

# THRILLING

JAN.

# ADVENTURES

ARROWS OF INVASION  
BY HARRY WIDMER

10¢

A THRILLING  
PUBLICATION

## ARROWS OF INVASION

A Stirring Novelet of  
the Norman Conquest

By HARRY  
WIDMER

## DOOM STALKS THE JUNGLE

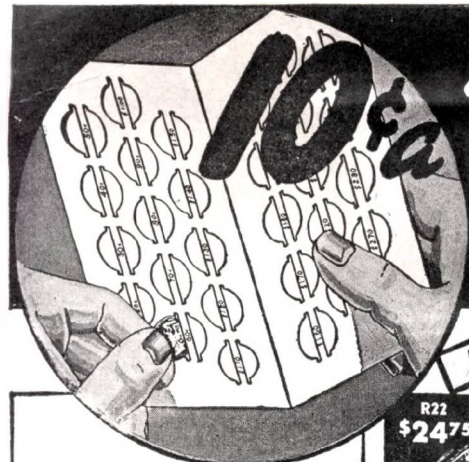
A Complete Novelet  
of British India

By CHARLES  
STODDARD

THRILLING ADVENTURES

JAN. 1922





# 10¢ a Day buys a Watch

## on Our SAVINGS BOOK PLAN

**BULOVA ELGIN GRUEN KENT BENRUS**

Yes—only 10¢ a day on my SAVINGS BOOK PLAN will buy your choice of these nationally known watches. It's simple—here's how you go about it...

### WHAT YOU DO:

Send coupon below with a dollar bill and a brief note telling me who you are, your occupation, and a few other facts about yourself. Indicate the watch you want on coupon, giving number and price.

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I'll open an account for you on my SAVINGS BOOK PLAN, send the watch you want for approval and

### 10-DAY TRIAL

If satisfied, you pay 10 monthly payments. If you are not satisfied after wearing the watch for ten days, send it back and I'll return your dollar on our

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*Jim Feeney*



### FREE TO ADULTS

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JIM FEENEY  
L. W. Sweet—Dept. 722A, 1670 Broadway  
New York, N. Y.

Enclosed find \$1 deposit. Send me Watch No. \_\_\_\_\_ Price \$\_\_\_\_\_. I agree to wear the watch for 10 days. If not satisfied, I'll return it and you will refund my dollar. If I keep it, I'll pay balance in 10 equal monthly payments.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

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**R22 - Ladies' BULOVA; 17 J. 10K yel. gold plate. \$24.75**  
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**L140**  
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**S141**  
**\$3750**

**L140 - Ladies' ELGIN; 17 J. 10K yel. gold filled case. \$37.50**  
**S141 - Man's ELGIN—sturdy 10K yellow gold filled case; 17 jewels. \$37.50**  
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**P145**  
**\$1595**

**K166**  
**\$1595**

**P145 - Ladies' tiny KENT. 7 jewels. Guaranteed. \$15.95**  
**K166 - Man's KENT. Guaranteed. 10K yellow rolled gold plate case; 7 jewels. \$15.95**  
**\$1 deposit \$1.50 a month**

**\$2975**

**T67**

**O68**  
**\$2975**

**T67 - Ladies' GRUEN. 15 J. 10K yel. rolled gold plate. \$29.75**  
**O68 - Man's GRUEN Verithin: 15 jewels; 10K yellow rolled gold plate. \$29.75**  
**\$1 deposit \$2.88 a month**

**K273**  
**\$1975**

**K273 - Service Watch—new radium dial, easy-to-see. 7 Jewels, sturdy 10K yellow rolled gold plate case. Made especially for Army and Navy men.**  
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**\$1975**

**T567**

**O564**  
**\$1975**

**T567 - BENRUS for Ladies. 7 jewels, 10K gold plate; bracelet. \$19.75**  
**O564 - Man's BENRUS: 17 jewels; 10K yellow rolled gold plate; leather strap. \$19.75**  
**\$1 deposit \$1.88 a month**

# L.W. Sweet

MAIL ORDER DIVISION OF FINLAY STRAUS, Inc.  
Dept. 722-A, 1670 BROADWAY, NEW YORK



# “THE BOSS DIDN'T EVEN KNOW MY NAME”

“HE SAID he remembered seeing me around, but he didn't even know my name until the I. C. S. wrote him that William Harris had enrolled for a course of home study and was doing fine work.

“Who's William Harris?” he asked. Then he looked me up. Told me he was glad to see I was ambitious. Said he'd keep his eye on me.

“He did too. Gave me my chance when Frank Jordan was sent out on the road. I was promoted over older men who had been with the firm for years.

“My spare-time studying helped me to get that job and to keep it after I got it. It

certainly was a lucky day for me when I signed that I. C. S. coupon.”

One reason employers recognize the value of I. C. S. training is that many of them are former I. C. S. students. They recognize that “today's I. C. S. students are tomorrow's leaders.”

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EVERY STORY BRAND NEW

# THRILLING ADVENTURES

Vol. XL, No. 1

J. S. WILLIAMS, Editor

January, 1942



*A Complete Action Novelet of the  
Norman Conquest*

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By **HARRY WIDMER**

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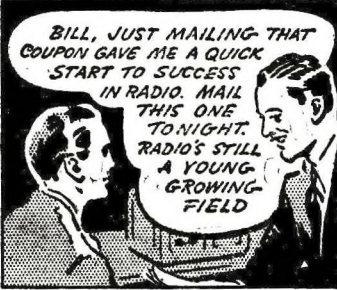
**THE GLOBE TROTTER** **A Department**

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HE THOUGHT HE WAS LICKED - THEN A TIP GOT BILL A GOOD JOB!



I Trained These Men



**Chief Operator  
Broadcasting Station**  
Before I completed your lessons, I obtained my Radio Broadcast Operator License and immediately joined Station WMPG where I am now Chief Operator.  
HOLLIS F. HAYES, 327 Madison St., Lapeer, Michigan.

Service Manager for Four Stores

I was working in a garage when I enrolled with N. R. I. I am now Radio Service Manager for the M. Furniture Co. for their four stores.  
JAMES E. RYAN, 119 Pebble Court, Fall River, Mass.



\$10 a Week Extra In Spare Time



I am doing spare time Radio work, and I am averaging around \$500 a year. Those extra dollars mean so much—the difference between being just barely getting by and living comfortably.  
JOHN WASHKO, 97 New Cranberry, Hazleton, Penna.

In U. S. Signal Corps

I am in the U. S. Army, Signal Corps, as Chief Radio Clerk. My duties also include maintenance of the transmitter and receivers when the Chief Radio Operator is absent.  
R. W. ANDERSON, Radio Station WTT, Vancouver Barracks, Washington.



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J. E. SMITH, Pres. National Radio Institute Established 25 Years

Here is a quick way to more pay. Radio offers the chance to make \$5, \$10 a week extra in spare time a few months from now. There is an increasing demand for full time Radio Technicians and Radio Operators, too. Many make \$30, \$40, \$50 a week. On top of record business, the Radio industry is getting millions and millions of dollars in Defense Orders. Clip the coupon below and mail it. Find out how I train you for these opportunities.

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J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 2A09, National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

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J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 2A09 National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.  
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Age.....  
Name.....  
Address.....  
City..... State.....



**THIS MAN DIDN'T BELIEVE HE  
COULD LEARN MUSIC BY MAIL**



**THIS MAN DECIDED TO TRY THIS  
EASY, SHORT-CUT METHOD!  
(P.S. You should hear him play now!)**



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*Here Are Some Facts That May Surprise You!*

**YOU HAVE** undoubtedly heard of the U. S. School method of teaching music by mail. This remarkable system of instruction has been in operation for over forty years and more than 700,000 people in all parts of the world have enrolled for it. Men, women and children of all ages and from all walks of life have taken up their favorite musical instruments this convenient, money-saving way. They have studied the piano, violin, guitar, accordion and, in short, every kind of popular instrument.

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(Established 1896)

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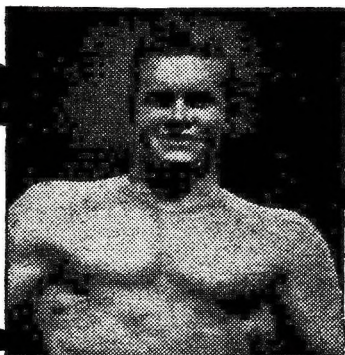
Name ..... Do You Have Instr? .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

Check here if under 18 years of age.

# HE Mailed This Coupon



## J. G. O'BRIEN

Atlas Champion  
Cup Winner

This is an ordinary  
snapshot of one of  
Charles Atlas' Cali-  
fornian pupils.



This is coupon O'Brien sent to get FREE Book. Yours is below—clip it NOW!

## ...and Here's the Handsome Prize-Winning Body I Gave Him!

J. G. O'BRIEN saw my coupon. He clipped and mailed it. He got my free book and followed my instructions. He became a New Man. NOW read what he says:

"Look at me NOW! 'Dynamic Tension' WORKS! I'm proud of the natural, easy way you have made me an 'Atlas Champion'!"

J. G. O'Brien.

## "I'll Prove that YOU, too, can be a NEW MAN"—Charles Atlas

I don't care how old or young you are, or how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be. If you can simply raise your arm and flex it I can add SOLID MUSCLE to your biceps—yes, on each arm—in double-quick time! Only 15 minutes a day—right in your own home—is all the time I ask of you! And there's no cost if I fail.

I can broaden your shoulders, strengthen your back, develop your whole muscular system INSIDE and OUTSIDE; I can add inches to your chest, give you a vice-like grip, make those legs of yours lithe and powerful. I can shoot new strength into your old backbone, exercise those inner organs, help you cram your body so full of pep, vigor and red-blooded vitality that you won't feel there's even "standing room" left for weakness and that lazy feeling! Before I get through with you I'll have your whole frame "measured" to a nice, new, beautiful suit of muscle!

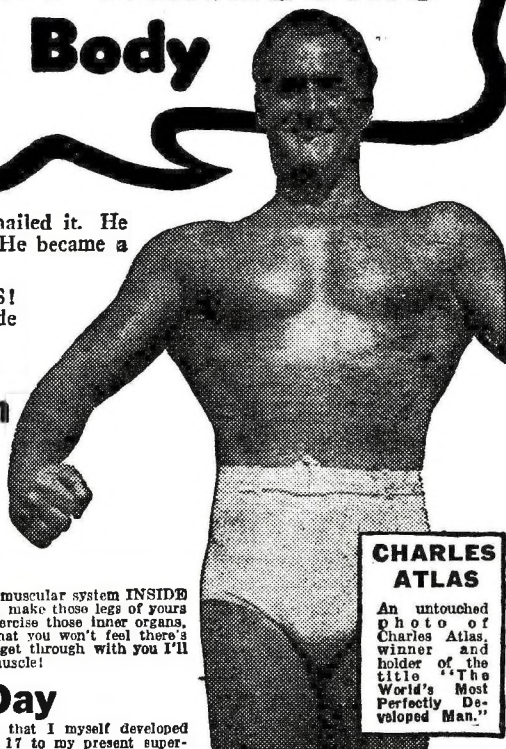
## Only 15 Minutes a Day

"Dynamic Tension!" That's the ticket! The identical natural method that I myself developed to change my body from the scrawny, skinny-chested weakling I was at 17 to my present super-man physique! Thousands of other fellows are becoming marvelous physical specimens—my way. I give you no gadgets or contraptions to fool with. You learn to develop your strength through "Dynamic Tension." You simply utilize the DORMANT muscle-power in your own God-given body—watch it increase and multiply double-quick into real, solid LIVE MUSCLE.

My method—"Dynamic Tension"—will turn the trick for you. No theory—every exercise is practical. And, man, so easy! Spend only 15 minutes a day in your own home. From the very start you'll be using my method of "Dynamic Tension" almost unconsciously every minute of the day—walking, handling over, etc.—to BUILD MUSCLE and VITALITY.

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In it I talk to you in straight-from-the-shoulder language. Packed with inspirational pictures of myself and pupils—fellows who became NEW MEN in strength, my way. Let me show you what I helped THEM do. See what I can do for YOU! For a real thrill, send for this book today. AT ONCE, CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-N, 115 E. 23rd St., N. Y. C.



## CHARLES ATLAS

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## CHARLES ATLAS

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New York, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" can help make me a New Man—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscle development. Send me your FREE book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." No obligation.

Name .....  
(Please print or write plainly)

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City ..... State .....

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MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY

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The figures shown above represent the insurance provided by the policy on a typical average family of five persons.

GUARANTEE RESERVE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY  
DEPARTMENT 17-A, HAMMOND, INDIANA

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Guarantee Reserve specializes in full family coverage, that's why we can offer safe, guaranteed life insurance on your whole family at one low price of only \$1.00 a month.

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Guarantee Reserve LIFE INSURANCE CO.

GUARANTEE RESERVE BLDG., Dept. 17-A, Hammond Ind.

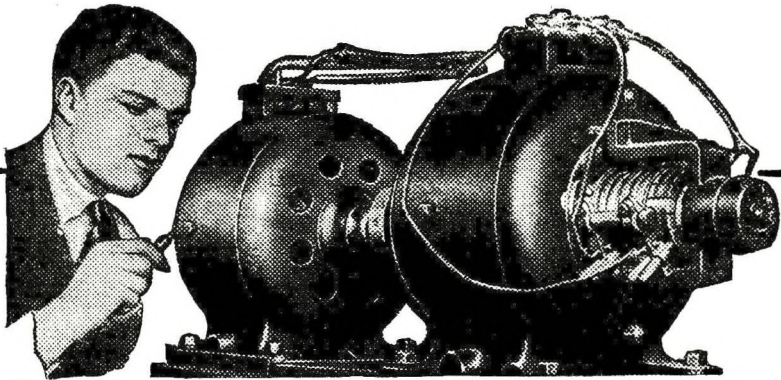
Gentlemen: Without obligation, please send me at once complete information on how to get your Family Life Policy for FREE inspection.

Name .....

Address .....

City..... State.....





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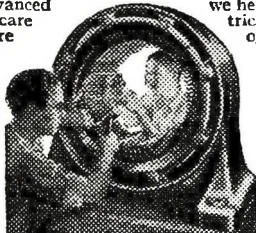
Lack of experience—age, or advanced education bars no one. I don't care if you don't know an armature from an air brake—I don't expect you to! It makes no difference! Don't let lack of money stop you. Most of the men at Coyne have no more money than you have. That's why I have worked out my astonishing offers.

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If you need part-time work to help pay your living expenses I'll help you get it. Then, in 12 brief weeks, in the great roaring shops of Coyne, I train you as you never dreamed you could be trained...on one of the greatest outlays of electrical apparatus ever assembled... real dynamos, engines, power plants, autos, switchboards, transmitting stations... everything from doorbells to farm power and lighting... full-sized... in full operation every day!

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No dull books, no baffling charts, no classes, you get individual training... all real actual work... building real batteries... winding real armatures, operating real motors, dynamos and generators, wiring houses, etc., etc. That's a glimpse of how



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Armature Winder  
Sub-Station Operator  
Auto & Aviation Ignition  
Maintenance Electrician  
Service Station Owner  
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# The GLOBE TROTTER



**N**OT many years ago I was seated at a little coffee table in one of the shelters lining the Khaiban-i-Dawlat, main street in Persia's capital, Teheran, talking about an automobile trip across Europe from London, England, to the Persian Gulf, which had just been completed. Two of us had made the trip, and had in mind the ambition of trying to duplicate the feat of the famous British explorer, Major Forbes-Leith and the London Museum Expedition. But as I recall it now, I believe that at that time the various *Tollkammers*, or Customs offices we had run across, had impressed me as much as anything else.

Another incident about the journey I also recall as still fresh in my mind, while we were resting in the chief Iranian city. It had occurred just a few days drive from Teheran.

I wonder if any of you globe trotters, accustomed to riding along paved highways, have ever stopped to give a thought to what you would do if you came to a place where the highway suddenly ended, as it often does in Asia Minor, and there should be nothing ahead for three or four hundred miles except a sea of sand.

Nowadays, with semi-tractor trucks, and oversized balloon tires, it is often possible to cover considerable stretches of roadless sand, but when that trip I am discussing was made it was necessary to discover another solution to our difficulties.

"Why not ride along the railroad track?" was one suggestion made.

That sounded reasonable, and in the Iranian area we didn't have to worry too much about bumping over the ties. The settling of sand between the tracks provided a covering for gravel and ties that was firm and durable.

But how to reach the railroad!

## *Sunk in the Sand*

The most important railroad in Persia runs from north to south, and we had to bisect it somewhere on our east-west route along the Turkish border north of Lake Van and west of Lake Rizaiyah. Just how we were to do that we were not sure, but more than once on that long journey we had left our fate in the laps of the gods. We could make one more gamble.

After plotting the location of the railroad, we looked at the mountains, rugged slopes and desert areas ahead of us with

some misgivings. But then we moved boldly eastward over the trackless area along the Thirty-eighth Parallel.

The area between the tributaries of the Araxes River, from Lake Rizaiyeh northward, is patrolled by mounted troops of the Persian Army. It is not unusual to run into three or four of these patrols in the course of a single day. Once your identity and business have been established, however, these soldiers, in peacetime, are the soul of hospitality. But none of our party was in the best of humor when the first patrol came upon us and the captain greeted us pleasantly.

"How are you making out?" he asked in musical Persian.

"We're not," I told him. "We've been stuck in the sand for ten hours, and we're sick of it."

The officer smiled, and turned to his men. He chattered to them for a while, and our interpreter gave us the gist of what he was saying. He was, it appeared, wondering just what to do with these hapless wanderers.

"Where are you going from here?" he finally asked through our interpreter.

"We're trying to get to the railroad line," I explained.

"We'll take you there," was the welcome response the interpreter gave us then.

The Persian soldiers, taking the ropes with which we had been making a vain effort to get our three cars out of the sand, swung their mounts into the pull, and before we could say "Franklin Delano Roosevelt" the cars were out of the holes we had obligingly dug with protesting rear-ends and transmissions. With the timely help of the Shah's soldiers, we were on our way again.

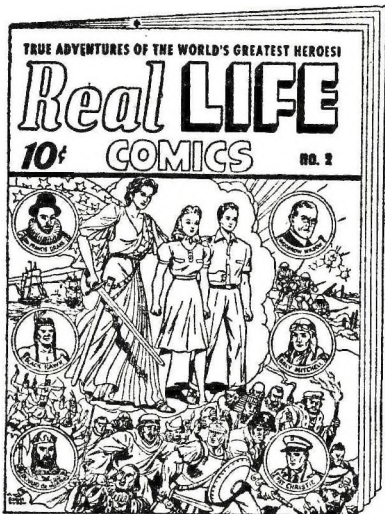
You may boast that a car has ninety horsepower, but when it came to real pull in a tough spot—pull that took muscle—a quartette of four-legged horses certainly beat mechanical power that time.

## *Cheap at Half the Price*

Our party, now with its complement of mounted Persian soldiers, proceeded for the next two days before we finally reached a point where the captain and the soldiers agreed we ought to be able to go on by ourselves. Then came the matter of a reckoning. I talked the subject over with

(Continued on page 102)

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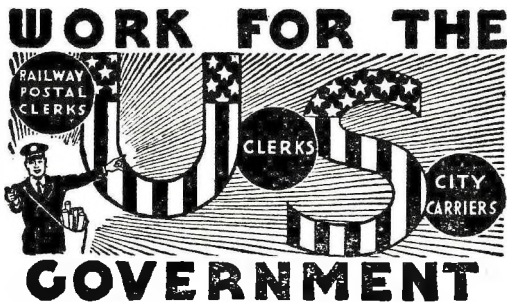
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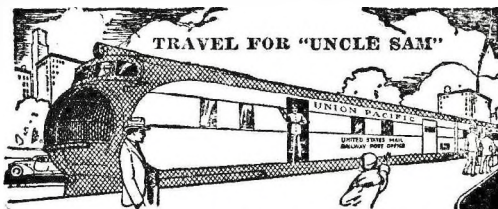


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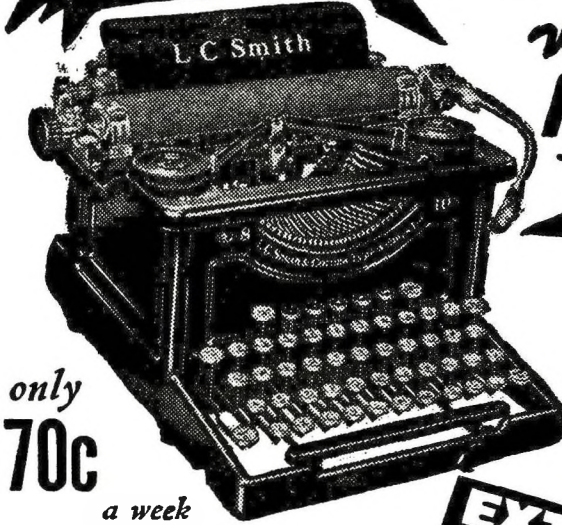
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# WHERE THERE'S FIGHTING

By LOUIS L'AMOUR

*Author of "Gloves for a Tiger," "Pirates of the Sky," etc.*

*Four Englishmen Battled Alone on the Greek Mountain Pass—Until  
the Yank Soldier of Fortune Came Along!*

**T**HE four men were sprawled in a cup-like depression at the top of the pass. From where the machine-gun was planted it had a clear field of fire for over four hundred yards. Beyond that the road was

visible only at intervals. By a careful watch of those intervals an enemy could be seen long before he was within range.

A low parapet of loose rock had been thrown up along the lip of the

depression, leaving an aperture for the .30 caliber gun. Two of the men were also armed with rifles.

It was very still. The slow warmth of the morning sun soaked into their bones and ate the frost away, leaving them lethargic and pleased. The low rumble as of thunder in the far off hills were the bombs over Serbia, miles away.

"Think they'll ever come?" Benton asked, curiously.

"They'll come," Ryan said.

"We can't stop them."

"No."

"How about some coffee? Is there any left?"

Ryan nodded.

"It'll be ready soon. The part that's coffee is done, the part that's chicory is almost done and the part that's plain bean is doing."

Benton looked at the two who were sleeping in the sun. They were mere boys.

"Shall we wake them?"

"Pretty soon. They worry too much. Especially Pommy. He's afraid of being afraid."

"Sackworth doesn't. He thinks we're bloody heroes. Do you?"

"I'd feel heroic as blazes if I had a shave," Ryan said. "Funny, how you like being shaved? It's sets a man up, somehow."

Pommy turned over and opened his eyes.

"I say, Bent? Shall I spell you a bit? You've been there hours!"

Benton looked at him, liking his fresh, clean-cut look.

"I could use some coffee. I feel like I was growing to this rock."

The young Englishman had risen to his feet.

"There's something coming down there. A man, I think."

Benton rose to his knees.

"Couldn't be one of our men, we didn't have any over there. He's stopped—looking back."

"He's coming on again now," Sackworth said, after a moment. He had

joined them at the first sign of trouble. "Shall I try a shot?"

"Wait. Might be a Greek."

The sun climbed higher, and the moving figure came slowly toward them. He seemed to move at an almost creeping pace. At times, out of sight of the pass, they thought he would never show up again.

"He's carrying something," Pommy said. "Too heavy for a rifle, but I saw the sun flash on it back there a way."

The man came into sight around the last bend. He was big, but he walked very slowly, limping a little. He was wearing faded khaki trousers and a torn shirt. Over one shoulder he carried a machine-gun. Over the other, were several belts of ammunition.

"He hasn't carried that very far," Ryan said. "He's got over a hundred pounds there."

**B**ENTON picked up one of the rifles and stepped to the parapet, but before he could lift the gun or speak, the man looked up. Benton thought he had never seen a face so haggard with weariness. It was an utter and complete weariness that seemed to come from within. The man's face was covered with a stubble of black beard. His face was wide at the cheek-bones, and the nose was broken. His head was wrapped in a bloody bandage above which coarse black hair was visible.

"Any room up there?" he asked.

"Who are you?" Benton demanded.

Without replying the big man started up the steep path. Once he slipped, skinning his knee against a sharp rock. Puzzled, they waited. When he stood beside them they were shocked at his appearance. His face, under the deep brown of sun and wind, was drawn and pale, his nose peeling from sunburn. The rags of what must have once been a uniform were mud-stained and sweat-discolored.

"What difference does it make?" he



asked mildly, humorously. "I'm here now."

He lowered the machine-gun and slid the belts to the ground. When he straightened they could see he was a half inch taller than Benton, who was a tall man, and at least thirty pounds heavier. Through his shirt bulging muscles showed, and there was blood clogging the hair on his chest.

"My name's Horne," he added. "Mike Horne. I been fighting with Koska's guerillas in Albania."

Benton stared, uncertain.

"Albania? That's a long way from here."

"Not so far if you know the mountains." He looked at the pot on the fire. "How's for some coffee?"

Silently, Ryan filled a cup. Digging in his haversack, Horne produced some Greek bread and a thick chunk of sausage. He brushed the sand from the sausage gravely. "Want some? I salvaged this from a bombed house back yonder. Might be some shell fragments in it."

"You pack that gun over the mountains?" Ryan asked.

Horne nodded, his mouth full.

"Part of the way. It was surrounded by dead Greeks when I found it. Four Italians found it the same time. We had trouble."

"Did you—kill them all?" Pommy asked.

Horne looked at him.

"No, kid. I asked them to tea an' then put sand in their bearings."

Pommy's face got red, then he grinned.

"Got any ammo for a .50?" Horne looked up at Benton. "I got mighty little left."

"They put down four boxes by mistake," Benton said.

Ryan was interested.

"Koska's guerillas? I heard of them. Are they as tough as you hear?"

"Tougher. Koska's an Albanian gypsy. Sneaked into Valona alone a few nights ago an' got himself three dagoes. With a knife."

Sackworth studied Horne as if he were some kind of insect.

"You call that bravery? That's like animals. One can at least fight like a gentleman!"

Horne winked at Ryan.

"Sure, kid. But this ain't a gentleman's fight. This is war. Nothing sporting about it, just a case of dog eat dog, an' you better have big teeth."

"Why are you here?" Sackworth demanded.

**H**ORNE shrugged.

"Why am I any place? Think I'm a Fifth Columnist, or something?" He stared regretfully into the empty cup. "Well, I'm not. I ran a gun in the Chaco a few years ago, then they started to fight in China, so I went there. I was in the Spanish scrap with the Loyalists.

"Hung around in England long enough to learn something about that parachute business. Now that's a man's job. When you get down, in an enemy country, you're on your own. I was with the bunch that hopped off from Libya and parachuted down in Southern Italy to cut off that aqueduct and supply line to the Sicily naval base. Flock of spigoties spotted me, but I got down to the water, and hiked out in a fishing boat. Now I'm here."

He looked up at Benton, wiping the back of his hand across his mouth.

"From Kalgoorlie, I bet. You got the look. I prospected out of there once. I worked for pearls out of Darwin, too. I'm an original swagman, friend."

"What's a swagman?" Pommy asked.

Horne looked at him, smiling. Two of his front teeth at the side were missing.

"It's a bum, Sonny. Just a bum. A guy who packs a tuckerbag around looking for whatever turns up."

Horne pulled the gun over into his lap, carefully wiping the oil buffer clean. Then he oiled the moving parts

of the gun with a little can he took from his hip pocket and slowly assembled it. He handled the gun like a lover, fitting the parts together smoothly and testing it carefully for headspace when it was ready for firing.

"That a German shirt you have on," Sackworth said. His eyes were level and he had his rifle across his knees, pointed at Horne.

"Sure," Horne said, mildly. "I needed a shirt, so I took it out of a dead German's outfit."

"Looting," Sackworth said, with scorn. There was distaste and dislike in his gaze.

"Why not?" Horne looked up at Sackworth, amused. "You're a good kid, so don't start throwing your weight around. This sportsmanship stuff, the old school tie, an' what not—that's okay where it belongs. You Britishers who play war like a game are living in the past. There's nothing sporting about this. It's like water-fronts or jungles. You survive any way you can."

**S**ACKWORTH did not move the rifle. "I don't like him," he said to Benton. "I don't trust him."

"Forget it!" Benton snapped. "The man's all right, and Lord knows we need fighting men!"

"Sure," Horne added, quietly. "It's just you an' me are different kind of animals, kid. You're probably Eton, and then Sandhurst. Me, I came up the hard way. A tough road kid in the States, then an able seaman, took a whirl at the fight game, and wound up in the Chaco.

"I like to fight. I also like to live. I been in a lot of fights, and mostly I fought pretty good, an' I'm still alive. The Jerries use whatever tactics they need. What you need, kid, in war is not a lot of cut an' dried rules, but a good imagination, the ability to use what you've got to the best advantage no matter where you are, and a lot of the old moxie.

"You'll make a good fighter. You got the moxie. All you need is a little kicking around."

"I wish we knew where the Jerries were," Ryan said. "This waiting gets me."

"You'll see them pretty quick," Horne said. "There's about a battalion in the first group, and there's only one tank."

Benton lowered his cup, astonished. "You mean you've actually seen them? They are coming?"

Horne nodded.

"The main body isn't far behind the first bunch."

"Why didn't you say so?" Sackworth demanded. His face was flushed and angry. "We could have warned the troops behind us."

"Yeah?" Horne did not look up from wiping the dust from the cartridges. "Well, we couldn't. You see," he added, looking up, "they broke through Monastir Pass two days ago. Your men back there know more about it than we do. This is just a supporting column to polish off any left-overs like us."

"Then—we're cut off?" Pommy asked.

Horne nodded.

"You have been for two days. How long you been here?"

"Just three days," Benton said. He studied Horne thoughtfully. "What are you? A Yank?"

Horne shrugged.

"I guess so. When I joined up in Spain they took my citizenship away. It was against the law to fight Fascism then. If it was wrong then, it's wrong now. But me, I feel just the same. I'll fight them in China, in Spain, in Africa, or anywhere else."

"In Spain when everything was busting up I heard about this guy, Koska. One of his men was with us, so when he went back, I trailed along."

"They're coming," Sackworth said. "I can see the tank."

"All right," Benton said. He finished his coffee.

"Did you fight any Germans in Spain?" Pommy asked.

"Yeah," Mike Horne brushed invisible dust from the gun and fed a belt of cartridges into it. "Most of them aren't much better than the Italians. They fight better, the younger ones try harder, but all they know how to do is die."

"It's something to know that," Sackworth said.

"Nuts. Anybody can die. Everybody does. An' dead soldiers never won any battles. The good soldier is the one who keeps himself alive and fighting. This bravery stuff—that's for milk-sops. For panty-waists. All of us are scared, but we fight just the same."

"The tank's getting closer," Sackworth said. He was plainly worried, and showed it.

"I got the .50," Horne said. He settled himself comfortably into the sand and moved his gun on the swivel. "Let it get close. Don't fire until they are close up to us. I'll take the tank. You take the first truck with the other gun, I'll take the second, an' so on. Get the drivers, if you can."

**T**HEY were silent. The rumble of the tank and heavy clank of the tread drew nearer. Behind them rolled the trucks, the men sitting in tight groups. They apparently expected no trouble.

"I'd have expected them to send a patrol," Benton said, low-voiced.

"They did," Horne replied.

They looked at him, startled. His eyes were on the gray-green column. He had sighted the fifty at the gun aperture on the tank.

"All right," he said suddenly.

His gun broke into a hoarse chatter, slamming steel-jacketed bullets at the tank. Then its muzzle lifted suddenly, and swept the second truck. Soldiers were shouting and yelling, spilling from trucks like madmen, but the two first trucks were smashed into carriers of death before the men could move.

The Germans further back had found their enemy, and steel-jacketed bullets smashed into the parapet. Pommy felt something stinging hot dash a streak along his jaw.

They were above the column and out of reach of the tank. Mike Horne stood up suddenly and depressed the gun muzzle. The tank was just below. The gun chattered, and the tank slewed around side-wise and drove full tilt into the rock wall as though to climb it.

Horne dropped back.

"The older ones have a soft spot on top," he said.

The men of the broken column ran for shelter. Some of them tried to rush the steep path, but the fire blasted them back to the road, dead or dying. Others, trying to escape the angry bursts from the two guns tried to scramble up the walls of the pass, but were mowed down relentlessly.

It had been a complete and shocking surprise. The broken column became a rout. Horne stopped the .50 and wiped his brow with the back of his hand. He winked at Ryan.

"Nice going, kid. That's one tank that won't bother your pals."

Ryan peered around the rocks. The pass was empty of life. The wrecked tank was jammed against the rock wall, and one of the trucks had plunged off the precipice into the ravine. Another was twisted across the road.

A man was trying to get out of the first truck. He made it, and tumbled to the road. His coat was stained with blood, and he was making whimpering sounds and trying to crawl. His face and head were bloody.

"Next time it'll be tough," Horne said. "They know now. They'll come in small bunches, scattered out, running for shelter behind the trucks."

Rifle fire began to sweep over the cup. They were low behind the parapet and out of sight. It was a searching, careful fire—expert fire.

Benton was quiet. He looked over

at Horne. Officially in charge, he had yielded his command to Horne's superior knowledge.

"What d'you think?" he asked.

"We'll stop them," Horne said. "We'll stop them this time, maybe next time. After that—"

Horne grinned at Pommy.

"First time under fire?"

"Yes."

"Take it easy. You're doing all right. Make every shot count. One cinch is worth five maybes."

Pommy crowded his body down into the gravel and rested his rifle in a niche in the rocks. He looked at Mike Horne and could see a thin trickle of fresh blood coming from under his bandage. The wound had opened again.

**W**AS it deep, he wondered, or just a scratch? He looked at the lines about Horne's mouth and decided it was deep. Horne's sleeve was torn, and he had a dragon tattooed on his forearm.

They came with a rush. Rounding the bend, they broke into a scattered line; behind them machine-guns and rifles opened a hot fire to cover the advance.

They waited and, just before the men could reach the trucks, swept them with a steel scythe of bullets that mowed them down in a row. One man tumbled off the brink and fell into the ravine, then another fell, caught his fingers on the lip, tumbled head over heels into the ravine as the edge gave way.

"How many got there?" Horne asked.

"A dozen, I think," Ryan said. "We got about thirty."

"Fair enough." Horne looked at Sackworth. The young Englishman was still resentful. He didn't like Horne. "Doing all right?" Horne asked.

"Of course," Sackworth was contemptuous, but his face was drawn and gray.

"Ryan," Horne said. "You an' Pommy leave the main attack to the machine-guns. Watch the men behind the trucks. Pick them off as they try to move closer. You take the right, Pommy."

The German with the bloody face had fallen flat. Now he was getting to his knees again.

Then suddenly, three men made a concerted rush. Ryan and Pommy fired instantly, and Ryan's man dropped.

"I missed!" Pommy said. "Blast it, I missed!"

There was another rush, and both machine-guns broke into a clattering roar. The gray line melted away, but more kept coming. Men rounded the bend and split to right and left. Despite the heavy fire a few of them were getting through. Pommy and Ryan were firing continuously and methodically now.

Suddenly, a man broke from under the nearest truck and came on in a plunging rush. Both Ryan and Pommy fired, and the man went down, but before they could fire again he lunged to his feet and dove into the hollow below the cliff on which their pit rested.

"He can't do anything there," Sackworth said, "he—"

A hurtling object shot upward from below, hit the slope below the guns, rolled a few feet, and then burst with an earth-shaking concussion.

Horne looked up from where he had ducked his head. Nobody was hit.

"He's got grenades. Watch it. There'll be another in a minute."

Ryan fired, and a man dropped his rifle and started back toward the trucks. He walked quite calmly while they stared. Then he fell flat and didn't get up.

Twice more grenades hit the slope, but the man was too close below the cliff. They didn't quite reach the cup thrown from such an awkward angle. "If one of those makes it—" Benton looked sour.

Pommy was shooting steadily now. There was another rush, and Benton opened up with the machine-gun. Suddenly another grenade came up from below, traveling an arching course. It hit the slope, too short. It rolled free, and fell. There was a terrific explosion.

"Tough," Ryan said. "He made a good try."

"Yeah," Horne said. "So have we."

Hours passed. The machine-guns rattled steadily now. Only at long intervals was there a lull. The sun had swung over and was setting behind the mountain.

Horne straightened, his powerful body heavy with fatigue. He looked over at Ryan and grinned. Ryan's face

We delayed them for awhile. All around through these hills guys are delaying them, just for awhile. We've done all we could here, now we scam. We fight somewhere else."

"Go if you want to," Sackworth said stubbornly. "I'm staying."

Suddenly there was a terrific concussion, then another, and another.

"What the deuce?" Benton exclaimed. "They got a mortar. They—"

The next shell lit right where he was sitting. It went off with an ear-splitting roar and a burst of flame. Pommy went down, hugged the earth with an awful fear. Something tore at his clothes, then sand and gravel showered over him. There was another concussion and another.

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## GUNS FOR GATUN

*Exciting Complete Novelet*

By **ARTHUR J. BURKS**

**FEATURED IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE**



was swollen from the kick of the rifle. Benton picked up a canteen and tried to drink, but there was no water.

"What now?" Pommy said.

Horne shrugged.

"We take it on the lam."

"What?" Sackworth demanded.

"What does that mean?"

"We beat it," Mike Horne said. "We get out while the getting is good."

"What?" Sackworth was incredulous. "You mean—*run*? Leave our post?"

"That's just what I mean," Horne said patiently. "We delayed this bunch long enough. We got ours from them, but now it doesn't matter any more. The Jerries are behind us now.

Somebody had caught him by the foot.

"Come on, kid. Let's go."

They broke into a stumbling run down the slope back of the nest, then over the next ridge and down the ravine beyond. Even then they ran on, using every bit of cover. Once Pommy started to slow up but Horne nudged him with the rifle barrel.

"Keep it up," he panted. "We got to run."

They slid into a deeper ravine and found their way to a stream. They walked then, slipping and sliding in the gathering darkness. Once a patrol saw them, and shots rattled around, but they kept going.

Then it was night, and clouds covered the moon and the stars. Wearily, sodden with exhaustion, they plodded on. Once, on the bank of a little stream, they paused for a drink. Then Horne opened the old haversack again and brought out the remnants of the sausage and bread. He broke each in half, and shared them with Pommy.

"But—"

Pommy's voice caught in his throat. "Gone?" he said then.

Horne nodded in the darkness.

"Yeah. Lucky it wasn't all of us."

"But what now?" Pommy asked. "You said they were behind us."

"Sure," Horne agreed. "But we're just two men. We'll travel at night, keep to the hills. Maybe they'll make a stand at Thermopylae. If not there, they might try to defend the Isthmus

of Corinth. Maybe we can join them there."

"But if they don't? If we can't?"

"Then Africa, Pommy, or Syria, or Suez, or Russia, or England. They'll always be fighting them somewhere, an' that's where I want to be. It won't stop. The Germans win here, they win there, but they got to keep on fighting. They win battles, but none of them are decisive, none of them mean an end.

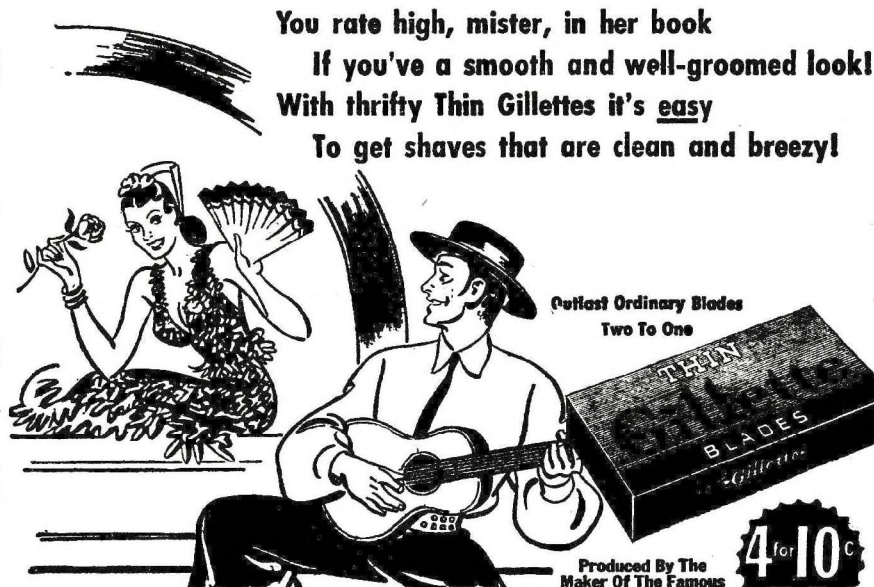
"Ever fight a guy, kid, who won't quit? You keep kicking him, and he keeps coming back for more, keeps trying. You knock him down but he won't stay down? It's hell, that's what it is. He won't quit so you can't.

"But they'll be fighting them somewhere, and that's where I want to be."

"Yeah," Pommy said. "Me, too."

*Next Month: LAW OF THE RANGE, a Gripping Western Novelet by ED EARL REPP.*

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Nielson slapped the gun from Bucko's hand

# THE FEATHERED SERPENT

By RICHARD H. RUSSEL

*Author of "Retreat Through Hell," etc.*

*The Idol That Guarded Galleon Gold Exacted Vengeance in Full—  
But Gave New Life to Those Who Put Its Treasure to Use!*

**C**HRISTOPHER NIELSON strode along Papeete's harbor-front thoroughfare with, for the first time in many days, a confident swing to his rolling stride. His

peaked officer's cap sat at a cocky angle atop a head of tawny hair. He balanced a ninety-pound sea bag on his shoulder, holding it lightly in place with one finger hooked into its

lacing. Two unexpected things had happened to Christopher Nielson that day. He had been offered a berth as skipper of a snug, trim, little copra schooner. And he had fallen in love.

His thoughts were of a pair of hazel eyes set in a lovely oval face framed by ringleted brown hair. And perhaps it was because his thoughts were of that face that he failed to hear the stealthy slithering of bare feet behind him.

With an easy swing he shifted his canvas sea bag from one shoulder to the other. That simple act saved his life.

The darting blade of a thrown knife made a silvery line in the moonlight, a line which would have terminated in his heart. Instead, the weapon buried itself to the hilt in the bottom of the bag.

Instinctive reaction to danger, born of his hard years in the fo'c'sle, caused Nielson to crouch low and spin all in one swift motion, dropping his bag as he did so. Two natives darted from the shadows of a building. One, the knife thrower, was unarmed. The other carried a wicked-looking club studded with shark's teeth.

Nielson launched himself from his crouching position in a flying tackle, his big hands clutching at fast moving brown ankles. His two assailants went down.

"Aue!" the knife thrower gasped in pain as his arm crumpled under him, and the bones of his wrist cracked.

The club wielder was the first to disengage himself. He grunted as he swung a murderous blow at Nielson's head.

The big sailor rolled away and regained his feet. The native's face was ugly with rage as he closed in for the kill. Nielson waited for the club to be drawn back, then hunched his shoulders and drove a bone-smashing straight-arm punch to the native's nose.

A gulping cry of agony escaped from the islander as he was flung

backward. He fell, rolled to his feet and was gone, holding his nose with both hands and running like a startled deer into the night.

**N**IELSON looked around. The knife thrower had likewise taken to his heels. It was well after midnight, and the streets were deserted. No one, apparently, had either witnessed the brief encounter or been aroused by it.

Experience had taught him that sailors were considered fair prey by thugs and waterfront scum in every port of the world. He shrugged his shoulders and picked up his bag. A few minutes later when he dropped lightly from the dock to the deck of the *Kaeo*, he had forgotten the incident.

"Captain Nielson, may I speak to you for a moment?"

"Yes, Ma'am," he answered respectfully. He snatched his cap from his head and turned to the young girl who stood by the galley hatchway. There was an eager light in his blue eyes that had nothing to do with the workaday business of skippering a South Sea copra boat. His heart sang a wild accompaniment to the lilting music of her voice.

If the blonde, rugged good looks of the big sailor awoke a responsive surge of feeling within Janet Coleman, she gave no sign. Her soft lips were unsmiling, and the sombre light of recent tragedy shadowed her eyes.

Three weeks before she had buried her father on Tanao down in the Tuamatos. Now she was sole owner of the *Kaeo*, and completely alone in the strange world of water and islands—strange indeed to a girl who had spent most of her nineteen years in a San Francisco boarding school for young ladies.

When Old Copra Coleman had felt his time drawing near, he had sent for her. He had no legacy but the *Kaeo*, last of his once great fleet of traders. There was only the ship and



a chart of the waters surrounding a certain uninhabited island on the fringe of the distant Australs.

The bearings and the cryptic markings on the chart might mean nothing at all. On the other hand they might mean a good deal. It depended entirely on what a dying man had whispered to his daughter that day on Tanao.

"Captain Nielson," Janet began hesitantly, "I'm afraid that when I signed you on this morning as Captain of the *Kaeo* I—well—I didn't really misrepresent, but I failed to tell you exactly what it involves."

"Now don't you worry, Miss," Nielson interrupted. "I understand that you're not sure when you'll be able to pay me. Do you think I signed on for the money?"

"Since my ship ran afoul of that hurricane I've had enough of the beach at Tahiti to last me a lifetime. The sea's the place for a sailor, Miss. I'm glad enough to be back."

She looked down at the deck, possibly to hide the warmth his words had brought to her eyes.

"That wasn't what I meant," she said slowly. "I told you we were unfitting for a cruise to the Australs, on the outlook for a new source of copra supply. That's not exactly true. What I intend doing is much more dangerous than a trading voyage. And I can't tell you any more than that—yet."

"I see," Nielson murmured thoughtfully. "And, whatever it is you're up to, you figured it was only fair to let me know it might be risky. If what you want to know is do I go anyway, then the answer is 'yes.'"

He saw her smile, for the first time. It was quite a smile, and he had a mad impulse to kiss her. For a thrilling instant her hand lay soft and warm in his.

"Thank you, Captain," she whispered, then moved lithely forward along the deck. Dressed in dungarees and a man's blue cotton shirt she was

slender and graceful, silhouetted against the sky.

Nielson picked up his bag and started aft to his cabin. Her voice again arrested him. He looked back, but the moonlight had swallowed her.

"Oh, Captain," she called. "One thing I forgot to mention: Bucko Birdge is in port. The *Curieuse* dropped her hook in the lagoon an hour ago. Please be careful when you are ashore."

"Now what did she mean by that?" Nielson asked himself later as he sat on the edge of his bunk and puffed reflectively at his pipe. He knew Bucko Birdge of old, and knew no good of him.

There had been a time, not so long before, when Bucko was the scourge of Oceania. It was common, if unproven, knowledge that the *Curieuse* had been engaged in everything from illegal pearl looting to piracy.

**B**UT that had been before the French gunboats took a hand and tamed the islands—half-tamed them anyway. Bucko had apparently resigned himself to the life of a trader, for the deck of the *Curieuse* reeked of copra, rather than of blood.

It occurred to Nielson that the girl's reference to the mysterious nature of the trip tied in with her warning about Bucko Birdge. He recalled the fight on the beach. For the first time he realized that the attack had been too viciously murderous in nature to have been motivated solely by robbery.

He wished that he had followed his fleeing assailants. Something told him that, had he done so, the trail would have led to the *Curieuse* and to a partial solution of the mystery that surrounded Janet Coleman.

"So Mister Bucko cuts for a hand in this deal," he mused as he swung his long legs onto the bunk. "Well, unless I'm dead wrong, he'll find Old Copra's daughter no shore-going softy to be pushed around. And then there's

always Cap'n Chris Nielson to be reckoned with. He sailed with her daddy when these islands were *really* tough!"

The work of provisioning and making the *Kaeo* sea-ready occupied all of Nielson's time for the next few days. There were running gear to be overhauled, sun-blistered sides to be scraped and painted and fresh water casks to be filled, all with the help of only two Tahitian seamen. He had little time for thought of Captain Bucko Birdge, little time even for conversation with Janet Coleman.

On the eve of their scheduled departure, the bad luck which had started for him with the hurricane came bouncing back. He was hurrying to the ship with some last-minute purchases which he had made in the city. On the dock, in full sight of the *Kaeo*, an alluring native girl approached him.

Tauna was hapa haole, half white. Her long hair was as black as the blue blackness of lava. Her lips were vivid carnations, and her ivory brown body was invitingly curved. She wore nothing but a tapa pareu wound about her waist and a single red hibiscus blossom in her hair. There was a half-fearful smile on her lips as she swayed close to him and touched his arm with the tips of her fingers.

"Pliz I spik wiz you, Captain?"

Captain Nielson did a foolish thing. He knew that Janet was on the *Kaeo*, might even be watching for him. His only thought was that she might see, might not understand. He took Tauna by the arm and drew her behind a huge pile of shell. It didn't occur to him that, to a watcher, his action would seem furtive and suspicious.

"Well, what is it?" His tone was unconsciously gruff.

"Pliz, Captain, you take Tauna wiz you on *Kaeo*. Tauna good cook, fix miti haari an' fei like nobodeez beezness!"

In spite of his annoyance, Captain

Nielson couldn't help being amused. He grinned, but shook his head.

"Sorry, Tauna. You may be the best cook in the islands, but I can't take you."

"An' why? Eez eet zat you go so far—to nozer country maybe?"

"No."

"Where eez you go?"

"Can't tell you, youngster," Nielson said briskly. "The orders are sealed even for me. Run along now." With a good-natured pat on the shoulder he left her and strode on down the dock.

Janet met him at the ship. Her eyes flashed him an angry challenge and her lips curled in scorn.

"You needn't come aboard, Mister Nielson," she called bitterly. "I'll have the boys set your things on the dock and give you pay for four days' work."

She couldn't have surprised, nor have hurt him more, by slapping his face. His slow, Nordic tongue fumbled for words, couldn't find them.

"But, Janet, Miss Coleman, I—"

Her voice was cold with contempt when she broke in upon his stammering.

"I saw you just now, meeting secretly with Bucko Birdge's native wife, Tauna. I might have known you were in league with him too. My father warned me against Birdge.

"He should also have advised me against making a beachcomber the captain of my ship. Now get your things and get out! You can tell Bucko, for me, that if he interferes with my quest for the *Serpent* I'll shoot him down like a dog!"

**C**APTAIN NIELSON stood at the bar in L'Tinito's, nursing a glass of rum which he had no intention of touching. His blue eyes were cold as drift ice on a Northern sea. He watched the gyrations of a native belly-dancer and the drunken carousings of seamen of many nations. But mainly he watched the door to the place.

It was midnight before Bucko Birdge and his native number one boy came in. The latter had a broken nose, and Nielson recognized him for the club wielder of the night encounter.

Bucko himself was typical of his kind. He wore dirty whites and a cotton singlet that revealed his paunchy, hairy torso. He was loose-lipped and gimlet-eyed, with a sardonic leer on his evil face. His right hand rested on the butt of a gun that swung at his hip.

Nielson was not adept at intrigue. It was not his way. He knew Bucko's reputation as a deadly gun-fighter, and was himself unarmed, but in all of the world he had never met a man whom he feared. He walked up to the skipper of the *Curieuse*.

"Answer me a question, Bucko," he said in a cold, level voice, "or I'll smash you to pulp wood with my hands. What do you know of a thing called the *Serpent*, and why did you make it cost me my job on the *Kaeo*?"

The belly-dancer stopped. The room was suddenly quiet. Bucko stared at Nielson with dumbfounded amazement that gradually changed to rage.

Red anger crept up his bull neck and spread over his face.

"Why, blast you!" he roared and snatched at the holstered gun.

Nielson laughed. One of his hands darted out like a striking snake and fastened on Bucko's gun wrist. The other balled into a great fist and traveled in a short arc to the point of Bucko's jaw.

The pirate dropped, but his native companion snatched up a bottle from a table, flung it at Nielson and charged in with a long-bladed knife. The big sailor dodged the bottle and knocked the knife aside.

By that time the other occupants of L'Tinito's dive had gotten into the action. They were all of Bucko's kind, the dregs of French Oceania. They swarmed all over Nielson with knives,

broken bottles, anything they could lay hand to.

He stood in their midst and fought joyously in the release of his pent-up anger. His laugh rang out above the din of the battle as he dared them to come on, and sent them hurling back from his bony fists when they did.

The end, though, was inevitable. They were too many for him. A half-breed giant crept up behind him and brought a chair crashing down on the back of his head. The bottom of the chair was metal banded, inch thick teakwood.

**H**E AWOKE in blackness and the familiar lifting, rolling motion of the sea. The rank odor of copra was strong in his nostrils, copra bugs crawled over his face and hands. His head roared with pain.

He tried to lift a hand to his head, discovered that his wrists were tightly clamped in iron shackles. He knew then that he was in the hold of the *Curieuse*, for that ship had known her day of blackbirding, and the ponderous manacles were designed to keep slaves in captivity.

He'd been shanghaied! And what of Janet? His only thought had been to clear himself in her eyes, to protect her from whatever evil plot Birdge had conceived against her and her search for the thing called the *Serpent*. He cursed himself for a fool.

And why had Birdge brought him aboard the *Curieuse*? The answer again, it seemed, was contained in this *Serpent* business. Janet knew where it was located. Birdge didn't, but he thought Nielson did.

Which was why the sea pirate had first attempted to kill him and, failing in that, had sent Tauna to pump information from him.

Even in his misery the captain could see the grim humor of the situation. Birdge might torture him, kill him, but he could never make him talk, simply because he, Nielson, knew nothing at all about the whole thing.

Hours passed. Nielson lay quiet feeling strength flow back into his body, planning desperately a means of escape. The shackles were hand-forged iron, heavy and thick. They were each connected by a short chain to an eye-bolt deeply embedded in the ship's planking.

Because he could not quite bring his hands together his strength was divided, and he stood no chance of pulling either of the chains from its mooring.

Having tested them once he sank back and rested, waiting for what fate might bring.

He heard a thudding of feet on the deck overhead. With the grating sound of an opened hatch a shaft of sunlight split the gloomy darkness of the hold. Moving with cat-like ease for all of his bulk, Bucko Birdge dropped over the combing and crouched beside Nielson. There was a sneer of sardonic amusement on his cruel lips.

"So, m' hearty! And how do ya fancy yourself for cock o' the fo'c'sle walk now? As long as those big fists of yours are in a good safe place we'll carry on with the conversation we started last night in L'Tinito's joint."

"Fly away, fatty!" Nielson snarled.

"Still tough! Well, we can fix that, sailor. You know Joe, I guess. He's the boy whose nose you've busted twice in the last week. Joe's half Murat.

"He knows a nice little trick they do on a man's fingernails with bamboo splinters soaked in salt water. Joe would just love to show you how it works. Ready to talk now?"

It was curiosity, more than fear, that caused Nielson to speak.

"Well," he said, "spit it out. What do you want to know?"

"Now that's better," Bucko Birdge laughed. "You asked me last night what I knew about the *Serpent*. Well, I'm going to tell you. The natives call it the *Snake With Feathers*. It's a wallopin' big stone image on one of

those little motus in the Austral group.

"It marks the spot where, about two hundred years ago, some Spanish ships landed, loaded to the plimsol with gold from the Yucatan. They buried the gold there and planted this *Feathered Serpent* over it to keep the islanders scared away from the place.

"Old Copra Coleman ran across a chart of the island and the *Serpent*. He give it to that brat of his before he kicked off down on Tanao. I know he did cause I got ahold of one of his men and tortured the truth out of him."

Birdge paused to let this cold-blooded recital of his brutality sink in.

"What you're gonna tell me now," he said, "is which one of those damn islands it's on. I know you was thick with that wench on the *Kaao*, and you musta seen the chart. So speak up now before I turn Joe loose on you."

**I**T OCCURRED to Nielson that this was one time when he needed more than his great strength to save himself and Janet. He made a rapid mental calculation. It was four hundred sea miles from Papeete to the Austral Islands, a week's sailing with good weather for the speedy *Curieuse*.

The *Kaao* had probably a day's start or more and the advantage of knowing where it was going. If he could stall Birdge off for a few days Janet would have time to locate her island. By the time Birdge nosed around and ran onto it, she could have her gold and be off with no chance of his ever finding her.

"And if I told you, how do I know you wouldn't dump me overboard?" he bargained shrewdly.

"You don't," Birdge admitted. "But I'm not likely to, and I'll tell you why. I'll want to keep you alive until we find the island, just in case you lie to me. Joe would never forgive me if I just plugged you outright and didn't give him a chance to show you some of his tricks."

"Well," Nielson said slowly, casting about in his mind for a location that would seem logical, "it's on the most Nor'westerly of a string of motus near Rurutu." He gave the approximate longitude and latitude. "The place itself is called Apa."

"Aye, I recall it now," Birdge said. His eyes gleamed with lust for the raw Spanish gold that would soon be his.

"I don't think the *Kaeo* will make it first, but well enough if she does. I'll lay off out of sight and let that little powder puff find the stuff, then I'll scuttle her craft and take her and her damn gold aboard the *Curieuse*."

He stood up and looked down at Nielson.

"As for you, my pretty sailor boy, since you've been so kind to tell me where to find the *Serpent*, I may forget the blow you struck me in L'Tinito's.

"Instead of turning you over to Joe, I may maroon you on a small bit of an island I know of that's inhabited only by cannibals!" Laughing at his joke he drew himself out of the hold and kicked the hatch cover into place.

But down in the stinking darkness of his 'tween decks prison, Nielson smiled to himself and set patiently to work to loosen the eye-bolt that held the chain of his left shackle.

**M**ARAAIPUPUA, The Trade Wind, sang his endless song in the rigging of the *Curieuse*, and the sea was awash with the cool white magic of the moon as Tauna, the native girl, crept silently aft and lifted the hatch cover.

Nielson awoke to feel the girl's gentle hand on his forehead.

"Iaorana t'ou hoa matai oe?" she whispered.

"Hello, Tauna," Nielson responded. "What brings you here. You wish to gloat over your success, eh?"

"No, no! Tauna eez fren to you," she protested, slipping back into the pidgin English of the islands. "Bucko

make me try to get eenformation from you ozer day. Aue! I hate heem. He eez like pau, zee peeg—only not zo clean."

Was it a trick? There was sincerity in the girl's voice. And what had he to lose? He knew these island maidens. They were quick to form an affection or a deep emotion for a new man. Just as quick to forget it too, but fiercely loyal while it remained.

"Tauna, I believe you," he said. "Will you help me to escape?"

"Ae! But zer eez nozing I can do."

"There is. Get into Bucko's tool box and find me a file."

"I do zat."

She was gone as silently as she had arrived. He waited impatiently, but the hours dragged by and she did not return. Another trick, he decided bitterly, and one that was sure to introduce him to Joe's little bamboo splinters yet.

The day came, and a flat faced seaman brought him food and water. But that night Tauna returned, and, to his joy, she had with her a large old file. He set to work immediately to free his left hand from its shackles.

Tauna told him that there were four in the crew of the *Curieuse*, not counting herself or Bucko. They were now six days out of Papeete and looking to make land at Rurutu sometime the next morning. Nielson knew that his only hope of escaping torture and death lay in releasing himself before that happened.

Hot sweat drenched him as he worked furiously at the chain. The file was old and worn almost smooth, and the chain was thick and hard, but there was a dogged persistence in him that would not let him give up.

Nielson had almost succeeded in cutting through one side of the link on which he was working when the storm came. With the awful suddenness of the South Pacific weather, a series of squalls struck the *Curieuse*.

The water was whipped up into

green, white-capped mountains that tossed her into the air and smashed her sickeningly down into their valleys. The wind tore at the rigging with a thousand greedy fingers and tugged at her bare poles to make her jibe into onrushing seas.

Whatever else Bucko Birdge might be, he was a seaman. For two days and nights he fought for the life of his ship with all the skill at his command.

When the storm finally broke he had been blown a hundred miles off his course, but the *Curieuse*, while limping and battered, was still sound.

When the black clouds had scudded away over the horizon, and the noon-day sun shone down on a still heavy sea, he found himself working to leeward of a strange group of islands. He thought of standing in to look for a sheltered lagoon where a bit of repair work and overhauling could be done, but his greed prompted him to commence immediately the task of beating back to Rurutu.

He was afraid that while he had been fighting the storm, Janet, on the *Kaeo*, had discovered the gold and would be gone with it before he could arrive.

He was preparing to come about when his eye was caught by a glint of white against the palm-green of the nearest of the motus. When he had trained his glasses on it, rage and delight struggled for possession of him. The white thing that had caught his attention was the jib'sl of the schooner *Kaeo*!

Exultantly, Birdge turned his glasses on the strip of coral beach. The first thing that met his eye was the *Feathered Serpent*. It was huge, nearly as big as the monoliths of Easter Island.

The head was the open and fanged jaws of a snake carved from a single block of stone. The body towered above it and was constructed of square blocks of granite piled on top of each other. The tip of the tail had been

artistically grooved and fluted by crude tools to resemble feathers.

Altogether, it presented an awesome sight, that of a great stone reptile resting on its lower jaw and with its tail flung upward to the sky.

**B**UCKO BIRDGE trained the glasses lower down. There at the base of the monster he saw a slim young girl and three Tahitian seamen, hard at work lugging yellow ingots down to the two outrigger canoes that were pulled up on the shore of the lagoon.

"I'll be blowed!" Birdge muttered to himself. "If she gets away with that gold I'm not Bucko Birdge. I'll have it below decks inside of an hour. Then I'll tend to her and to the yellow headed liar below who told me she was on *Apa*."

He roared orders to the helmsman to put in for the island. He shouted at his three other Kanaka cutthroats to bring up rifles and ammunition.

On the beach, Janet Coleman looked up to see the *Curieuse* bearing down on the island. It was no more than she had expected, and she was not unprepared for it. She had a loyal native Tahitian for a captain. She had hired him just before leaving Papeete.

"Oro," she commanded him, "bring the guns and get behind the *Feathered Serpent*. Bucko Birdge is coming."

Oro nodded gravely and ran down to the canoes. When he returned he was carrying four rifles. Janet selected one. Supporting its barrel against the weather worn granite of the *Feathered Serpent* she opened fire on the *Curieuse*. If there had been any words of profanity in her vocabulary, she would have employed them all in a scathing denunciation of young ladies' boarding schools which failed to include the proper handling and firing of a rifle in their lists of required studies.

Bucko Birdge, who had taken the

wheel of the *Curieuse*, snarled as a few shots thudded into the hull of his craft. More of them were singing harmlessly overhead or ricocheting from the surface of the water. His beady eyes were centered on the opening in the reef where a fresh-water stream flowing out to sea had stunted the growth of the coral ring.

It was a narrow passage and apt to be filled with sharp snags. But where the *Kaao* had gone, there too could go the *Curieuse*. He barked an order to his men who were huddled in the bow, rifles ready.

They began to fire steadily and with deadly accuracy at the little group on the beach. At the first volley, Oro dropped silently, a small round hole between his eyes and a gaping, jagged one in the back of his head.

Janet looked, shuddered, and re-loaded her gun.

The *Curieuse* was close to the passage. Caught in the first break of the surf it raced faster and faster.

Down in the hold of the pirate ship, a man filed away at an iron chain in mad desperation. A girl knelt beside him, talking excitedly in a mixture of Tahitian, French and English, urging him to hurry.

The file was smooth and slippery with sweat in the man's hands. There was still half the thickness of one side of a chain link to cut through. At last he flung it down and gave a mighty jerk.

"Ah!" he grunted as the link snapped and his left arm was free. He fastened both hands on the other chain and got to his knees. His back bent like a steel bow and the cords stood out on his arms as he slowly exerted the full strength of his young giant's body. Tauna waited, listening in fearful silence to the man's heavy breathing. Then, with a splintering screech of sound the eye-bolt pulled out of the planking that held it.

So intent was Bucko on piloting his ship into the lagoon at full speed

that he failed to see the haggard, tawny headed man who suddenly appeared on the deck. He did not see him until it was too late.

He clawed at his gun but a flailing length of chain whistled through the air and slashed across his face, splitting the flesh of his jowls, smashing his teeth out. With an animal scream of terrible pain he staggered back. The wheel, released from his hands, spun crazily.

It was then that the *Curieuse* struck. Flung forward by the surf she leaped like a live thing onto the coral fangs of the reef. With a cannon roar her masts snapped and her canvas came down in a white shroud.

**N**IELSON was thrown, as from a catapult, into the still waters of the lagoon. When he came up from his forced dive he swam with powerful strokes for the shore, pulled himself up onto the beach and ran toward the *Feathered Serpent*.

"Janet! Janet!" he cried.

In answer to his call a white faced but grim lipped girl stepped out from behind the stone image. The rifle in her hands was steady and its muzzle point at his chest.

"Stand where you are, Mister Nielson," she commanded coolly. "One more step and I shoot. Put your hands up."

He started to raise his hands and then she saw the iron cuff on his wrist and the chain dangling from it.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Chris!"

"Bucko shanghaied me into the *Curieuse*," Nielson said. "I just now got loose and piled him up on the reef. I don't know whether I killed him or not. I hope so. The crew's done for anyway. They were all in the path of the mainm'st when it went down."

"Drop that rifle!"

"Bucko!" Janet gasped as she whirled to face the man who had spoken. Caught off guard, and menaced by the deadly pistol, she had no choice but to obey. She allowed the

gun to slip from her fingers as she shrank back from the apparition of Bucko Birdge arisen from the sea.

He looked like some hideous monster that had crawled up from the depths of the lagoon. His face had been split open by Nielson's chain, and his repulsively obese body dripped blood and sea water.

One of Janet's seamen had stealthily swung his rifle around to cover Bucko, but before his finger could contract on the trigger, the revolver in the hand of the sea-raider flipped around and barked twice. Both of the natives fell to the beach, clawing at suddenly gaping abdomens.

Bucko's laugh was the raucous croak of a vulture. The gun muzzle twitched back like the head of a snake as Nielson started to step forward.

"Now," Bucko roared, "lay to, the both of you, and finish loading those canoes. I'm sailing with the *Kaao* and a cargo of gold in an hour."

"I'll see you in Davy Jones' locker first!" Nielson shouted. His very helplessness in the face of the pistol made him boil with rage.

"Aye, there we'll meet, Matey," Bucko agreed. "But after I'm done with you, it'll be worse than that for Old Copra's brat if you don't change your tune and get to work."

He sat down on the head of the *Feathered Serpent* to watch them at their labors. There was no mistaking the meaning that lay behind the pirate's dark threat. Nielson could see nothing to do but obey. He walked over to the pile of gold and picked up one of the yellow ingots.

"Sorry, Chris," Janet whispered. "My fault. I should never have doubted you."

Somehow, through his anger, he managed to give her a wan smile that spoke his understanding.

IT WAS on the return trip from the canoes that Nielson spotted a movement of the brush in back of the *Feathered Serpent*. Hope surged

within him. Tauna! He recognized a flash of red as the pareu she had worn. He had forgotten the native girl.

Then Tauna was up and running forward on silent bare feet. Steel gleamed in her hand and buried itself in the flesh of Bucko's shoulder as she hurled herself upon him.

With a squeal of pain he jumped up and swung a backhand blow that caught the native girl on the side of the head and knocked her sprawling. He whirled again toward his captives, but, in the second or two that his attention had been distracted, Nielson had leaped in close.

The chain that hung from his wrist curled out like a whip-lash and then slapped the gun from Bucko's hand. It swished back again and thudded into the pirate's hair-covered chest. Bucko threw up both arms to cover his face, and the shaft of the eye-bolt drew a red streak across his stomach.

With a howl of agony, Bucko Birdge turned to run. As he did so, his foot slipped on the crumbling edge of the pit Janet's crew had dug at the base of the *Serpent*, the pit from which they had taken the gold. Struggling to maintain his balance he fell heavily against the head of the stone god.

It moved under him. The tunneling and digging had loosened its foundations. Jaws agape, the evil thing slid forward as if alive. It pushed Bucko before it. His feet could find no hold in the soft sand. The great body and fluted tail writhed in the air and tilted perilously forward, poised for the death blow. Then with a grating roar the whole thing turned loose.

"No! No!" Bucko Birdge screamed above the bellowing thunder of sound as the great stone structure plunged down about him in an avalanche of gray stone.

It filled the pit. Only the feathered tail remained above the level of the beach, as if reluctant to surrender its ancient task of pointing skyward.



Terror coursed through Tauna's half native soul as she cringed before the terrible vengeance of the *Feathered Serpent*. But she knew that somewhere beneath those tons of stone was all that was left of Captain Bucko Birdge, and she was glad.

Later, as they stood by the newly dug graves of the three faithful Tahitian seamen, Janet expressed a belief that all of the gold in the world was not worth the lives of three Kanakas.

"But, Chris, I had to come and find it. It was my father's last wish. He dreamed of some day building his fleet up again to the glory it once knew here in the Islands. He wanted me to

do it for him, and it took money."

"Those men knew Old Copra," Captain Nielson reminded her gravely. "I knew him too. There's not an honest sailor, brown or white, in all of Oceania who wouldn't have gladly fought and died for him. And you're Old Copra's daughter."

"Thank you," she said simply.

"With Tauna to help, we three can work the *Kaeo* into port all right. You'll have the gold and a good ship to start building the fleet again."

Janet leaned her ringletted brown head against his shoulder and sighed with weary content.

"We'll build it, Chris," she corrected him gently.



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# ARROWS



Girard lunged at a Saxon

By HARRY WIDMER

Author of "The Terrible Turtles," "Heir to Horror," etc.

## CHAPTER I

### *Knight of the Golden Leopard*

**I**T WAS Friday the thirteenth day of October in the year 1066. Three Norman knights stealthily scaled the battlements of the hostile Saxon castle. Moonlight glinted on their conical iron helmets and mail hauberks as they crouched low behind the crenelated parapet.

Girard, Marquis de Clavaloux, the leader of the Norman raiding party,

peered down into the dark courtyard far below.

The din of boisterous voices, raised in a lusty barracks song, came up to them. Girard spoke quietly to the knight nearest him.

"The Saxons are blowing their ale horns, Sir Ambrose."

Sir Ambrose de Guissac leaned on the ball of his sword hilt and smiled darkly at the sound of the brawling merry-makers.

"Which may account, my Lord Mar-

# OF INVASION



threatening Sir Richard's flank

## *Shipwrecked Knights of William the Conqueror Battle Against Great Odds in the Name of Their Valiant Ruler!*

quis, for the lack of watchers in the tower."

The third knight, Sir Richard de Laval, was crouched down staring apprehensively at the dark courtyard below.

"This is madness!" he whispered hoarsely. "We are but three against a castle full of Saxons. Would it not be wiser to surrender to them?"

Girard made an impatient gesture with his mail gauntlet.

"Silence, Sir Richard."

The fourth member of the raiding party was a Norman archer. He was swiftly coiling a long length of stout rope, the rope on which the knights and himself had climbed the steep castle wall.

Girard adjusted his huge kite-shaped shield carefully on his left shoulder.

The shield was a masterpiece of defensive armament. Tough hide had been stretched over the face and painted gray. In the gray field was a

rampant golden leopard. Then Girard drew his long Norman sword.

"Follow me, my lords." He cautiously led the way down the steep stone steps on the inside of the fortress wall. At the entrance to the gate-house keep, he raised his shield in silent signal.

A deep, heavy snoring came from within the gate room, which housed the windlass for the drawbridge and portcullis. Girard pushed open the door with his sword. A low-burning torch on the wall showed a sleeping Saxon kitchen knave. An empty jug lay on its side near him. Girard beckoned the others into the room and closed the door. Then he prodded the snoring Saxon with his sword point.

The knave came out of his drunken slumber and stared up the gleaming length of steel that lay against his throat. He tried to talk, but words would not come.

Girard spoke quietly.

"Your life, knave, depends upon your ready tongue. Tell me, how many men-at-arms are in the castle?"

When the knave could summon words, he whined:

"Spare me, good knight, I am only a knave in the kitchen of my lord, the Earl of Dundervale."

"How many men-at-arms, knave?"

"Eight of them, brave knight—filling their gullets with ale."

Girard glanced at the dark-browed Sir Ambrose de Guissac, then at the small-eyed Sir Richard de Laval.

"Only eight Saxons, my lords," he said.

**T**HE torchlight in the keep showed that sand and seaweed clung to the mail hauberks of Girard and his two barons. That sand and seaweed told the grim story of the fate of the invading fleet of Duke William of Normandy. For that great armada, carrying sixty thousand fighting men, had been turned back by a storm and hurled against the French coast.

Only one ship got near the Saxon

shore, but it had sunk, taking its knights and soldiers to the bottom. The only survivors were the three Norman knights and the archer. They had drifted in a small boat for days before sighting the Sussex coast and making a landing.

"Only eight Saxons," Girard repeated, "which puzzles me greatly. Think back, my lords, to when we landed on the beach. There was not a single Saxon to challenge us. Nor, in the march to this castle, did we encounter any Saxon fighting men. Surely the Saxons must have been expecting Duke William — yet their coast is undefended." Girard turned back to the knave. "Where is the Earl of Dundervale?"

"My master rode to Yorkshire with King Harold to fight the Norwegians."

"So the Norwegians, too, are invading." Girard's eyes sharpened. "Then, my lords, when Duke William regathers his fleet, he will find no one to oppose his landing on the Sussex coast."

Sir Richard de Laval shook his head, spoke vehemently.

"It is my thought that Duke William perished at sea with his host. We are fools to think of succor from him. We might save our lives by an honorable surrender to the Saxons here."

Ignoring him, Girard turned again to the knave.

"Who else is in Dundervale Castle?"

"My mistress, gracious knight, the Countess of Dundervale — and my master's sister, the Lady Muriel."

Girard smiled to himself.

"We waste time here, my lords."

Leaving the archer to guard the knave and the gate-house keep, Girard led the knights down the stone steps to a corner of the dark courtyard. The moon was not yet high enough to light the court.

Here, the noise of brawling was louder. The drinking men-at-arms were in the barracks room on the east side of the court. Flickering torchlight streamed from the tall windows

of the barracks and lay in quivering yellow patches on the yard stones. Girard cautiously advanced to one of the windows and chanced a swift glance within.

**A** HALF-DOZEN guttering torches showed a square room with long, rough-hewn tables. Eight men were lolling about in different degrees of intoxication. Huge ale horns lay on the tables or were tilted to thirsty throats. All eight Saxons wore the green livery and white stag's-head crest of Dundervale. Their swords were stacked in a rack on the wall. Pikes and battle-axes were also arranged in racks.

Girard rejoined his barons.

"There are eight men—with a great assortment of arms. We might take them by force, but the risk would sorely peril our holding this castle until Duke William comes to our aid." Girard rested his leopard shield on the ground. "There must be another method," he said thoughtfully.

Sir Richard de Laval spoke in a strained, bitter voice.

"We shall be throwing away our lives, my Lord Marquis. Duke William and his host are at the bottom of the sea. Surely—"

Girard paid Sir Richard no heed, continued speaking his thoughts aloud. It was the dark-browed Sir Ambrose who answered.

"Sir Richard, keep your mouth closed or the Saxons will hear the chattering of your teeth."

Suddenly Girard broke his silence.

"I have a method to take the Saxons. Sir Ambrose, fetch me the long cloak worn by that knave in the gate-keep."

Sir Ambrose soon returned with the cloak. Girard took the garment, grimaced at the stench of it. He slipped it over his helmet and steel-sheathed body.

The cloak completely concealed his armor and shield. He beckoned the two knights over to the barracks door.

There he pulled the hooded cloak closer about him.

"Wait here, my lords, till I summon you. Sir Ambrose, you are to keep the Saxons from reaching the pole arms. You, Sir Richard, will see that none escape through this door." Girard turned and entered the Saxon barracks.

He bent low as he trudged across the room. The Saxons had ceased their singing and seemed to be mixing their ale with differences of opinion. One of them, a deep-chested fellow with a thick yellow mustache, was talking as Girard drew near.

"I am for breaking down her door. We are not men if we sit here like sheep."

"But the consequences, my captain," another cautioned.

"The fiends take the consequences! Down with the door!"

**T**HEY paid no heed to Girard. He kept his ears to their argument, learned that five Saxons were of the captain's opinion while three were against him. Girard plodded toward a stack of logs, lifted one and expertly placed it on the roaring fire.

No one noticed him in his knave's cloak, so he edged closer to the rack holding the Saxons' swords. Then, with the most deliberate of movements, he gathered the swords in his arms and tossed them into the huge, blazing fireplace. That done, he turned and calmly faced the roomful of Saxons.

He casually dropped the hooded cloak from him. With the same unhurried ease he drew his sword. His voice reverberated from the barracks walls:

"De Guissac, de Laval—to me!"

The two barons plunged into the room. Sir Ambrose covered the rack of pole arms, Sir Richard the door.

The Saxons staggered from their benches, stared about in bewildered alarm. Their bleary eyes found the three knights. Never before had they

seen fully armored Normans with their hawklike, beaked helmets and hoods of mail. Girard looked at them over the top of his leopard shield. Sir Ambrose stood behind his shield, a white field emblazoned in crimson with the head of a bull. Sir Richard's had a black field with a silver eagle perched on the shaft of a battle-axe.

Girard called out.

"Do not act rashly, my Saxon friends. Hell is full of heroes."

One Saxon lunged toward the swords in the fire. Girard struck him smartly with the flat of his blade. The Saxon dropped to the floor, stunned. While Girard was dealing with this one, the yellow-mustached captain darted around them to the fireplace and thrust his hand into the flames to draw out a sword.

The captain got the hot blade half-way out, had to drop it back into the blaze.

Girard lightly pricked him with his sword point, speeding his departure from the vicinity of the fireplace.

A big, red-bearded Saxon, seized a bench and started for Sir Richard at the door. Sir Richard gave ground before the red-bearded fellow. With his shield and sword, Sir Richard could have made short work of the bench.

Instead, he backed away from the threatening Saxon.

Quick anger stormed in Girard's tawny eyes.

"Hold fast, de Laval!"

**B**UT Sir Richard had been maneuvered from the door. Two Saxons bolted past him.

The big, red-bearded Saxon hurled the bench at Sir Richard, and raced to join his companions, his harsh laugh of derision booming across the courtyard. They disappeared into the night.

Sir Richard dodged the thrown bench, moved quickly back to cover the door.

The yellow-mustached captain

seized a ponderous axe from the wall and rushed Girard, calling out.

"Arm yourselves, men of Dunder-vale!"

From the corner of his eye Girard saw two Saxons grasp benches and leap to attack Sir Ambrose de Guissac, who had placed himself in front of the pole-arm rack. Then the captain was upon Girard. The marquis stepped in under the descending axe and then swung his sword, not at the Saxon, but at the shaft of the axe. The Norman blade sliced through the shaft, leaving the captain with a stick of wood in his hand.

Girard held his point at the captain's chest, backed him to the wall, then glanced quickly toward the Baron de Guissac. Sir Ambrose had struck the benches from the hands of both Saxons, and they had retreated a safe distance from his lively blade. Sir Richard de Laval was now blocking the door, permitting no others to escape.

Girard turned back to the captain, coolly looked him over.

"Yield, and your lives will be spared."

The captain exchanged glances with his companions, then nodded to Girard.

"We yield, Sir Knight."

Girard beckoned to Sir Ambrose.

"Bind their hands." Then to Sir Richard: "Gather all these pole arms, axes and bows and hurl them over the wall into the moat."

Sir Ambrose spoke in a cutting voice.

"Do not let your three Saxon friends take them away from you, de Laval."

The small eyes of Sir Richard became tiny points of fury.

"I shall remember your words, de Guissac," he choked.

Girard called the Saxon captain to the far side of the barracks room, out of earshot of the rest. Girard folded arms across his hauberk and looked down at the captain.

"Now you can tell me all about that door you were so set on breaking down."

For a moment the Saxon was silent.

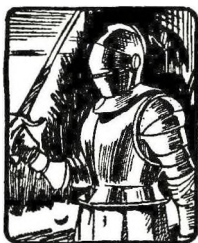
"The chamber holds a lady, Sir Knight."

Girard made an impatient gesture.

"Certainly, a lady is in that chamber. Who?"

"The Lady Muriel, sister to my good master. She is held prisoner in the West tower. It was my plan to set her free."

"And your plan required the encouragement of the ale horn," said Girard dryly. "Now tell me who has



the power to imprison the sister of Lord Dundervale?"

"The countess!" spat the captain. "Our mistress, Countess Gail of Dundervale and wife of the master. She is a black-headed witch."

**G**IRARD DE CLAVALOUX regarded the captain coldly.

"Why is the Lady Muriel held prisoner?"

The captain suddenly clamped his lips. Minutes marched by before he spoke.

"But I have already said too much."

Girard's mail gauntlet caught a fistful of the captain's leather jacket.

"I shall judge the length of your tongue. Speak on."

"Kitchen talk has it," began the captain, "that the mistress is plotting some foul deed. That is all I know."

Girard's tawny eyes bored into the captain's. Finally, he released the hold on his jacket.

"Go back to the others now. If you

have lied to me, your yellow-roofed head will race the dawn across the courtyard.

"Sir Ambrose, you and Sir Richard will lock these Saxons and that kitchen knave in the donjon tower. Order our archer to mount guard at the drawbridge and drive an arrow into anyone approaching the gatehouse keep. Warn him of the three escaped Saxons.

"Then find the Countess of Dundervale and have her await me in the great hall. Apologize for the lateness of the night, but I want to take stock of the castle and its people—and plan a defense till Duke William reaches these shores."

Girard took Sir Richard aside, spoke quietly.

"As a baron of Normandy you gave a poor account of yourself when that clumsy Saxon attacked you with a bench."

Sir Richard bowed.

"It was I who was clumsy, my Lord Marquis. And it shall not again happen."

Girard nodded. He took a torch from the wall and crossed the courtyard to the entrance to the West tower. There, he climbed the narrow, winding stone steps. In the guttering torch-light his distorted shadow dogged his heels.

Nearing the top, Girard saw another light flickering above around a bend in the stairway. Girard laid his torch on the steps, drew his sword and advanced in swift silence. At the top he saw the red-bearded Saxon who had escaped from the barracks. Red-beard was trying to pry the chain loose from a panel on the heavy oak door, and he was talking to the person within the chamber. His words reached Girard:

"Wait till you feel my hands on your pretty throat, my lady. A full bag of gold is what I get for so little effort. You will plead, my lady. But your cries will not be louder than the jangle of gold in my pouch."

## CHAPTER II

*The Conquerer's Court*

GIRARD laughed outright. "Now let us hear how loud your cries will be."

The red-bearded Saxon jerked back from the door, his startled eyes fastening on Girard de Clavaloux. He seized an iron-headed pole arm, advanced slowly on Girard.

"I can well use that mail you are wearing." Then he lunged viciously with his long-shafted weapon.

Girard waited on the steps, waited until the iron head of the weapon was scant inches from his shield, then he rolled the shield with the thrust. The pole arm harmlessly slid over his shoulder.

The Saxon strangler reached the top step, lost his balance when his weapon missed Girard and tumbled forward down the steps. Girard raised his sword and let Redbeard impale himself on the point. The strangler's shrill screech filled the narrow staircase of the tower.

The Norman disengaged his blade and contemptuously booted the dead strangler to one side of the steps. Then he approached the oak door. A small hole, the thickness of a lance, was at eye level in the door. Girard looked into the hole, saw nothing save darkness.

From the chamber came a low-timbered voice.

"Who are you, Sir Knight?"

Girard regarded the door. He liked the sound of that voice. There was nothing in its tones to tell that a strangler had just tried to force the door.

"You can see me, my lady?"

"Yes—but I do not recognize the style of your arms."

"These arms, my lady, are common in Normandy."

A startled exclamation sounded

from the chamber. Then words came in a rush.

"Have the Normans fought the Saxons? Do you know if Lord Dundervale lives?"

"I know not the replies to your questions," said Girard. "But Dundervale Castle is a Norman prize." He severed the chain on the door with one stroke of his sword. Then he opened the door and looked upon her.

The Norman marquis had known Saracen maidens in the Holy Land. Their dark skin and piercing black eyes had held a tumultuous challenge. The maids of Florence, with their soft, caressing eyes and flashing white teeth had stirred him not a little. There had been French damsels, tempestuous with their changing moods, Teutons, stolid and incredibly tender, Norman maidens, the fire of the Vikings still in their veins. And now there was the Lady Muriel.

He saw her eyes first. They were blue, a very deep blue. Then the torch-light caught her hair, made it a foamy crest of golden spray. She looked up at him.

"To whom do I owe my life, my release from prison and my new Norman bondage?"

"Girard, Marquis de Clavaloux at your service, my lady."

**L**ADY MURIEL inclined her head, then moved into the full glow of the torch. Her beautifully formed body was draped with a long white gown. She looked very tiny and fragile standing before the towering, steel-clad Norman.

Girard shifted his shield to hang over his back and offered his arm. Neither wasted a glance on the dead strangler, as Girard guided her down the steps.

Their shadows fled before them, making monstrous figures on the bleak stone walls.

"Where are you taking me, Sir Knight?"

"To the great hall."



"Will the Countess of Dundervale be present?"

"Aye, my lady. She awaits me there now."

Lady Muriel lapsed into deep silence. Girard could not read her features with the torch in the wall behind them, but he could see the determined tilt of her chin.

They rounded a bend in the stairway. Girard took up the torch he had left there, and they continued the descent in silence. He escorted the golden maid across the courtyard and into the great hall.

The hall had high stone walls rising to a lofty wooden ceiling. Crossed lances and swords relieved the bareness of the walls, and above them hung triangular Saxon banners with green fields and the white stag's-head crest of Dundervale. Torches burned in sconces spaced about the walls. At the far end of the great hall was a dais with chairs set about in courtly fashion.

Sir Ambrose de Guissac, Sir Richard de Laval and a lady were seated on the dais. The lady's hair, under the light head-cloth she wore, was a bright blue-black. The black-headed witch, thought Girard.

The two Norman barons rose from their chairs when they saw Girard and the Lady Muriel advancing across the rush-strewn floor.

Sir Ambrose bowed to the dark-haired Saxon lady.

"Countess Gail, Mistress of Dundervale, I have the honor to present my lord, first nobleman of Duke William's court—Girard, Marquis de Clavaloux."

The countess inclined her head, not once taking her bright eyes from Girard's face.

Girard bowed. He saw that her eyes were almost black, her slightly slanting lids fringed with black lashes. Her nose was straight, set above a well-shaped mouth. Her dark bodice curved to a slender waist. She never even glanced at the Lady Muriel, seemed

unaware of her presence. Girard's tawny eyes flicked to the golden-haired maid. The Lady Muriel's chin was tilted, and she was staring coolly at the countess.

OFFERING his arm, Girard de Clavaloux handed the Lady Muriel up on the dais and into a chair beside Sir Ambrose. Next to Sir Ambrose was the countess, and on her far side was Sir Richard de Laval. Sir Richard was fawning over the countess, lavishing her with all the attentive courtesy of a Norman courtier.

Girard laid his shield and mail gauntlets on the dais. He unlaced his helmet, took it off and pushed his *Coif-de-Mailles* back on his shoulders. His face and head, exposed for the first time, held the eyes of the Lady Muriel. For Girard was sternly handsome with the rugged features of the hardy Norseman.

He lost no time in coming to the point. "My ladies, Dundervale Castle is now a Norman fief. All its people are subjects of William, Duke of Normandy. All will be treated as friendly, loyal subjects till treachery is shown. Do you, Countess Gail, give your word as a noblewoman not to hamper us—"

The Countess Gail laughed disdainfully.

"So Dundervale fell to three shipwrecked Normans. The Saxon knights will have a good laugh over that—before they put you to death." Her bright eyes traveled over Girard's tall, well-knit figure. "What a shame it will be to kill so splendid a knight."

"Your ladyship," said Girard dryly, "must not so concern herself on my behalf." His tawny eyes sharpened. "Did you use the word 'shipwrecked,' my lady?"

The countess nodded toward Sir Richard.

"The Baron de Laval was so gallant as to lament the seaweed and sand on his armor while in my presence."

Girard's gaze fastened on Sir Richard.

"The baron's great gallantry is surpassed only by his great tongue."

Sir Richard recoiled from the sting of the marquis' words. Hot hatred flamed in his little eyes, but he said nothing.

The countess seemed to find a new interest in Sir Richard, for her glances to him were warmer and her voice lower. Girard did not take heed of this, as he had turned to the Lady Muriel.

"What is your stand, my lady?"

She answered in a clear, quiet voice.

"I am a Saxon and wish for the return of my countrymen—and I am not forgetting my great debt to you, my lord. But I do marvel at the countess for wishing for the return of my brother and his Saxon knights."

Countess Gail took notice of the Lady Muriel for the first time.

"My dear Lady Muriel, would it not be more seemly to keep our personals to ourselves, and not bore these Norman noblemen?"

It was Girard who spoke up.

"A red-bearded strangler, a full bag of gold and a maid's white throat have never bored me, my lady."

Sir Ambrose and Sir Richard stared at Girard, who explained.

"One of the three Saxons who fled the barracks has joined his ancestors." Girard saw the blood drain from the face of the Countess Gail, and he decided upon a bold move. Turning to the Lady Muriel, he spoke directly.

"Until your brother, Lord Dundervale, stands before these castle gates, let there be a truce between us. In return for your given word, my lady, I shall make you mistress of Dundervale."

The countess leaped to her feet.

"You will make that chit mistress of Dundervale?" she cried.

**L**ADY MURIEL rose from her chair, faced the countess.

"Deny that you and that toad, Lord Bradwick, conspired to kill my brother and take this castle. Deny

that you imprisoned me—tried to have me strangled!"

The countess snatched a dagger from her bodice, lunged toward Lady Muriel. Girard moved swiftly, seized the upraised arm and shook the dagger from it. He found himself with an armful of lithe, tigerish fury. Holding the countess firmly, he spoke over his shoulder to the Baron de Guissac.

"Sir Ambrose, you will take the countess to her chamber and secure the door."

Unseen by the others, the countess made a mute entreaty to Sir Richard. He caught the meaning and spoke to Girard.

"My Lord Marquis, permit me the honor of serving you by allowing me to escort this wild Saxon to her chamber."

"De Guissac has been ordered to do so," said Girard flatly.

The countess wriggled in Girard's grasp, twisted her head to look up at him. Her eyelids were so narrowed that her eyes were not visible.

"Your indignities, Sir Knight, will be doubly avenged when Lord Bradwick storms this castle. You and that yellow-haired chit will die together."

Girard chuckled.

"Your ladyship suggests Paradise. I can think of no pleasanter a death."

Sir Ambrose was amusedly watching the countess work herself into a fury. He touched her arm. "Will you walk or be carried to your chamber, my lady?"

The countess twisted to face him. Her eyes peered out over the crook of Girard's mail elbow.

"And you, Lord of the Red Bull—you shall hang from my chamber window."

Girard released her, and she swept from the great hall.

The Lady Muriel squarely faced Girard.

"I agree to your terms, Sir Knight. I shall not conspire against you without first giving you warning."

"Agreed, Lady Muriel, Mistress of Dundervale. Now, I shall escort you to your chamber. Sir Richard, you will stand watch in this hall."

When Sir Ambrose returned, Girard shook his head.

"Find a chamber and rest. Keep a sharp ear for our archer on the drawbridge."

Girard and the Lady Muriel went to her chamber. He carefully examined the windows and the archer's slits, then looked to the stout bar on the door.

A sudden clanking and rattling of chains broke the stillness of the night.

"The drawbridge!" Girard hastily laced on his helmet. His long Norman sword flashed from its scabbard as he ran from the chamber, telling Lady Muriel to securely bar her door. On reaching the courtyard, he raised his voice in a thunderous roar.

"De Guissac! De Laval! To the drawbridge!"

### CHAPTER III

#### *The Saxon Siege*



THE rumbling of the chains was louder, faster. The great wooden bridge was descending. When Girard reached the steps leading up to the gate-room, his running feet stumbled into a soft hulk. As his mail-clad body clanked down on the stone steps, his startled eyes saw the vague silhouette of a man flick in front of the dull light from the keep. This blurry, unrecognizable figure swiftly disappeared behind a stone wall adjoining the battlements.

As Girard regained his feet, he saw that the soft hulk beneath him was his Norman archer—dead with a slashed throat. The marquis mouthed a bitter oath, raced up the stairs and threw open the gate-house door.

The Countess Gail defiantly placed

herself in front of the grinding windlass. Girard brushed her aside, knocking her to the stone floor. Then he threw in the brake on the windlass. The heavy drawbridge came to a rasping, jarring halt. He stepped over to the machicolations and looked down through the holes which were used for pouring molten metal. In the bright moonlight he saw that the bridge had stopped about six feet from the level of the rim of the hill across the steep rocky moat.

On this hill he saw five Saxon knights in full mail and some fifty men-at-arms. The knights had numerous devices painted on their shields. But all of the men-at-arms wore the green livery and white stag's-head crest of Dundervale.

The drawbridge was much too high for the knights' horses to reach. But a number of men-at-arms had leaped up, caught hold of the bridge and were clambering over.

Girard dropped his sword, tripped the release of the spike-fanged portcullis, sending the grilled wooden gate crashing down to seal the castle entrance. But the clang of swords below told him he had not been fast enough to shut out some of the Saxons.

Sir Ambrose's voice rang out in the courtyard.

"We are here, my Lord Marquis!"

Girard put both hands to the windlass, and started the ponderous bridge on its upward climb. Hoarse cries of terror told of the Saxons who were losing their handholds on the edge of the ascending bridge and were hurtling down into the rocky, dry moat. Girard saw that the bridge was now at a safe enough angle and out of reach of the Saxons. He locked the windlass and strode over to the countess. She still lay where he had thrown her. He stared down at her.

"Who was the man I saw leaving here?"

Her black eyes were burning with hate and defiance. It seemed that she

was not going to answer, but she changed her mind.

"One of my trusted Saxons."

Girard made no gentle ceremony of tying her securely with a length of rope. Then he left the keep.

**T**HE clash of steel in the yard was louder now, more furious. Sword in hand, Girard swiftly descended the steps to the gateway. He saw that his two barons were pressed by seven Saxon men-at-arms. Two other Saxons lay on the stone yards with their heads split open.

Sir Richard was in full mail with shield and using a spiked mace. But Sir Ambrose was without his hauberk and shield, and was defending himself with sword and helmet. Sir Ambrose was at a disadvantage, for all of the Saxons were garbed in tough leather armor and thick wooden helmets. They all wore the crest of Dundervale.

Girard shouted.

"De Clavaloux! De Clavaloux!"

He lunged at a Saxon who was threatening Sir Richard's flank. Girard's long sword cracked open the Saxon's helmet like the shell of a nut, splitting wood and bone together. The Norman marquis called heartily to his barons.

"Forgive me for intruding upon your fun, my lords."

Sir Ambrose shouted above the clashing ring of his steel blade.

"A well-timed intrusion, by the Glory!"

Yells of encouragement came from the Saxon company out on the hill across the moat. They were helpless to aid the trapped Saxons. All they could do was yell.

Sir Richard uttered a deep grunt as his spiked mace bit into a wooden helmet and lodged there. The stunned Saxon went down, carrying the embedded mace with him. Sir Richard's sword was sheathed at his side. Instead of using his big shield as a cover to draw his sword, Sir Richard

turned tail and ran some ten paces to the rear.

Girard swore a blistering Norman oath. For Sir Richard's hasty retreat had left Sir Ambrose's unprotected side open to a Saxon attack—and Sir Ambrose was fighting without shield or hauberk.

An alert Saxon saw the opportunity to strike a death blow and made a swift thrust at Sir Ambrose.

Girard lunged sideways and took the full brunt of the Saxon's thrust on his hauberk. Faulty links in the mail would have sent the Saxon's point into Girard's chest. But the links held, and the life of Sir Ambrose de Guissac was saved. Girard then brought his blade up, cleaving the bone of the Saxon's forearm. The fellow stumbled blindly into the descending sword of another Saxon. Sir Ambrose, at that moment, cut the legs from under another. The Saxons became confused, panicky.

"By the Splendor of God!" Girard shouted, using Duke William's favorite oath. "I have no stomach for this. Even lacking full armor we could slay them all! Saxons! You can yield with honor — for it is not to our knightly credit to slay needlessly stout men-at-arms."

The Saxons drew together, murmured among themselves. One of them spoke up.

"We yield, on condition that I be permitted to deliver a message to my mistress, the Countess of Dundervale."

Girard considered a moment.

"Where is your master, the Earl of Dundervale?"

"In London, Sir Knight, with King Harold."

**G**IRARD'S tawny eyes widened, slowly became thoughtful slits. For King Harold's presence in London meant that the Saxon monarch had retreated from the Norwegians in Yorkshire, or that he had crushed them.

"The condition of surrender is granted—and I, too, shall hear the message to the countess."

"It is agreed, Sir Knight," said the Saxon spokesman.

Sir Richard de Laval had been doing some thinking of his own. He suddenly addressed the Saxon.

"How did your king fare at Yorkshire with the Norwegians?"

"King Harold won a glorious victory," bragged the Saxon.

Girard was irked by Sir Richard's interruption.

"If you were as swift with your sword as you are with your tongue, you would not have put Sir Ambrose's life in jeopardy."

Sir Richard's little eyes were venomous, but he bowed.

"A thousand pardons, my Lord Marquis."

Leaving the knights to watch the Saxons, Girard conducted the spokesman to the gate-house keep. From out on the hill came a sudden clamor, shouted questions as to the fate of the Saxons in the yard.

The Countess Gail was still bound and lying on the floor of the keep. The Saxon bent to help her. Girard put his sword between the two.

"It is unfortunate—but her Ladyship brought it upon herself. Proceed with the message."

The Saxon addressed himself to the countess.

"Your Ladyship, I bring greetings from my master. He bade me tell you that King Harold was victorious over the Norwegians. And that he was wounded and unable to ride to Hastings with King Harold. The wound is not a serious one."

"Why Hastings?" asked the countess. "Has the Duke of Normandy landed his host?"

The Saxon glanced toward Girard, but the countess urged him on.

"It will do no harm to tell. These three fool Normans could not leave here if they desired to."

"Yes," continued the Saxon. "The

Normans have landed and are raiding the countryside near Hastings. King Harold sent us back to Dundervale to re-garrison the castle so that it would not fall into Norman hands."

Girard smiled.

"Your king is a trifle tardy."

The Saxon turned on Girard.

"But King Harold will take the Normans by surprise at Hastings." Then he added in a bragging tone, "King Harold has assembled his fleet off the Sussex coast. The Normans are trapped at Hastings—by land and sea."

## CHAPTER IV

### *Traitor-Baron*



DAWN was streaking the east when Girard and Sir Ambrose wearily seated themselves on the castle wall with their backs against the battlements. The Saxons had gone off to their

camp on the hillside. Countess Gail was in her chamber, and Sir Ambrose had secured the door with a stout chain. Sir Richard was patrolling the castle.

Suddenly a great din came from the hillside. The increased volume of noise told of new numbers added to the Saxon forces. Girard moved to the parapet, took a quick look and sprang back. A shower of Saxon arrows whistled past the spot where his head had been. But he had seen enough to know that close to a thousand Saxons were advancing on the castle.

"This stronger force puzzles me," said Girard. "I wonder how Duke William fared at Hastings. The outlook was not so favorable."

"We can hope," said the dark-browed Sir Ambrose. "But Sir Richard does not even hope. He showed no heartiness when you told him that Duke William had landed."

Girard nodded.

"Sir Richard has been at odds with our plans since we first saw this castle. He must have the Saxon fever. Because they have fierce mustaches and put horns on their helmets, he thinks they are invincible. Yet, Sir Richard comes from an old and honored Norman line."

"His noble blood did not help us much," said Sir Ambrose, "when he allowed three Saxons to escape from the barracks. But we are free of them, now."

"How so, my friend?" asked Girard quickly.

"It goes back before the battle in the courtyard. I heard the drawbridge start to descend and rushed from my chamber. Two armed Saxons set upon me."

"Two?"

"Aye, my Lord Marquis. Two. I slew them both."

Girard stood up straight, but ducked back into a crouch as a Saxon arrow sang past his helmet.

"Sir Ambrose," he said, "only three Saxons escaped from the barracks. I slew the red-bearded one in the west tower. You slew two of them. That accounts for them all." Girard gestured up toward the donjon tower. "Before coming down here, I counted all the Saxon prisoners. The tally is right, even to the kitchen knave."

**S**IR AMBROSE DE GUISSAC scowled in thoughtful silence. Girard went on.

"As I related to you before I came upon our poor archer with his throat cut. And as I stumbled upon his body, I saw a man run from the gate-house keep. The light was bad and I could not distinguish anything about him. But the Countess Gail said he was one of her trusted Saxons."

"Aye," said Sir Ambrose. "It is sorely puzzling. But neither of the Saxons I slew could have been helping the countess lower the drawbridge. They could not have been at

the gate-house keep and fighting me at the same time."

Girard nodded in agreement.

"Also, my lord, someone must have opened the countess' chamber for her after you secured it—and then lowered the drawbridge for her."

"Our loyal archer," put in Sir Ambrose. "They would have had to pass him. He would have driven a shaft into any Saxon who set foot near the keep—and he would not have allowed the countess to approach the keep alone." A black scowl was forming like a thunder cloud on Sir Ambrose's face. "The archer could not have betrayed us—he was already dead when you saw the vague figure flee from the keep."

A steely glint crept into Girard's tawny eyes. His mail gauntlet clasped the hilt of his sword.

"The puzzle is no longer a puzzle, friend Ambrose. For only a Norman could have approached our archer close enough to deal a cowardly blow." Girard drew his long sword. "Our betrayer is — Sir Richard de Laval. And I am certain now, Sir Ambrose, that he planned to let you be killed in the courtyard fight when he suddenly moved back from your side."

Girard de Clavaloux strode to the stone steps. Saxon arrows were falling in the castleyard by the hundreds. Girard held his huge shield over his head and made his way down the wall and across the courtyard. He entered the castle and went straight to the Countess Gail's chamber. He found that the stout chain Sir Ambrose had put there was broken. Girard kicked open the door.

Countess Gail was fully clothed, reclining on her couch. When she saw Girard, she called out reprovingly.

"To frighten a lady so—"

Girard went to her side and stared down at her.

"Where is the Baron de Laval?"

Her black eyes were very bright. She waved a graceful hand for him to

seat himself beside her. A smile came to her lips.

"This is the first chance, my lord, that we have had to be together. I have much to say to you." She pulled on Girard's arm till he was seated on the couch. "There, that is better." She leaned very close to him.

Girard spoke evenly. "My dear countess, you are very beautiful, very desirable, men would trade their souls for your favors—but I am seeking the Baron de Laval."

**T**HE smile froze on the Countess Gail's face. For a moment Girard thought she was going to rake his face with her fingernails. But the frigid smile thawed, completely melted and was more friendly than before. She leaned forward, pressed her mouth firmly against his, entwined her arms around his neck.

It was then that Girard saw the shadow on the wall of her chamber—the shadow of a man with an upraised sword.

Girard pushed the countess over backwards, rolled to the floor, carrying his leopard shield around and over him. A terrific blow struck the shield, nearly tearing it from his grasp. Standing over Girard loomed the fully armored Sir Richard de Laval. Sir Richard's face was a malignant, savage mask, as he struck another blow, wrenching the shield from Girard's hand.

Instead of trying to hold the shield, Girard pushed it farther from him and into Sir Richard's legs. Sir Richard, fearing it might trip him, backed off several paces.

Girard sprang to his feet. Sir Richard stood facing him, his little eyes showing above the top of his kite-shaped shield. Only the eyes showed, for his nasal guard and iron helmet covered the rest of his face. His sword was drawn back for a quick thrust.

"At last, de Laval," said Girard, "I see your true eyes. Craven eyes, they are, of a man who betrays his com-

rades for the slim chance of saving his own life. And slim chance it is, my traitor-baron." He suddenly slashed, his sword striking with the speed of a lightning bolt.

The blow would have cut through the trunk of a young tree. It cleaved across Sir Richard's shield, shearing off the top. Girard's point flashed within inches of the baron's eyes. Never had Sir Richard felt such a stroke.

He leaped back from the blade that came so close to tearing the eyes from his head. Then Sir Richard set himself and struck. Both swords met in midair, and the castle rang with their clash. Girard pressed the fight, striving for a blow at the baron's helmet.

But Girard had not reckoned on the Countess Gail. She was seeing all of her carefully laid plans tumbling down about her. Seizing a small bench, she set it behind Girard on the floor.

Sir Richard saw her place it there. In a sudden burst of desperation, he lunged forward. But he was too anxious to press what he thought was an advantage.

Girard saw an opening. He stepped back to set himself for the powerful stroke. His foot encountered the bench. He lost his balance, stumbled to the side but recovered his feet.

**S**IR RICHARD then got his chance, the chance he had been frantically awaiting. He took it—ran from the chamber. He ran as if all the devils in hell were snapping at his heels. Darting through the doorway, he flung the stout panel shut behind him.

Girard recovered his shield and grasped the Countess Gail's arm. He took her from the chamber, quickly crossed the courtyard under the protection of his shield and climbed the wall to where Sir Ambrose was watching the Saxon onslaught on the castle.

Sir Ambrose turned at their approach.

"De Laval?" he asked.

"He is hiding," said Girard, then told Sir Ambrose of the encounter with Sir Richard.

"Allow me to seek out the craven," begged Sir Ambrose de Guissac.

"He will be forced to come to us. He is convinced that the Saxons will take the castle. And it is the Countess Gail's word alone that will save him from them. Secure her in the gate house, then rejoin me."

Sir Ambrose took her into the keep, and gently bound her. She heaped abuse on him as fast as her tongue could form the words. But the baron only smiled in amusement at her furious frustration. As he was leaving her, he laughed.

"When this business of battle is over, I believe I shall claim you as conqueror's loot."

Her reply was so savage she choked on it. Sir Ambrose chuckled, and rejoined Girard on the battlements. Girard spoke.

"The Saxons must be in some desperate need to take the castle. Look at the manner in which they waste arrows. One rock from a catapult would do more damage than a thousand shafts. It is my thought that the Saxons were forced to travel fast—and had not the time to haul engines of war." Girard then went to the courtyard steps. "I have one thing more to do."

He again entered the castle. There was no sign of Sir Richard. Girard went straight to Lady Muriel's chamber. He knocked on the door with his mail gauntlet. Presently he heard that low voice of hers.

"Who is there?"

"Girard de Clavaloux."

The bolt was instantly shot back, and the door swung open. Lady Muriel stood there in a long blue sleeping gown which made sapphire stars of her eyes. Her golden hair fell about her shoulders.

"Come in, my lord."

Girard stepped into her chamber.

"I came to warn you, my lady. The

Baron de Laval is a traitor to both Normans and Saxons. See that your door is securely bolted. And now there is word of your noble brother. He is in London, with a wound that is not serious. He will soon be well again."

For long minutes the Lady Muriel looked steadily at Girard.

"What a friendly enemy you are, fair knight."

**G**IRARD took a coin from the pouch at his belt. The coin was struck by Ricardus I of Normandy in the year 960. Then Girard drew his dagger and cut the coin through the center. One half he placed in her hand, the other he slipped back into his pouch.

"It is a Norman custom," he told her, "to consider only a Norman victory. Duke William is at Hastings. And it is my thought that he will conquer and advance upon this castle. Should a Saxon arrow pierce my hauberk—then keep this coin till Duke William himself is at the gates. Tell him that I gave it to you, and you will be under his protection."

The Lady Muriel held the coin tightly in her hand. Girard bowed and quickly withdrew from the chamber.

Back on the battlements, Sir Ambrose greeted him.

"I have just been up in the tower, my Lord Marquis, and saw a heavy cloud of dust beyond the forest. I could not tell if it were made by horsemen or not."

"Let us go up," began Girard.

A heavy thump sounded below. Girard stepped to the parapet and looked over the wall. The Saxons had fashioned a huge scaling ladder and were trying to lay it against the castle wall to bridge the rocky moat. Their first effort had fallen short of the gate rampart, and they were raising the ladder for a second try. Girard spoke quickly.

"Stand by the windlass in readiness to lower the drawbridge when I call."



## CHAPTER V

*Loot for the Lords*

SIR AMBROSE looked strangely at Girard, but the marquis said no more. In silence Sir Ambrose went to the gatehouse keep.

Girard kicked arrows off the rampart to insure a firm footing for himself. The Saxons' ladder again banged against the wall, its two uprights jutting over the parapet. Then the ladder quivered with the weight of Saxons scrambling up its rungs. A deluge of arrows sailed over the parapet to protect the climbers' advance.

Still in a crouch, Girard unsheathed his sword, and drew back his arm. He moved closer to the ladder, then he swung his heavy blade. In one powerful stroke he cut off both uprights, leaving none of the ladder showing above the parapet. Now he would have a clear sweep for his sword, and the Saxons would have no hand-holds.

A fresh flight of arrows came over the wall. Their number was doubled and redoubled till the air fairly sang with them. Girard kept his crouch, for a straight-on arrow at that distance would pierce his mail hauberk.

Suddenly the arrows ceased. This meant that the Saxons were nearing the top of the ladder. Girard quickly rose to his feet, heavy leopard shield in front of him. Only his eyes showed in the narrow slit between helmet and the top of his shield.

A mighty shout came up from the Saxons. But they could chance no arrows now, for the first Saxon knight had reached the parapet. He was a thick-set giant thane with a flowing beard of straw color. His iron-pot helmet reached his blond brows. A collar and shawl of mail were fitted over a coat of stout leather armor. On his left arm was a thick shield. His right was raised aloft, swinging a

great long-handled axe with an edge fully a foot across.

Girard struck swiftly, engaging the axe before it could gain the ponderous momentum of a downward slash. He turned aside the blow which would have had the power to cleave through shield, hauberk and bone. The Saxon giant thundered an oath and again raised the axe. This time there was no stopping its descent.

The foot-long edge swished down at Girard's helmet. The Norman fell into a crouch, letting the weapon pass over his head. The force of the swing carried the upper part of the Saxon's body flat across the parapet.

Girard's sword cut down, crushing the thane's shoulder and breaking his backbone. The dead Saxon sprawled grotesquely over the parapet.

**A**NOTHER thane coming up the ladder fast caught Girard with his sword still in the giant's body. Girard could not disengage it in time to deal a blow. He swept his shield aloft, warding off the Saxon's sword. Thus, Girard's left arm was upraised holding off the thane's blade. His right was tugging the sword from the giant's body.

A hoarse shout of triumph escaped this second Saxon. For he carried no shield in his left hand. Instead, he clutched a long dagger. And Girard's hauberk was an open target. The Saxon's thrust was quick, short, hurried, so inflamed was he with success. Girard's rich, finely meshed coat of mail turned the thrust. The thane drew his arm back for a hard, vicious blow.

Girard saw the blade coming, knew that even his masterpiece of Norman armorer's art could not withstand its force. He wrenched mightily at his long sword. It came free. He slanted the point upward and drove with all the power in his right arm. The cross hilt of his sword ran flat against the Saxon's chest, the red length of blade sprouting from his back. Girard withdrew swiftly as the dead thane tum-

bled out of sight. Then Girard raised his voice in a lusty shout.

"Lower the drawbridge, Sir Ambrose!"

The third Saxon was now at the top of the ladder.

A great rumbling of chains was heard, and the heavy drawbridge lurched free of the castle wall. The Saxon at the top of the ladder grasped frantically at the parapet.

Girard wanted a captive—a captive to answer questions. He dropped his sword and seized the startled Saxon by the shoulders. With a prodigious heave he swung him over the parapet. And he let the force of the swing carry the Saxon across the rampart ledge. There, Girard loosened his hold and let the man drop down to the courtyard below.

The fall was a long one, and the Saxon landed with a jarring thud. He crumpled to the ground, all consciousness jarred from him.

With a deeper rumbling of chains, the drawbridge started on its downward sweep. Startled cries of horror came from the Saxons on the ladder. For the descending drawbridge had thrust the ladder out from the wall. And, as the bridge went lower, the ladder was swept backward. Saxons, shaken from their precarious hold, went plunging down into the steep dry moat below.

Girard chanced a look over the parapet, saw that the bridge was about halfway lowered and that the Saxons' ladder had broken and carried all the soldiers on it to the rocks. He called out.

"Hold, Sir Ambrose! Raise the bridge."

The huge bridge was checked and started back on its lumbering ascent. The angry din of the Saxons on the hillside swallowed the straining and grinding of the bridge.

"Well done, noble Ambrose!" said Girard. He quickly went down the steps to the courtyard. The Saxon was just coming to his senses, reaching in-

stinctively for his sword on the stones near him. Girard's foot pressed on his back, and he placed his sword point at the Saxon's throat.

"Sir Knight," said Girard, "your life hangs upon one word. Speak it truthfully, and you will live to a good old age." When the thane stared up at him, Girard asked: "Did William of Normandy defeat the Saxon king?"

**F**OR moments the Saxon stared dully at Girard. Then he shrugged. When he spoke his voice was hoarse, bitter.

"Yes, Sir Knight. We were tricked by the Normans at Hastings. We fell into the same trap in which we defeated the Norwegians in the north."

Girard clenched his mail gauntlet in silence. He then helped the Saxon to his feet, saw that one of the man's legs was broken by the fall from the rampart. Up to the gate-house keep Girard assisted the stricken knight.

When the Countess Gail saw the thane, a startled cry came from her.

"Lord Bradwick!" she gasped, and fought to free herself of her bonds.

Girard gave Sir Ambrose the news.

"Duke William has conquered—"

"De Clavaloux!" the call came from the courtyard. It was the voice of Sir Richard de Laval.

Girard, sword tightly gripped, darted to the head of the stone steps. Down in the courtyard were Sir Richard and the Lady Muriel. He was holding a dagger at the small of her back. Her face was white, but no words escaped her tightly clenched teeth. Sir Richard called out.

"I forced your damsel's chamber and now offer a bargain. I will exchange captives, de Clavaloux—the countess for the Lady Muriel."

Before Girard could answer, the Lady Muriel threw a glittering object which landed on the steps at his feet. He looked down and recognized that gleaming semicircle.

Sir Ambrose de Guissac strode swiftly to the doorway of the gate-

house keep when he heard Sir Richard's words. The instant his back was turned the Countess Gail quickly held out her bound hands to Lord Bradwick. The thane slipped out a short knife and severed the rope.

Then the Countess Gail slyly moved up behind Sir Ambrose. She braced her hands on each side of the doorway, swiftly raised her right leg, placed the sole of her foot in the small of Sir Ambrose's back — and pushed. Sir Ambrose fell flat on his face outside the gate-house keep.

With a taunting laugh of triumph, Countess Gail slammed the door of the keep and barred it from inside.

From within came a rasping noise, followed by a thundering clatter. The drawbridge was being lowered, and the portcullis raised.

Sir Ambrose roared a blistering Norman oath and attacked the door with his mighty sword. His strokes were mighty, and great chunks chipped from the door. He redoubled his efforts, struck with the strength of ten fiends. And he chopped clear through the panel, reached in and throwing aside the bolt, kicked the door open. But the harm had already been done. Lord Bradwick was locking the portcullis windlass. He was swaying on his good leg, supported by the Countess Gail.

A roar of triumph came from the hillside across the moat. Saxon yells filled the air. There was the tramp of many feet on the drawbridge and the thud of knights' horses.

**D**OWN in the courtyard, Sir Richard de Laval was too surprised, too stunned to move. Facing him was a score of Saxon archers. He was a Norman baron, their enemy—and his dagger was menacing a Saxon lady of noble birth. A score of bowstrings twanged on the air. Sir Richard's cry of alarm was choked off by the heavy thud of arrows piercing his hauberk. The Baron de Laval died by Saxon hands.

Saxon archers and knights swarmed into the castle yard, and quickly surrounded the Lady Muriel to protect her further from the Normans. It was then that they espied Girard at the head of the stone steps. He stood there alone, his great shield before him, his long Norman sword in his hand. A tumultuous cry arose from the Saxon ranks.

In the gate-house keep, Sir Ambrose de Guissac balled his mail fist and struck Lord Bradwick squarely on the chin. The Saxon collapsed like an empty sack. Sir Ambrose turned to the Countess Gail with a tight grin, grabbed her by the wrists. Then he heard the cool voice of the marquis.

"Sir Ambrose, sever the drawbridge chains, so that it may not be raised again. And jam the windlass of the portcullis, so that it may not be lowered."

Strange orders they were, coming from a lone Norman in the midst of hundreds of Saxon enemies, but Sir Ambrose knew that Girard de Clavalloux did strange things for still stranger reasons. He threw the Countess Gail from his path, and raising his sword, brought it down in a mighty two-handed stroke upon the drawbridge chains.

The links separated and slid through their conduits to clank down on the rocks in the moat. That drawbridge would not be raised again that day. Then Sir Ambrose crippled the machinery of the portcullis, so that it would take at least a week's work to repair the damage. The Countess Gail stood aghast at his suicidal work.

Girard's voice called out.

"Ho, my good Saxons! You know well that the drawbridge is down to stay, and you know well that the Norman host of Duke William is within a league of the castle gates!"

A lone figure in white wriggled from the press of the Saxons in the courtyard, and quickly climbed the stone steps to stand at Girard's side.

"That coin—I thought throwing it

would prevent bloodshed and save the lives of my countrymen."

The Norman swiftly drew her to him, and swung his huge leopard-emblazoned shield to cover her small body, but no Saxon arrows thudded against that shield. Instead, there was a stunned silence in their ranks. Then Girard's words rang out across the courtyard.

"Saxons! You can choose between an honorable death and an equally honorable surrender. The choice is yours—and either choice will be the fancy of the Norman knights now approaching the gates."

At Girard's mention of Duke William, Sir Ambrose ran to a narrow archer's slit in the gate-house wall. The sight that met his eyes must have gladdened his heart, for a wild Norman cry came from his throat.

"By the Glory! It is Duke William and his noble barons!"

Countess Gail came to his side for a look out the slit. Sir Ambrose gaily lifted her so that she might see better. Her choked sob of frustration brought an amused chuckle to his lips. Then he set her down. Mail gauntlets on hips, he looked into her black eyes.

"My lady, you, too, have a simple choice to make. Shall I declare you under the protection of the Baron de Guissac—or shall I let you be free booty for yonder knights of Normandy?"

Hate glittered in the countess' eyes, but she moved silently to his side. Sir Ambrose smiled very slowly.

Girard called down to the Saxons.

"There is no hurry in making your choice, my Saxon friends. Take all the time you wish, and weigh its values carefully. It is truly the choice of a lifetime. Should you decide upon an honorable surrender, you have the knightly word of the Marquis de Clavaloux that your lives will be spared, and that you will be free men to go back to your fields."

At that moment a thousand martial

horns blasted across the countryside. They were the war horns of the Normans hurling a challenge at the castle.

Lady Muriel moved from the protection of Girard's shield, and faced her countrymen.

"My lords and soldiers, all of you know that I am a true Saxon. I will not influence your choice of life or death—save to say that the word of the Marquis de Clavaloux is a just and honorable one."

There was a great mumbling down in the courtyard. Then one thane stood in his stirrups, and became the spokesman for the Saxons. He was a tall, gaunt warrior with horns jutting from his helmet. A great axe lay across his saddle. He raised the axe toward Girard.

"We have made our choice, Lord of Normandy. We doubt not your knightly word, but we will take our chance with the Normans. Whirling his horse, he led the Saxons out of the courtyard, back across the drawbridge and down the hillside.

Girard, Lady Muriel, Sir Ambrose and the Countess Gail stepped to the battlements to watch the Saxons' heroic charge.

The Norman host had reached the hillside. There were thousands upon thousands of them. And against their steel ranks, the valiant Saxons hurled themselves. The Norman wave rolled over the Saxons, engulfed them.

Girard raised his sword in salute to the Saxons.

"Truly, hell is full of heroes."

**T**HEN Girard and Sir Ambrose lifted their huge shields and rested them on the ramparts. The advance guard of the Norman host saw those shields, and a wild shout went up when they recognized the golden leopard of de Clavaloux and the crimson bull of de Guissac. They spurred their mounts into a gallop.

Girard spoke to Sir Ambrose.

"There's Sir Hugh de Maltroit with

his black falcon streamer. And there's the royal standard of Duke William!"

Sir Ambrose spoke up.

"It puzzles me how you knew that Duke William and not a Saxon army was advancing on the castle."

Girard smiled at the golden maid at his side.

"It was the Lady Muriel who told me of this. She saw the Normans from her chamber, before Sir Richard forced her door with an axe."

"But she spoke no word in the courtyard," said Sir Ambrose.

Girard held half of a Norman coin in his hand.

"Lady Muriel threw this coin to me. I had told her to keep it till Duke William himself was at the castle gates."

Sir Ambrose looked into the smoldering eyes of the Countess Gail.

"There is something about these Saxon maids."

Then Girard, Marquis de Clavaloux, spoke in a very low voice.

"In yonder castle yard lies Sir Richard de Laval—who bore a proud Norman name. His body is filled with Saxon arrows. He died a noble death."

"Aye," said Sir Ambrose de Guissac.



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By ED EARL REPP

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# HALIBUT NAVY

By G. H. GILROY-MOORE

Author of "Good Bait," "Black Cargo," etc.



"TYPHOON"  
BARNEY IVERSON

The Lewis burst  
left four figures  
prone on the fore-  
deck

*"Typhoon" Barney Iverson, of the Fisherman's Naval Reserve, Baits His Hooks for a Catch More Deadly Than the Denizens of the Deep!*

**T**HE door of the waterfront tavern was swung open by a heavy hand, and "Typhoon" Barney Iverson stood for an instant on the threshold. A deep-chested, powerful figure, clad in the uniform

of the Fisherman's Naval Reserve, his keen eyes probed through the murk of tobacco smoke to find the men he sought—Kellner, his new radio man, and Abbet, his ship's cook.

"Sparks!" he rapped out.

He strode purposefully toward a grimy, slop-covered table at which three men were sitting—two in naval uniform, the third in civvies.

Kellner saw him coming, and his shifty eyes flickered apprehensively. Then his thin, foxy face split into a forced grin.

"Hello, Skipper!" he said ingratiatingly. "Just in time for a little one, before we go aboard!"

Barney Iverson towered above them, grim-jawed, his eyes glinting frostily.

"Listen, you two!" he snapped. "There's been times when I've drug the whole crew of the *Carmanah* out of every darned blind-pig on Vancouver waterfront. But that was in the days when we was halibuttin', and the boys was blowin' their wads after a lucky spell offshore. This here job's different, even if you two slobs don't realize it. I'll let it pass this time, because you're new. Get outa here—and get aboard!"

Kellner moved to obey, but Abbet, the cook, had taken on enough liquor to make him stubborn.

"Just a minute, Skipper, just a minute! We'll have a f'il' one before we go. Hey, you"—he waved to the owner of the joint—"bring three—no, bring four more!"

Without a word, Barney bent over. One massive hand fell on Abbet's collar. Abbet struggled, mouthing obscenity. Barney shook him like a rat, then heaved him, gasping, against the wall.

"Sober up, you bum, and get aboard!"

Other occupants of the place were watching with interest. One of them, obviously a fisherman, broke into a delighted chuckle.

"If it ain't Typhoon Iverson hissself—all dolled up and in the Navy! Atta-boy, Typhoon—clean 'er up!"

Abbet heard it, and his eyes lighted with alcoholic belligerence.

"You ain't goin' to do this to me, Iverson!" he snarled. "No sir, you—"

But the man in civilians, who had

been sitting with them, interposed quickly. He stepped up to Abbet, straightened his collar.

"Get sobered up, you fool, and get out!" The low tones seemed somehow to carry a ring of hidden authority, and Barney stared hard at the man.

**T**HE civilian was tall, blond, well-dressed, clean-looking. Somehow, he looked over-clean, and in that dump he just didn't belong. But he had an air of complete self-confidence, almost of arrogance.

Barney's mind worked at top speed, searching the filing-record of memory. He looked hard into the porcelain-blue eyes that were now staring into his.

"Well, Mister," he said quizzically, "who might you be? You don't seem the sort that belongs in a joint like this. Ain't you got more sense than to feed this rot-gut to boys in uniform? And I've seen you before, haven't I? Ever been in Seattle?"

The man's reply was contemptuously indifferent.

"No. I just met these fellows here. I happen to like sailors, and I bought them a drink. Does that call for a formal introduction? If so, my name's Redard—and I've never seen you before!"

Barney ignored the sarcasm. There was a sudden tensing of his square jaws. His big, muscular frame moved light-footedly to a position that would bar the other from reaching the door. For that elusive file of memory had clicked, opening to him the page he sought.

Somebody suddenly cried, "*Cops!*"

Barney held his ground. A man in light overcoat and soft cap had entered the room.

"I'm a police officer!" announced the newcomer, loudly. "Sit still, everybody! Where'd you fellers get all the liquor?" Then he noticed Barney's uniform. "Hello, Skipper. Roundin' up some of the boys?"

"Yeah!" boomed Barney. "And I

rounded up something else, too! If you're an officer, just step over here!" Then, indicating the stranger: "Ask this guy for his papers—if he's got any!"

The police officer looked puzzled. "What's the idea?" he asked.

But the civilian had quickly produced a paper, which with elaborate dignity he handed the crackling sheet to the officer.

"As you will see, Officer," he said, "I'm Swiss born, but I came to this country ten years ago!"

The officer looked at the paper critically, then at Barney.

"Seems all right to me," he said. "It's a naturalization certificate, taken out right here in Vancouver."

"Takes five years residence to get one of those things, doesn't it?" asked Barney.

"Yes."

"Well, I'm not saying it's not okay," said Barney slowly, "but it wouldn't hurt to check up on it a bit. I'll tell you why. Four years ago, I was doin' a spell of longshorin' in Seattle. Once or twice I was in gangs that worked the *Portland*, *Hamburg-American* line. And at that time, Mister, this here guy—or his dead ringer—was her first officer!"

Barney had watched the stranger's eyes as he spoke. For a moment they had held a fleeting, strained look. Now Redard calmly reached over for his glass, which still stood upon the table. He laughed derisively as he raised it toward his lips.

"You're crazy!" he said.

Barney turned to the police officer, who stood looking at the stranger doubtfully. Then suddenly the detective's hand grabbed frantically beneath his coat.

Barney turned, a split second too late. He felt the cutting impact of the glass that struck his forehead. Blood spurted, mingling with the deluge of rank spirit that stung his eyes blindingly. Through a fog he glimpsed the flash that came from the gun in the

suddenly raised hand of Redard. The crash of the gun was followed by the sound of running feet. There came an instant of silence, then an uproar of voices, as Barney staggered backward, striving frantically to mop the rank and burning spirits from his eyes.

When he could see properly, half the occupants of the place had gone. Others were in an excited group, Abbet standing dazedly among them. Kellner was solicitously offering a handkerchief, steeped in water. The civilian was gone, and the detective lay crumpled on the floor. His coat was open, revealing the butt of the holstered gun he had failed to draw in time.

A man was shouting excitedly into a wall telephone. He hung up and turned to Barney.

"Okay, Skipper—they'll get him! Half the boys is after him, and the cops'll be here any minute!"

Barney sped to the door of the joint. Over the faint hum of night traffic came the distant report of a shot. For Barney the chase had gone too far. He returned to the room to wait the coming of the police. After giving them the story, he went to his ship.

**L**ATER that day, the eighty feet of the *Carmanah* slipped smoothly into the unruffled Strait of Juan de Fuca. Musingly, Barney stood at her wheel. He swung her head deftly, avoiding contact with a giant cedar that went floating idly by, torn from its age-old bed by spring freshets and spewed from the mouth of some distant inlet to become a source of potential danger to small craft. He swung her again, and the distant peak of Mount Baker, which had sprung into white, glittering majesty ahead of him, now fell slowly astern.

His eyes roved the misty shores of the Olympic Peninsula and the Puget Sound country. This was his country, all right—God's and his. It was going to stay his country, too—if Barney and his kind could do anything to that



end. Yes, sir—it was going to stay a free country!

He listened to the smooth humming of the *Carmanah's* Diesels, felt the thrill of ownership surge through him. She was his, and he loved her—loved every plank, line and bolt of her. To him she was a sentient thing. It had taken sixteen years of arduous wooing to win her. Sixteen years, half his lifetime, spent in battling the grim Northwest Pacific, from Cape Flattery to Bristol Bay. Sixteen years at the toughest of all callings up here in the Northwest—a halibut fisherman's.

But she was his at last—excepting, of course, that the Canuck Navy now had some sort of a claim on her. He didn't regret that either. He grinned inwardly at thought of the airy subterfuges, the juggling with truth, that had put him, Seattle born and bred, in the Royal Canadian Navy. But those Naval brass hats hadn't been too fussy—good men and good boats were too badly wanted.

Why had Barney Iverson done it? Not for profit, no. There was a lot more money in fishing.

A Viking strain ran through the veins of Barney Iverson. Now his face clouded, as he thought of Norway and her betrayal to the Hun. He thought of the politicians. Keep America out of war, huh? Well, politicians had to talk, to keep their jobs. Those old guys, the Vikings, didn't bother about politicians—didn't have any, maybe, in those days. No, sir, they didn't bother with that stuff: if the feller on the other side of the pond started making trouble, those old guys just put on those funny square battle-hats they wore—that's howcome they called 'em Squareheads—grabbed their boats, and went over and settled it.

He was getting a bit fed up with this monotonous patrol job, though. William Head to Cape Scott and back, then report to Esquimalt. The *Carmanah* was capable of better work than that. Other and smaller craft had dodged the subs in the Atlantic, were

now at grimmer work on the other side. Well, his chance would come—his and the *Carmanah's*.

A Vancouver newspaper lay in front of him, displaying a bold headline:

#### NAZI SPY SLAYS POLICE OFFICER

He'd read the thing a dozen times, but it was mainly a repetition of his account of the affair to the police. Kellner and Abbet denied any former knowledge of the man, said he'd come in the blind-pig casually, and bought them drinks. Barney frowned. He hadn't much time for those two bums. They weren't seamen anyway, and had been wished on him by the recruiting depot at Esquimalt.

**K**ELLNER entered the pilot-house with a radio message. There was a smugness about his thin, foxy face, and his shifty eyes looked up at Barney appraisingly.

"Message for you—*Sir!*" he said, emphasizing the courtesy title with veiled insolence. Barney redoubled his resolve to get rid of him.

"Who from—what's it about?" he demanded.

"Japanese freighter, *Nishi Maru*. Skipper says he's got a sick passenger—a Canadian—and thinks it's appendicitis. Wants him taken off and rushed to hospital in Victoria."

"*Nishi Maru*—why, she passed us at daybreak. What's her position?"

"Fifteen miles west of San Juan. Skipper says he's standing by, calling all coastal and inbound vessels."

"He's right on our course," said Barney. "Why the devil can't he lose a little time and run into Victoria himself." He looked at the chronometer. "All right, tell him we're heading for him, and repeat his call to all vessels in the vicinity. Somebody may get there before we do."

Barney cursed the prospect. Strictly speaking, this was outside the line of his duty, but it was a call no mariner would ignore. So he signaled his engineer to cram on all speed.

The *Carmanah* responded with a graceful curtsy of her bows, then bent to it in dead earnest, took the lazy Pacific swells in her teeth, and hurled them from her prow in a steady, snow-white cascade.

A solitary, venturesome troller, whose boat lay with poles outflung to the heaving swells, hauled in a fifty-pound Chinook salmon and yelled a salty fishermen's greeting to Typhoon Iverson as he passed at cable's length. Barney replied in kind. This was the life he knew and understood. This was the real "freedom of the seas," and it was what he was going back to, once the dirty mess in Europe was cleaned up.

The Japanese freighter lay hove to, a dirty smudge in the heat haze ahead. Barney headed directly for her, slowing down as he saw the name *Nishi Maru* daubed in white paint on her bows. He swung the wheel, and deftly brought the *Carmanah* alongside the rusty hull.

So far there had been no appearance of life on the steamer, and Barney yelled up to the seemingly deserted bridge.

"Ahoy there, Cap'n—where's your man? Any doctor aboard?"

A solitary head, wearing a seaman's cap, appeared over the steamer's rail.

"Sorry, Skipper—there's no doctor aboard, and this man's very sick. Haul in a bit closer, and we'll lower him away!"

Barney yelled an order for fenders, and ran in as closely as safety permitted to the gently swaying hull of the freighter.

Came the rattle of a winch, and the man at the steamer's rail seemed to be directing operations. Barney stood on his foredeck, waiting. Nearby stood Abbet. The remainder of the crew clustered in idle curiosity near the forepeak.

**I** VERSIDE the freighter came a cargo-tray, swung from the derrick. Lashed to it was a stretcher,

carrying a blanketed, inanimate form. For a full minute the cargo-tray and its burden swung dizzily over the oily water that surged between the two vessels, and Barney cursed at the callous handling of a sick man. Why couldn't the useless swabs have lowered away a boat? The winch rattled again, the tray descended swiftly, and hit the deck of the *Carmanah*.

Barney moved a step toward the head of the stretcher. Then he backed in sheer astonishment—Abbet was holding a gun on him.

For a bare moment, Barney stood in open-mouthed amazement. Then he bore down on Abbet with a roar.

"What the— You greasy, hash-slingin'—"

But Abbet crouched threateningly. His oily, flabby face worked with mingled fear and hatred, his eyes gleamed with murderous intent.

"Back, you!" he snarled, "and get your hands up!"

Sheer astonishment held Barney for a moment. Then, disregarding the gun, he made for Abbet.

But the man on the stretcher came to life like an uncoiling snake, shot to his feet. Barney, aghast, recognized the spy of the Vancouver speakeasy! But his dash toward Abbet put this second enemy behind him. The cold muzzle of a gun pressed to the base of his skull brought Barney to a standstill.

"Easy now, my friend!" The voice of the man had lost its former smooth enunciation, now sounded thick and guttural. "Easy—or your brains will spatter the deck!"

Barney went rigid, but his mind was racing, seeking the smallest loophole of escape from those two threatening guns. He felt the hot breath of the Nazi fanning his neck, knew that at the slightest move the fellow would make good his threat. Through the corner of an eye, he saw Holger, his engineer, dive for the scuttle that led from the foredeck. The rest of the crew vanished with him.

Barney sparred for time. Holger, he knew, and the three other members of his old crew who were with him, would come back—and come back fast—and shooting.

"What's the game?" he asked, feigning ignorance of who was behind him. "You, Abbet—you suddenly gone crazy—or have I?"

"You *will* be crazy, my friend—if you resist!" said the voice behind him. "You are a prisoner—a prisoner of the Reich! Raise your hands, and walk before me to the cabin. And you, Abbet, hold the deck! Where is Kellner?"

Abbet lowered his gun, stood looking at his superior. His reply was in German, which Barney could not follow. Then Barney saw what he had been waiting for—Holger leaping from the scuttle, a rifle in his hand; behind him three others.

Holger dropped to his knee, aimed carefully. Abbet saw him, shouted a warning. Behind Holger crouched the others, aiming upward at the bridge.

Barney glanced upward, saw something far more deadly than the gun that pressed against his skull. Kellner was up on the bridge there, with the *Carmanah's* Lewis gun. He was depressing the muzzle, bringing the gun to bear on the foredeck.

Then Typhoon Iverson went into reckless, furious action. He crouched swiftly, drove backward with a kick that sent the Nazi reeling to the deck. Holger's rifle cracked, and Abbet's gun blazed. But the bullet sped harmlessly, for Barney's fist had smashed into the flabby face as Abbet pulled the trigger.

Then Barney saw Kellner, crouching over the Lewis gun. A crash of rifle fire came from the deck, and ill-aimed shots sent splintered glass in showers across the bridge. The Lewis flamed into a hacking, barking roar.

It roared for brief seconds and jammed. But that short burst of fire had been hellish, deadly. It left four prone figures on the foredeck—Holger

and the three others. On the bridge, Kellner strove to clear the gun.

The Nazi was struggling painfully to get upon his feet again, at the same time reaching for his fallen gun. Like a towering, berserk Viking, Barney Iverson alone stood upright upon the deck. He bent forward, grabbed the half-conscious Abbet by the ankles, swung him as easily as a boy would a sling-shot. He heard the winch of the freighter rattle again as he swung Abbet around his head, then sent him hurtling through the air at the German. The Nazi crashed again, with Abbet on top of him.

Barney dived for the gun that had fallen from Abbet's hand. The cargo-tray had risen from the deck, swung dizzily above his head as he reached for the gun. As Barney rose, the tray descended swiftly, and crashed to his skull.

**B**ARNEY IVERSON emerged from oblivion to find himself in his bunk, his wrists bound tightly behind him with stout fishing line. The German stood there watching him, a mocking smile upon his face.

"You damned, murdering Hun!" Barney's words shot between clenched teeth. The horror of that scene on deck swam before his dizzy eyes.

The porcelain-blue eyes regarded him with callous contempt.

"Fool! I told you that to resist was madness! Those other fools—your crew—are gone! Wiped out, every man of them! Such, my friend, is the fate of those who resist the Reich!"

"Then why spare me?" His crew's bloody fate stung Barney to utter recklessness.

The cold eyes bored into him before the Nazi answered.

"For one thing, my friend, you are a prisoner of war, and the Reich respects the usages of war! For another thing, you will be useful. I have a great task before me. You know the waters around here, and in that task you shall help me! Oh, yes you will!"

he went on, as Barney shot a scornful and contemptuous refusal. "For I have ways of compelling you—painful ways—and Heinrich Redard knows no scruples when the interests of the Reich are at stake!"

He stalked from the cabin, smiling grimly. As he went, Barney's eyes shone their utter loathing and contempt. God save America—and Canada—from a creed that bred men like that!

For some minutes Barney lay there, listening to an indistinct flow of guttural conversation that came from the wheel-house. Seemingly Kellner had been at the wheel, and Redard relieved him, for shortly the grinning, foxy face of Kellner appeared at the cabin door.

"Well, Iverson, you nearly spoiled it for us at Vancouver, didn't you? But not quite. And you're not quite as smart as you think. You spotted the chief as first mate of the *Portland*, but you didn't know I was her second wireless, did you? Or that Abbet was in the galley? I'm from Dusseldorf myself, Iverson, but I know every waterfront on the Pacific Coast, from San Diego to Vancouver, B. C. I know you, too, and that's why I worked it for Abbet and me to ship along with you when we got out of the depot at Esquimalt. But I'm going on the air now, Iverson. Listen in, and you'll hear a good program!"

A few moments later Barney heard Kellner at the radiophone, sending out a call. His voice came loud and strident through the bulkhead from the radio shack.

"Calling QXD! Calling QXD!" he shouted. "This is NVR, the patrol boat *Carmanah*, calling QXD and standing by!"

QXD—what code signal was that? Who was QXD? The letters seemed familiar, but Barney vainly racked his brains for their significance. There was silence for a few minutes, then Kellner went at it again.

"QXD—QXD—this is the patrol

boat *Carmanah*—NVR calling QXD! Come in, QXD!"

It went on intermittently for fifteen minutes or so, without result. Then Kellner seemed to abandon the effort for awhile, and left the radio shack to go to the pilot house. It seemed that Abbet was at the wheel now, for Barney heard him talking to Kellner.

**T**HERE were two lights to the cabin, one to port, and one that looked out on the after deck. Sounds of the tapping of a hammer came from the after deck, and Barney craned to the port and looked through. Redard was there, working carefully with a hammer and chisel at a large wooden case—something, no doubt, that had come off the *Nishi Maru*.

Now Kellner was back at the radiophone, calling loudly again. This time he picked up an answer, indistinct to Barney's ears. But he heard Kellner's message all right.

"This is NVR, back to QXD. One of our crew is badly hurt, needs a doctor urgently. Can you help? Give us your position!"

Back came the indistinct reply, inaudible to Barney, but Kellner's answer was clear enough.

"NVR back to QXD—all right, QXD—we should meet up with you in a couple of hours. This is NVR, clear and off the air."

Barney heard Kellner go out on deck. For a few moments Barney lay back in the bunk. He worked his fingers in a futile effort to get at the strong fishing twine that bound his wrists crosswise behind his back. But whoever had done the work had made a seaman's job of it—his fingers could reach the cords, but could make no headway with the knots that tied them.

After a few minutes he desisted, and returned to the puzzle of the code call—QXD. And what did they mean by a sick man? Was that one of his crew who still survived, and were they showing enough humanity to try and get help for him?

No, that couldn't be it! He had the whole thing in a flash now! QXD was the auxiliary cruiser *Prince Albert*. She had recently brought a prize to Vancouver, a German liner, captured off the coast of Chile, and was now no doubt patrolling the northwest.

And why were they calling her? That thing that Redard was working on, out on deck! Barney craned forward again to look at it once more. Redard was stooping over a round, black object he had taken from the packing case. That was it, all right—a mine! Those devils were deceiving the *Prince Albert* by the same trick they had used on him, and meant to get close enough to her to launch the infernal thing!

Then, to dispel all doubt, the foxy face of Kellner again appeared at the cabin door, leering savagely. His voice was hoarse with exultant blood-lust.

"You heard that call, Iverson? That was the *Prince Albert*, in case you don't know! Oh, we Germans are clever people, Iverson! We're getting her by the same trick we got you. We'll be up with her in an hour or so. The chief's a clever man, Iverson—one of the cleverest! Before he's through, he'll play havoc with your shipping in the northwest. You never saw a big ship almost blown out of the water, then go down with all hands, did you, Iverson? That's what's going to happen to your bloody cruiser!"

Kellner's face was contorted with an insane, savage gloating as he walked away. Barney cursed silently, and strained futilely at his bonds.

Then a deadly, cold resolve settled over him. He would defeat these murderous vermin, come what may! His brain began to work in cold, orderly fashion, seeking the smallest chance of escape.

**H**E SLID noiselessly to his feet, looked intently through each of the portholes in turn. Redard was still at work on his hellish weapon, Kellner now helping him. The mine would be

one of those magnetic things. Launched a little ahead of a heavy steamer under way, she would have small chance of escaping it. And it would need no great skill of seamanship to maneuver the little *Carmanah* beyond the immediate zone of impending devastation.

Far to the westward the receding sun was turning the ocean into a rim of living fire. Outlined against it Barney saw a distant pilchard seiner, the net rolling off her stern in preparation for a "set." Too far away to be of any help to him in any case. Nor was there any comfort in the grim peaks of Vancouver Island that rose forbiddingly astern.

The seconds that made up the hour between him and a fearful impending tragedy ticked off remorselessly. Barney heard the creaking of the winch that would launch the mine on its errand of death. He strove against a feeling of hopelessness that began to possess him.

There was no knife or other implement in the cabin by which he might sever his bonds, and to reach the galley and get one he must needs run the gauntlet of his three enemies. He might do that, after dark—but that would be too late.

Then, on the skyline, he saw a faint trail of smoke. That would be the *Prince Albert*. Her captain, bound as he thought upon an errand of mercy, was rushing his ship to her doom.

What chance would there be for Barney to give warning? None. Redard would take damned good care that he didn't.

They hadn't locked him in, it was true—for the very good reason that there was no lock on the door. Fishermen—at least, the kind the *Carmanah* carried—scorned those things. There was nothing locked, excepting the main deck-house doors when they were in port and everybody ashore.

Barney heard the creaking of the winch again. Kellner was hauling on a rope, and Redard was carefully

steadying the engine of death as it rose slowly from the deck. It swung from the boom, which would be swung outboard to launch it, once they were within the right distance, and a little ahead of the *Prince Albert*. And then—

Suddenly Typhoon Iverson's eyes lighted on something—a large halibut hook, hanging on a nail on the bulkhead. How it came there he didn't remember, but he knocked it from the wall with his head, and with difficulty picked it up.

His fingers grasped it awkwardly, behind his back. It was a vicious and deadly thing, with a shank almost four inches long, and a savage barb that sheared down over an inch below the point of the hook. Barney ran the tip of a finger over the sharp edge of the barb. Then patiently he went to work, using the barb as a miniature knife. One by one, he began to sever the strands of the cords that bound his wrists.

It was slow work, and painful. A dozen times the wicked point of the hook jabbed into his flesh, and he felt the warm blood that trickled from his hands. As he worked his mind turned over a dozen expedients for obtaining a weapon.

There were rifles—but they were in the after-cabin. He would have to pass Redard and Kellner to get to them. He might, with luck, reach the galley and get a butcher-knife, but that would be almost hopeless against these devils and their guns.

**T**HERE was one last resort, final and desperate—the mine itself. No doubt it could be detonated by contact. He would hurl himself upon it, in one final, mad rush— They wouldn't dare shoot, once he reached it. He could blow them, the *Carmanah* and himself to hell, before he would let them wreak their devilish wills on the gallant ship that was approaching, and send hundreds of brave men to a terrible death. For he could see the slim,

gray shape of the cruiser now, heading toward them out of the gathering twilight.

The strands parted, one by one. He cursed himself for a fool, that he hadn't thought of the hook before. Hook? Why, there were scores of them, in his locker in the cabin there—hooks and lines, all made up, sufficient for a complete "skate of gear." Then, in a flash, there came to him a possible way out—a *fisherman's* way out.

He heard Redard pass to the pilot-house, speak rapidly to Abbet, who apparently was at the wheel. The *Carmanah* changed her course very slightly, moving into position that would later give her leeway to swing across the bows of the oncoming cruiser. Then Redard went on deck again, and there was a creaking of block and tackle.

The last strand parted, and Barney stood for a moment, flexing his aching hands. Then he swiftly bent to the locker, and took out a neatly-coiled, fifty-fathom length of "ground line," from which hung scores of those deadly hooks, suspended on their three-and-a-half foot lengths of "ganging lines."

Time meant everything now. He laid the hooks and lines upon the cabin deck. His practiced fingers, supple as a woman's, went swiftly to work. He dispensed with the unnecessary lengths of hook-line, by drawing up the hooks and hitching them by their becketts to the main or "ground line," neatly coiling the line again as he worked. When he had finished, three hundred feet of neatly coiled line lay on the deck, with one of those deadly hooks hitched onto every dozen feet of its length.

He had worked silently and swiftly. He saw Redard and Kellner, standing together beneath the mine, now suspended high above the deck, and ready for launching. Abbet, no doubt, was intent upon his steering. The cruiser was closer now, very much closer. Five

minutes more—three minutes, perhaps—then the *Carmanah* would swing across her bows.

Swiftly Barney divided the coiled line into two portions, a dozen feet of free line between them. Then he took a coil in each hand, and sped for the after-deck.

Abbet saw him go, shouted a wild warning. Barney rounded the corner of the deck-house, saw the blank looks on the faces of Redard and Kellner, as they stood there together. But Redard went for his gun—and fast.

But Barney Iverson could rope a dock bollard with any man. With the ease and skill of a cowboy roping a steer, he heaved his line. It fell neatly over the shoulders of both Redard and Kellner, and settled about their bodies.

**R**EDARD'S gun was out, and it flamed. But Barney tugged viciously at the line. He saw the blood spurt from Kellner's neck as a savage hook tore into the yielding flesh. Kellner screamed and went to the deck, dragging Redard with him. They lay there, writhing in the toils, and Barney picked up Redard's gun.

But there was Abbet to be dealt with, and Abbet came round the deck-house, shooting. For a moment Barney took shelter behind the mast, and fingered Redard's gun. But he scorned the unfamiliar weapon, and hurled it to the deck. The other coil of rope snaked at lightning speed through the air, and Abbet too was in the toils.

Kellner was screaming hysterically. "Iverson—oh, for God's sake, stop—stop it!"

But Barney, grim-visaged, com-

pleted his job. He gathered in the slack of his lines, and tugged viciously, snarling them hopelessly in his terrible trap.

"That," he said, jerking savagely at the lines, "is for Holger! And that—and that—and that—you murdering swine—that's for the rest of my crew!"

They screamed madly, as the vicious hooks tore through clothing, and ripped the quivering flesh from their bodies. Then Barney picked up Redard's gun again.

"On your feet," he roared. "Back aft, you vile scum!"

He drove them astern, and tied the slack of his lines to a ring-bolt. Then he turned, and walked away contemptuously. For he had no fear of them breaking loose—any one of those deadly hooks would hold a two-hundred-pound, fighting halibut. And there were other things to attend to—sounds of faint voices came up from the hold, where seemingly Holger and the others had been thrown, and some of them were still alive.

Signals were coming from the cruiser, which Barney answered by a call that brought the doctor and a boarding officer. When the wounded had received attention, the officer looked grimly at Barney's prisoners.

"You've got a neat job ahead of you there, Doc," he said. "Getting those awful hooks out of them—before we put them in front of a firing squad. And you, Skipper," turning to Barney. "I guess you've been off the air all afternoon, but Naval Headquarters have been trying to contact you—a job on the other side, I shouldn't wonder!"

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The Safari Feared the Man-Wolf But a

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Leinsdorf crashed into the brush, his flashlight pointing the way

## CHAPTER I

### *Son of Siva*

**P**ACK elephants, laden with supplies for the five white men and lone girl, waited for the sun to drop beyond the Rajmahal Hills before trumpeting their version of taps. As night closed in, turning the jungle fastness from vivid green to utter blackness, native beaters drew back to the campfires. There they huddled in nervous, apprehensive groups, mumbling incantations to appease pagan gods.

"They're getting jittery," muttered giant Dave Kerry, dark eyes darting toward the natives.

"Don't let on!"

Powerfully built, a veteran explorer, Kerry understood the Indian aborigines. Precisely for that reason

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# Far More Dangerous Wolf Lurked Closer!

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he had been chosen as guide. He leaned forward, spoke again to the others, voice guarded.

"We're in Ranigan territory now."

The girl's eyes flashed.

"Then we must be near *him!*"

Lips parted and slightly moistened, she stood up, head tilted as though she were harkening to a voice none of the others could hear. Clad in jodhpurs, open-collared linen shirt and jacket, she appeared more alluring, lovelier than ever to Bruce Jordan.

He sprang to her side, ignoring the skeptical glances of his three colleagues. Their cold, factual eyes followed him as he put his hand on her shoulder.

"Joan!" It was an admonition. He didn't want to heighten the uneasiness of the natives. But the girl wasn't listening.

"The natives must know we're near him," she declared in a strained voice. She looked toward the huddled groups. "Bruce, ask them. I've got to know!"

Jordan hesitated. Though he had organized the *safr*, he depended upon Kerry for advice. The explorer shook his head curtly, gesturing for Bruce to get Joan Chandler to sit down again. Bruce nodded, urged her to the camp-chair, then crouched at her side, holding her small hand reassuringly.

"Listen," whispered Dave Kerry. "Those natives go primitive at a minute's notice. Right now they've got their ears to the ground. Shirsi, our Number One boy, will tell us why later." His tone grew stern. "Whatever we do we must go along making them think we're just on a hunting expedition!"

"Aren't we, though," laughed Carl Leinsdorf, "a new kind of hunt?" He sounded amused.

**P**ROFESSOR HENRI PENSON frowned, his chubby face wreathing. Usually a talkative Frenchman, he now kept mum. His books on anthropology were required reading at

leading universities. A short, pudgy man, the trek through the dense forests had taxed him more than it had the others. He had grown less congenial as time went on, especially toward Kerry, whose endurance and physical prowess he envied and resented.

He turned to Ralph Morely, ethnologist, who spoke sharply to Leinsdorf.

"This is no laughing matter, Carl!"

"Not the way those blackguards are behaving," muttered Kerry. "If they so much as guessed what we really are after—" he jerked his thumb meaningfully—"they'd scoot."

Professor Penson spoke scornfully.

"I zought M'sieur Kerry could handle dose natives like zat!" He snapped his fingers.

"Cut it out," ordered Bruce Jordan suddenly. A psychiatrist with a brilliant future, he could appreciate the tension girding his *safr*. "Kerry knows what to do. If those pagans caught on to our game they'd panic—leave us flat."

A grim smile tugged at Kerry's lips. He glanced appreciatively at the tall, well-built Jordan.

"I had another reason for playing it out this way."

"Ah-h, I begin to see," exclaimed Leinsdorf, one of the best known sociologists in America. "You're waiting for the natives to confirm Miss Chandler's—er—premonition. You want them to warn us when we have reached the stamping grounds of the alleged phantom creature who behaves like a wolf and is said to resemble a man."

His blue eyes twinkled in amusement. A realist, he had no truck with anything smacking of the superstitious. He had joined the expedition primarily to disprove Joan Chandler's claims. But his humor had become irksome.

"A true scientist has a tolerant mind, *n'est-ce pas?*" asked Professor

Penson caustically of nobody in particular.

Leinsdorf was ready with a retort, but Jordan rose. "We seem on edge," he said reproachfully. "So let's forget personalities."

Kerry glared at the professor.

"He's got the jitters. He's half-scared we'll meet up with this phantom wolf and half-scared we won't."

"That's enough, Kerry," Jordan said sternly, a glint in his eye. Nearly as tall as Kerry, he possessed trimmer lines. His chin boasted a firmness that could be backed up by his athletic frame should an occasion warrant.

Ralph Morely broke the tenseness.

"A night's rest is best for what ails us. Let's turn in."

**D**URING the interval, they had ignored Joan. Jordan looked at her. She sat rigidly, eyes unwinking, her delicate features set in a serene



mask. She appeared completely oblivious of the ragging about her. The lull suddenly turned all eyes to her.

"Joan!" hoarsely from Bruce Jordan.

She answered hollowly.

"He is near. I felt it!"

Leinsdorf snorted.

"Come, come, Miss Chandler. This will never do!" His unswerving stand, refusing to accept her reactions in a scientific light, was based purely on his sociological studies. "You must be fair."

Jordan whirled.

"Listen, Carl. Are you trying to refute all medical and psychiatric science? Are you going to continue

to disregard the accepted fact that telepathy does exist?" His words stung. "You're the one who is unfair."

"I'm not refuting telepathy. I know it *does* exist. I've had chances to study its phenomena. Miss Chandler's case is different."

Morely spoke quietly.

"Science supports her, even to the psychic attractions. We all admitted that at the start, except you. No matter how implausible it sounds there are actual records which prove that two people, however distant from one another, have had telepathic communications."

"*Oui*," added Professor Penson. "Not only zat, Carl, it is an established fact zat such communications are more frequently found between unidentical twins. Bruce, here, can quote you any number of ausoorities from Freud down in support of his zeory."

Leinsdorf scowled, stuck stubbornly to his point.

"I'm not arguing against Freud, Adler and Jung. I'm tackling Miss Chandler's case from the negative side. She must prove herself or I won't take any stock in her story!"

His statement was abruptly punctuated by a petrifying howl from the jungle blackness. Joan jumped to her feet at once. The men were rooted, motionless. The howl grew more piercing, louder. Blood drained from Leinsdorf's chunky face.

The cry was like the yap of a wolf—yet different!

It was higher-pitched. More throbbing, articulate. But it was undeniably wolfish. It rose poignantly to a crescendo, then as though in anger, it trailed off to a growl that left the jungle stillness tingling.

"Lord!" gasped Morely. "I'd swear it couldn't be a wolf!"

Dave Kerry rasped in a low voice.

"No wolf I ever heard howled that way."

Carl Leinsdorf stared in the direction of the cry. In his analytical way,

he spoke audibly, trying to fathom what he had heard.

"The tempo, the underlying cadence, certainly was animalistic. Yet it had a human quality. Was it the howl of a frightened beast, or was it uttered to instill fear in us?"

"Quiet!" ordered Kerry, looking toward the natives. "They must have heard you!"

He wheeled, hurried to the natives, who groveled, heads touching the damp soil. Kerry barged into their midst, shouting in Hindu, but they continued to lament. The explorer beckoned to the Number One boy, Shirsi, took him aside.

Bruce put an arm about Joan, watching Kerry, the natives. She laid her head on his chest, quivering. He was aware suddenly that he, too, had not wholly believed her. All those months he had been humoring her, finally deciding to investigate her strange story. But it had been as a doctor of psychiatry that he had financed the expedition.

**J**OAN had come to him for professional help, had told of her amazing background. She was one of twins born in the teakwood forests near the foothills of the Himalayas, where her father managed a mill. When she and her brother were two years old, her parents started on a journey to Calcutta. During a violent storm, natives deserted the party. Only the *ayah*, the Hindu governess, stayed.

"One night the camp was attacked by wolves. Father and mother were killed. My *ayah* fled for safety, and when she returned with native Sentals at daybreak, she found me—my brother was gone!"

"He might have been overlooked," Bruce had suggested.

Joan denied it.

"The Sentals had been thorough in their search. In Calcutta the *ayah* told what had happened, and it brought to mind legends of children being raised by wolves. When my

grandparents arrived from America to get me, they investigated rumors of a ghost-wolf scampering in the wake of a hungry pack. But they never found it."

Bruce had listened, his interest fired. He knew of one authentic case history in which two native Indian children had lived with wolves. These children had been discovered by a Mindapore missionary who rescued them. Then there was the other rumor of baboons suckling a child in South America.

"I've come to you," Joan explained, "because I'm being plagued by nightmares. I seem back in India with— with my brother!" Her voice had faltered.

"You mean as a two-year-old?"

"No! As I am. And my brother is leader of a pack of ferocious wolves!" Sheer horror held Joan taut. She went on, ashen but determined. "It began six months ago, and has been recurring more frequently."

"It may be a flashback of your earlier memories."

She smiled wanly.

"There's more to it, I'm afraid. I've checked with sources in India. North of the Demondar River and in the Ranigan country there's a dense jungle. Natives keep away from it. They say the pagan god, Siva, the destroyer, has a son there, who is part man, part wolf—a phantom wolf!"

"Do you think—" Bruce Jordan studied her critically.

"I don't truly know what I think. But I do know one thing. My parents were killed in that forest, and my governess found me there!"

Professional curiosity first compelled Jordan to delve into Joan's story. Soon the reason became personal. She had begun to mean happiness to him. But her own peace of mind was rooted beyond the veil of India. He made inquiries at responsible sources, gathered data until little by little his information assumed factual proportions.

## CHAPTER II

*Human Fangs*

BRUCE enlisted the aid of Henri Penson whose anthropological studies would be helpful. Morely had been Henri Penson's choice. The Frenchman described him as level-headed, a

balance for Bruce, who was emotionally involved, and a check to Penson's impulsiveness. Then it was decided to get another man who brooked no ideas such as Joan's story suggested. Leinsdorf was that man.

"We need a guide, a man who knows India and whom we can trust," Bruce told them. And Leinsdorf mentioned Dave Kerry, noted explorer.

"He's flat broke. His exhibits died, or the jaded public was tired of what he 'brought-back-alive.' He'll want good money, though."

As soon as he learned the details, Kerry was eager to join. He was ready to take along a complete movie outfit, but the others wouldn't hear of it. He drew a flat salary.

"This is strictly a scientific venture—with a personal possibility," Jordan told him bluntly. "No publicity at all. That's ethical. If we do locate this Wolf-Man, we will treat him as a human phenom, and if he is Miss Chandler's twin brother, we'll do our best to fit him into the social picture where he belongs."

"Then you'd better let me handle this," said Kerry. "We've got to keep this Wolf-Man business a secret. The Hindus won't help otherwise. For all intents and purposes we're just on an ordinary *safr*—big game hunters. Right?"

The others agreed, and Kerry immediately began to supervise the expedition. Until the unholy howl, he had done remarkably well. His talk

with Shirsi was brief. He hustled back to Joan and the others, spoke crisply to the girl.

"Seems as if you've got something on your side."

Leinsdorf interrupted hotly.

"Speak up, man!"

"We're in Wolf-Man territory. Those natives swear the howl came from the Wolf-Man himself. They say he's Siva's son, that the person who looks upon him dies a horrible death!"

"Bosh!" cried Leinsdorf. "And I'm going to prove it!"

He raced to his tent, picked up his automatic, a pack of clips for the gun and his flashlight. Before anyone realized what he had in mind Leinsdorf was streaking in the direction of the howl. Kerry shouted to him.

"Hey, you! Don't go in there!"

Leinsdorf didn't answer. He ran to the brush, crashed through, his light pointing the way. Bruce Jordan spun around to face Morely and the explorer.

"After him. He'll get lost!"

Kerry cursed under his breath, pivoted, going to the supply pack. He seized a flood-lantern, tested it. A turmoil at the native end of camp caused him to halt, look there. He handed the lantern to Morely, yelled to Shirsi. The boy hurried over.

"They go 'way, *Sahib*."

"I'll take care of them," Kerry barked. "You go with *Swami* Morely. Find Leinsdorf!" He ran toward the fleeing natives.

Shirsi and Ralph Morely headed into the maze of bamboo, mango and blackwood. Joan started to go after them. Jordan lunged, grasped her by the wrist, held her firmly.

A wild gleam shone in her eyes. Silently, she struggled. Bruce Jordan realized he wasn't fighting Joan. He was battling an overwhelming impulse which had mastered the girl—an impulse urging her to find out the truth for herself.

He succeeded in getting her to her cot. As he seated her there, still hold-

ing her, the jungle turned into a pandemonium.

**E**LEPHANTS roared, ripping free of their stakes and thundering off. A tiger growled nearby. Frightened samburs and swamp deer dashed through the forests. Jackals awoke, snarling as they retreated deeper into the darkness. Jungle fowl, flushed from their roosts, fluttered and squealed in confusion.

Jordan called to Professor Penson, who had remained near the campfire. At every noise and sound he twisted his head nervously to look and listen. Owl-eyed, he came to Joan's tent, glanced at her.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he said. "Ze is distraught!"

"Don't let her out of here," said Jordan. "Tie her to the cot if you have to!"

She was trembling, having conquered the wild impulse. She lay on the blankets, her slim form wracked by convulsive sobs. Jordan was worried about her, but was also concerned with the native desertion and what it was likely to mean.

He sped to the edge of the camp clearing. Kerry was returning, sweat glistening on his face and brow. He spat an oath.

"Those black heathens ran out on us, Jordan. And we've got Leinsdorf to thank for it."

Bruce Jordan ignored the accusation. His main job was to get the ethnologist back to camp.

"Morely and Shirsi are liable to miss him," he said. "It's up to us, Kerry!"

"O k a y. We'd better separate, then," advised the explorer. "If either of us runs into him, fire two rounds. Shirsi will understand and bring Morely in with him."

He snatched up a flashlight, started off, muttering in rage. His beam of light raked the ground in front of him. Jordan set off at an angle. The mushy ground squashed under his

heavy boots. Branches lashed at his face, chest and legs. Twigs crackled like gun-shots as he broke them off. A wild pheasant zoomed up, flittered across his path like a banshee.

Plodding along, he heard the others faintly. Once his foot snagged on exposed roots of a giant rhododendron plant. He teetered for a fraction of a second, regained his balance. A nauseating stench struck his nostrils. He stopped, his light beam falling on brackish water in a stagnant pool. Avoiding it, he kept on.

A grotesque shape reared up at him. He whirled by instinct. A claw tagged his shoulder, spinning him half-around. His shirt was ripped. Sharp nails stroked his flesh, stinging like liquid fire.

His light blinded the wildcat. It snarled, cowered, growled once, then slunk off into the brush. Jordan felt blood trickling down his arm, but paid no attention to it. Head lowered, he ploughed forward. He glanced back toward the camp. Dense vegetation hid it from him.

Then the unmistakable growl of a wolf chilled him. His heart thumped against his ribs, his breath came faster. He scoured the space in front of him. Something was slipping off into the darkness. His muscles hardened. Whatever it was it seemed to be crawling on all fours like a human being!

He bounded forward, hoping to corner the thing. But fast as he moved he was pathetically slow compared to his quarry. It vanished almost under the beam of his light. But the uncanny knowledge of having seen a human form crouched animal-fashion burned through his mind.

He examined the ground where the thing had been. The soil was marred as though a body had slithered along. Jordan trailed it, scarcely daring to think.

The trail led him to a swamp. His boots sank into the mud as he stepped into it. A grating, clacking

noise froze him. He whipped his flashlight around. A long, narrow snout, its upper jaw knobbed, oozed out from the slime and muck, clacking hungrily.

**J**ORDAN recognized India's man-eating crocodile, the gaval. Its dull orbs were partially shut, reflecting the glare of light. But it came forward, intent on him.

Springing back, his boots making a sucking noise, Jordan crashed through the tangled web of low-hanging branches. He hacked with his arm, driving hard with his legs. His lungs felt afire as he lunged through to a clearing.

There a cool breeze soothed the pounding of his blood at the temples. He fanned his flashlight in a circle. He was about to push toward the fringe of trees ahead when a terrifying shriek congealed him.

The cry reached an agonizing pitch before dying to a choking, gasping gurgle. It stopped as abruptly as it had begun.

Jordan stood stock-still, judging the direction of the cry. In the two weeks of travel through the jungle, he



had learned how tricky sounds could be. The breeze, the clearing in which he found himself, could pick up a sound and amplify it many times.

Nevertheless, he judged the direction of the breeze, then jogged through the knee-high grass. Hardly had he taken a dozen strides when an ungodly screech of vengeance rose shrilly from the same place the shriek had come from.

He halted, his brain reeling. Was it his imagination, or had he actually detected a human quality in that gloating howl of glee?

It was repeated, more forcefully than before. Jordan's mouth went dry. No doubt lingered in his mind now. The notes had been fully articulated, had been made by human vocal chords!

But the shriek—what had it meant? Jordan propelled himself into the densely wooded sector. As he neared it, he had the insidious sensation of being spied upon. He whirled, heard the crash of the others heading for the same place.

Bounding forward, he saw the cone of light. It served as a beacon, guiding him. He approached warily, every fibre taut. The howling creature might be lurking behind the screen of foliage. The cone of light came from a flashlight stuck in a clump of berry twigs.

He sprang to it, tense, ready to meet any challenge, be it from man or beast—or a combination of both!

A fallen branch, evidently yanked down during the brief struggle, lay near the upturned flashlight. Jordan glanced at it, stiffened.

The branch leaves partially covered a body. He directed his own beam at the head and shoulders of the man. He recoiled, aghast.

It was Carl Leinsdorf!

The sociologist's eyes bulged from their sockets, as though the last thing they had seen had provoked astonishment. His mouth was agape, lower jaw twisted grotesquely.

Jordan dropped to his knees, revulsion churning his stomach. Blood poured from a horrid gash on the dead man's throat. The jugular vein was mascerated, the flesh around it was gouged. The windpipe, too, had been severed. Now he knew why the shriek had ended in a choking, gasping gurgle!

He bent down closer, scrutinized the wound. What he saw caused his

pulse to hammer. No wolf's fangs were responsible for that outrage. Teeth marks were distinct, the contour unmistakably human!

Jordan drew upright, revolted by the gruesome thought. Leinsdorf had been set upon by a human being gone cannibalistic!

He turned as the others came nearer. He shouted to them. Dave Kerry broke through first. From another direction Morely and the native boy arrived. The boy stayed back, frightened.

"It's Carl!" cried Morely, staring.

The explorer sucked in a deep breath, went down to one knee. He examined the wound, got up a few seconds later, his face betraying the rushing thoughts he dared not voice. He began to scour the soil, mouth compressed to a thin line.

Finally, he stopped. He pointed his flashlight at a depression in the ground a short distance from Leinsdorf's body. Kerry barked curtly for Shirsi. The native showed the whites of his eyes as he obeyed Kerry's command.

They gabbled in Hindi for a moment. The boy nodded vigorously after a prolonged study of the mark in the soil.

"What is it?" demanded Morely.

Kerry glanced at him, then at Bruce Jordan. When the explorer spoke, his voice was harsh.

"You might as well know it now," he said. "The wound is typical of those left by a wolf. But no wolf, as far as I know, ripped Leinsdorf's throat like that. And this print Shirsi and I have examined is patterned like that of a human foot!"

Jordan had deliberately waited for Kerry to substantiate what he himself had thought. Now that it had been verified, he wondered how he could tell Joan Chandler that the Man-Wolf was a killer!

Kerry went on speaking.

"Whatever it is, it showed plenty of animal cunning. Yeah, I know you want me to say it's the Man-Wolf.

Well, I won't until I'm sure. But I'll say this. The reasoning power behind this trap was almost human in its cleverness."

Jordan frowned.

"Cleverness—how?"

"Look here." Kerry jabbed his forefinger at the fallen branch. "The— the thing baited Leinsdorf as you and I would bait a fish or set a trap. See, this branch was yanked down to make a noise to draw attention here. Leinsdorf probably went to see what it was all about. As soon as he got close enough, he was ripe for the attack. He didn't have a chance to use his automatic."

The gun lay almost at the tips of Leinsdorf's outstretched fingers. Jordan got down on his haunches to study the print a yard away from the gun. To his critical eye it appeared as though the creature who made the depression had overdeveloped bones in the toes and initial arch of the foot. The metatarsal ridge and three rows of phalanges reminded him of a gorilla.

Rising, he spoke meditatively.

"If that creature has the ability to reason, to plan—" He stopped short, shaken by his own thought. "Let's get back to camp."

Morely stared at him in surprise.

"Bruce, you don't for a minute think *he*—whatever it was—decoyed us from the camp to get at Joan?" His voice was strained, cracking at the finish.

Kerry cut in before Bruce Jordan could reply.

"One way to find out is to get back. Wait though—" He turned to Shirsi. "You carry *Swami* Leinsdorf's body."

They turned, Kerry leading them toward the camp. Jordan was at his heels. With the natives gone, Leinsdorf dead, and murder on the loose around them, anything was likely to happen. Hardly had the idea germinated in his mind when an unearthly series of howls and cries filled the night air.



## CHAPTER III

*Jungle Trap*

THEN came the sporadic *crack-crack* of exploding bullets. Only the professor had a gun. The white men halted. Above the hideous screeching was the yelp they had heard when Leinsdorf was

struck. It cleaved the ominous howls, reached them distinctly. They stared at one another, letting each know that they identified the horrible *whar-r-rr, whurr* of the phantom wolf!

Sweat oiled Jordan's face, rolled down his neck. He urged Kerry along faster. Morely, behind them, stumbled, fell headlong. Jordan turned but Morely jumped up at once, said he was all right, for them to keep going.

An eon seemed to pass. Jordan's legs felt tons heavier as he thrust them forward. A prayer turned his lips. He wanted to reach camp before it was too late.

It was no more than a few minutes later, actually, when they came in sight of the line of three tents, the pile of stores and the flickering fire. The scene was shot with fleeting dark streaks. Ominously absent was the gunfire.

Kerry yelped suddenly.

"Look—they got at the stores!"

The foodstuffs were scattered over the whole clearing. Wolves were yapping at the preserved meats, nosying into boxes of dried fish, crackers, marmalade, spreading them helter-skelter.

Jordan looked toward Joan's tent, concerned only with her safety. At his side, Morely blurted, extended his arm just as Jordan himself spied it.

"Good Lord!" came hoarsely from Morely. "It's—it's that *thing!*"

The skin at the back of Jordan's scalp crawled. His eyeballs threat-

ened to pop from their sockets. By the light of the fire he made out the human form, crouched like any of the wolves. The body was hairy in spots, blotchy where mud covered the tanned but undeniably once-white flesh.

"That's a *man!*" croaked Kerry. "I swear it is!"

"Joan!" burst from Bruce Jordan. "He's at her tent!"

He ran as he had never run before. He yanked at his automatic, then fired squarely into the midst of the voracious pack. The Man-Wolf spun, half-sitting, teeth unsheathed in a baffled snarl. Light from the campfire revealed eyes defying description. Bright and piercing, like glinting agates, they were widely spaced under a high, broad forehead.

A curt yap from its drooling mouth spat at the trio of white men. The wolves tensed, as though to a given signal. Another sharp cry caused them to herd together into a pack. Wedge-formed they sped toward the Man-Wolf. Instantly, the wolfish creature assumed leadership!

They vacated the camp in an amazing short time — scurrying into the blackness of the jungle like so many spectres.

Jordan blasted a volley at their tails, but only the resounding echo of the gunfire returned his fire. They raced to the center tent. Jordan thrust aside the flap, his heart missing a beat.

**J**OAN lay on the cot, deathly pale. His hand flew to her wrist, found the pulse. The rhythmic spurt of life reassured him. The girl stirred, moaned fitfully, then sat bolt upright, a low cry of terror bursting from her lips.

Seeing Bruce Jordan, she threw herself into his arms, trembling. He spoke comfortingly.

"You're all right, Joan."

She sobbed brokenly.

"Bruce—Bruce! He was here. I had dozed off when shots awoke me." A shudder raked her from head to

foot. "And I saw *him*—running among a milling pack of wolves. I—must have fainted!"

"We saw him too," said Jordan. His teeth ground together. He was wondering where the professor could be.

From the outside, Kerry rasped an oath. They went out of the tent. Morely jumped toward them, blocking the way. He jerked his head for Joan to stay back.

"It's Henri," he managed to tell Jordan. "*Horrible!*"

"Stay here, Joan," Jordan snapped.

He released her, moved swiftly toward the rear of the next tent, where he had last seen the mannish creature. Dave Kerry was crouching at the side of the sprawled body of Professor Penson. Any personal differences he may have had with the professor were gone.

"If I didn't see this with my own eyes," he said to Jordan, "I wouldn't believe it!"

Bruce Jordan steeled himself, looked down at the second victim. A more thorough job had been done on the professor. Face, head and neck were mutilated. Blood dripped from raw chunks of torn flesh. One eye was gouged out. Deep grooves in the cheek below it hinted that the wolfish thing was equipped with long nails which he used as talons.

"He must have been doing it about the time we spotted him," exclaimed Kerry. "If I didn't know better, I'd say the native superstition about Siva seeking revenge is working out. First Leinsdorf saw the *thing*, then the professor."

Jordan's voice crackled.

"But you *do* know better. Otherwise we'd all be marked. We saw the Man-Wolf ourselves."

Kerry shrugged, stood up.

"That's what I mean." He faced Jordan squarely, asking. "Do you suppose any of your shots hit home?"

"No. Not from the way he scampered away. Easy about this to Miss

Chandler," he warned. "She's plenty upset."

Kerry swore softly.

"I don't like this business, Jordan. If that science talk about telepathy and psychic phenomena holds good, Miss Chandler is like a magnet. You saw how close that thing was to her tent. Maybe we ought to pull up stakes."

He was interrupted by Joan rushing up, breathless. Her hand flew to her lips as a cry broke involuntarily from her. She had to look away from the professor's features.

Morely came up behind her, shrugging. His efforts to save her the horror of seeing what had happened had been unavailing. He spoke to the two men.

"I had to tell her about Leinsdorf, too. She had every right to know."

Joan spoke hastily.

"And I heard what Kerry wants to do. I don't intend to leave. We came for a specific purpose, and I'll stay until I get my answer one way or another." She tilted her head determinedly.

Bruce tried to persuade her to change her mind. But she shook her head insistently again, appealed to him.

"Don't you see, Bruce, I couldn't go on living with this hanging over me. You must help me—you *must!*"

**T**HE courage she displayed heartened Jordan. He took her hands, pressed them, nodding. His only thought had been about her safety and welfare. He knew how much the truth meant to her.

"We'll stay," he told Dave Kerry.

The explorer shook his head.

"Then I'm not taking any more chances. I'm going to build a trap for Mr. Man-Wolf. With Shirsi's help, I ought to have it ready in short order."

"A trap?" Joan appeared shocked, mystified. "How—how—"

"Leave it to me," smiled Kerry con-

fidently. "Meanwhile, I think someone should stand guard."

"I'll take care of that," exclaimed Jordan.

"Fine! We'll beat old man Siva and his native bugaboo. At the same time we'll bag us a Man-Wolf de luxe." His eyes glittered as he swung around, shouted to Shirsi to get the machetes. "We'll start chopping some bamboo stalks."

As he strode off Jordan turned to Ralph Morely. The ethnologist was standing apart from them, concentrating his attention on the professor's body. The peculiar expression on Morely's face caused Jordan's eyes to narrow.

"You must be dead tired, Ralph," he said. "Better get some sleep while you can."

Morely half-heard him. He hadn't been listening. He came to with a slight start.

"Eh? Oh, all right." He glanced hesitatingly at Joan Chandler, then he patted her on the shoulder. "Good girl!" With that he shuffled off to his tent, head lowered.

Joan whispered.

"Did you see his face?" She shivered. "It made my flesh crawl. Bruce, he's got something on his mind."

"He's just fagged out," said Jordan to allay her fears. "Perhaps you ought to get some shut-eye, too." He escorted her to her tent, put his hand on her chin, lifted it, winking with approval. "Keep it up, Joan." Then he urged her inside and drew the flap closed.

Jordan frowned as he wheeled, looked speculatively at Morely's tent. He could see the ethnologist's shadow on the canvas. The lamp inside was extinguished almost at once.

Rousing himself with a shrug, Jordan tried to understand the abrupt change in Morely's attitude. Morely had been the cool, level-headed man Henri Penson had recommended until Joan had insisted upon staying. Was Morely cracking under the strain?

The jab of premonition dug deeper into Jordan's consciousness as he strode to the fire. He stooped to pile more wood on it. A cylindrical object caught his eye. It gleamed from the smoldering ashes. Jordan quickly plucked the object out, let it fall on the ground at his feet.

Sweat dampened his brow, pebbled his upper lip. When the metal cooled, Jordan inspected it. His heart somersaulted. The cylinder was an empty cartridge shell. After a quick look about him Jordan pocketed it.

He straightened up, his brain gearing to high. Going to the professor's body, he knelt over him. Thanks to his medical training, he was able to check his hunches. Then he began a systematic search of the ground near the body.

His toe snubbed something. He stooped, picked up a slab of preserved meat. A semi-circle at its edge drew his gaze, held it. What he was thinking appeared fantastic, incredible!

He ran a shaky hand through his moist hair. If the line of his reasoning were correct, it explained Ralph Morely's changed attitude. Repugnant as the truth appeared to be, Jordan was forced to admit the logic of it.

Dropping the slab of meat, he pivoted, going to Morely's tent. Instinctively, his hand dropped to the butt of his automatic. He called softly to Morely, waited, but received no answer.

Jordan's scalp tightened. He then pointed his flashlight at the camp cot inside the tent. It was vacant!

Entering, he looked around. At the head of the cot on an overturned box was a tin dish filled with a white liquid. Jordan dabbed at it, didn't have to be told what it was.

**T**HE pattern of events began to unfold in his mind. The milk in the dish definitely bolstered his theories. Taking the dish out he dashed its contents into the fire. The sizzling seemed to go right through him, was a pre-

lude to the anguished plea hurtling from the darkness.

"Jordan! Jordan—help!"

It was Dave Kerry. The shouting stopped. Jordan cast a harried glance at Joan's tent. The cry of help had not awakened her. He darted for the spot where Kerry was erecting the trap. Just then the blood-curdling howl shrilled again eerily.

He plunged through the brush, caught the unmistakable panting and scuffling of a bitter struggle. His light beam coned through the darkness toward the ravine. At the bottom, near the partially built trap, he discerned two figures locked in savage embrace. Even as he watched, they fell to the ground, rolling, kicking, each trying to get the upper hand.

Jordan's light drilled at Ralph Morely's back. Kerry was thrusting him off with a boot planted against the ethnologist's chest. A gun in the explorer's hand spouted an orange-red flame. Morely seemed to hang suspended in air. Then he crumpled, body twitching as life ebbed.

It happened so fast Bruce Jordan had had no chance to interfere. He slid down into the gully. Kerry scrambled up, blood gushing from a head wound. His voice was thick with emotion.

"He almost got me!"

He yanked out a handkerchief, put it to his wound, stemming the blood. He glanced at Jordan, who was blinking down at the third man to die that night. Kerry started to explain.

"I was working on the trap when suddenly I felt somebody nearby. I saw Morely. He said he'd come to help me. Before I could say anything he slugged me with his gun butt. I went down, yelling for you. It was then that Morely howled like a wolf—came at me with something in his hand."

"Where's Shirsi?" cut in Jordan.

"Out getting some bamboo stalks. The howl must've scared him off. Morely probably figured that out."

"What did he come at you with?"

Dave Kerry brushed the ground with his boots. They struck an instrument not unlike a pair of pliers.

The jaws were serrated with teeth similar in contour to those found in the human mouth. Dried blood shone on the metal.

"Holy Harry!" cried the explorer. "Don't you see it, Jordan? This looks like a man's set of teeth. And that howl. Morely wanted it to seem as though I had been finished off by the Man-Wolf, too!"

**B**RUCE JORDAN leveled his gun steadily, shook his head.

"It won't work, Kerry. I know why Morely came here. He suspected you were behind Leinsdorf's and the professor's deaths. That milk you put in his tent to lure a cobra there was the last clue he needed."

Dave Kerry's lids drooped.

"You're crazy, man!"

"Don't try that," retorted Jordan icily. "Things stand up too patently. Only you were capable of tracking down Leinsdorf, killing him, hustling back to camp and tossing around the meats to entice the wolves.

"You fixed the fire so that two shells would explode when the wood burned through. When I found the empty shell in the smoldering ashes I got the whole picture. You murdered the professor as you planned to murder every one of us!"

Bruce Jordan's finger tightened on the trigger as Kerry lurched. But it had been a trick. A padded step sounding behind Jordan warned him—too late.

The back of his head seemed to burst. A vicious clout to the base of the brain toppled him. He heard Kerry's gloating voice as he hit the ground.

"Nice work, Shirsi," it said. "Now get *Mem-sahib* Chandler. We've got to work fast."

There was a sibilant reply. Then Jordan lost consciousness.

## CHAPTER IV

*The Man-Wolf*

HE CAME to with his head feeling the size of a diving bell. He groaned as shafts of pain drove agonizingly through his skull. He tried to budge, found himself unable to do anything. He pried his lids apart. The jungle blackness was fading as dawn stroked the eastern horizon.

His eyes riveted on the trap twenty yards from him. A lump clogged his throat, and he tried to speak. The gag stuffed in his mouth almost suffocated him. He realized suddenly that he was tied to a mango tree trunk, just as Joan Chandler was lashed to the bamboo poles inside the trap Kerry had built!

The diabolical scheme was apparent. Kerry was trying to lure the Man-Wolf to Joan. When the creature entered the tent, the trap would be sprung!

Joan's blouse was torn, exposing her tanned shoulder. She had fought Kerry, obviously. Mud streaked her jodhpurs, and her boots were caked with slime. She faced a criss-crossed gate made of rattan strips and reinforced with bamboo. Her back was to Bruce Jordan.

He could see her, but she couldn't see him!

Rage hardened the muscles in Jordan's body. Kerry had been pretty clever. But he had not counted on Morely, then Jordan, discovering him to be the culprit. The teeth marks in the slab of preserved meat had been enough to convince Morely and Jordan that the teeth marks on Leinsdorf and the professor were different.

Kerry's final act, though, was even more devilish. He wasn't going to kill Joan and Jordan himself. He intended to have the pack of wolves do

that, once their leader was captured!

No wonder Kerry had impressed them with the need for strict secrecy! It had been part of his game. The world outside knew the expedition had been on a hunt for wild animals. Kerry would explain that the native desertion had put them at the mercy of the jungle. The hungry wolf pack had killed off the inexperienced among them, and only Kerry himself, explorer that he was, had been able to come out alive—with a prize!

Jordan had no doubt that every move in the plan had been well calculated. In order to capture and bring back the Man-Wolf to America as his own, Kerry had to eliminate the others especially Joan. She, above all, might have claim to the Man-Wolf!

Bruce Jordan tugged on the raw rattan holding him prisoner. He had to get free. He wondered where Kerry and his accomplice, Shirsi, were hiding.

He followed a length of rattan with his eyes. It was connected to the gate release five feet from Joan. It led through the crotch of a neighboring tree, back to a camouflaged clump of bushes. Not until that moment was Jordan aware he too had been camouflaged in order not to frighten off the Man-Wolf.

"The stage is set, Jordan," crowed Kerry. "All actors are on the set except one. He'll be along shortly, I'm betting."

He was referring, of course, to the wolfish creature. His previous experience had taught him how to induce animals to walk into a trap. Confidence flavored Kerry's statement.

"You and your ethics," he snickered. "I'll get international publicity from the deaths of Leinsdorf, Penson, Morely and you. Joan's value lies in the direction you can see now."

His voice was low, gloating. He went on boastfully.

"You fools were going to make a laboratory specimen of the Man-Wolf, get all the credit. I'd get a few thou-

sand bucks only for my trouble. You didn't think I was that stupid, I hope!"

Bruce Jordan couldn't answer, though he strained to shove the gag out of his mouth. Kerry kept talking, getting a vicarious thrill out of the situation.

"No, siree! I had a few ideas of my own. The Man-Wolf will bring me millions. Can't you see every man, woman and child flocking to see this unusual creature. Movies will pay big for a chance to photograph him. Scientists, if they want to study him, will kick through plenty. You and your narrow-minded ethics," he laughed, "would keep him penned up in a private cell for observation and study. I'll give him to the world at a price—and what a price!"

Kerry stopped talking. Jordan also heard the rustling of foliage. He and Kerry were down-wind, the creature making the noise couldn't detect them. A heavy silence ensued.

Then came a growling sound, like the first time. Bruce Jordan heard the Man-Wolf howl. Kerry's trap was going to work!

Twisting his body, Bruce Jordan succeeded in getting his fingers on the empty cartridge shell. Its sharp rim gave him new hope. He contorted himself, began to rub the sharp rim against one of the rattan strands.

**V**EINS stood out on his forehead as he labored noiselessly. He knew Kerry was too absorbed watching the trap to pay any heed to him. Stealthy sounds reached Jordan. The brush some forty yards away parted. A hideous face leered out at Joan.

She stirred, writhing. Then she grew rigid, stared at the creature as he crawled toward her on all fours. A growl came from the drooling mouth. When Joan remained motionless the creature took courage, advanced, sniffing suspiciously.

Reassured, it came to the brink of the ravine, jumped down to the trap!

In spite of the peril to Joan, of his own predicament, Bruce Jordan found himself staring, fascinated by the wolfish creature. It was human, all right! The hairy portions of its body gave it an apish appearance, but it did not stand erect.

It snarled, one hand clawing the earth. It seemed timid, undecided, its behavior typically lupine. Certain it had nothing to fear, it launched itself inside the trap, a yard from Joan!

There was a twanging sound, a snap. The rattan release functioned perfectly. The gate winged shut. Instantly Kerry and the native Shirsi sprang from cover. Shirsi whirled around the trap from the embankment above, fastening the gate.

The caged creature howled in dismay, pinwheeled grotesquely. It uttered a drawn-out howl, bucked at the gate with its sloping shoulders, its head.

Bruce Jordan worked feverishly on the rattan strand, taking his eyes off the yowling creature for a few seconds. The rattan fibers split suddenly. Jordan flung the strand aside, hurriedly began to extricate himself. He was positive Kerry was too absorbed with his captive to heed anything he was doing.

In less than a minute Jordan was free. He looked at the trap. The Man-Wolf was crouching as though to lunge at Joan. With a mighty spring Bruce Jordan catapulted himself at the trap. Bamboo supports crashed as he hit them.

A blasphemous oath spat from the explorer. "Don't touch him or I'll shoot!"

The frightened creature mistook Jordan's appearance as a danger to itself. Roaring wrathfully, it hurtled itself at Jordan. Kerry fired at the same time.

Jordan heard the report as he jumped aside to avoid the Man-Wolf's clutches. In doing that the bullet labeled for Jordan struck the lunging creature in the chest. It shrieked.

Clawing at its chest it tried to tear out the burning slug. Then it slumped to the ground, its piercing eyes turning glassy in death.

Jordan looked up at Kerry. The explorer stood there, dazed, smoke curling from the gun snout. He lifted it slowly, training it on Jordan. A maniacal gleam shone in Kerry's eyes. But he never got the chance to yank the trigger.

Snarls and howls hemmed in Kerry. Shirsi screamed. It took Bruce Jordan a half-second to understand what was happening.

The trap was a boomerang for Kerry. The expression on his fear-lined face showed it.

From all sides came the pack of

It was then that Jordan went into action. On impulse, he dragged the Man-Wolf out of the trap, laid it some yards away. Quickly stepping back to the trap, Jordan righted the bamboo poles. They would be a barrier against any attack from the wolves.

That done, he wheeled to Joan. She had fainted, and he thanked God she had been spared the sight of the terrible onslaught. He removed the gag, freed her, and began to revive her. She came to, stared around her, slowly understanding what had happened.

At that moment the pack cascaded into the ravine. They prowled around the trap, yapping and snarling, then huddled around their dead leader.

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wolves the mannish creature had led. Its cries had been a summons for them to rally 'round to the rescue.

Whirling, Kerry fired at them as rapidly as he could. But the beasts gave no quarter. Kerry retreated. Shirsi raced from the spot. But he didn't get far before his scream heralded the end.

**A**LONE, now, Kerry backed to a tree, tried to climb it. His gun clicked on an empty cylinder. A brown shape sprang viciously at him. He flung his automatic. Fangs tore into Kerry's arm. From another side, a second wolf leaped at him, bore him to the ground.

Jordan had to look away. A terrifying screech from Dave Kerry faded into silence as the wolves piled on him.

Jordan had about given up hope of getting out alive when a volley of gunfire thundered through the forest. Jordan rose, shouted as loud as he could. The wolves slunk off immediately. From a distance came an answer in Oxonian accents.

"Where are you, man?"

A short time afterwards a white man in a pith helmet came up with a squad of native troops. Jordan helped Joan out of the ravine. The man introduced himself as the Commissioner of the district.

"What's been going on?" he demanded brusquely. "The natives sent word you were being attacked by the so-called phantom wolf. They said *Sahib* Kerry wanted help."

"So that's how the natives deserted," murmured Jordan. "Kerry didn't overlook anything except how

the wolves would take to his trap."

Swiftly, Bruce related what had been going on. The Englishman's eyes widened with incredulity. He turned, went down into the ravine to inspect the body of the Man-Wolf.

Jordan led the girl back to camp. Neither cared to talk. They waited for the commissioner to return. He was ten minutes in coming. He looked at Joan, cleared his throat, frowning.

"Your Mr. Kerry certainly would have had a fine prize," he admitted. "That creature is human, no question. Kerry gambled for high stakes — a world reputation that would last as long as civilization does and a handsome fortune. But he lost."

The commissioner couldn't repress a shudder as he remembered the havoc done by the wolves. Bruce Jordan nodded.

"The native scouts must have reported seeing signs of the Man-Wolf, and Kerry scared them with the superstition about Siva, the destroyer. He urged them to get help from you as a verification that we were being attacked by the wolves. The pair of

pliers with the teeth was a device to throw us into a panic—and he succeeded for a time."

The commissioner nodded gravely. He hesitated for a moment, then spoke to Joan.

"Miss Chandler—er suppose that creature was your brother. It's been so long since he was lost, and you were far too young to remember what he looked like." He stopped, then came to the point bluntly. "What I want to know is this—had you any positive means of identification?"

"Yes," Joan asserted. "There was a scar left by a snake bite on his right foot above the ankle. My Father had cut the wound and sucked out the venom."

"Well," the Englishman answered quietly, "there is a scar on the right foot above the ankle, Miss Chandler!"

Joan quivered. Bruce Jordan circled her with his arm. It was all over now. He was taking her home. Never again would she be haunted by the doubt concerning her brother. Jordan vowed that silently as he pressed her closer, protectingly.

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The blade took Silver Jack in the base of his chest

*Blood Was on the Sun and Death in the Wind When the Giant Smith MacThane Rode the Desert Trails to Avenge the Murder of Silver Jack!*

**S**ILVER JACK BINEY was pretty smart, even if he was our sheriff and died before his time. He said, among the hundred other things that folks still jaw around, that the most peculiar thing about a man is what he is. Silver Jack

said that the funniest thing about a merchant is that he likes to trade, a gambler likes to gamble and a killer likes to kill. He said, too, that if a man is good at his calling, he is a good man.

Silver Jack was right, sure as shoot-

ing, sure as death. The MacThane was a smithy because he liked to smith. He was a rattling good smith, too. That was reason enough for folks to call him "The" MacThane. But there were other, bigger reasons. Out of the fierce loyalty of his Scot nature there grew a legend which the men of our town still tell their kids. You can believe it or not, as you wish, but some folks claim that you can still hear the MacThane's anvil ringing through the dark of a night whenever men like Yavapai Ben and his devilish consorts come to town.

This might be a story about Silver Jack alone or the MacThane alone, but it isn't. It is a story about the two together, because they couldn't be parted while they lived, and they can't be parted in death. They came West together on the same bucking seat of the same high-sided Conestoga. They lived the best part of their lives together, bound with an unbreakable bond of mutual respect and understanding between them. But they didn't die together, and that is why there is a story to tell.

Silver Jack was smart, but there were men he met while he lived who were smarter. They were smarter in the way that a trapped fox or a badger in a barrel is smarter than his scot-free brothers. They were deadly-smart. Silver Jack was too much of a tolerant man to cope with their weasel cunning.

When Yavapai Ben and his pack of murder-mean hellions rode in on the lashing tail of a dust blow that had been clawing the Arroyo for three unholy days, they came like the Horsemen of the Apocalypse, riding out of the gloom of hell. They were four evil men on four bleeding, brush-scarred horses, riding through the swirling yellow fog of dust.

Silver Jack saw them as they passed the County Sheriff's Office and knew them instantly for what they were. He noted the set of their guns, the way each man turned his head fur-

tively as though expecting to be shot at. The silver-haired, silver-mustached sheriff saw them as four bad men who would some day grace a gallows if fate let them live so long.

The MacThane saw them when they passed the door of his smithy. He paused in his work long enough to notice that their horses were badly in need of shoes, that one had a broken cinch ring and another a bent bit shank.

**I**T WAS typical of Yavapai Ben and his crew that they left their drooping, thirsty horses to huddle tails to the wind while they washed the dust from their own throats at Donovan's saloon. What the MacThane did was just as typical. He laid down his sledge and let his iron grow cold while he went out into the inferno of dust and watered the horses, one by one, at the livery stable trough.

Silver Jack paused on his way into the saloon.

"You've done a kindness, Douglas," he shouted above the howling wind.

The MacThane crashed his huge right fist into his palm and roared.

"They're unfeelin' brutes, leavin' the beasties suffer while they carouse. You'd better beware o' such men, Jock."

"Stick to your forge an' leave sherrifin' to me!" Silver Jack said with a chuckle.

The MacThane went back to his work, but his mind was uneasy. As the might of his arms forged glowing metal in to useful shapes, he couldn't help but think how desolate life would be without Silver Jack. He thought of their years together, of the hardships they had faced, of how Silver Jack had taken to enforcing the law not because he liked the work, but because, in that wild time, no other man was willing.

He thought, too, of Yavapai Ben and his ilk—the human drones whose idleness led them into deviltry. The MacThane believed that a man's mission

on earth was useful work, that there would be time enough in eternity for resting. Like the strong men of all eras, his philosophy was simple because he had no fears. He was a smith, through and through, even to his hair which was the color of golden-hot metal, and the hue of his eyes was the blue of well-tempered gun steel. Yet he was no automaton, the MacThane. The warmth of his heart and his dry Scottish humor made him the best loved man in our town.

That evening, when Silver Jack came to the MacThane's house for their nightly game of checkers, he did not lay his guns aside as usual. In answer to the question in the Scot's blue eyes, he spoke softly.

"Stacey just rode in from down Arroyo. Says he found Placer Sam Willoughby murdered in his cabin. The killers took every ounce of dust the old man had, then slit his throat with a skinning knife."

MacThane's rugged face turned stern as judgement in the pooling yellow lamplight. He let his hand fall on the checker board, scattering the pieces.

"The murderers!" he muttered.

"The storm has covered the killers' sign." Silver Jack went on as he rearranged the board. "There's no proof, and they know it."

"Proof!" MacThane snorted. "What more d'ye need, mon? No one of us would do such a bloody thing."

"I'm a sheriff, and I need proof. I'll get it, too."

"How, Jock?"

**S**ILVER JACK sighed thoughtfully and crowned a black king.

"If I know their kind, and I do, they won't be happy unless they're gambling. If I know Donovan's games, which I do, they'll lose. Now if they pay off in dust, I'll have my proof, because Sam's diggings are the only place in a hundred miles where a man could get placer gold and plenty of it."

"But they're four, an' you're one, Jock. Ye'll be needin' help."

"Play and keep shut, you muscle-bound Scot." Silver Jack said with a grin. "What I need most is your help in killing time. They'll be well-liquored in another hour, and unless I'm wrong they'll be gambling their filthy shirts away. Play, Douglas!"

"They'll no escape, Jock?" MacThane asked anxiously.

"Not while the dust keeps blowing. They wouldn't get twenty miles."

"Then I'll play, an' no doubt I'll beat you as usual."

They played for an hour to a six-game draw, and though they usually played ten rounds, Silver Jack pushed away from the table. He looked at his watch.

"It's time I was going. They'll be liquored up by now."

MacThane stood hurriedly and reached for his cap.

"I could do wi' a wee drap, mysel'," he said.

"No, Douglas. This is my job just as yours is smithing."

The Scot snorted noisily.

"Whoosh, now!" he said, "If you were as good a mon at your job as I at mine, I wouldn't worry. Let's go."

Yavapai Ben and his dark-skinned breed consorts were liquor-ugly and inflamed with the bad fortune they were having at cards when the MacThane and Silver Jack came in. The saloon was crowded with men waiting out the storm. The floor was thick with powdery dust so that when a man walked he was enveloped knee-high in a cloud of it. There was white dust on the bartop, and on the brass lanterns that swung from the ceiling beams.

Dust trickled into every fold of clothing and clung to sweaty skin like a plague of the itch. Tempers were short because of it, and men drank incessantly to wash their raw throats clean. To top all was the stench of the place, for the windows were shut tight against the storm. It smelled, as

the MacThane remarked to Silver Jack when the two bellied up to the bar, like a whiskey barrel full of unwashed sox.

Silver Jack nursed his drink and watched the pile of chips in front of Yavapai Ben shrink, watched the house dealer's fingers tremble a little each time he spun the cards across the table. Yavapai Ben was chunky as a fattened beef. The flush of Indian red on his features had deepened to a livid, sweaty hue. His mashed nose and crow-black hair which dropped in long, straight braids from behind each ear, gave him the appearance of a fat, predatory vulture.

The beady Apache eyes of his men followed his every move as hawk nestlings watch their mother, waiting for a carrion morsel to be crammed down their maws. They were not handsome, as breeds often are, but only evil. The dark and the light blood that mingled in their veins was the murkiest dregs of two great racial pools. They were bad, not because of the color of their skins, but because they lacked souls.

"I dunna like the look of them." MacThane whispered. "And they care not a hoot whether you're here or gone."

"They know the storm has covered their sign," Silver Jack explained. "They're nervy scoundrels, and the sooner they're jugged the better—if they're the ones."

"Can ye, doubt it, mon?"

Silver Jack shook his head. It was easy to imagine blood on their swarthy hands.

**A** FEW minutes later an oath cracked from Yavapai Ben's lips. The saloon grew still, and you could hear the howl of the wind and the swish of sand in the eaves outside. Yavapai Ben came to his feet and glowered down at Donovan's white-faced dealer. His three outriders sat tense, thumbs hooked in their beaded cartridge belts. Yavapai Ben's voice

had in it the spine-tingling yelp of the Apache war cry.

"Our dust, all of it, against your whole stinkin' bank!" he yelled. "We cut once with a new deck. High card takes all."

The dealer's face was ghastly in the green glow of his eye shade. His glance flickered to where old man Donovan stood. Donovan, who owned the saloon, raised a finger in assent. Yavapai Ben dug a rawhide poke from inside his shirt and plunked it down.

"This is it!" Silver Jack whispered to the Scot. "They're gambling with a dead man's dust!"

The dealer broke the seal on a fresh deck. Yavapai Ben snatched it from his hands, riffled the cards a few times, then slammed the deck down.

"Cut!" he snarled.

The dealer's supple white fingers reached out and hesitated over the pack. Tension became a tangible, electrifying thing in the crowded saloon. Men shrank away from the table or hunched deep in their chairs. Some of them hurried out the door, preferring the lash of gale-driven dust to the eminent risk of lead.

Silver Jack moved in easily with the MacThane not far behind. With a jerky, nervous gesture, the dealer cut. Yavapai Ben's breath hissed in his teeth when he saw the card. No one doubted, from the curdling rage that contorted his face, that Donovan's dealer had drawn an ace.

Yavapai Ben's chunky paws dropped toward his guns, then hesitated. He seemed for the first time to become aware of the sheriff's presence. Silver Jack chose that moment to speak.

"Keep 'em high, Ben. You're under arrest!"

Ben whirled, his red-shot eyes narrow. He held his hands stiffly away from his sides.

"What for?" he growled.

"Murder." Silver Jack told him as he drew a gun, "You slit Placer Sam's throat and stole his dust."

"That's a lie!" Yavapai Ben snarled.

"You're in on this crooked game, you two-bit lawman!"

Silver Jack smiled thinly.

"I'll talk to Donovan about his games later. Right now there's murder on my mind. Are you coming peaceful?"

Yavapai Ben hesitated, his eyes sweeping the room. His three long-riders sat rigid in their seats. Then Ben seemed to make up his mind. He raised his hands high but close to his ears.

"It's a dirty frame, but I'll come," he snarled.

"Drop your guns and kick 'em over here," Silver Jack ordered.

Ben obeyed, keeping his movements slow and cautious. First one gun, then the other hit the sawdust. He toed them over to Silver Jack.

"The rest of you do the same," Jack said.

For one tiny instant his glance strayed from the big breed's face. But that was time enough. Ben's hand darted to the back of his neck, then flipped toward the sheriff. The swish of the flying knife was a faint echo of the howling wind outside. The blade took Silver Jack in the base of his chest.

He knelt in the dust, retched, then pitched forward on his face.

**A** SIGH went through the room. No one moved except the breeds, who leaped to their leader's side with guns drawn. MacThane stood rigid, his unbelieving eyes on Silver Jack's body. A moment ago the man had breathed, had moved and talked. Now he lay in pooling blood—not a man any more, but a charnel thing, fit only for the grave.

The Scot dropped to his knees by the dead man's side. He opened his mouth and tilted back his head. The sound that poured from his throat was never heard in Donovan's saloon before or since. It swelled forth in a rising wail and had in it the howling loneliness of the coyote, the trumpet-

ing anguish of a wounded moose and the death cry of a wolf-slashed antelope. It struck the chill of the tomb into the very souls of those who heard it, and they shuddered, trying to imagine what horrible vengeance could ever still a grief so big, so elemental.

Yavapai Ben snatched up his guns and cowered back. Out of the very wildness of his own savage nature, he understood the meaning of that cry. He knew that there was no longer room enough under the same sun for himself and the terrible Scot. Yet, knowing this, he dared not kill the MacThane. He sensed that no grave was deep enough to bury this man's grief. It would reach out from beyond death and drive him mad in the lonely hours on the trail. So Yavapai Ben bolted like a bushed deer, his three dark imps of Hades crowding his heels.

There was not a man in the saloon who dared follow, for some say that Satan himself took a hand in things then. You can believe it or not, as you wish, but the instant Yavapai Ben stepped out into the night, the gale wind dwindled to a sullen whisper.

When the sound of their galloping horses had died away, a few of the more daring ranchers tried to follow, but the storm lashed up in their faces and drove them back again. The devil was riding the wind that night.

Yavapai Ben and his murderous crew were long gone when the MacThane rose to his feet, and with his eyes still on Silver Jack's body, swore in a terrible, choked voice.

"They'll no live ta ken anither sunset, Jock! I vow it!"

Yet through all the dark night hours, the MacThane could do nothing but sit in his smithy and beat his huge fists on the unfeeling iron of his anvil. There was mockery in the sand that hissed through the open door and settled like snow on his head and shoulders. Each passing minute saw Ben and his bunch getting further away, while MacThane did nothing to stop

them. His vow seemed only an empty boast.

As the sand storm dwindled toward dawn, the storm in MacThane's breast waxed till he was half mad with the pain of it. The best years of his best friend's life had been stolen from him, and a man's years were his most precious possessions. How could the MacThane avenge such a terrible crime? Silver Jack himself had said that a man is what he is. The MacThane was only a smithy while Ben and his bunch were professional killers. They were as expert in their infamous calling as MacThane was in his peaceful one. Yavapai Ben, no doubt, could never have smithed a stroke if his worthless life depended upon it. By the same token, MacThane couldn't wield firearms.

He looked down at his huge hands with loathing. They were capable hands for honest work—muscular, broad and thick in the fingers.

"But what good are ye now, when I need ye most?" he choked. "Ye'd break a gun to bits. Ye'd tear a trigger off its pivot. Ye canna avenge the death of a friend, ye useless, beastly things!"

**T**HE pistol was not for the mighty hands of the MacThane, nor was the more delicate art of the knife. Yet, with the coming of dawn, one thing was clear to the grief-stricken Scot—he could never smith another stroke until Silver Jack was avenged. And smithing was the MacThane's whole life. Without it, he was no good on earth.

"I'm a simple smith just as Davy of the Good Book was a simple shepherd," the MacThane told himself bitterly. "Puny little Davy that keeled Goliath wi' a rock no bigger than his fist. He was a good mon, that Davy. If only I was as good a smith as Davy was a shepherd—"

As MacThane muttered the words, a blood-red shaft of dawn sunlight thrust through the murk of circling

dust in the smithy. It struck through the dust, shattered on the far wall where hung a coiled lariat, and bits of it trickled down upon a sledge that leaned in a rack. The dawning sun bathed the rope and the sledge and a coil of heavy iron trace-chain in bloody light.

Slowly, the MacThane rose to his feet. The blood-red dawn sunlight bathed the great bulk of him from head to toe. He was a fearsome figure, like the Avenging Angel himself. The timbers of the smithy shuddered as MacThane thundered.

"Guns! Guns! I'll ha' no need o' the devilish instruments!"

A short time later, MacThane rode out of town on the back of a powerful, thick-withered stallion that could bear the great weight of him. The hoofbeats of his hurrying animal were muffled in the dead-white sand that carpeted the valley, and the light of the blood-red sun clotted and ran, staining the hillsides and touching the dust-whitened foliage with gory color. And as he rode, the MacThane sang, rumbling out a war song that his mailed and mounted ancestors had chanted on their way to battle in old Scotland.

Before it died, the storm had clawed from the earth every sign of the trail left by Yavapai Ben and his murdering riders. But MacThane knew the valley as well as he knew his own anvil. There was one way into Shaman's Arroyo and two ways out. One led steeply over the rocky hills to green grass range in the north.

The other, enticingly easy, was a terrible man-trap. The verdant valley twisted and turned until it finally ended in a steep canyon. The canyon gave on a hundred mile stretch of the dreariest, deadliest alkali desert that ever man had seen. A few had crossed it, but more had left a heat-cooked vulture feast of their bones on the glittering borax flats.

MacThane breathed his mount at the fork of the trail. He studied the

rippled dust with a hopeful eye, wondering which way Yavapai Ben had chosen. If the forces of evil had reigned in the night, the power of good were supreme by day. His glance caught the glitter of polished iron in the dust of the canyon trail.

It proved to be part of a cinch ring that a freak of the storm had left uncovered. MacThane recalled that one of Ben's riders had been traveling with a broken cinch ring, and he whispered a prayer of thanks. Yavapai Ben and his hellions had chosen the wrong way out of Shaman's Arroyo. Unless they were fools, they would turn back, and if they turned back, MacThane would be certain to meet them on the narrow canyon trail.

**I**T WAS noon, or near it, when he sighted the four. They were plodding up the trail with Yavapai Ben leading. Their horses were half dead with thirst, barely able to shuffle one hoof ahead of the other. MacThane reined in and waited. They had not seen him yet because their heads were lowered against the glaring sun.

The iron-muscle Scot must have made an awesome appearance, sitting his horse athwart the trail as rigidly as though both were made of granite. He bore no visible weapon save a short-handled sledge that was tied to a lariat which hung from his saddle horn. Yet when Yavapai Ben saw him, a scant dozen feet away, his mouth slacked open and his black eyes bulged. He and his men looked as though the Avenging Angel himself were blocking their trail.

In a sudden agony of haste, Ben snatched both guns from their holsters and leveled them at the MacThane.

"Get out of the way!" he snarled, his voice pitched high with terror.

MacThane didn't answer. He lifted the sledge from his pommel, and tied the free end of the hide lariat to his left wrist. Then he balanced the strange weapon in his right hand as

though it weighed less than a feather. The breeds watched with complete fascination, but all four held their guns ready.

"Get gone, you crazy Scotchman!" Yavapai Ben snarled again, taking courage from the knowledge that his bullets were faster and deadlier than the Scot's sledge.

MacThane spoke in a voice that rumbled like the crack of doom.

"There's nothing of mercy in the heart of me now, but in the name of dead Jock Biney—will ye return an' stand trial like men?"

Yavapai Ben's dark eyes slitted. He sensed that he must kill or be killed here in the sweltering canyon. His fear of MacThane's ghost was less than his fear of the man, now that the red sun was shining. He fired twice, carefully. As his shots cracked out, there came the splatting of lead as it struck. Two black holes blossomed in MacThane's plaid shirt, both of them over his heart. But the man himself seemed completely unhurt. His booming laugh shook rubble down from the canyon walls.

Yavapai Ben backed away, moaning in terror. His trembling fingers triggered lead while MacThane slowly lifted the hammer over his head.

"Die now, ye black-souled imps o' the Anti-Christ!" the Scot thundered.

The sledge flew from his mighty fist, trailing the rope behind it. Ben's horrified yell died on his lips. His horse whinnied, then bolted at the sudden sight of a bodyless head crimsoning the dust near its hoofs. And the sledge was a gory and gruesome thing as it returned to MacThane's hand, obedient to his tug on the hide lariat.

The three killers pivoted and spurred down the echoing canyon, shooting as they rode. MacThane followed, spinning the sledge in a widening arc until it was a twenty-foot circle of humming death. It whistled down like a gigantic scythe as his great horse overtook the hindmost breed. There was a hollow

sound, like the plop of a ripe melon breaking, and what had been a man a moment before was only a lump of quivering flesh.

Yet as he thundered along through the scorching hail of their lead, MacThane was not entirely invulnerable. A bullet had opened his cheek, from mouth to ear. Another had ripped the cap from his head. His neck was gashed, his left hand bloody. By the time his terrible sledge had tolled off another of the two fleeing killers, he swayed in the saddle like a gale-blown oak.

The last of them stopped at a bend in the canyon, turning to make a desperate stand. MacThane's relentless charge didn't falter, but just as he sent his sledge winging toward its final mark, the breed aimed a careful shot over the crook of his arm. The sledge caved his chest, and he flew from the saddle, dead before touching the ground. The bullet struck MacThane high on the forehead. Blood gushed down into his eyes, and the great bulk of him tottered, then slid to earth where it lay without moving.

**I**T WAS two hours later when a posse set out from town. We followed the MacThane by the wheeling gray buzzards, and many of us turned from the sights we saw—the four grisly things on the clean canyon trail.

When we found MacThane we were sure he was dead from the way his shirt was riddled and torn. But the great pulse of him throbbed in his wrists, and we found that a bullet had furrowed his scalp. MacThane was unconscious, but not dead.

We gave him a quart of Donovan's

best, then three of us tried to lift him, but failed. Three grown men couldn't lift the MacThane!

It was beyond understanding how even my father could weigh so much until we thought to open his shirt. Around his waist, around his chest, completely covering the powerful torso of him was yard upon yard of heavy trace-chain. It covered him snugly in a three-fold thickness and only my father could have borne the weight of so much well-forged iron.

We unwound the chain, and bullets dropped out of the close-fitting links. There can be no doubt that the slugs were fired by Yavapai Ben and his murdering spawns of evil.

My father lived to an age of ninety, and some folks say he didn't die at all. When Quincey's Livery burned at midnight, they claim to have seen Silver Jack standing in the flames with his checker board under his arm. MacThane went in to rescue the horses, and he never was seen again. Some folks claim they heard him talk, while the fire was wrapping him around.

"I'll play, Silver Jock, an' I'll beat you again as I used to."

The fire raged the whole night through, and when the blood-red light of the dawning sun lit up the smouldering ash, the only trace they could find of my father was a broken cinch ring that he habitually wore on the fob of his watch.

There are folks who claim—and you can believe it or not—that whenever the ilk of Yavapai Ben ride into our town, the MacThane's sledge rings through the night until the murdering son is gone.

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Doren swung the gun like a blackjack against the Lama's skull

# FATE ROLLS THE BONES

By SEABURY QUINN

*Author of "I Married a Ghost," "Candid Camera," etc.*

*Vengeance At the Roof of the World Cuts the Ground Out From Under Two Adventurers Who Invade a Sacred Temple!*

**D**ICK ENVERS had been dead ten years, almost eleven. Of that much Doren was certain, but all the same he was horribly afraid of the dead man. Envers, alive, had not been much to reckon with—

undersized, inclined to be consumptive, slightly crack-brained ever since his head had been broken like an egg-shell in a brawl in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

His life had been saved by a quick

trephining operation that left him with a silver plate the size of a half-dollar in his skull. But after that he had grown erratic, unpredictable and often vicious. When his brittle temper broke, he was a nasty customer with a knife or pistol, yet Doren would have laughed if anybody had suggested that he would ever be afraid of the crazy runt.

Envers, dead, was another matter, though. Doren's materialistic attitude toward life was underlaid with all a gambler's blind, unreasoning faith in chance and hunches. He had a hunch that somewhere, somehow, in some way, Envers would even up the score. In the language of his unregenerate earlier days—a language he was now careful to avoid—Envers' memory "had the Indian sign on him."

"I'll get you for this, you cheat, just wait and see if I don't!" Envers had screamed in hysterical farewell.

Of late Doren had developed a slight facial tic, an uncontrolled and irrepressible twitching of his left cheek underneath the eye. Now, when the frightening memory of that ghastly threat came to him, his whole face jerked and quivered. His pulses jumped like frightened rabbits with each breath. His throat closed with ungovernable fear and he trembled like a helpless bird that sees a snake approaching.

"Poor chap," his business friends said sympathetically, "it must have taken something out of him, that long stay in the Orient. Of course he made his pile, but—with a half-envious, half-resigned shrug—"I'd rather sweat for mine right here in God's great country."

"Poor Mr. Doren," sympathized the nice old ladies of the church of which he was a leading member, and to which he made large contributions regularly, "he must have had a dreadful time in the East. Perhaps he had a tragic love affair, like that one Kipling tells about. You know, the one where the Englishman fell in love with a native

and when her father found out, he cut off both her hands? A shock like that would be enough to cripple anybody's nerves forever."

**I**T HAD begun in Mysophur, near the Nepal border. There *had* been a woman mixed up in it, though Doren had seen her less than half a dozen times and had never spoken to her. She was Envers' girl, a sixteen-year-old Eurasian, sloe-eyed, sooty-haired, with pinchbeck jewelry shining in her ears and clinking on her arms and wrists and ankles. An ivory-skinned, lithe dancer who looked like a Madonna, she was familiar with all seven of the Seven Deadly Sins. Her name was Luli-Jan.

Envers had been mad about her, lavished money on her as if he were a maharajah. He bought rings of solid gold to replace the brass hoops in her ears. Bangles of pure precious metal he hung upon her wrists, in place of the cheap imitation silver that had clanked every time she moved a slim henna-tinted hand. The little silver bells he gave her chimed musically upon the slender ankles above the high-arched, narrow, henna-painted feet.

The woman was a leech. The more he gave, the more she asked. When he had spent his whole stake on her and as much as he could borrow, she was still demanding more. A wealthy Parsi coveted her and offered her a diamond nose-stud.

"You geeve Luli-Jan?" she had asked Envers. "Not mak' her take eet from Phiroze that old fat peeg?"

"Where the devil would I find the money for a three-caret stone?" he demanded angrily.

She shrugged her creamy shoulders till the gold hoops in her ears touched them. At the same time she spread her pale-saffron hands with a gesture that set all the bracelets he had given her to chiming mellowly.

"Luli-Jan mus' be made hap-py," she replied in her soft sing-song voice. "If you not geeve her di-a-mond,

Phiroze *sahib* do so. You geeve her di-a-mond and *piche*—afterward—”

Her sloe-eyes promised delight unguessably. Her pandanus-red mouth was moist and dewy with a rich pledge. The touch of her tiny henna-tinted hands swept away all resistance.

“I’ll find the money somehow, somewhere!” he groaned. “I’ll get the diamond for you, little lovely Luli-Jan, if I have to die for it!”

Where he could raise a hundred guineas, he had no faintest idea. Borrow? No chance. His friends were all as near the borderline of bankruptcy as he was, and not likely to advance five hundred dollars on his unsecured note. Steal? British Indian jails were far from comfortable. But possibly he could do a little “prospecting.” Jim Doren was in town. Envers had seen him at the bar in Celestes’ place the other night. Doren was the sort of chap who would be ready to go shares on anything that promised profit, and hang the ethics of it.

Envers called a rickshaw.

“Madame Celeste’s,” he ordered. “Chop-chop!”

The usual crowd was at the notorious saloon. Flies clustered murmurously about the tawdry chandeliers. Electric fans buzzed wheezily beneath the cobwebbed beams of the ceiling, stirring up but not cooling the superheated, sultry air.

At the bar and the small tables, set along the farther wall, the polyglot clientele of the place took whiskey-sodas, gin and bitters, straight brandy or absinthe, for they came from every race and every nation. Celeste’s customers were men whose occupations were strictly their own business, but one and all they could be bought for a price. The price was also their own business.

**J**IM DOREN sat alone at a small table. He was a lean, brown man, already graying at the temples, with the stamp of the sun and wind upon him, and a shrewdness in his gray eyes

that revealed the seasoned gambler. He might have been forty, but his years, however many they were, had not so much aged as hardened him. The few wrinkles he had were deep ones.

“Hullo, Doren,” Envers greeted with unnecessary cordiality. “How’s tricks?”

Doren looked up from his Scotch and soda with the dispassionate stare of one accustomed to weighing humanity.

“Broke?” he asked with acid brevity.

“Almost.” Envers tried to cover his embarrassment with a laugh. “Broke and disgusted. I’m fed up with this rotten place. Been thinking of takin’ a trip up-country. Know anything good?”

“Do you?” Doren gave out little information. He preferred to listen, rather than to talk.

“Well,” Envers hedged, “they say there’s a chance to pick up—”

The approach of the stranger cut short his faltering words. The stranger had obviously been a big man, with the high cheekbones and ash-colored eyes that proclaimed him a White Russian. But what he had been was entirely blotted out by what he was—a pitiable cripple.

He dragged one foot as though it were encumbered by a ball and chain. His body was emaciated. And his hands, once large and powerful to judge by the size of the bones, were now little more than withered claws. Across his face, from brow to chin, zigzagged a dreadful leprous-white scar that obliterated his right eye and pulled down the corner of his mouth a full inch. Though the night was hot and stifling as an overheated greenhouse, he trembled as if with a violent chill.

“*Pardon, messieurs,*” he said to Envers and Doren, “but do you mind if I sit here? I am a little tired.”

They made room for him at the table, studying him with covert glances. Finally Envers, who never

could keep his mouth shut long, coughed deprecatingly.

"You Russian?" he asked tentatively, though what remained of the man's countenance and the glass of vodka in his hand were sufficient answer to his question.

"Yes," their new companion answered absently. Then, as if echoing the question he repeated: "Russian."

He bolted half his drink of vodka. When he set the glass back on the table, his hand was somewhat steadier. But his one good eye remained expressionless and the wrinkled flesh where cheeks met chin still trembled pitifully.

Envers fairly squirmed with curiosity. Women and other people's business held an irresistible fascination for him.

"The Revolutionists," he hazarded. "They did that to you?"

The Russian's maimed face twisted in the parody of a smile, making the great scar that forked across his cheek do a grotesque macaber dance.

"Tibetans," he responded in a flat, accentless voice. "Lamas."

"Great heavens, man, you mean—"

The Russian went on speaking, apparently unaware of the interruption.

"Yet, if I had succeeded, I should have had a treasure beside which the fabled hoards of Monte Cristo and the Mines of Solomon are nothing. Less than nothing. Wealth—the word seemed to hypnotize him, for he repeated it slowly, as though savoring its taste—"as much wealth as was ever fought for or stolen."

Doren's gray eyes flickered a warning at Envers with the quick, admonitory look of the alert gambler who signals an accomplice.

"Tell us about it, old scout," he asked sympathetically as he raised a finger to the hovering Goanese waiter. "Chop-chop, boy. A bottle of vodka for this gentleman. And leave it here."

The big clock in its fly-specked case ticked off the hours. One by

one Celeste's patrons left, some staggering, some walking with the stately, careful stride of men far gone. Some were bent on rounding out the night with opium or hasheesh in the little houses with the blue-tiled fronts that gleamed on Frangipani Road, where heavy, cloying scents and bitter, caustic stenches mingled in a stupefying, anesthetic reek, and laughter sharp and bitter as smashed glass fell tinkling from the barred windows of upper-story rooms.

**B**UT Envers and Doren and the maimed Russian kept their places at the table. The first bottle of vodka was replaced by a second and a third. The crippled man's faint, stammering whispers grew stronger as the potent liquor fumed into his brain. He leaned conspiratorially across the table, and the scar that zigzagged down his face seemed to grow whiter against the flush in his slashed cheeks.

"*Da, da!*" he rasped excitedly. "Yes, yes, the hoard is boundless, without limit, greater than the riches of the Forty Thieves' cave. But ah, *mes amis*, he who tries for it runs greater risks than he who braves the depths of Hades to steal the fiery rubies out of Satan's throne! *Bozhe moy*—my God—do not I know it? Look at me, my friends. Behold these withered limbs, this sorry remnant of a face.

"They did that to me, those lamas! And because I screamed and whined and begged for mercy like a beaten dog, they released me, for I had not gone into their sanctuary. I had not profaned their shrine. I did but stand outside and watch. Those who had gone in and laid hands on their heathen idols"—he broke into a croaking laugh—"were not so fortunate."

"And where's this bleedin' lamasery with its blinkin' pot of gold?" urged Envers. He had grown a little thick-tongued and his eyes were showing bloodshot, but his covetousness had merely grown with his drunkenness. "D'ye know how to get back there?"

The Russian recoiled as from the threat of a bared knife.

"Ten thousand nevers," he screamed. "Not for all the Indies' riches! Not though I knew I could come back safely, would I go near that accursed place again. What good would wealth do to a creature such as I? Could women love me for it, I whose face is frightful as a skull? Could I buy the confidence of little children or the friendship of men, the tolerance of my neighbors? You know that I could not. Everyone would fly from me, or turn away their heads in horror. No, my friends, I cannot be tempted."

Doren shoved the vodka bottle toward him.

"Take it easy, old man," he soothed. "We're not askin' you to go there with us. Just draw a map to chart the course for us and we'll attend to everything. You can rest safe in Nepal and if we succeed, we'll cut you in for a third. That's fair enough, ain't it? What's there for you to be afraid of?"

The Russian looked away for a long time. He tried with all his meager strength to resist the temptation, but in the end the lure of gold was too strong. He nodded miserably and quickly hurled another drink down his skinny throat.

**F**OR DAYS they had struggled upward through the *tach-davans*, the sharp-edged mountain passes in the flinty ridges of the ever-rising hills. Their six Bhotia bearers and the two small shaggy ponies were rebelling at the enforced speed, but Envers and Doren drove them mercilessly. Now, according to the Russian's chart, they had reached the treasure throne, the ugly yellow stone building that clung precariously to the very edge of an enormous cliff.

"You, boy, makee talk-pidgin 'long-side lama feller, can do?" Doren asked their head bearer as they drew up before the low gate of the lamasery.

"Why, you can talk their lingo, Doren," Envers protested.

He was silenced by a furtive kick.

"Quiet, you fool! D'ye want 'em to catch wise? We're just a couple of English Johnnies out here, huntin', got caught by nightfall in the passes. Savvy? Keep your big mouth shut and your eyes open."

The broad, benevolent, rather stupid face of a lama peered through a wicket in the gate. It opened and they trooped into the lamasery courtyard. The *ta-lama*, or abbot, met them with halting Russian.

"*Chileb sol*—be welcome."

When they smiled and bowed and shook their heads, he tried slurred Mongolian and a few slow words of Cantonese with no better result. After that the conversation went on in sign-language.

They were shown to a small cell with windows overlooking the great chasm. Wolf and bearskins were piled almost knee-deep on the floor. Envers complained when they had made a circuit of the lamasery's corridors:

"He sold us a pup, the filthy swine! Gold, me eye. I'll bet there ain't a grain of it within five hundred miles. Just look at the poor beggars, Doren. They're so poverty-stricken, they'd crawl a mile on their bare knees for a handful of copper *cash*."

"Maybe," Doren said. "Maybe not. I'm goin' to have a look around when everybody's gone to bed. Are those flashlight batteries workin'?"

They lay upon the pile of skins on their cell floor till the luminous dial of Doren's wrist-watch showed midnight. The strain told heavily on Envers, who never could keep silent long. Half a dozen times he started to speak, and each time Doren shut him off.

"Keep that blasted tongue of yours between your teeth. Snore if you have to make a noise, but don't talk."

At last he whispered: "Okay, Dick, time to start. Keep your mouth shut and step softly. Let me have the

flashlight. I can't trust you with it."

Across the courtyard, where the bearers lay against the ponies for warmth, he led the way to the small door of a passage cut in the virgin rock.

"I noticed one of 'em was always standin' here," he whispered. Every time a bearer started toward this door, they turned him back. Maybe it's nothing, but I've got a hunch."

The door led to a tunnel, and the tunnel twisted like a snake in agony, dropping from one level to another with bewildering suddenness. Finally it ended at a doorway hung with yak hide, beside which a fat, shaven-headed lama squatted like a Buddha, sound asleep, with a Mannlicher rifle propped incongruously across his knees. Their felt-soled underboots made no sound as they crept past him and pushed aside the yakskin curtain.

**B**YOND the curtain was a vaulted room some twenty-five feet wide by forty long, partly hollowed from the living rock, partly a natural cavern. Multicolored *hatyks*—long silk banners—hung from the low, vaulted ceiling, each embroidered with Buddhist prayers in Chinese characters, or painted with the effigies of Lamaite saints. Wide bands of blue and yellow silk, stiff with gold embroidery, rippled down the walls. On each side of the doorway were prayer wheels waiting to be turned.

A plate of beaten gold, on which the signs of the Chinese zodiac were carved, was set above the curving lintel of the entrance. Before the altar were red lacquer benches for the lamas and the choir, set in sections like the pews of a church, with a center aisle between. At the farther end of the chapel was a great curtain of imperial yellow silk, inscribed with Tibetan mottoes worked out in rubies, diamonds and emeralds. Small lamps with tiny flickering flames threw a subdued light upon gem-encrusted vessels and tall gold candlesticks.

Doren's breath rasped as he viewed the lush wealth of the cavern.

"Poor, are they?" he grunted. "Crawl a mile on bare knees for a copper *cash*, eh? What d'ye say to this?"

Envers' eyes were bright with avarice and the fever of incipient tuberculosis.

"Gold!" he almost bleated, hypnotized by the sight of the treasure. "Gold, diamonds, rubies—"

Doren's warning hiss shut him off. "Listen!"

Muffled, as if coming from a distance and through many closed doors, they heard the whispering shuffle of feet on the stone floor of the corridors and the soft, sweet chiming of little bells.

"Quick!" Doren ordered. "We've got to take cover. If they catch us here, Lord knows what'll happen."

He ran on tiptoe to the door, but it was too late. The lama at the entrance had awakened. Doren could see the gleam of approaching candles shining on the passage wall at the far turn. He drew the heavy Browning pistol from his belt, weighed it for an instant in his palm, then swung it like a blackjack. The monk collapsed without a sound.

Doren caught him in his arms, dragged him inside the chapel. He stripped the yellow cassock from the stunned man, thrust the inert body behind a curtain, then slipped the gown over his own head.

"On the floor with you!" he ordered Envers. "Lie flat behind those benches. If you make a sound or move, our goose is cooked!"

Next instant he was squatting by the prayer wheel, the cowl of the monk's cassock drawn about his ears, his head bent as in supplication while he spun the disk of the prayer machine. Softly he murmured the Buddhist invocation:

"*Oom mani padmi hong*. Hail, thou Jewel of the Lotus."

The long procession filed into the

chapel. First came the *ta-lama*, hands crossed upon his bosom, head bent reverently. After him, in double file, paraded the monks of the community, robed in yellow, bearing staffs of bells, candles, or small saucerlike dishes of fine gold, from which spiraled up thin streams of incense.

Two of them pulled back the silken curtain of the sanctuary. In the half-light of the flickering candles and the ceiling lamps there seemed to emerge a life-sized effigy of the Lord Gotama Buddha, seated in the Golden Lotus, one hand upon his navel, the other raised palm forward, as in benediction. Grouped about the great image were a hundred smaller ones, ranging from the size of chessmen to a height of two or three feet, and they all appeared to be of solid gold.

**D**OREN fairly shuddered with cupidity as he glanced at the sanctuary while he spun the prayer wheel. The great image of Buddha was pure, solid gold. The robe that draped it had been cunningly devised to simulate brocade, with the pattern picked out in enormous yellow diamonds. There must have been a million dollars' worth of gold and gems in it, he estimated breathlessly.

The *ta-lama* struck a golden gong with a padded drumstick to call the Buddha's attention to his prayer. Then he closed his eyes and put his hands before his face as he prayed. The other lamas bent their foreheads to the floor, while their abbot prayed upright before the face of Buddha.

Meticulously they kept in rank according to importance. The yellow-robed *hutuktus*, or highest monks, knelt in front. Behind them were the *gelongs*, whose rank entitled them to offer sacrifices of incense before the sanctuary. Last of all were the *getuls*, the lowest order, scarcely worthy to be known as monks at all, who occupied a position roughly corresponding to that of lay brethren in medieval Christian monasteries.

"*Oom mani padmi hong*—hail, thou Jewel of the Lotus."

The invocation began in a muted whisper, slowly, with each syllable spaced carefully. Then by degrees its tempo quickened and its volume rose. Louder, faster it came, till at last it was a rumbling wave of never-ceasing sound that seemed to shake the carved rock walls of the cavern and make the candle flames burn higher. The prayer wheels spun. The incense spiraled upward in a cloud so thick that it obscured the lights before the sanctuary. The air was heavy, choked and saturated with it.

Doren felt his senses reeling and his will slowly oozing from him. He was numbed and almost physically battered by the continuously shouted invocation, half-anesthetized by the incense. In a moment he would have to rise and tear the disguising cassock off, while he screamed in self-accusation:

"Here we are, the vandals who would loot your shrine and commit sacrilege! Take us, kill us, torture us. Do with us as you will!"

Only the booming of the great gong by the altar saved his sanity. It echoed like a peal of sonorous music in the little vaulted chapel. The echoes of its echoes seemed to hang in mid-air, reverberating second after endless second, till Doren could not say if he still heard it or only imagined that he did, and would continue to imagine its resonance forever.

The prayer-service was concluded. Led by the *ta-lama*, the monks filed slowly from the chapel.

Doren let his breath out with a jerk. Though he hadn't realized it, for some time he'd been holding it deep in his lungs, striving to keep out the reek of paralyzing incense and retain the mastery of his will.

"Whew!" he breathed. "That was a near thing. Thirty seconds more and I'd have given the whole bloody show away. Are you there, Dick?"

Envers crept out from the shelter of the bench behind which he had lain.

"Gawd!" he gasped. "I thought they had us dead to rights that time." He stood before the gem-encrusted curtains of the sanctuary and tears streamed down his cheeks. "We've found it! The Russian didn't lie!"

**H**E SEIZED a little golden image, another, a third, and thrust them in his pockets.

"What the devil are you doin'?" Doren asked.

"I'm goin' to take as much of this as I can, of course."

"You poor fathead, don't bother with that junk. You couldn't carry more than fifty pounds of it at most. If you load yourself down, you won't have a chance. Here, help me with this."

Like a farmer shelling corn, he ran his knife blade down the sanctuary curtain, ripping diamonds and rubies off in handfuls. He crammed his pockets with the glittering stones, then turned to gouge great yellow diamonds from the Buddha's golden robe with his knife point.

The lama he had stunned stirred weakly, whimpering like a sick child.

"Tie that fellow up," he ordered. "Put a gag in his mouth."

"Tie him?" Envers' voice was high and squeaking, almost mouselike in its nervous shrillness.

There was a scuffling sound, then a noise like a man choking, and a gurgling as of water running softly down a drain. Envers came back to the altar, wiping his Kurkri knife on his breeches.

"Stand clear!" he commanded. "Let me at those diamonds! She wanted one for her nose, did she? By the Lord Harry, she'll have one for every toe and finger and both ears as well." Like a man possessed, he gouged and dug and picked at the great yellow stones, stuffing pockets and shirt front with them. "I'll make her love me.

I'll make her crawl to me and beg for diamonds like a puppy begging for a lump of sugar."

\* \* \* \* \*

The bearers still lay huddled by the ponies when the two white men came out again into the courtyard. Doren bent above the nearest man and struck him ruthlessly upon the head with his pistol. Stripping off the fellow's sheepskin coat, he drew it over his own shoulders. Envers served a second porter the same way.

In a moment, muffled to the ears, they led the ponies through the gateway of the lamasery. They paused a moment to make sure their girths were tightened, secured their coats against the wind that whistled past the peak, then fled down the long, winding trail.

The way was all downhill and fear struck spurs to them, for the memory of the crippled Russian's face was before them as they fled. Five miles, seven, ten they raced, flogging their mounts mercilessly. The ponies slipped and stumbled on the rough trail, but they jerked them up again with savage tugs at their bridles, then lashed them on to greater speed.

By dawn they passed the third *tach-davan*. They lost sight of the peak on which the lamasery stood. If they could hold the grueling pace six hours more, they'd be free.

Then they heard it. Softly at first, scarcely louder than a summer zephyr sighing through the trees, but growing louder and closer every moment, the shrieking, screaming war-cry of a wind that tore through the mountain passes. It was one of those sudden, fierce wind-storms of the upper Himalayas that come swooping down from the roof of the world, gathering strength and momentum like crashing avalanches as they advance, leaving death and desolation in their wake.

The brooding mountains were suddenly alive with its shrill screaming. And yet it was not quite a wind sound.



Mixed with it seemed to be a devilish laugh that echoed out of the immensity of the hard sky. It roared and swirled about them like a mountain torrent at full flood, twisting, tearing at their clothes and forcing them against the cliff-walls as if they had been dry leaves caught in an autumn gale.

**D**ISMOUNTING hurriedly, they fought their way to a cleft in the rocks and crouched there, breathless and afraid. They clung to the sharp, uneven stones with hands that were bloody ribbons on the flinty edges, wedging themselves tighter in the fissure, bracing feet and legs against the suction of the vengeful, shouting, laughing hurricane.

Then silence, utter and abysmal, fell. After the tumult of the tearing wind, it was like a great weight dropped on them. The air was still, but thick and dark with brooding menace.

They crawled out of their refuge and looked around. One of the ponies huddled close against an overhanging rock. Its flanks were swelling and contracting like the folds of a bellows as it fought to regain its breath. The other lay upon its side. When they forced it to its feet, its left foreleg hung helpless from the knee.

"Blast the luck!" Envers swore. "Its leg is broken. It'll be no good to us— Hey, what're you doin'?" he yelled as Doren led the sound beast out into the trail and swung it around to mount it. "That ain't your horse. You can't do that to me."

Doren shut him off with an impatient gesture.

"No use crabbin', Dick. These little horses can't take two riders and there's just one of 'em. One of us goes on him. The other takes his chances with the lamas. What say we match for it?"

Envers eyed him speculatively. He'd been a gambler all his adult life and in the main he had been lucky.

The only gods he knew or trusted in were those of chance.

"How'll we manage it?" he asked. "We haven't got a deck of cards, and I threw all my coins away to make room for this bloody bunch of Lama jewels."

"Shoot craps?" Doren broke in. "I've got a pair of dice."

"Roll 'em," Envers said tersely.

The dice were souvenirs of earlier days. Doren had always found them dependable. He shook them gently and blew on them for luck before he made his cast. They turned up five and one.

"Six is your point!" cried Envers, dropping to his knees beside the ivory cubes. "Come on, you little honey of a seven!"

Doren threw a second time, neglecting to shake the dice before the cast. Two fours turned up and Envers snapped his fingers in delight.

"I knew you couldn't make it. Come on, dice, turn up a seven."

Doren had cast once more. A three and six turned up. Envers' flushed face went a ghastly gray.

"Come on, seven!" he implored as Doren scooped the cubes up from the stony trail, rattled them beside his ear and threw. A four and a two turned up. Envers snatched at the dice. "No, you don't! It's best two out of three. Give me your turn!"

Jim Doren was already in the saddle.

"Not on your life, sucker. I won this nag and I'm takin' him." He struck his heels against the pony's sides. Then, as the unshod hoofs struck on the bare rock of the trail, he said: "Here, take the bones and amuse yourself. I won't be seein' you again, most likely."

He threw the dice at Envers' feet and drove another vicious kick into the pony's flanks. He'd gone perhaps a hundred yards when the shrill yell came to him from the trail above.

"I'll get you for this, you cheat, just wait and see if I don't!"

He half-turned in the saddle and waved a hand ironically.

"So long, sucker!" The fusillade of shots came like a hail-storm. "Wonder how long it took him to find out the bones were loaded?" he asked himself as he bent low above his pony's neck.

Envers was emptying his Browning at him. Rage spoiled his aim and all the shots flew wide, though one or two struck close enough to make Doren flinch.

The end would have been easier if Envers had not quite emptied his clip. Hardly had he fired his last shot than he saw five husky lamas, moving with the practiced ease of hillmen down the pass above him. Their faces were impassive, but their eyes were not, and the morning sunshine glinted on the barrels of their Mannlicher rifles.

Envers flung his empty pistol from him. Bent almost double, he raced along the downward path, slipping, stumbling, falling, then scrambling up and rushing on again. A lama leaned against a jutting rock and braced his elbow on it, steadying his aim. The report of his rifle was like the snapping of a whiplash in the cold, still mountain air.

Envers slid face-forward on the smooth stone of the trail as a steel-nosed bullet, scored across its tip with a knife-cut, smashed the bone of his left thigh. He lay still for a moment, whimpering with the agony of his wound, then dragged at the knife hanging from his belt. His weight was on it and he couldn't seem to turn himself. Finally, though, he had it out, raised the keen blade to his throat and made a futile, ineffective slash. He couldn't do it. The will to live was too strong in him.

Then the lamas were upon him, binding his hands to his sides with strips of fresh yak hide, pulling a felt bag over his head.

"Cheat!" he shouted as they put the sack over his head. "Dirty cheat! I'll get him for that rotten trick. . . ."

Doren could never tell what made him pause before the glass-shelved window of the antique shop on Third Avenue. He wasn't interested in antiques, whether furniture, rugs or jewelry. His house in the fashionable Westchester suburb was furnished strictly in the modern mode, glass and chromium and bright, contrasting leathers, modern rugs loomed in American factories, pictures that were painted within the last two decades. In all the place there was no hint of background of ancestral furniture or silverware. Most especially was there no hint of the Orient.

He had become respectable, conservative, an average citizen of a community that was composed of people in the upper brackets of the income tax, a regular attendant at businessmen's luncheon clubs, a solid, though not very active member of the local golf and country club. He was a liberal contributor to the most respectably conservative church in the community. He didn't believe in God, but with a gambler's inconsistency he thought disbelief was no reason to prevent his trying to bargain with Him.

With the proceeds of the jewels he'd taken from the lamasery, he'd bought into an old, conservative insurance business in Maiden Lane. It was in pursuit of business—looking at a building project on which they had been asked to write an indemnity bond—that he found himself in Third Avenue where it bounds old Murray Hill upon the east.

The shop was typical of its kind. In the window was a miscellany of old glass, old china and old silver, with here and there a curio to dramatize the display. An Afghan *tulwar* lay beside a Turkish water-pipe with red glass globe and snakelike stems of verdigris-discolored brass. This in turn was flanked by a long-barreled Moorish musket with a short stock thickly inlaid with shell-pearl.

At the very bottom of the window, picked out by a stray ray of sunshine, a skull grinned with sardonic humor at the lumbering red trolleys and green buses bumping on the cobblestones beneath the El.

Doren couldn't take his eyes from it. Some skilful craftsman had transformed it into a tom-tom, stopped the nose and eye openings with small inlays of flat, polished bone, wired the jaws together with thin strands of silver thread, pierced the low bridge of the nose and set a ring in it, then hung a cord and tassel from the hoop.

It was a trick of light, of course, a sudden shadow cast by an El train or passing vehicle. But as Doren looked upon the grisly relic of mortality, it seemed that the death's head winked at him with one of its blank eyes.

Before he realized it, certainly before he was aware of any such intention, he was in the shop.

"What's that thing?" he demanded of the proprietor.

"That?" the man responded. "Oh, I don't know. Some sort of drum, I think. We got it from the Wade collection. Old Cyrus Wade was a great one for stuff from the Far East. Want to look at it?"

Doren didn't want to look at it, but in a moment it was on the counter before him. He saw that the skull-vault had a silver plate in it. Circular, slightly ragged at the edges where the periosteum had made attempts at bone-repair, it was darkened like an aged coin, but entirely recognizable as a trephining plate about the size of a half-dollar.

**J**IM DOREN looked at it more closely. Down the right temple and cheek, clear to the jutting chin and almost to the silver hoop that held the parchment drumhead to the open bottom of the skull, there ran a zig-zagged, wavering scratch. It looked as though a knife had slashed the flesh right down to the bone.

A scene stood out in Doren's mind

like the after-image of a flash of dazzling light upon the retina of a closed eye. Madame Celeste's that night, ten years and more ago. The crippled Russian had had a scar like that across his face.

"How much?" he asked the shopkeeper. Then, before the other had a chance to name a price: "I'll take it."

Here was the proof. Envers was not only dead, they had dismembered him. They'd made a drum out of his head. Well, he was always sounding off in life, so that seemed appropriate.

And Doren had bought Envers' skull. It was his. He could do anything he wanted with it, kick it, curse it, fling it out the window, sink it in the river. And it couldn't answer back or do a thing to stop him.

It had all been an empty boast, that parting threat of Envers', hollow as the skull-drum in his hands. He couldn't come back now. The dead can't act. The dead can't think. The dead cannot even remember.

Doren stood upon the high embankment overlooking the Hudson. A motorboat's lamps flashed as it sped up the river. From a passing tug a ray of orange light fell splashing on the night-dimmed water. From far away the lonely, melancholy hooting of a ship's whistle sounded.

"I've got you dead to rights," he whispered to the skull as he undid its wrappings. "Goin' to get even with me, were you? Goin' to square things for those loaded dice? Don't be a fool, Dick. You'd have done the same to me if you had had the chance. You know it. Now I'm goin' to roll the bones once more. See what you think of this throw, pal. Good-by, Dick. Good-by for keeps."

He drew his arm back like a pitcher about to throw a curve, raised one foot from the ground, turned halfway around to give more force to his throw. And he screamed in sudden pain and horror.

The force with which he had drawn back the skull had snapped the silver

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lashings of the jaw. In some way he'd caught his finger in the gaping mouth. He felt the rasp of long-dead teeth against his forefinger. In terror he hurled the skull from him.

Wind whistled through the gaping, unlashd mouth and beat upon the parchment drumhead as it flew through the air. At first it hummed and rumbled with a satisfied, low, chuckling sound. Then, as its force increased, the chuckle rose to a shrieking, laughing scream.

The skull fell in the river with a soft splash. There was a moment's bubbling gurgle, then silence.

"Heart failure," Dr. Wilkes wrote in the blank that followed "Primary Cause of Death" on the certificate. "Septicemia" resulting from infection of a small incised wound of the right forefinger," he wrote in the blank reserved for "Immediate Cause."

"Funny thing about the vagaries of delirium, Doctor," the nurse said chatily as Dr. Wilkes replaced the cap on his fountain pen. "Take Mr. Doren, for instance. He seemed to think he was in a crap game. Imagine a solid citizen like him rolling dice! Just before he died, he sat up straight in bed and shouted: 'All right, Dick, are you satisfied now? I lost the last throw of the bones. You win!'"

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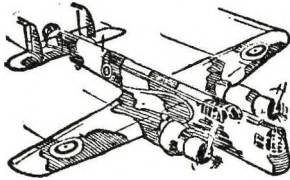
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## THE GLOBE TROTTER

(Continued from page 10)

my English colleague. Then we called the captain.

"We want to pay you," I told him. "After all, you've had to feed your men, and they've come miles out of their way. Just how much, do you think, will reimburse you?"

I was holding a handful of American dollar bills, and my British friend held a sheaf of pound notes. The captain took one of the American dollars and looked curiously at the engraved picture.

"Who is this?" he asked then.

"That's George Washington," I told him. "The Father of Our Country."

"Washington. Ah yes, we have heard of him. And these are American dollars? We will take one of them for each of the men."

There were sixteen men in the patrol, and without delay I shelled out the sixteen dollars. It was the cheapest two days towing I had ever heard of.

Three or four years later I met the same captain at Bandar Shapur on the Persian Gulf. I recognized him immediately, and he proudly displayed his dollar bill. He had kept it as a good luck token, he told me, and his men had kept their bills for the same reason. Volubly he assured me that the American dollars had brought good luck.

I wondered then—I have often wondered since—whether that plain admiration for George Washington on the part of that Persian captain was because, in a way, Washington had a Persian parallel.

In many respects, the career of the recent Shah Riza Khan Pahlavi—who has been succeeded by his son, Mohammed Riza, since the British-Russian occupation—was like that of George Washington. There are differences, of course, generally prompted by the demands of the Persian or Iranian people, but the general features of the careers of both great leaders are the same.

The British and American officials in Teheran arranged for us to visit the Shah's palace, and we met Riza Khan amid all the Oriental pageantry and color that are famed in history and legend. The pomp in which we were received began when an automobile was sent to our hotel on the Khaiban-i-Dawlat, a short distance from the Maidan Tupkhaneh, or Artillery Square.

It may have been that they figured that our sand-scarred, battered, rather dilapidated-looking machines were not the proper vehicles for a regal visit. I quite agree that they would not have been striking adjuncts of beauty to the scene when we reached the Maidan where we were met by a mounted escort of gaily caparisoned troops. Personally, however, we believed we fitted quite well into the setting, in our new tropical linens, and with the polished, chalked whiteness of our tops set off by the morning sun.

### Pomp and Ceremony

The drive to the palace was a comparatively short one—only about three or four

city blocks. Nevertheless the populace turned out to watch us go by. The Persians are always interested in a spectacle, and love pomp and ceremony.

The approach to the palace is a scene long to be remembered. The old citadel, part of Teheran's defense works, formerly stood on the site, but was torn down in 1869. There is a splendid collection of gardens, riotous with gay flowers and bright green shrubs and bushes. Facing these gardens are courtyards of polished and colorful stone, and buildings that rise above the surroundings in monarchical splendor.

Officers carrying golden swords led the way from the car into the *Talar* or throne room. The throne of gleaming white marble, was brought from Shiraz by Karim Khan Zand.

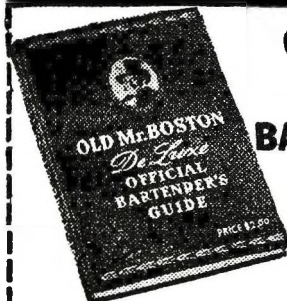
Riza Khan Pahlevi first greeted us while he remained sitting. Then he cast aside regal rights and came down to shake hands with us democratically. This was a particular honor—one we duly appreciated.

When some of the officers and retainers had withdrawn, the Shah strolled with us into the adjoining council chamber. Here we were treated to a sight of the famous Peacock Throne of Fath Ali Shah.

Even in his relaxed moments, Riza Khan gave me the impression of being a man heavily burdened with responsibilities, a man who must make important decisions, and is constantly wondering whether they are the right ones. Because of the position of Iran between British India and Soviet

[Turn page]

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Russia, and with Turkey on her western border, the diplomatic situation in Iran is one that requires extremely deft balance—and always has.

Riza Khan likes nothing better than to recall his youth. His father was an officer in the Persian Army, and Riza Khan was accustomed to riding the fiery chargers of the cavalry regiments almost before he was old enough to walk. At the age of twelve, he enlisted in the famous Persian Cossack Division. One of his commanding officers was Taimur Khan.

When later, his military successes during and after the World War I indicated that he was destined for a brilliant future, he married the daughter of Taimur Khan. And when the old Shah departed in 1924, and the Majliss or Persian Cabinet selected a new Shah, it was the son of the army officer and the daughter of the cavalry commander who ascended to the throne.

## New Days—New Ways

During the past sixteen years there have been extensive changes in Teheran and throughout Persia. The city has well over a quarter of a million people, and would probably be much larger, were it not for the fact that all the water must be brought in through *kanats* or pipelines running out to the Shimran slopes of the Elburz mountains. There are no reservoirs or lakes close to the city, which naturally means that the water must come from underground sources that are entirely dependent upon snow and rainfall.

In speaking of snowfall for a city supposed to be in the tropics, it must be recalled that Teheran is actually about as far north as our own city of Richmond, Virginia. Over a ten-year period, the average maximum shade temperature of Teheran was 104.6 degrees Fahrenheit, while the average minimum was 14.7 degrees Fahrenheit. You can just about name the sort of weather you want there—and get it.

## Ancient and Modern

It is impressive, and curious, to note and compare the ancient and the modern during a stroll through Teheran. Age-old buildings are there, buildings which have known the tragedies, the lightness and grandeur of life through the ages. The city has a state-owned electric plant which provides street lights from sunset to 11 p. m. The additional lighting provided by the municipality is of the ancient variety and consists of old-time wick lamps. And a sturdy lamp-lighter still makes his evening rounds to kindle them, and drops around each morning to snuff them out.

Teheran is in the center of another World War. It is a quaint city at a crossroad over which has already rumbled the power and might of two warring countries. It still is a focal point of the world's interest. The country's wealth of oil, and its transport route for the goods of battle are vital in Democracy's struggle, and are well worth fighting for.

But now, let us put that Europe-Asia auto jaunt back into our memory book, and



look at the business on hand for this day and month.

### Our Authors Speak

We have a most interesting collection of letters this month from our writers and readers, and I know you're going to get a big kick out of them. First of all, we've asked Harry Widmer to tell us a few things about his novelet of the Norman Conquest, "Arrows of Invasion." He writes:

Dear Globe Trotter:

By asking me to tell you something about the background of "Arrows of Invasion," you may have left yourself wide open. The early history of England and France is one subject that I like to play with, both in my story writing and as relaxation. I've gone behind the scenes from the time of Charlemagne right down to the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and some of the incidents that I've dug up make really exciting material.

Naturally, with Great Britain as the mother country, I've always been interested in the early doings in the Isles. We've heard a good deal about the position of the Norwegians in the discovery of Vineland and North America, and it is interesting to note that the Normans of France were also descendants of these Vikings who roamed from their Northern countries to the Mediterranean and the west coast of Africa, and penetrated as far eastward as Syria, Palestine and ancient Phoenicia.

William the Conqueror is the personalized figure in the forefront of the Norman Conquest picture, and selecting some of his men as my heroes, gave me a knowledge of individuals based on my reading, that seems to have stood me in good stead in "Arrows of Invasion."

I've tried to make the castle background look and read authentic. I've striven to have my characters act as they might during the period. I've tried to dramatize and fictionalize people that are real, living breathing individuals to me. I hope I succeeded, and I hope you like the story.

Sincerely,  
Harry Widmer.

Thanks for the interesting discussion, Harry, and we'll be looking forward to more material from your facile pen. Charles Stoddard's story takes us around another half of the world, and he's certainly gotten behind the scenes in digging up this material. Here's what he says:

Dear Globe Trotter:

Until six months ago that yarn about Romulus and Remus, those two kids who were supposedly raised by a mama-wolf and who later founded Rome, was just another legend to me. Imagine, a wolf playing nursemaid to a pair of youngsters! Then, like they say in stories, it happened.

From the northwest wilds of India an Anglican missionary, Reverend J. A. L. Singh, was reporting a true-life drama that not only knocked the props out from under my belief, but gave science in general a swift boot in the intellect. You see, those factual gentlemen, who use a micrometer for a yardstick, are loathe to take anything for granted, especially if it smacks of the fantastic.

Proof is their weapon against that, and they whipped out that weapon to silence the report emanating from the little orphanage in Midnapore. Armed with skepticism and notebooks, reputable scientists invaded the Rev. Singh's domain in search of proof. They got plenty—sufficient to wipe out the skepticism and fill their notebooks. What's more, they initiated a rumpus that is still reverberating where scientist meets scientist.

Some argue that the Amala-Kamala story is authentic, but they want to know where those two native children who were rescued from a wolves' den, came from. They are anxious to learn how those children got "lost," to whom they belonged.

[Turn page]



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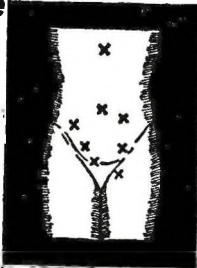
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what made that mother-wolf care for them as she cared for her cubs. If you have any imagination, your guess is as good as theirs.

Other scientists are stewing in a hot-two-sided dilemma, each side sticking out like the proverbial horn. One group of scientists contends environment molds the human being while the other group says its heredity. The answer, judging from the case history of the Midnapore children seems to be a combination of both theories.

If you haven't read about Amala and Kamala, here's the gist of what occurred.

On October 10, 1920, Rev. Singh and some companions investigated a rumor about "ghosts" inhabiting an ant hill, common in that region of India. After building a tiger-hunting platform the men waited for the "ghosts" to appear. They didn't have to wait long. A wolf emerged from a hole, followed by two other adult wolves, then two cubs. At the heels of the cubs came two creatures shaped like human beings.

Rev. Singh was satisfied they were human beings and, with the aid of native diggers, eventually broke into the clean, neat den. Huddled in a corner were the two human creatures and the cubs. After a tussle the cubs were separated from the humans, who fought more ferociously than the wolves. One of the children was eight, the other about a year and a half old—both girls. Rev. Singh named the older Kamala, the younger, Amala.

Then a case history, the equal of which science had never known, was inaugurated by the Singhs. They treated the children as infants, attempting to make them civilized. It was tough going, because the children were in reality nothing more than animals, possessing the instincts of animals. At certain times each night they howled like wolves. They scampered about on all fours, lapped milk like dogs, shunned daylight and human contact. But Rev. Singh and his wife were patient. They realized what a job they had undertaken.

Just when the pair appeared to get a foothold on civilization Amala took sick and died. Then the first word of the wolf-children penetrated to the outside world, causing a stir that had never been anticipated by the Rev. Singh. Still, he refused to let the world in on his secret, preferring to handle the delicate task of remodeling Kamala to human standards with the aid of his wife.

Ten years after he had found the two "ghosts" Kamala died, but she had succeeded to a certain extent in learning much about her fellow beings, and unlearning a great deal about wolves. It must be said, however, that Rev. Singh did not completely change Kamala from the animal he had rescued to a blushing girl of eighteen. She could do errands and speak about fifty words, but if she had to do something quickly she reverted to the wolf, loping on all fours, or acting in characteristic wolf fashion.

Gathering the facts from the history written by Rev. Singh, science interpreted them according to its set dogmas. The scales of science jockeyed back and forth like a seesaw, bowing first to environment, then giving the nod to heredity. But the case history of the Midnapore girls spoke bluntly. Heredity and environment can't be taken alone. They are so integrated that they unite to develop the creature we know as the human being.

That was the amazing case that gave me the incentive to write, "Doom Stalks the Jungle." In it I tried to depict another mystery frowned upon by science because it doesn't fit into the bracket of statistics. When Amala died, something vital appeared to snap in Kamala—something not wolfish, and yet it doesn't come into the human ken. It was as if a complete circuit had been broken, a circuit of telepathy that appeared to have existed between the girls, telling one what the other was doing or thinking—yes, a sixth sense, that quality supposedly inherent to us, but dormant now.

Science does not countenance anything less than a theory based on facts. Perhaps, though, the time is not too remote when another phenomenon like the wolf-children of Midnapore will shake the conservatism out of science, and daring thought will unravel mysteries beyond our reach today. Here then, Globe Trotter, is the reason for the mysticism in my story. May the future give us the right answer—soon.

Yours truly,  
Charles Stoddard.

That's sure an interesting story, Charles. But now it's the turn of our readers to have their say. Let's open the mail bag a

bit wider and see what we can dig out of it.  
 Here's one from a member out in Utah.  
 At least she's in Utah for the moment, but  
 as you can see from her letter, she takes  
 her globe-trotting seriously, and will prob-  
 ably be on the way when this hits print:

Dear Globe Trotter:

Greetings from one of your members. Been a  
 long time since I wrote you for membership but,  
 man, since then I've "been places and done things."  
 And have made several good friends through  
 you.

Hope to heaven I'm not through going just  
 yet. At least not until time to make the last trek.

Am planning on seeing the extreme Northwest of  
 the States. Have managed to miss them somehow,  
 but as long as I'm this far West perhaps that can  
 be remedied in the near future.

I enjoy all your stories, and especially those of  
 Harold Cruickshank. But then I've always had a  
 yen for things Oriental.

So keep up the good work and the next time I'm  
 in New York I'll stop in and see you.

Ruth Bonachea.

Now that the women have taken the  
 floor, here's a missive from an air-minded  
 young lady:

Dear Globe Trotter:

I read in your October issue of **THRILLING  
 ADVENTURES**, which I enjoy reading, that you  
 would also like to have girls in your club. I am  
 glad of that for I like to correspond with people  
 and I would enjoy having pen pals from all parts  
 of the globe.

I am twenty-two years old and work in the office  
 of a construction concern. I like all outdoor sports,  
 and have several hobbies. I am especially inter-  
 ested in aviation.

I will enjoy hearing from anyone who cares to  
 write me and I promise to answer.

[Turn page]



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Hoping this will bring me many new friends, I remain,

Bebe Lee Sawyer.  
P. O. Box 64, Allapattah Station, Miami, Fla.

Here's a young fellow out in Pennsylvania with something of a squawk for you pen pals. He's living rather an interesting life as you can see. Tell us about it, Steve:

Dear Globe Trotter:

I have read your magazine for some time and always meant to join your club, but was always delayed.

I have a good many pen pals that I met through your column. One thing I notice is that the foreign boys answer my letters while the boys in the U.S.A. don't. What's the matter with them? I have thirty friends in foreign countries all obtained from your column. Of all the letters I have sent abroad only one has not been answered.

My hobbies can be classed as everything under the sun—coins, stamps, books, curios, Indian relics, fossils, gems, semi-precious stones, postcards, and many other things too numerous to mention.

By joining your club I hope to get many more pen pals. With so many hobbies I find it easy to be pals with anybody.

I was over the Pennsylvania Turnpike the other Sunday and I sincerely wish that all of the readers of your column could see it. This is one of the most modern highways in the world. I doubt if there is another one like it anywhere.

This highway stretches from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh with no sharp curves, no intersections, no red lights, no steep grades, although it travels through the beautiful Appalachian Mountains. It has less than a three-percent rise because of the tunnels built for the highway. I could write on and on about the highway, but I would probably bore you. If you think the readers of your column would be interested I could write a letter to each and every one of them through your column about this example of modern engineering.

Stephen P. B. Pavlina.  
318 Eighth Street,  
New Kensington, Pennsylvania.

That Pennsylvania Turnpike sure is a beauty. It's going to mean a lot to people who want to see the western part of your state, and the sights along the Appalachian and the Blue Ridge Mountains. Our next swing of the geography book and the mail bag takes us up to Fall River, Massachusetts. Jack Carroll is a new member from that bailiwick, and we're glad to hear from him.

Dear Globe Trotter:

As a new reader of your magazine allow me to praise you on your fine stories, (articles and departments which are both interesting and informing. I am sending along the application for membership in your world-wide Globe Trotters Club and I would like to get letters from members of the club in foreign countries.

I am seventeen years old and my favorite hobbies are correspondence, travel, reading, languages (French, Gaelic, and German, a little), literature, current events, photography and radio. While my favorite sports are baseball, football, and hiking and bowling.

So, hoping that foreign pen pals keep the mailmen busy,

Jack Carroll.  
766 Locust Street,  
Fall River, Mass.

And here's another long letter from one of the girls in our club. Fern is really getting a big kick out of life, and she wants to tell you about it.

Dear Globe Trotter:

May I come in for a chat? I've been an ardent reader of THRILLING ADVENTURES for quite a long while and my thirst for adventure is momentarily quenched in the episodes of the characters therein. Some individuals shun the idea of women adventurers but history gives proof of

many brave and adventurous women. Women who have changed the destinies of nations themselves.

Men have the shoulders, breadth and strength, but it's a woman's sustaining and enduring love that waters the roots of man's ambitions. So I feel justified in claiming a part of **THRILLING ADVENTURES** for my very own. Stories told of legends of old are especially interesting to me and in October's issue of said book, "Don Roberto's Right Arm," by Jonathan McCulley, was worth double the price of the magazine.

I've been in New Mexico only a short while, but this country is an adventure in itself. Many sights of interest to entertain one's imagination. The "Carlsbad Caverns" are one of the world's greatest attractions and people travel here from all over the world to go through them. Truly a miracle of scenic attraction. Being a typical outdoor girl I love Nature and all she has to offer us. Too, I give heed to the laws of Nature in all respects. I love life, I love adventure, but most of all I love strength. Strength to overcome temptations and troubles. I have written a short poem and will send it along, hoping you enjoy it. And many thanks for a "Thrilling Adventure."

Life is short, but pain is long;  
Temptations lead from right to wrong.  
We pay too much for pleasure's song,  
We look for life, then find it gone.

*Adios, amigos.*

Fern Hendrickson.

110 1/2 S. Main Street,  
Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Your idea about having woman adventurers sounds like a good one, but I'm  
[Turn page]

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afraid we're going to have some trouble convincing our writers about that. After all, if the villain has a spark of gentlemanly feeling, he isn't going to take a whack at the heroine, or gun her down at the climax. Or would he? Your Carlsbad Caverns are worth going a long way to see—unless you happen to be afraid of bats.

And here's a brief note from one of our C.C.C. boys.

Dear Globe Trotter:

I have always been interested in adventure and when I read your magazine I found that I may really have the chance to correspond with real adventurers. It would interest me tremendously to correspond with a man who does a great deal of sailing and writes stories. I would also like to hear from some person who has been around the South Sea Islands. All mail written to me will be answered promptly. So come on, some of you sailors and writers. Let's hear from you.

Alton Tvedt.

CCC Camp Co. 1722-S-95,  
Effie, Minnesota.

Thanks for the note, Alton. I'm sure some of our real globe trotters will be glad to correspond with you. Our next new member comes from Indianapolis. And he has a couple of pets that ought to be novel in anyone's menagerie.

Dear Globe Trotter:

Enclosed is my application for membership in your club. Although I am only nineteen, I have managed to travel about a little. The longest trip I have made was in 1939. My father retired from business that year and he decided to take a trip to a country he had always wanted to see. When the freighter sailed, I was on it with him.

I especially want to contact members and readers who live in the Caribbean or near it, and South America. I expect to head that way next spring and personal contacts with a country help to insure the success of a trip. Correspondence with A.Y.H. Association members is also desired.

As for hobbies, I like everything. Athletics are my favorites, though, and I enjoy such sports as skiing and sailing, down to just rowing a boat. I am not above average in any of them but I will try anything once.

I have a pet lemur from Madagascar, and a South American parrot. Their actions supply plenty of interesting writing material, so come on, some of you fellow members, let's make the postmen earn their wages!

Yours truly,

Maurice Barker.

2930 Guildford Avenue,  
Indianapolis, Indiana.

Before closing the mail bag this month, we have a note from a youngster in London. He's anxious to have some pen pals, and I'm sure he'll get his wish through this department.

Dear Globe Trotter:

I hope this letter reaches you quite safely. I think I shall enjoy being a member of your club. I know most of this little England of ours quite well, and will be only too glad to answer any questions that are put to me by other members, provided they are discreet, and not liable to be blue-penciled by the censor.

My hobby covers a large ground of photography, electrical sciences and engineering. I am also an ardent student of all medical sciences, and can ob-

A Lot of New Members of  
**THE GLOBE TROTTERS' CLUB**  
will appear in next month's issue

tain any information you may require concerning hospital work. I also speak French, German, and Latin. Hoping my application for membership will meet with approval, I remain,  
 John Richardson.  
 St. Bartholomew's Hospital,  
 London, E. C. 1, England.

### Our Next Issue

The editorial wheels have been grinding, as usual, and we feel that for the next issue we've assembled a group of stories that will be a delight to all of you readers. As usual, we've reached out and tapped the backgrounds from all parts of the world to lend variety and appeal both to the long stories and to the shorter ones.

With the little disturbance in Panama, and the interest of the American people in the defense of the Canal, the area on the Isthmus is particularly intriguing at the present time. That's why the leading novelet in the February issue will be "Guns for Gatun," a top-notch yarn of the U. S. Defense forces at the Canal Zone. You're going to like the way the United States Marines handle a situation that is a radical departure from ordinary military strategy, and which puts a new twist on jungle warfare.

The story is by Arthur J. Burks, an ex-leatherneck himself, and he ought to be able to give the boys that patrol from the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli the sort of action story to which they're entitled. We liked this story, and felt that it was extremely timely. Here's hoping it rings the bell with you.

[Turn page]

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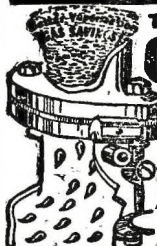
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8.00-20	7.25	53.65	10.00-20	9.95	53.95
8.50-20	7.75	54.15	10.50-20	10.45	54.45
9.00-20	8.25	54.65	11.00-20	10.95	54.95
9.50-20	8.75	55.15	11.50-20	11.45	55.45
10.00-20	9.25	55.65	12.00-20	11.95	55.95
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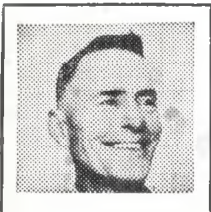
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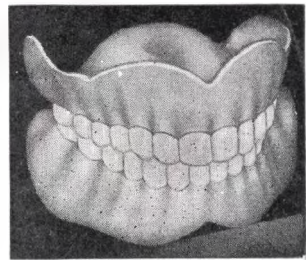
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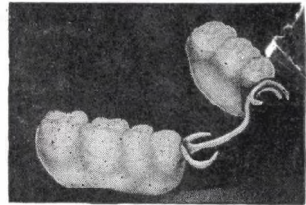
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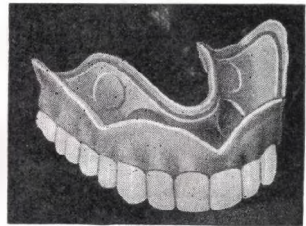
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