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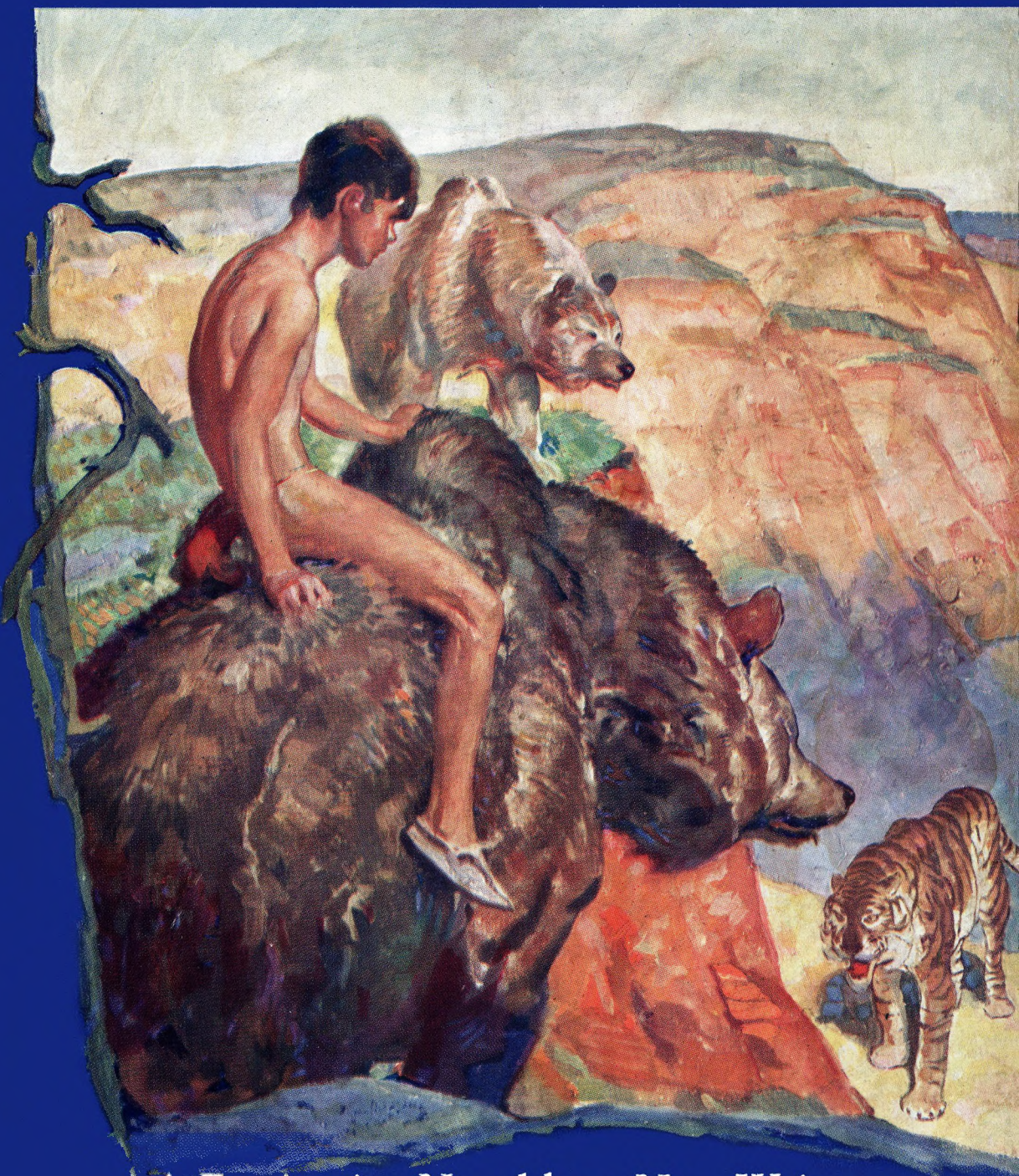
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APRIL 1935

THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE



VOL. 60 No. 6



A Fascinating Novel by a New Writer

## HAWK of the WILDERNESS

H. Bedford-Jones, Edgar Rice Burroughs

## *“Let’s Face Reality”*

**E**ACH crisis has its pet phrase: “Let us face reality,” is the favorite of the moment in many circles. If you admire a person, “He knows how to face reality;” if you disagree with anyone, “He can’t face reality.”

It is a good slogan, and shows a fine courageous spirit. Sometimes its champion forgets, however, that the only reality is what is in his own mind. “There’s nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

Moreover, a man who deals only with what he can see and feel, taste, smell and hear, leads a dreary life; and one who wishes to read only realism must confine himself to the duller newspapers, to textbooks—and to that school of modern novelists whose chief device for dramatic effect is the printing of the unprintable. . . .

In planning this magazine, therefore, we seek to offer you not only stories which are true to the facts of life as their authors see it,—stories like Robert Mills’ tales of Tiny David, for instance, or Leland Jamieson’s dramas of air adventure,—but also stories whose only reality is in the minds of author and reader: stories like, again for example, Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie’s “When Worlds Collide,” Edgar Rice Burroughs’ “Swords of Mars” or William Chester’s “Hawk of the Wilderness.”

For we are strongly persuaded that the reality that is in your mind is even more interesting and more important than the reality of this sometimes dull or painful actual world; and we know that while an unmitigated realist may dig a perfect ditch or win a fist-fight, he can never invent airplanes or radio, or lead an army to triumph. And no matter how fantastic soever an author’s premise may be, his story may achieve the finest realism if it maintains fidelity to man’s unique and most precious endowment—his imagination.

—*The Editor.*

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# BLUE BOOK



APRIL, 1935

MAGAZINE

VOL. 60, NO. 6

## Two Extraordinary Novels

- Hawk of the Wilderness** By William L. Chester 6  
The fascinating story of a white boy brought up in a primeval Arctic oasis that may have been the birthplace of the American Indian.
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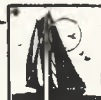
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*Except for stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.*

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## The Day

FROM the slopes of the High Atlas to the wind-swept stretches of the Damascus-Bagdad trail, from the drab barrack walls of Sidi bel-Abbes to the lush miasmatic jungles of Cochín-China, twenty-five thousand lean, hard-bitten men annually celebrate one red day in Mexico. Camerone Day—day of Danjou of the Wooden Hand. Wherever Légionnaires may be on April 30, there is celebrated Camerone Day. Over the shining napery of the officers' mess at Fez glasses clink. In mud-walled frontier forts tin cups clatter as bleak-eyed soldiers drink. In its Golden Book—that scroll so jealously kept in the Hall of Honor of the mother regiment at bel-Abbes—the Foreign Legion has perpetuated many names; but in all those pages of glory none will ever stand higher than Camerone.

"They were here less than sixty, opposed by an army. Its mass crushed them. Life, not honor, abandoned these French soldiers, April 30, 1863." Thus the scroll. Behind that bare recital lies a story paralleling the story of the Alamo. But the end differs. Whereas Travis, Crockett, Bowie and that galaxy of gallant Texans fell to the last man at the hands of Santa Anna on March 6, 1836, the handful of survivors at Camerone received all the honors of war from the Mexican troops who crushed them, twenty-seven years later. . . .

Maximilian the ill-fated was clinging to the throne of Mexico, that fateful year of '63, supported there by French bayonets. Mexico was aflame. The Foreign Legion was scattered along the French line of communications from Vera Cruz to Puebla, then being besieged by the French.

At dawn, April 30, the 3rd Company of the 1st Battalion of the Legion, commanded by Captain Danjou—a tough veteran of a hundred combats, with his right hand shot away and replaced by a hand of wood—marched on Palo Verde, with a mission to reconnoiter for a convoy about to start for Puebla. Danjou had sixty-one in his company, including two lieutenants—Villain, and the regimental color-bearer Maudet, a volunteer.

By seven o'clock in the morning the company had halted for coffee at the stream at Palo Verde, just beyond the deserted village of Camerone. From that direction a dust-cloud rose—mounted men. The company

*Next Month—*

# of the Legion

By CAPTAIN  
R. E. DUPUY

pushed back through the woods to Cameron; and debouching from the woods, was assailed by eight hundred and fifty cavalry under a Mexican Republican officer—Colonel Milan, who as the French were later to find out, had also under his command an additional force of twelve hundred infantry.

Forming square, the company repulsed two cavalry charges. The enemy was too strong to be held in the open, however, so Danjou moved his square of glittering bayonets to a hacienda on the western edge of the village.

Summoned to surrender, Danjou replied: "We have cartridges!" The Mexicans, dismounting, pushed their way into the hacienda, occupying part of the buildings in which the *Légionnaires* were at bay. A sharp fire fight opened at close quarters. Danjou, calling on his men to fight to the last gasp, fell with a bullet through his heart, and Lieutenant Villain took command.

Until noon the company held its opponents back, while the sun grew stronger and thirst became greater. The one well was in Mexican hands. A blare of bugles now aroused hope. Sergeant Morzicki, climbing on a roof, discovered a column of infantry moving up. French? Alas, no; Milan's twelve hundred foot soldiers.

The enemy formed for assault. A second invitation to surrender was received by the *Légionnaires* with jeers. Again and again the Mexican infantry pushed in, to be received by a steady, well-aimed fire. Sheer weight of numbers prevailed; each time the Mexican tide rose a bit higher. The surviving French were driven into the southwest angle of the hacienda court, the attackers now being able to take them under direct fire from other parts of the buildings.

At two-thirty in the afternoon Lieutenant Villain was killed, and Lieutenant Maudet, the volunteer, assumed command. Captain Maine of the Legion, then a corporal, gives a vivid picture of the battle in his memoirs: terrific heat, a torrid sun beating down upon the livid corpses, the parched but stoic wounded, and the grim survivors.

"Hope was gone," says Maine; "but no one spoke of surrender."

The Mexicans set fire to the roofs and framework of the hacienda. Through rolling, choking clouds of smoke the *Légionnaires*

doggedly held their place until—with all wood burned—there remained only the baked and charred adobe walls behind which but a dozen men still remained on their feet.

At five o'clock the Mexicans ceased fire for a moment. A third summons to surrender followed. "We didn't even answer," is Maine's comment. Hell broke again. The survivors, ammunition falling short, made every shot count. Mexican dead, heaped in the breaches made in the walls, impeded the new waves of assault.

"I propped Morzicki's body against the wall," says Maine, "and searched it for cartridges. I found two. We were now only five—Lieutenant Maudet, a Prussian named Wenzel, Catteau, Constantin and myself. At six o'clock there remained one round apiece. At the Lieutenant's command, we fired as one man, and with bayonets fixed plunged into the open.

"A wave of fire received us. Catteau, throwing himself in front of his officer, fell with nineteen balls in his body. The Lieutenant was himself struck down by two shots, one smashing his right thigh-bone. Wenzel fell with him, but regained his feet, with a shot through his shoulder.

"Three men were now still standing—Wenzel, Constantin and myself. . . . A wave of Mexicans engulfed us, their bayonets poised. An officer struck up their blades with his saber.

"Surrender!"

"If you leave us our arms and promise to help this wounded officer," I responded.

"The officer consented. . . . He offered me one arm, gave the other to the wounded Wenzel, while a stretcher was brought for the Lieutenant. We moved out to a little fold in the ground where stood Colonel Milan and his staff.

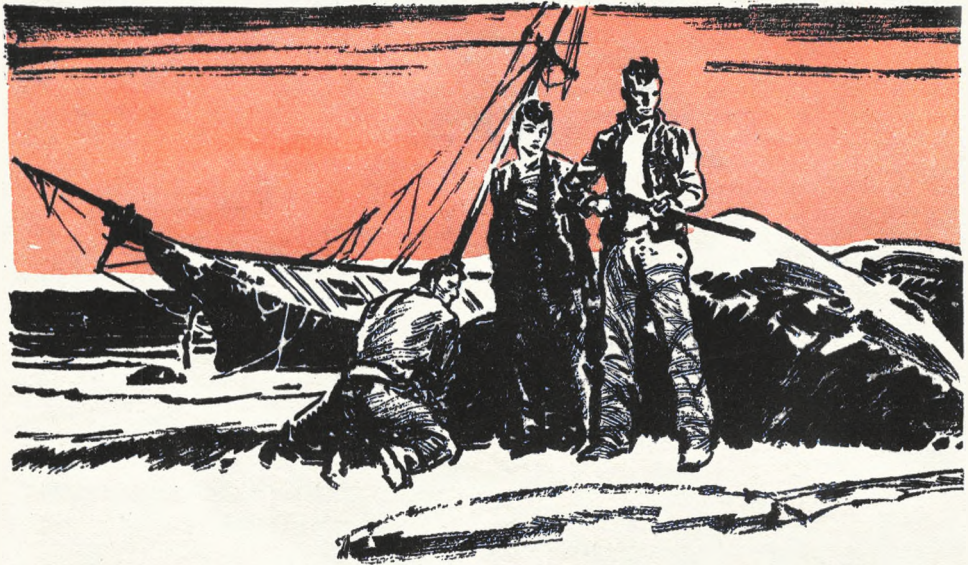
"Are these all who are left?" he demanded. And on affirmation—"They are not men; they are demons!"

"They gave us cornmeal cakes and water, which we gulped."

Thus the story of Cameron—the story of ten hours of fighting—sixty-two against more than two thousand—in an open court, without food or water, under a burning sun. Nineteen in all of the Legion survived. Of the attackers three hundred were casualties, two hundred of them dead on the field.

*The Extraordinary Real Experience of an American Soldier*  
"TEN YEARS in the FOREIGN LEGION"

# HAWK of the



*The extraordinary story of a white boy brought up among primitive men and savage beasts, in the strange and hitherto undiscovered land whence perhaps came the American Indians.*

By WILLIAM L. CHESTER

IN relating the Tale of the Log and the Skin, I am also telling the story of James Munro, the famed anthropologist and Amerindian enthusiast, whose collection of American Indian historical objects is perhaps the largest extant in private hands—the result of more than three decades of collecting here, in South America, and on the islands between. My own part in the tale is small, but highly fascinating. I am a kind of curator of this private museum, the guardian, so to speak, of treasures turned up by the man in the field—Munro himself.

Munro's passion for his chosen work took him endlessly to the far fringes of civilization. Indeed, only twice in the ten years preceding his last visit had I the honor of his company at my board. Those rare visits will live undimmed in my memory. Sitting smoking his pipe in the glow of the fireplace, he talked as only a man can talk who is steeped in aboriginal lore, of that most enigmatic and much-argued of puzzles—the origin

and pre-Columbian history of those true Americans, the Indians. We discussed these straight-bodied, copper-skinned, warlike people, debated the Asiatic theory and dissected the others, even that far-fetched one asserting their migration from the lost continent of Atlantis. Far into the stillnesses of the night we recreated between us the powerful Aztec civilization of Montezuma, the barbarian king; the golden riches of the Inca Princes of the Sun; the mighty unity of the savage Iroquois, and the absorbing and picturesque plains cultures of the Sioux, the Cheyenne and the Apache—all, alas, swept away like chaff before the invasion of the Europeans. . . .

A several years' absence had ensued after Munro's previous visit, during which I had kept rather close check on his wanderings by noting whence were sent his various shipments to our museum. Then one day a traveling-bag was received, shortly followed by a letter advising me of his probable arrival within a day or two.

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# WILDERNESS



Illustrated by  
Jeremy Cannon

Supposing that the bag contained more arrow-heads, stone celts and similar odds and ends peculiar to the study of ancient cultures, I proceeded to examine and catalogue them, preparatory to storing them safely away. I began this operation at about nine o'clock in the morning on one of those gloomy, lower-

ing days so conducive to study; but within a few moments, time ceased to have any meaning or importance.

The first object I took from the bag was the tanned skin of a large animal, tied at its corners into a bag. Opening this out, I saw at once that the smoother side of the skin was crowded with what I took to be tiny Indian picture-drawings, hieroglyphics and symbols of various kinds. A packet of freshly developed photographs, through which I quickly thumbed, contained among others some extraordinary pictures of big-game animals and many unusual panoramic scenes of great beauty and grandeur. In a little skin belt-pouch, such as Indians once used to hold small sacred objects—or



so-called "medicine,"—I found, to my utter astonishment, a small quantity of precious stones of undoubted value, of which a ruby and a diamond of antique cut were among the largest and most perfect I ever had beheld.

In mummy-like wrappings was another object which proved to be a rather small flat book, in which I judged, with rejoicing, that Munro had kept notes of his journeys and discoveries, since I observed dates and closely crowded annotations. Other objects of an unusual nature also came into view, but all were suddenly wiped from my mind as upon the picture-skin, which lay beneath my hand, I chanced to notice, in small, compact perfect characters, words written in English.

Now, there exist many such picture-records painted upon buffalo-hides, by Indians long-dead, containing stories of battles, hunts, journeys and scrimmages with enemies. But it was altogether an unprecedented thing to find upon such a hide the familiar outlines of civilized script. Moreover I now saw that the little book before mentioned was written in several handwritings—none of them Munro's. One, however, was identical with the writing on the buffalo-hide; and thoroughly aroused by this remarkable fact, I opened the little volume, and by later references to the picture-skin, and the photographs, pieced together part of an extraordinary and startling story. . . .

Munro arrived later that night, and greeted me in his usual way, as perfunctorily as if only hours instead of years had intervened since last we had

met. Almost his first words referred to the subject of the book and the skin.

"I see you've read it too." From his tone I realized that the matter gripped his imagination beyond any discovery he had ever made before.

"Science," he observed reflectively, "knows much—but not all."

"Then you think," I began, tapping the picture-skin, "that there are grounds for believing this?"

"Between us two—I am sure of it," he answered with a positiveness which I knew must be grounded in facts; then he drew a notebook of his own from his pocket, and handed it to me, continuing:

"Scientifically, it remains to be proved. I can't rest until I am absolutely certain. It is possible, very possible, that I won't return. Time is too short to explain everything, but my diary here will complete the story up to the present. If you do not hear from me in three years, do what you will with it." After a few further words, he departed—and I have not set eyes on him since.

Not so much as a word has ever come out of the North, whither Munro went on his strangest expedition, to attest either its success or its failure. Myself, I finished the story that same night. I shall not comment further on its right to credence, but set down the facts as revealed or suggested in the log-book, the picture-skin and Munro's own diary:

**T**HE earliest threads of the narrative go back, roughly, to the turn of the century. In unraveling them we find ourselves almost at once aboard a stanch little vessel, the *Cherokee*, cruising, according to latitudes given in her log, in the mild waters of the North Pacific Ocean, near the Aleutian Islands, south of the Bering Sea.

The *Cherokee* was no ordinary vessel, for though of small tonnage, she was built of oak, carried triple-sewn canvas, and was in all ways designed to withstand the angriest storms. Her owner and navigator, Doctor Lincoln Rand, had equipped the *Cherokee* as a kind of floating infirmary in which he hoped to accomplish for humanity something of what another knight of medicine has done in Labrador on the Atlantic side.

An extraordinary man, young Lincoln Rand, the last of a mighty breed that had served with distinction in America's wars, and in each generation since the *Mayflower* had won success in both material and spiritual ways.

Sharing his father's enthusiasm for rough outdoor expeditions, tutoring privately between long trips, living with and learning the different dialects of many Indian tribes, young Lincoln's boyhood had been an active and arduous one. Manhood found him a splendid specimen and example of clean living, over six feet tall and straight as a pine.

Trips and stays at the Indian reservations had resulted in the formation of a strong friendship with the polished and educated Indian whose name was Woodman Running-Wolf—or, as Rand called him by his Indian name, Mokuysi. This dark, lean and stalwart full-blood was the second member of the little party aboard the *Cherokee*.

Rand's lovely and cultured wife Helena was the third. For a long time she had held Rand at arms'-length, vainly hoping that time would release him from his craving for the life of another and forever vanished day. But being herself derived from bold pioneers and settlers of the West, she understood his discontent with the soft life of this modern age.

**B**UT the crew of the *Cherokee* might have consisted of three men instead of two, had it not been for an unfortunate estrangement between Rand and his friend James Munro, then but a young man, just beginning the researches that were to make him famous. This estrangement arose out of their mutual love for the same woman—certainly the only circumstance that could have impaired their lifelong friendship. . . .

Noble in purpose and aspect, the trim vessel nosed her graceful way through shipping in San Francisco Harbor one autumn day and slipped out into the open sea on what was to be one of the strangest voyages in all marine annals. She was last sighted and spoken by a whaler, rounding the island of Unimak and standing north into the Bering Sea, where she was swallowed up in a dense fog—and never again seen by the eye of civilized man. . . .

Not many years afterward came the earthquake which rocked the west coast of America and gutted San Francisco. Had the Doctor and his party returned they would have found themselves homeless and virtually penniless. The Marsh family, Helena's kin, regrettably perished in the ensuing fire. Only James Munro, absent on a mission to the Blackfeet reservation, survived, and spent all of

his time and most of a private fortune in the attempt to learn the fate of his friends and the woman he had loved. But the *Cherokee* had vanished utterly.

The storm which crippled her was one of those which sweep up from tropic waters to make the Pacific belie its gentle name. The soft regular hiss of the passing sea deepened to a boiling snarl, and the *Cherokee* began to pitch ominously as the barometer fell. A sullen greenish sea rolled aboard, the first during this voyage. Two hours later the first of many mishaps overtook the *Cherokee* when a tremendous sea washed aft and tore out the stout Oregon pine mast, carrying canvas and rigging, which snapped like thread, far astern into the blackness. Almost instantly thereafter the full force of the hurricane struck. Time and again the three souls aboard despaired of the *Cherokee's* ability to weather through; but always, like a living thing, she struggled from beneath the weight of the waters, shook them from her straining decks and rose wearily to the surface, the winds moaning in her little remaining rigging.

When the storm had somewhat abated, the two men cleared the deck of its wreckage and between them they rigged up a jury mast.

Steady watch was kept for that sail or smudge of smoke in the distance which would mean rescue: but the limitless horizon played tricks upon their weary eyes, and even that was blotted out on the sixteenth day, when another but colder storm charged down upon them like a great black bull, tearing away the makeshift mast and straining the oaken heart of the ship almost to the breaking point.

**I**N following days of northerly drift, the storm wore itself out; they awoke one morning to find themselves in the sheltering lee of a small melting iceberg, which gleamed like a polished blue-green castle in the rising sun. At this point in the log-book, Rand's fears that they were adrift in the vast Arctic Sea were first expressed, and quickly confirmed by the continual presence of fog-banks and occasional ice-cakes.

There was no want of life around them. They sighted a vast herd of sea-lions swimming rapidly northward under dense, low-hanging storm-clouds, through a gale-swept ocean. Sea-otters came fearlessly alongside, rearing vertically from their beds of floating kelp to watch them

A devilish yelping cry arose from the throats of the warriors as they closed like wolves upon the unfortunate little party.



drift past. Now and then herds of walrus passed at a distance. But life only accentuated the terrible solitude of the sea, and of land they caught no glimpse.

It grew increasingly cold. And they now saw the miracle of the Arctic night begin. The moon in the south was transformed from a red-gold shield into a huge pale silver bubble encircled by a yellow ring. The blue-violet, pink-tinged shadows on the ice near the boat began to reflect the magic glory of the kindling sky, which was alternately veiled in glowing silver, yellow, green and clearest red, which spread billowing across the dome and then melted into the clear brilliance of the moonlight, only to begin anew the dazzling display.

That night, by the moon's light, Rand and Mokuyi killed a large seal at the edge of a floe, and thus added to their diminishing food-supply. But thereafter fog again shut down like a great smothering blanket, and the ice-pressure upon the *Cherokee's* hull increased alarmingly. For many days they floated thus, blindly, in their groaning, creaking craft.

One aspect of the situation puzzled both men, however. The long-expected complete freeze-up did not appear to be materializing. The *Cherokee* actually began shaking off her weight of ice, and floated freely once more. Then one day they saw a branch drift past, with leaves still green upon it. Finally Mokuyi, ever alert to nature's signs, pointed out a great flock containing thousands of murre, flying high overhead, as evidence that land must be somewhere near.

They were no less astonished and pleased when the severe cold gave place to a bracing, invigorating atmosphere, wine-clear, and of a mildness, Rand thought, attributable to some unrecorded warm ocean current. The ice was unmistakably diminishing now, and their continuous northward drift appeared to have ceased. Then they began to observe water-logged hulks in the sea about them, mere half-submerged, slime-coated wrecks for the most part.

"Sargasso seas—areas of calm—exist in both hemispheres," Rand declared, "and no doubt in the Arctic. If so, then



Too late Rand realized the meaning of Mokuyi's words, having already reversed his empty rifle and clubbed a savage to earth.

we've added something to man's knowledge of the sea."

From one of these ancient wrecks they salvaged a short mast, seated it firmly, and by the use of their last spare canvas, again found themselves in case to make slow headway.

"It would be foolish to return as we came," suggested the Indian. "Let's go on, and hope to find some little island to winter on. Then, with the return of warmer weather and the break-up of the ice, we'll be able to make our way southward again." This they did, to such purpose that within two days of northerly sailing, they came in sight of shoals; and dimly through the hanging mists, they detected a distant headland.

As they approached, their anticipation turned to dismay, and it appeared to both Mokuyi and Rand that upon this serrated bank their journey must come forever to an end, with the *Cherokee* pounding to matchwood like those other derelicts on every hand ahead.

By what benevolence of the Almighty they never knew, the ship passed some-

how through the roaring invisible maelstrom of the combers. Times without number the *Cherokee* scraped and pounded her sides upon the rocks. Hour after hour and mile after mile this torture continued, and the three appalled humans expected momentary shipwreck.

When during that endless Arctic night, that terrible ordeal of waiting, they finally and unmistakably grounded, all believed the end had come. But early dawn of a day which would last but an hour or two revealed instead that most beautiful sight of all to sea-weary eyes—land!

Like the shoals, the cliffs extended into the distance grim and forbidding; and behind them the waves, breaking upon the reefs through which they had so miraculously come, churned, seethed and foamed, as if gnashing their watery jaws at the *Cherokee's* safe passage.

This shore air was filled with bird-life. Arctic terns curved overhead or dived swiftly. Sand-pipers fed in little pools. Black-bellied and golden plover swirled in large flocks. Bands of pintail floated up from the grasses about the

salt-lagoons, while high above, rough-legged hawks circled slowly. From the cliffs came the *kok-a-row* of red-throated loons, or the mournful screams of great black-backed gulls; and the far-reaching calls of ravens echoed in the spray-drenched coves.

The entry for that day in the *Cherokee's* log expresses Rand's wonder that they had contrived to reach the mainland through the deadly miles-wide barrier formed by the reefs. The vessel, it appears, had picked a way along a course of her own choosing—or of God's choosing, as Rand put it—and had grounded in a bay scarcely a hundred yards wide.

## CHAPTER II

### THE VANISHED RACE

**WORKING** swiftly, the two men and the woman transferred all of value to the battered decks of the *Cherokee*, being especially careful to keep dry their single rifle and revolver, their only means of defense against whatever perils might beset them upon this strange strand. They salvaged Rand's instrument-kit, the log-book, and a few other things.

A difference of opinion existed between the two men. Rand believed they had floated in an easterly direction, grounding on the northern coast of Canada, in the neighborhood of Mackenzie Bay. Mokuyi contended that this land was either an island north of the Asiatic coast, or more probably the coast of Siberia itself. They reached an agreement in a startling manner.

Lack of water had made finding a spring vital; and while Helena stood guard over their belongings, Rand and Mokuyi discovered water a little way down the shore, filled their containers and turned to retrace their steps—then stood suddenly rooted to earth:

Poised in statuesque beauty upon a ledge, mighty power and grace in every line of its form, stood a magnificent long-haired tigress! Scarcely a hundred feet away, they could discern every stripe, every ring in the long thick tail, even the cruel glint of her glowing eyes. Between the massive jaws she held a freshly-killed seal, limp in death. As they watched, she executed an elastic spring, attained a higher ledge and vanished behind a bend in the cliff, soundless as a phantom and leaving the two men momentarily spellbound.

"Good God!" ejaculated Rand.

"Lucky she made her kill before we came along," said the Indian. "The gods seem to be on our side, Lincoln."

"You know what this means?"

Mokuyi nodded grimly in answer. "It upsets your theory. That animal locates us beyond all further doubt. It's Asia, not America."

They spent that night aboard the vessel, thoroughly convinced that careened though she was, she offered a safer haven than any spot ashore; and as the tide rose, righting her, they were tolerably comfortable.

Frequently during that sleepless vigil Rand directed the beam of his lantern shoreward. First revealed in the luminous circle was a handsome thick-coated puma, which seemed to the silent watchers as large as a lioness, before it screamed and slid into the blackness. Soon a huge brownish-black bear reared up in surprise at the brightness of their light. Mokuyi knew he had never seen another so large.

Toward dawn a heavy bass moaning roar brought the light shoreward again, and now they saw another tiger, heavier and more massive than she who had startled them the day before, and with fur so thick that it hung halfway to the animal's knees. Continuously, until the southern sky was again alight, came the echoes of the cries and calls of savage animals from somewhere inland, audible testimony to the teeming numbers of the predatory beasts.

**AT** daylight,—of which there would be but little,—the three set out as had their forefathers before them, to erect a temporary dwelling as protection from both elements and savage beasts, until they could determine their whereabouts and effect their escape from this inhospitable shore. The two men had already laid the four corners of a proposed rock house, and Helena was industriously spreading their salvaged apparel to dry.

Darkness was now falling. Rand and the Indian bent under the weight of a great slab of stone. Suddenly they heard Helena utter a startled cry of warning, and following the direction of her eyes, saw a band of some twenty paint-streaked and almost naked men closing stealthily in upon them from three sides, with weapons in hand and gleaming in that lowering dusk.

To Rand the thought of armed and hostile attack by Indians in this year of the Twentieth Century was all but in-

credible, and astonishment robbed him for the moment of his usual poise. Snatching up his rifle, he fired.

A devilish yelping cry rose from the throats of the remaining warriors as they closed like wolves upon the unfortunate little party. Mokuyi was shouting something in an Indian dialect. Too late Rand realized the meaning of the words, having already reversed his empty rifle and clubbed another savage to earth. Nor did he remember the look of intense astonishment which crossed the grotesque features of their assailants at Mokuyi's cry, for something fell with stunning force upon his skull.

RAND returned slowly to the consciousness of a throbbing ache in his head.

And presently he heard a vaguely familiar musical tongue. He felt a hand under his head, cool water at his lips, and drank greedily. Slowly opening his eyes, he realized that he lay upon a bed of leaves, covered with soft skins, and that the bark covering overhead was the roof of an Indian lodge.

An aged crone, seamed, wrinkled and shrunken by age, but garbed in fresh new buckskin, held a brimming vessel to his lips, and her eyes seemed like bright black beads imbedded in a leathery skin the color of roasted coffee. Behind her a fire threw its warm glow upon the walls, where Rand discerned a fishing-net, several pairs of moccasins, a war-club, a quiver full of arrows, and sundry other implements of war and the chase, all lying or hanging about as if their owner had but a moment before put them aside to prepare for his coming.

Sounds from without, the subdued voices of women and children, the deeper gruff tones of mature men, reached his ears. Now and then he caught a word or two which he could understand, in a tongue more sonorous and pure than he knew it, or had ever heard it spoken, but Indian words none the less. One voice in particular rose with authority:

"The white prisoner—where have you put him?"

"Inside this lodge," came a child's eager voice; and a hanging skin which curtained the doorway was parted. Several tall and muscular warriors filed in. The leader of the party spoke.

"Sawamic commands presence of prisoner with white skin. Cut his bonds." Producing a wicked-looking knife, the old crone cackled and obeyed. Slowly and with great effort Rand arose,

"Who," he demanded, as nearly as possible in the dialect they were using, "who is Sawamic, and what village is this?" His tone had at once the dignity and his bearing the haughty impressiveness of their own.

"To far corners of mountain-land, all men know Sawamic, king of the Shoni. This is village of Hopeka, wherein all men are accountable to him before whom we are ordered to bring you."

Bewildered and still half-dazed from the blow he had sustained, Rand answered: "Let us go, then, and at once. I would protest at being thus attacked and separated from my wife and brother."

The spokesman of Sawamic raised a hand. "They are safe. They would be dead, had not the one you call brother spoken to us in our language."

"Is it the way of the Shoni," demanded Rand in some heat, "to fall upon and kill those to whom they are bound by solemn treaties?"

For a moment a blank stare greeted these words. The Indian leader drew himself up angrily; then he seized Rand by the arm, and with his knife's point held at the captive's throat, pulled him through the door, into the open, passing between watching lanes of staring women and naked brown children, to an assembly lodge.

Within the bark walls the smoke from many pipes lay in streaks upon the close atmosphere. Tall warriors, chiefs and head-men squatted, sat and stood row back of row to the outermost dark edges of the interior, where only the whites of their eyes gleamed in their fierce and haughty faces—truly a sight to stir the blood of any American familiar with the history and decline of the Red race.

THEY were costumed in handsome robes, splendid plumed headdresses and gorgeous colored tunics. They wore ornaments of bone, bear-claws and eagle-talons and shells. They were wrapped in brilliant sashes of deer-skin threaded with scintillating bits of colored bone and dyed moose-hair. Many boasted richly decorated head-bands, and quill-embroidered war-shirts upon which the firelight at the center of the lodge glowed yellow and orange-red. All carried arms—bows, painted quivers stuffed with arrows, war-clubs of strange design, evil-looking lances with copper blades. These things Rand observed as he passed through their ranks, which opened before him with many marks of respect.



A curious droop came into Kioga's lips.

He was bidden to squat upon a thick *pukkwi* mat at the side of the fire. A hawk-nosed chieftain proffered him a choice cut of boiled meat from a steaming cooking vessel. After he had accepted, all others in the first row, the ranking Indian leaders, were served in their turn. During this ceremony not a word was spoken, until at last the aged chief, whose features were so like those of a bird of prey, handed him a lighted pipe. When he had smoked, the old man took it back, himself puffed, blowing smoke to the earth, to the sky and thrice toward the south. So the pipe went the rounds, and all smoked in the same deliberate manner that proclaimed them sun-worshippers.

When the pipe returned, the old chieftain (Sawamic, as Rand was to learn) rose and faced him with stately bearing.

"To our white brother we have given greeting. Together we have smoked the pipe. Let there be no blood between us for the battle of yesterday. Let there be only friendship."

"Friendship!" answered Rand bitterly. "Yet when we come here in need of succor, not peace but the war-club did we receive. Is it the way of the proud Shoni to slay those who stand helpless before them?" he demanded again.

"My warriors are quick to fight, quicker to right a wrong," was Sawamic's answer. "They will bring gifts to prove

their regret, in due time. But speak—tell us how it is that white man speaks language of Shoni."

"I learned the tongue from your Canadian brethren," replied Rand, "—in whose lodges I spent many happy days of my boyhood."

A look of surprise greeted this statement, and eye went to eye in puzzled fashion.

"Of our Canadian brethren you speak," at last pursued Sawamic. "Who are these? We know them not, nor meaning of this strange name."

It was Rand's turn to be amazed.

"Canada is a dominion under the rule of the Great Father, King Edward the VII," he explained. "Many members of the Indian nations live there in return for aid given the English king against the Americans during the Indian wars. Do you not know these who speak your own tongue?"

After long thought the old chief shook his head, an expression of bafflement upon his weathered features.

"There is but one Great Father—He is above," he answered with reverence. "We call Him Na-Tose, the Sun. We call our land after His name—Nato'wa—Sun Land. We do not know this strange king, nor land called Ca-na-da. We acknowledge no strange king. We are a mighty people, and a free people. What are Americans? When were these wars? Give us your answers to these things. Our ears are open to receive your words."

**F**AR into that to him incredible night, Rand addressed his replies to attentive questioners. He told of the coming of the white men to the New World, of the gradual destruction of the Indian nations, of the extension of white dominion over the broad empires once ruled by the Red men. He spoke of the white man's railroads, his mighty engineering works, tunnels, skyscrapers.

Frequent guttural ejaculations greeted his words, upon which that barbaric assembly hung as if hypnotized. Once there was a moment of low laughter, without intended discourtesy, as he described ships of heavy metal which could yet float upon the waters, bearing armies of men within their steel walls.

When in the early hours of the morning they had quite finished with him, Rand knew not whether privately they hailed him as a teller of wonderful strange tales, or as a liar without peer.



Once again escorted by his fierce body-guard, he was returned to the lodge, where he found Mokuyi and Helena unharmed and awaiting him with open arms. A mutual exchange of experiences convinced Rand that they must be in the power of some hitherto unstudied tribe of the far Northwest.

Mokuyi, however, was curiously silent as to this theory. When later they were provided with all things necessary to their comfort on a rude scale, and given the freedom of the village, the Indian immediately circulated among the natives, with whom he soon seemed at perfect ease. . . .

True to the assurances of the venerable Sawamic, a feast and dance were given in their honor by the warriors responsible for their capture, to placate them for indignities they had suffered.

Around the great fire sat the copper-colored musicians; one beat the head of a great cylindrical drum, producing a rich heavy vibration which mingled with the gay squeal of reed flutes and the intermittent blowing of conch-shells in a strange pulsating cadence. The glistening naked bodies of the dancers leaped, postured and sidled to the rhythmic beat of the drum, or stiffened at the frequent overtone caused by the shaking of snake-skin rattles.

To three fascinated strangers watching and listening, it seemed almost as if time had been turned back a thousand years to a day when the free Indian nations roamed the deep forests and broad prairies of an undiscovered continent.

### CHAPTER III

#### A LAND UNKNOWN

**R**AND and his wife were not unhappy in their enforced exile. The picturesque life of the Indian village awoke memories of the colorful past of their own land. Naked dark-eyed children, playing in the fortified village, hunters returning from the looming wilderness laden with wild game taken with the bow and arrow, ceremonial drums throbbing, lodge-fires glowing at dusk—all these fascinated both.

From that other side of savage existence, grimly eloquent of violence and death, Rand carefully shielded his young wife, taking care that she did not see those blood-stained trophies—enemy scalps, brought in on poles and dried before the lodges of the warriors; and

there were ceremonies whose existence he tried to keep from her knowledge—scalp-dances and the occasional torture-rites incident to the capture of an enemy.

Helena soon learned the Indian tongue and many of their simple arts; and her ready smile dissipated the reserve of the native women.

**I**T was Mokuyi who learned most about the land into which the tides had carried them. He in turn related it to Rand, who recorded it in the log-book:

Many days' travel beyond the Atali-Gwa, or Great Mountains, to their west, lay a great plain. On it lived the Red People, famed for horsemanship and the pursuit of war. On a plateau further north dwelt the Apu-Tosupi, or People of the Cold. These resembled, by description, the ancient Blackfeet tribes of the old American Northwest. Of other nations Mokuyi spoke at great length—of the P'Saroki, the P'koni, the L'cota, the 'Sapwo—in all of which Rand fancied he could trace a resemblance to some American Indian nation. He was also forced to admit that this land was vastly larger than he had at first supposed, and in this Helena also concurred.

"It is not Nato'wa that seems strange now," she said to him one day. "But trains, telephones, great lighted cities—they seem so remote from us here."

Listening to the bass cough of some prowling animal beyond the palisade, and the answering defiance of the wolves, Rand could not but agree.

Hopeka was a village of several hundred lodges, housing in all perhaps three thousand souls, of whom at least a quarter were continually absent on the hunt, or journeying by canoe between the various tribes. The Indian capital was situate upon the junction of two rivers, and by intelligent use of the skein of waterways which linked his mountain kingdom, Sawamic, the reigning ruler, had maintained a peace of several seasons. This, however, did not exclude frequent minor brushes on the rivers, between prestige-hungry young warriors of one tribe and malcontents of another.

The long-houses were all set in a great circle close to the palisade, facing the southeast—whence first rose the sun after the long winters. Thus, at the center of the village, as at the hub of a wheel, there was a spacious clearing on which were held dances, tribal celebrations and other more barbaric ceremonies, in monument to which a grim

scaffolding had been erected by the witch-doctors, upon which dangled countless scalps torn from the skulls of the foe.

The people called themselves Shoni, a shortened form of their original name, meaning League of the Kindred Tribes. This league was formed of seven tribes known as the Wanaki, Wacipi, Ionta, Tawiki, Tugari, Mioka and Otumi. Roughly translated, these became the People-of-the-Plumes, the River-People, the Pipe-smokers, the People-with-Their-Ears-Pierced, the War-makers, the Canoe-builders and the Cliff-People.

Boy-children, naturally, displayed an early aptitude in the use of the weapons upon which survival depended, and were severely disciplined in their use almost from the cradle. Even the Indian women fought boldly beside their lords in times of crisis, wielding the weapons of war with skill and dispatch. Hunting through the summertime provided meat for the long dark winters; and during the sunless winter night no one left the village except in an emergency; while all winter long the perpetual undertone of the drums was to be heard, keeping the Shoni in contact with the holy Sun until he should look once more upon his people over the rim of the southern horizon.

Ancient and changeless, the life of the Shoni retained in a state of native wildness all the brilliant pattern of Indian existence. The natives addressed worshiped mountains in sonorous tones, talked with the stars before retiring, chanted to the hunter's moon a prayer for success in the chase, and daily the drums beat out their prayer messages to the Great Mysteries.

**W**ITH the paddles stealthily dipping before and behind him, Rand experienced that same gripping fascination with the red men's way of life felt by the earliest explorers.

The feel of the stout bow at his back and the barbed arrows in his hand—which had replaced his exhausted ammunition—discouraged any lingering doubt as to the reality of it all and keyed him to the pitch of the new life. He sensed the pagan beauty of it, and without being blinded to its cruelties, was caught up in its savage measure. So, in a sense, he became a part of a new Stone Age.

Naturally, all of this life, so unexpected and different than anything their wildest imaginings could have conjured up, alternately amazed and startled the white witnesses of it. All of it remark-

ably resembled the customs and ways discovered among the aborigines in America by the first white men, and strengthened Rand's growing belief that both were sprung from a common root.

**A**T last he recorded his startling conclusion; legends of the Shoni origin, as he had it from them, spoke of a great continent lost beneath the sea which he at first associated with the lost continent of Atlantis, but later with North America. At any rate, he was now convinced that the Indian had not originated in Asia as was believed by some, but that the red-skinned races found by Columbus had originated in this unmapped and mysteriously warmed land of Nato'wa far to the north, and migrated not across the Bering Strait from Asia, but southward from Nato'wa, via some land-bridge now destroyed.

If to Rand this theory may at first have seemed dubious, Mokuyi wasted no time in speculation, but slipped back easily into a life from which all the education in the world could never have wholly divorced him. To the white man also, this was life as he craved it.

Hunting, fishing, or traveling along the forest-darkened rivers of the interior, Rand observed a wilderness of amazing complexity, startlingly reminiscent of the gloomy equatorial jungles in South America. All along the rivers enmeshing riatas of wild vines cast their strangling clasp about the towering walls of the great trees. Sometimes, along the narrower streams, the Indians had to hew a way through the overhanging leafage, or go another way. Rich mosses grew over fallen trees and rocks like green tapestry; and travel was almost solely by water-craft, since the forests were all but impassable—treacherous with the rotting, spongy, yielding mold of centuries of decay. Very rarely, near a village, a sagging vine-rope bridge spanned a stream for the convenience of the infrequent forest runners.

Of these journeys Rand kept a written record which rivals anything left by those early pathfinders of the New World, whom he must have resembled no little in his new attire of hunting-shirt, fringed leggings and cap of lynx-fur, and surrounded by the silent red Shoni paddlers, gliding along amid the oppressive quietude of those moist, cool humid forests.

He found cause to marvel at the grandeur of the countless waterfalls, the

rushing rivers, and the smoking vents of volcanoes whose internal heat seemed to warm the ground beneath his feet.

If his reasoning be correct, Nato'wa had evaded the glacial ages which made life intolerable on the North American continent, repulsing the Indians time and again ere they could obtain a foothold. He credited the moderate climate and the dense vegetation to the protection of a northern mountain-barrier—from all accounts loftier than the Himalayas; to the wonderful influence of the summer sun, which did not set for months on end; to the pervading volcanic heat which, together with that unrecorded warm ocean current, tempered the atmosphere.

An accomplished naturalist, he was awed by the abounding wild life which quickened the forests. The Indians dreaded the giant brown bear as the Stone-Age Europeans once feared the cave-bears. Wolves, more fierce than those which once ravaged the outlying areas of the Old World, preyed on the defenceless, haunting the villages in winter—and woe to the lone and unwarlike hunter!

He was not astonished to find pumas in the new land, knowing that no other animal on earth has a range equal to this adaptable cat's; nor did reports of buffalo on the plains and in the forest to the west surprise Rand, as a scientist having knowledge that all bison are descended from a circumpolar species.

**B**UT other features of the new land were highly challenging to his imagination. Strange rumors reached him of ivory tusks, possessed by northern tribes, measuring twice the length of a man. Were the tusks from some such elephant-like monsters as were found in the asphalt pits of California?

An old Indian told him of a bird of prey, found only in the highest altitudes, capable of carrying off a yearling bear-cub. Could this be the Thunderbird of old American Indian mythology? And the wolf of Nato'wa was of a giant species unknown to the naturalists of his day. Was it a relative of the Dire Wolf of antiquity?

The presence here of certain animals peculiar to Asia—notably the great blue-horned wild ox, the long-haired Siberian tiger and the snow-leopard of the upper mountains—led him to conclude that Nato'wa was the fecund, teeming nursery of the animal species which had once so

abundantly populated the entire Northern Hemisphere.

Deer, elk and woodland caribou also thrived nearer home, amid a hunter's paradise of fur-bearing animals; yet lacking canoes and the stout palisades which protected the villages, life for man must have been intolerable in those somber game-thronged wilds, for the preying animals, to whom firearms were unknown, had no fear of his other weapons.

The appalling toll of human life taken by wild beasts exceeded the worst reports he had ever heard concerning any land, not excluding tropic India at its worst. Tigers accounted for the greatest number of deaths, though bears maimed and disfigured many. Depredations by tigers or snow-leopards sometimes caused the evacuation of entire villages. Such man-eaters so dominated the lives of the people that often they scarce dared speak of a beast which personified the cruelty of the mighty forests round about them. Children were never left alone by the women, lest the dread cry "Guna! Guna! *Guna!*" herald the snatching of another life by one of the flame-eyed devils.

Rand's consideration for Helena, even more than the limitations imposed by the rigors of winter, put a limit to overlong journeys by foot or canoe; but painstakingly he recorded his thoughts on the probable latitudes in which he found himself; on the glories of the winter skies, filled with the fire of the aurora borealis; on the sonorous purity of the Indian tongues. Through all his writings runs his exultant, almost fierce gladness to find that the red race was not approaching extinction, but endured in the land of its beginnings in the old semi-barbaric way, unspoiled by the ways of more civilized men.

"**M**UNRO would revel in all this!" Rand exclaimed to his wife one day, while writing in his log-book diary. "Poor Munro!" she murmured softly, with a trace of tenderness. "How he will be turning things upside down to find us! If only we could send him some reassuring message that we are safe!"

How rightly she read the absent man, who had loved her, just as Rand did, if less successfully—a man who for many years was to persist in the endless search for his lost love, only at long last to give up in despair, and then, by a remarkable turn of events, to gain knowledge of the accident to the *Cherokee*. . . .



I have said that Rand won the respect of his new and savage friends, the Shoni tribesmen. One there was, however, to whom the coming of the white doctor was a bitter pill.

This was Yellow Weasel, a young and ambitious savage but recently inducted into the office of witch-doctor. A wooden skewer pierced the septum of his nose, overbold in a face marked as cruel by close-set brooding eyes, which were framed between long dangling strands of uncombed black hair. A double row of tattoo-marks was imprinted upon his either cheek and etched in wavy lines across a receding forehead, while his thin lips made up in fierce disdain what they lacked in beauty.

Black-magic, necromancy and demonology constituted Yellow Weasel's strong points. His arms and limbs were horribly scarred by self-inflicted cuts, while one ear was perpetually unhealed of wounds given by his own hand to propitiate the evil spirits with whom he boasted communion. A dried human hand hung by a cord upon his breast, which was girdled by a string of human scalps. But of all the decorations which made him revoltingly hideous, none was

more horrible than the thin and poisonous viper which formed a live necklace about his sinewy throat, its glittering eyes simulating a relationship to those of Yellow Weasel which he quickly turned to account, claiming the snake as his brother.

A strange and terrible figure, he looked at first with amazed resentment upon the superior efficacy of Rand's medicines over his own charms, amulets, incantations, and the other superstitious adjuncts of his dark idolatry. Later on he came to hate all the newcomers with the implacable and rankling hatred of the aboriginal religious fanatic. His malignity was the more violent because the arrival of the *Cherokee* had interfered with his well-laid plans for recruiting new members into the secret Long-Knife Society, of which he was the leader, and through which he aspired eventually to replace and overthrow Sawamic by guile where he dared not employ force.

Of this enmity Rand had no suspicion; he had too much else on his mind.



As the murderer bent to run a knife about the coveted scalp, Helena raised the club high and brought it down on the Indian's head.

Though the Indians were too polite to show outward curiosity, he knew that they wondered why a man should sit for hours bent over two squares of white paper, making endless marks with a curious colored stick; and again he experienced that sensation of unreality concerning this barbaric Indian culture.

Mokuyi, however, answered the voice of a thousand plumed and painted ancestors. Toward the end of the first winter the Indian responded to the call of his blood, taking to wife an Indian maiden, a handsome girl named Awena, daughter of an Indian chief Two Owls.

"I have found myself. This is my life, the old Indian way. These are my people. What should I want with civilization, when I can choose this life?" he asked calmly; and Rand knew that the words came from one in whom ancestry had completely dominated training.

His answer was the perfect expression of their unquestioning friendship:

"That is good, I think. Let's smoke a pipe on it."

Spring came before the first cloud fell upon the happiness of Rand and his young wife. Stunned by the knowledge that she was to become a mother, and with his arms protectingly about her, she told him of her fears, while tears trembled in her lovely eyes.

"A daughter of pioneers oughtn't fear pioneering on her own account. But oh, Lincoln, I pray it won't be a girl!" Choking momentarily, she continued: "Think of it—the wife of a savage Indian hunter! Or if a boy, to grow up a naked savage, always in peril of a violent end under the teeth of wild beast or the tomahawk of an enemy—what a prospect! I love our Indian friends, but I dare not believe this child of ours shall be denied the rights and blessings of civilization, of our glorious America. I dare not!"

As best he could Rand comforted her; but he felt a foreboding of disaster seize upon him for an instant—a feeling of impending misfortune which he could not shake off.

## CHAPTER IV

## RAID IN THE NIGHT

ALTHOUGH Rand would gladly have allayed his wife's fears for her unborn, twice within a month enemy warriors had fallen upon the canoe-men of Hopeka, killing several; and the mourning wails from various parts of the village were driving Helena into despair.

Nor was that all. Earlier in the week wolves had pulled down a small hunting party near by, and a panther had boldly entered the palisades village, seized a child near the wall and escaped with its unlucky victim. Then finally open warfare broke out in the northerly mountains; and exhausted runners, braving the dangers of the open forests, came fainting into Hopeka with the news that massacre raged up and down the mountain frontiers.

To the fatalistic Indians, such things were but a matter of course. Long habit had inured them to it all. But to a woman of Helena's sensitive refinement, they were highly exhausting to nervous and physical strength. More in order to comfort her than from any confidence in ultimate success, Rand and Mokuyi turned their hands to the building of a little ship in which, so they told her cheerfully, they would make their escape to civilization—though her husband often wondered how a safe passage could be made through the uncharted reefs, even were his little vessel completed.

Precisely how far he progressed with this project, the records do not reveal. But his log for November 20th shows the following entry:

*"Savage warfare continues to the west of here. Daily the canoes bring news that the snows are red with the blood of innocents. Though I doubt Hopeka will be imperiled, I am keeping Helena in ignorance of the facts until her hour of trial has passed. Mokuyi has not been here for days. The village is an armed camp, as if some unseen hand were stirring a hell's-broth of uncertainty and suspicion. I go now to get whatever news there may be, though I dare not leave Helena long in this approaching crisis."*

On inquiry Rand found, however, that a measure of peace had descended upon the wilderness. This he conceived due to the strategy of old Sawamic, for which he gave fervent thanks. Little did he know that not twenty miles to the north the war-drums were in full beat, set to

throbbing by Yellow Weasel's provocative haranguing that this was the moment for a trial of strength.

The wild wolves of the high hills, who had learned to follow the throb of the tom-toms, were gathering in hungry packs, waiting. The vultures wheeled in vast circles far overhead.

Into a world thus filled with the threat of bloodshed there was born into the drama of savage existence a little white boy-child, and for a month the happy parents rejoiced. Even though Helena's misgivings diminished for her the joys of motherhood, it came to Lincoln Rand that there were worse fates for a boy than to be reared an Indian. He pictured his son grown tall and stalwart and garbed like himself in buckskin, shod in deer-hide—but not by the wildest stretch of imagination could he have foreseen the strange future already beginning to spread out before their first-born.

In the most approved civilized manner Rand drew up and executed a certificate of birth; in the best civilized style the wee infant was swaddled, attended and baptized Lincoln Rand, Jr., while the interested Indians stood about in waving plumes and blankets, looked for the first time upon a white infant, and found it, to their surprise, not unlike their own.

By the imperfect light of the village fires Rand took many photographs of his wife and baby, in order to preserve these happy hours for all time. But when he found time to develop them, he discovered to his regret that nothing remained of his photographic supplies necessary to this process. Accordingly he laid them carefully away in a light-proof steel box, locked and wrapped in deer-skin along with the birth-certificate, against the time when they should make good their plans of escape.

WHEN the child was six weeks old, a great feast was prepared in the family's honor by Mokuyi, and over the little mite's head and smiling face resounded the chant of the Warrior's Song, reserved for men-children alone; while in sonorous, ceremonious tones, a medicine-man christened him Kioga, the Snow Hawk. This name was chosen for two reasons; his skin was pale, and one of those fierce white birds of prey had hovered over the village that morning. . . . The name was to prove more apt than they knew.

Scarce had that name been uttered amid these natal festivities, when high

into the black heavens rose a pitiless, ululating scream, containing all that the human voice can express of murderous hatred. At the same instant two sentries near the stockade fell dead, arrowed to the heart. Then the stout gate crashed inward before the log battering-ram of the enemy, and a swarm of hideously painted warriors swept suddenly down upon the startled village, hurling themselves like naked devils upon the surprised Shoni, and voicing savage yells.

**I**T was several seconds before the Shoni could reach their weapons; in that space of time dozens of their foremost men-of-arms fell to rise no more, while flames already licked at the near-by lodges, into which the raiders had thrown brands from the village fires.

Before the eyes of his wife, Rand fell with an arrow in his breast, and dragged himself to his feet and to the defense of his little family only to receive the crushing weight of a stone war-club full upon his skull.

Like the pioneer forbears to whom she was a worthy successor, Helena rose to the occasion. As her husband's murderer bent to run a sharp knife about and rip away the coveted scalp, she put aside her tiny human burden. Seizing the club which the Indian had momentarily dropped, she raised it high and brought it down upon the base of the Indian's head. The savage fell dead across the body of the white man.

Then, sick with horror, Helena dropped to Rand's side and took the poor mutilated body to her breast. She had but a moment of heartbreak ere a naked painted form paused above her, and with a brutal deliberateness which was nevertheless a mercy, struck her down.

Meanwhile the Shoni were recovering their wits. The overwhelming wave of attack was beginning to break upon their fierce resistance. Under the leadership of Mokuyi, several score of villagers struck as one man, cut down all who stood in their way and rallied the other defenders with an ear-shocking battle-yell.

Suddenly the attack wavered, crumbled. The raiders fled as swiftly as they had come, and as they ran, were pursued and knocked down without quarter. All hell let loose upon the little clearing could not have produced the diabolical clamor resultant from the successful counter-attack.

When, an hour after the raiders had been repulsed, it came time to count the

dead, scarce a family but had lost one of its circle. Warriors, women, and most pitiable of all, little infant children had shared a common fate. Of these the small son of Mokuyi was one, and the young Indian mother Awena bent moaning over the body of her lost baby.

At a glance, stricken Mokuyi knew the worst; but with no more than a word of sympathy, threaded his way stoically through the dead, identifying all he could, and composing the ghastly features. It was here he came upon the bodies of his friends, and read the tragic story of their end.

His eyes darted about, seeking the mutilated form of their little son. Perceiving it at last, he knelt beside it for the final visual assurance that it too was dead. But by some miracle the child lay unharmed and smiling amid that red and smoking saturnalia of death. Tenderly Mokuyi lifted it up in his arms and carried it to Awena, who took it to her heart with that sad resignation of the Indian mother, to whom any child is better than no child at all.

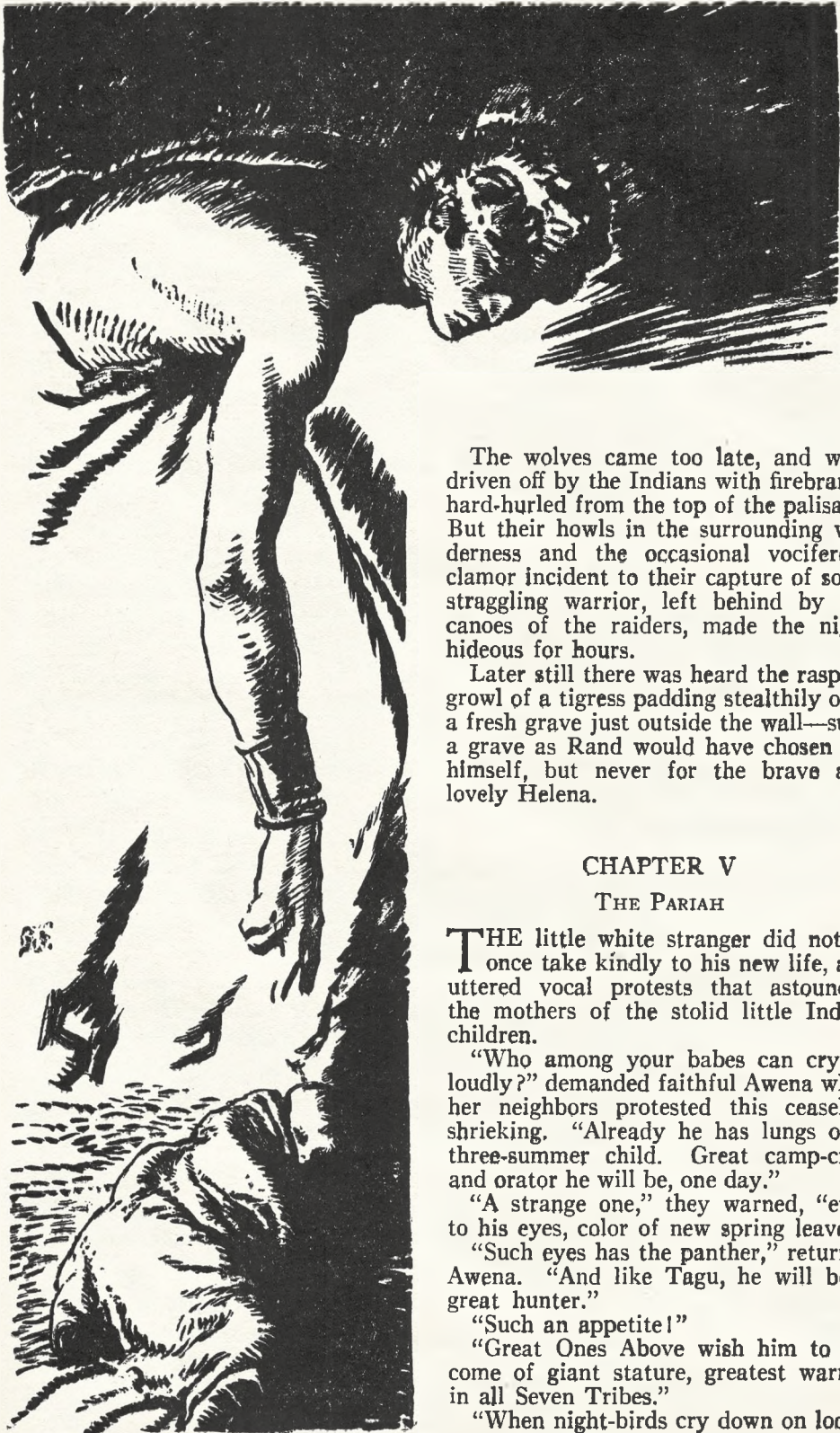
Then back to the scene of his friends' death went Mokuyi, and stood awhile beside the mortal remains of those he had loved.

Deep, silent, noble Mokuyi, fine product of a dying race, a scholar in his own right! How short a time separated him from a life filled with the promise of the success which civilized men covet; yet how unerringly straight had been his reversion to the ways of his barbaric ancestors; for now, as he laid his friends to rest side by side, he added Rand's rifle to a quantity of food which he placed in the double grave, and, highest sacrifice of all, his own good bow and arrows.

Was not the long journey to the Sunrise full of hazard, and must not the souls of the departed be propitiated and put at ease in their new Life?

**N**ONE will ever know what other thoughts inhabited that alert brain as he covered the bodies with earth; but that they had to do with the log-book is certain, for when he returned to the village, he went to Rand's lodge and wrapped the book and sundry other articles in a skin. These he carried away and hid safely in his own lodge.

The village dead were separated from the enemy dead, whose bodies were loaded into canoes, taken down-river a few miles and consigned, with appropriate rites, to the water-gods.



By some miracle the child lay unharmed amid that red saturnalia of death. Tenderly Mokuvi carried it to Awena.

The wolves came too late, and were driven off by the Indians with firebrands hard-hurled from the top of the palisade. But their howls in the surrounding wilderness and the occasional vociferous clamor incident to their capture of some straggling warrior, left behind by the canoes of the raiders, made the night hideous for hours.

Later still there was heard the rasping growl of a tigress padding stealthily over a fresh grave just outside the wall—such a grave as Rand would have chosen for himself, but never for the brave and lovely Helena.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PARIAH

THE little white stranger did not at once take kindly to his new life, and uttered vocal protests that astounded the mothers of the stolid little Indian children.

"Who among your babes can cry so loudly?" demanded faithful Awena when her neighbors protested this ceaseless shrieking. "Already he has lungs of a three-summer child. Great camp-crier and orator he will be, one day."

"A strange one," they warned, "even to his eyes, color of new spring leaves."

"Such eyes has the panther," returned Awena. "And like Tagu, he will be a great hunter."

"Such an appetite!"

"Great Ones Above wish him to become of giant stature, greatest warrior in all Seven Tribes."

"When night-birds cry down on lodge, then he is quiet."

"Already he knows tongue of wild things," retorted Awena, undaunted.



Yet between lullabies, "*Ai-i-i*," she would whisper, "my pretty one, what *do* the owls say, what strange things tell thee?"

Old medicine-men, aware of the notoriety surrounding Mokuyi's adopted, and spurred on by Yellow Weasel, visited Awena, ostensibly on friendly calls, but really to verify strange rumors that were current as to the child's occult gifts.

A secret medicine-dance was held, whereat the evil spirits were exorcised from the absent child by burning a bit of his stolen clothing, or a hair plucked slyly from his head. At the instigation of Yellow Weasel, who had transferred his hatred of Rand to the shoulders of Rand's little son, it was decided to do away with the child, on the ground that its wailing would betray the village to an enemy.

Hearing of this just in time, Awena slipped from the village in the dead of night with her precious little bundle, and appropriating a ready canoe, fled for miles with wildly beating heart along the dark animal-haunted streams, to live with relatives in a distant village.

Returning by canoe from the north, Mokuyi learned of this, and went with unerring judgment straight to the lodge of Yellow Weasel.

"The adopted son of Mokuyi," he said calmly, "sees with eyes of his mother's restless spirit, which cries through his mouth for vengeance. He will live to punish those who wrong him." Then, drawing his robe about him, Mokuyi turned aside, having in his own peculiar way implied that Yellow Weasel's treachery was known. This threw the shaman into a fever of uncertainty as to the full extent of his knowledge—which was, in fact, not knowledge at all, but only distrust, and therefore suspicion.

Two weeks later Awena and her beloved returned, on a safe-conduct guaranteed by Sawamic himself, and for a time they were disturbed no more by the medicine-men.

**N**OW Kioga, the little Snow Hawk, became abruptly silent, and Awena worried because he no longer wailed, for this is the way of mothers, red or white. Hour after hour he would hang vertically from the limb of a village tree, or from a peg hammered into the palisade, snug in his cradle-board, solemnly watching her go about her duties. But when the lodge-fires glowed warmly in the dusk, his large intent eyes always turned toward the mysterious forest be-

yond, and those eyes were plainly luminous, as with some strange sapphire's glow. This was the characteristic which first marked Snow Hawk as one apart and set the stamp of mystery on his pale little brow.

**S**CARCE had he taken his first toddling step when the other children were warned away from him; and this was but the beginning of a long series of petty persecutions, all traceable to the artful Yellow Weasel, who carefully sowed the seeds of superstition which were to sprout and throw their shadows over the white child's entire boyhood.

Daily Mokuyi dipped little Snow Hawk into the cold waters of the Hiwasi. Beginning with his fifteenth month, he was compelled to sleep well away from the fire, for it is not seemly that a brave-to-be think too much of physical comfort. Later on, Mokuyi would let a white-hot pine-needle char to ash on his own bare knee; nor was it long before the little Snow Hawk could endure the stinging pain as stoically as his foster-father. Often, while his son still slept, Mokuyi would voice the deep war-whoop of an enemy tribe. If the boy was not afoot, knife in hand in a second, he felt his father's keenest displeasure until he reacted to that dread signal instantaneously.

So Mokuyi hardened his foster son, teaching him to bear discomfort, pain and hardship uncomplainingly, as befits a warrior—and constantly to be ready for attack from any quarter by enemy tribesmen.

But as Snow Hawk grew, he asked a question that Mokuyi always avoided:

"Why do other children shun me, my father?"

"One day all will respect Snow Hawk, great warrior, mighty hunter. Await that day with patience."

Nevertheless the matter gave his foster parents much worry.

The Indian boys wrestled in teams, ten or more on a side. There were spirited foot-races in which all participated. There was the arrow-game, mock scalp-dances, the playing of medicine-man, mimic deer-hunts and the spinning of tops whipped with thongs of buckskin—but Snow Hawk played ever alone.

When he appeared among them, their various little cliques broke up to drift elsewhere, and reunite and continue their play where they had left off. As yet undismayed by something he did not

understand, at first Kioga followed hopefully, hungry for the companionship of children his own age. But gradually he gave it up. A curious little droop came into his fine lips. He crept off by himself, a pathetic lonely figure, friendless but for the companionship of a little redskin named Kias.

Kias was always silent because he was deaf, having lost his hearing as a result of some early injury from which he was very slowly recovering. Kias and Kioga between them took the boyish oath of blood-brotherhood—not in spoken words, for Kias could not talk, but in sign language, their only means of communication.

**B**UT a time came when Kias and his parents moved to a far village. When their canoe vanished round a bend in the river, in it, waving sad farewell to one whose name he had never so much as heard, went Kias, little Snow Hawk's one friend. Now he had only the crows near the palisade, with whom he exchanged calls and shared his corn-cake. These, together with an occasional hawk, fox-cub or lynx-kitten brought in by Mokuyi, were his companions.

From the beginning he displayed a remarkable vitality. He had walked at seven months, and run at fifteen. At three years of age he was a blur of active enthusiasm; at four he sped like the deer, bounding ethereal and light from winged feet into the air.

Physically he far outstripped others of his age. His arrows soared farthest and hit the target oftener. On one occasion he humiliated two of the other boys, defeating both at once by applying several baffling *ju-jitsu* holds which Mokuyi had taught him. But all this only implanted deeper their hatred of him. Thereafter they were ever seeking to provoke a quarrel—but always *en masse*, like a flock of crows harrying a lone outcast in their midst.

When, on the advice of Mokuyi, he ignored this, they mistook forbearance for fear, and took to waylaying him in pairs and finally singly. One after another forced him to defend himself; and then, crying that he had given first offense, with the help of the rest thrashed him unmercifully. He took it all in silence.

Things went from bad to worse. Life became hell on earth for proud little Snow Hawk, for it was pride alone which stayed his hand, pride in Mokuyi's

confidence in his patience, and in the fact that he, the lone outcast, had more moral courage than his hostile little darker brothers all put together.

Night after night he came home with bloody nose and bruised lips, constant reminders of unprovoked attacks upon him by the others. But Mokuyi was always there to reward him with lessons in shooting the arrow and throwing knife and tomahawk, in all of which the apt child speedily excelled.

To distract the boy's mind from his troubles, whenever possible Mokuyi also instructed him in the language and social etiquette of his white fathers; and upon the walls of the Indian long-house the boy scrawled his earliest letters as he learned the fundamentals of the spoken and written word.

At first he hated this strange hissing tongue called English. He could not see why he, of all children, should be compelled to make these foolish black marks upon the wall, or learn rules of conduct foreign to the Indian way. But once he had grasped the wonderful and unsuspected utility of reading and writing, he learned very rapidly. Between his various escapades this teaching continued. So diligently did he apply himself that at the age of ten summers, without the aid of grammar or text-book, he could print any word he could speak, and his command of the English tongue was really remarkable.

**O**NE summer day the other boys were playing spear-the-hoop, with Snow Hawk, as usual, hugging himself with suppressed excitement on the sidelines. The hoop—made of withes fashioned into a circle and criss-crossed with strips of hide—chanced to roll far toward the other end of the village. Seven boys, one after another, cast their weapons, but missed the moving target.

Now Kioga, like the rest, had a beautiful spear, slender and true-cut, made for him by Mokuyi, and placed in his hands almost before he could walk. With it he had been wont to practice in secret. His skill was considerable.

Excitement broke the bonds of long habit. Seeing the hoop rolling past boy after boy, he drew back his arm and sped his spear away. A second later the rolling hoop lay transfixed through its center, pinned tightly to the ground. It had been a beautiful cast, worthy of a lad many years Snow Hawk's senior. For a moment there was a tense aston-

ished silence as the others stared open-mouthed at the proof of his skill.

Suddenly, with an exclamation of outraged pride and indignation, another boy who had missed the target ran forward, drew out the spear, broke it over his knee and tossed the pieces far out into the forest.

**K**IOGA was stunned by this calamity. All the accumulated resentment of months of undeserved ostracism burst into flame. With lightning quickness he threw himself upon the one who had committed this outrage, and bore his opponent to the ground.

Now, fighting among Indian children, as among all lusty boys, was nothing new. But jealousy was an element present in this instance. So where under normal circumstances Snow Hawk would have been vindicated by his quick victory, he was soon squirming and battling as if for his life against the whole gang of them. Easily equal to his single older opponent, seven quickly overwhelmed the lone boy and beat him pitilessly to the ground, continuing their blows until he lay half unconscious.

Then they seized his quivering form between them and tied him to a tree well away from the village proper, but within the walls, half sick from swallowing his own blood, heart-broken at the loss of his prized spear. There they held a mock scalp-dance over him, kicked, struck and pricked the little prisoner with sharp pine-needles, threw stinging pebbles into his face and spat upon him, one after the other. Finally they crammed his mouth with earth and grass and departed, yelling derisively:

"White-skin! Owl-talker! *Ena! Ena!* Shame, shame! Hereafter play with the girls!"

And there he hung when Mokuyi returned from the hunt—uncomplaining, caked with dried blood, yet with a look of dull pain in his eyes which stabbed Mokuyi to the heart. When the cords were cut away, Kioga fell from limbs blackened and numbed by the prolonged constriction of his bonds.

But that Spartan training had not been in vain. Never a tear, a cry, or an expression of pain had his tormentors wrung from the little Snow Hawk. Shamed by their part in the affair, several of the boys made friendly overtures; but to none did he vouchsafe so much as a glance; he had been too deeply hurt, not only in spirit but in body.

As a result of the fight something had happened to one leg, leaving it all but useless. Despite every effort made by Mokuyi and Awena to effect a cure, it began to look as if he would be permanently paralyzed. In pitiable contrast to his former quick and active stride, he now hobbled about painfully and feebly.

To ease the burden of his disablement, one day Mokuyi brought a tiny bear-cub home from the chase. No longer did the society of the other boys interest Kioga as he crept away with his new pet, and played with it by the hour, alone.

At sundown the frantic mother-bear, bold and fierce, could often be heard raging outside the solid walls of the palisade. This continued for several months. And then one dark night in late autumn she succeeded in tearing a hole in a rotting log with her great claws, and recaptured her lost one, killing an Indian sentry, who would have interfered, with one raking blow of her huge paw.

Discovery of his loss left Snow Hawk disconsolate; for Aki, the cub, had been to him what a dog is to a lonely civilized boy. Of Aki he saw nothing for the duration of that long winter. But one day the following spring, as he lay in the shadow of the great wall, whittling a stick with his little knife of sharp flint, he heard a faint scratching and a low whine outside. Instantly he jerked to attention and applied his eye to a hole in the stockade near the ground.

Without stood Aki, once a tiny cub, now already grown to a sturdy two-hundred-pound yearling bear. At Kioga's low cry of welcome Aki reared, bearlike, and thrust a moist nose into a waiting friendly palm.

What passed between the little outcast and the eager creature of the wilderness depths remains forever unknown. But when Awena sought the pride of her heart, she found only the spot pressed into the new grass by his body—that and a hole in the palisade quite large enough for him to have wriggled through.

Two shadows had vanished together into the purple gloom of the forest.

## CHAPTER VI

### WILD BEGINNINGS

**D**EEP in the thickets, boy and cub had a romp as of old before Aki led off on a trail which took them ever farther from the village. Soon again they paused to play, and in the midst of a friendly

tussling match Kioga felt the cub stiffen suddenly. A moment later a vast ink-black form reared to giant height in the undergrowth ahead.

It was a magnificent she-bear, a full nine feet tall as she stood erect, fiercely eying the little combatants. Long curved claws armed her ponderous paws, and her sharp dog-teeth gleamed big and yellow against the velvet of her lolling tongue. Behind her stood two other cubs about the size of Aki, their small eyes filled with curiosity.

Snow Hawk saw that armory of crushing teeth lengthen into the cavern of her mouth as the she-bear's lips twitched back. Aki scuttled toward the other cubs, bleating with fear of punishment.

Quick as Aki was, the she-bear, for all her monstrous bulk, was quicker still. She dropped to all fours. Her heavy paw caught him a blow across the quarter that sent him sprawling. Then, with her enormous head swinging close to the ground, her tusks bared menacingly, her great shoulder-joints rolling beneath her pelt, she advanced upon Kioga in a deliberate, ominous shuffle.

An ordinary child might have been stiff with fear. But Snow Hawk was nothing if not individual. He could never have escaped her by taking to his heels—he still limped too badly for that. Therefore he moved as quickly as he could, not away from the bear, nor to one side, but straight at her, uttering the while a shrill yell, doubtless calculated to frighten Yanu into a retreat.

Certainly more from astonishment than from fear, the shaggy beast drew back an inch before striking this absurdly bold little atom a light side-swiping blow which hurled him into the midst of her cubs. The irrepressible Aki promptly pounced upon him, starting a rough-house in which the other cubs instantly joined.

**H**AD Kioga remained prone and suffered the brute to approach, she would have crushed his skull like egg-shell, and there had been an end to him once and for all—for the Bear People have no love for humankind. But by his spirited temerity, the boy had turned that murderous determination into an uncertainty which merged into puzzled amazement when she saw that he brought no harm to her cubs.

Slowly she advanced upon the tangle of soft fur and brown skin. With a sweep of her paw and a warning rumble,

she dashed the cubs aside and nosed Kioga over and over upon the ground, until thoroughly satisfied as to his apparent harmlessness. Finally with a gruff growl she sat down doglike upon her haunches, and with a dig of one paw unearthed a fat mouse for the strange little creature, and probably marveled at his stupid failure to seize and devour it.

Then she turned away with simulated indifference, to tear out the side of a huge log, licking up the insects she thus exposed. But occasionally she threw a puzzled glance his way as he renewed the interrupted game with the cubs.

That night, curled up against the warm arch of Yanu's mighty body, weary little Kioga slept the soundest of them all, secure beneath the menace of the great bear's guardian jaws.

When he would have gone back to his village on awaking, the bulk of the she-bear blocked his path. It was as if Yanu had decided that so long as he was in her care, no harm should befall him.

**T**HAT Snow Hawk was a trial and a worry, there can be no doubt. He was forever stumbling into trouble. Too often she had to defend the little cripple with her fighting fangs from the prowling hunters of their joint domain, when he failed to slip into a protecting thicket on her growled order. At such times she punished him as she would one of her own. The blow of a mother-bear is no gentle reminder; he quickly learned to accord her the most perfect obedience.

Ordinarily, though, when she left her charges alone, she herded them up into a tree, out of harm's way. The cubs could climb the largest trees like cats, aided by their sharp curved claws. Kioga had to be carried aloft, hanging to Yanu's shaggy fur, and for a time clung to his branch so tenaciously that every muscle in him was cramped on her return. But the sight of the cubs pursuing one another all over the tree finally proved too much. Warily he commenced venturing out along his limb to join in the play of his furry companions.

To his satisfaction, taking his weight off the injured leg greatly relieved the ache. Moving about in the branches by swinging hand over hand proved to be a means of locomotion that favored the painful member, which profited by the rest and commenced gradually to regain its strength. So began his arboreal apprenticeship, and it was not long before he surpassed the bears in climbing skill.



Kioga lived as Yanu and her cubs lived, ate as they ate.

Yanu and her kind led a restless gypsy life. In spring they visited the shallow streams to pounce upon the fat leaping shiny salmon. In summer they sought the wooded river-banks in search of berries. In autumn the nut-tree ranges on the sunny slopes lured them.

Ofttimes they climbed far up the timbered mountains to seek the perfectly preserved ice-killed elk and goat along the glacier-lines or the snow-slides, then back to the lower jungle again, rarely sleeping twice in the same neighborhood.

Such activity must have been severely arduous even for a boy with the full use of both limbs. But at the first sign of pain in his thigh, Kioga mounted upon the broad back of Yanu and rode on these far jaunts. So he came to learn the nooks, crannies, caves and hide-aways within a radius of many miles—a knowledge that was one day to be the ransom of his life.

Yanu's knowledge of the wilderness was exhaustive. Much of it she had already imparted to her own young. With Kioga she had to begin anew, but soon he knew more than they. He lived as Yanu and her cubs lived, ate what they ate—nuts, plums, roots, herbs, mushrooms and flesh uncooked. But he

drew the line at crawly things which the bears clawed from under dead stumps and licked up or devoured alive.

Example, repetition and a heavy paw were Yanu's means of instructing her human cub. Instinct, imitation and the deductions of an alert brain were the faculties enabling him to learn from her.

Toward the middle of summer Yanu escorted her cubs and Snow Hawk to a hidden little lake for instruction of another kind. Taking them one at a time upon her back, she swam out into deep water and rolled over without ceremony. Thus the cubs had their swimming lessons. The boy held back, but after a buffet or two he submitted to the ordeal, though with very ill grace.

ONE day the wandering bears came to a stream in which otter were at play, swimming and sliding down a muddy bank into the water.

With wondrous grace and ease the seal-like animals sent their long and agile bodies through the water, while poised upon a rock overlooking their playground sat the sentry-otter, alertness personified. Slipping from Yanu's shaggy back, Kioga crept forward to watch them, followed by the cubs, every

whit as curious and cautious as himself. Then an amazing thing happened.

With a startling suddenness a huge lynx bounded out of nowhere, to land heavily upon the great dog-otter; and for a moment it seemed that his vigilance had been slumbering. But now there occurred something both startling and instructive.

Scarce had the big cat's claws sunk in, when the otter retaliated with a vicious lunge that closed its own jaws upon the lynx's throat. With a thrashing twist the otter took hold and then, writhing, dragged its enemy over the bank into the water, which closed over the heads of both.

Twice the fascinated watchers saw the battle churn and seethe beneath the surface. Then, in remarkable contrast to its former arrogance, a bedraggled, screeching and frantic lynx tore itself from the clutches of the otter and fled ignominiously.

**O**THER eyes—yellow, incalculably cruel, the eyes of a sinister jungle felon—had seen the lynx beat him to the spring. They were about to turn away, when Kioga's movement in the rushes brought them to a focus. Then, snarling ravenously, a wolf bounded from concealment, terrible in his gaunt ferocity, and a giant of his kind.

The snarl, vibrant with menace, together with the dog-otter's example still fresh in mind, sent Kioga leaping out over the water. In that fraction of a second the wolf detected Kioga's companions and snapped twice, in passing, before being carried into the stream by the momentum of his bound.

Meanwhile Yanu, hearing the cubs scamper to safety and the double splash that followed, came crashing through the willows to where, in a moment of carelessness, she had left Kioga to his own devices. She saw the huge wolf break the surface, floundering and howling as if in the toils of death, but nothing was to be seen of Kioga. Yet beneath the water his keen little brain was at work, and had formed a cunning scheme by means of which to outwit T'yone until Yanu should arrive. Emboldened by the feel of the creek-bottom under foot, he gulped a breath of air each time the animal struggled to the surface, and then promptly sank, dragging his enemy down with him.

Caught unawares by this strategy, the raging beast's fury had already turned to

panic. Snapping and biting fiercely, his jaws closed upon nothing more palpable than water, of which he had more than enough already. For the first time his wits were unequal to the combat. Ever weaker grew the struggles of T'yone; ever tighter became the grip of that relentless brown hand upon his tail.

By now Yanu had divined the situation, and plunging into the shallow stream, she seized the wolf's head between her mighty jaws and with a bite reduced it to jelly. To her surprise the animal was already all but dead. Growling, she turned to survey Kioga, who was scrambling up the bank. He bore not a scratch.

Between them the bears tore T'yone's body to shreds while Snow Hawk watched. His victory meant little to him, because it was overwhelmed in the thrill of discovery: water, which until that moment he had hated and feared, was something friendly, which not only slaked one's thirst and hid one's trail, but also preserved one from one's enemies. . . . When they had wrought their vengeance upon what was once T'yone, the bears faded into the forest with Kioga triumphantly astride Yanu's broad back once more.

Such was the story Mokuyi and his band found imprinted upon the soft mud beside the stream. Perceiving blood everywhere, and finding no little human footprints leaving the scene, the heart-broken Indian gave up the search. Slowly the canoe drifted away, carrying tragic news home to waiting Awena.

**N**EVER again did Yanu have trouble getting the boy into the water. He had learned another vital lesson, and thereafter perfected himself in the art of swimming upon the surface and below, until he could plunge with scarce a splash or submerge almost as smoothly as a seal. In the summer when savage Suggema, the mosquito, became too fierce, he like the bears learned to lie deep in the woodland pools, with only the tip of his nose protruding; and he would follow Yanu across miles of streams or lakes in their long journeys through her territory, without hesitation.

Nothing could have been more beneficial than swimming, in which his lame leg was exercised without strain. His recovery was now well advanced.

Occasionally mighty Yanu would bash in the head of a woodland buffalo with a blow of her terrible paw, for she was at

heart a killer, feeling the lust for slaughter periodically; and of all his strange experiences, this made the deepest mark upon the boy's impressionable mind, implanting deep within him the desire to kill as she did with the weapons nature had given him.

All summer long the sun had not set, and life had been one long round of adventure and travel. But now the endless day was waning, as each hour the sun sank lower. The southern skies darkened from light orange to a warm blood red, grim harbingers of the sterner season to come. The forests became gloomier, the shadows deeper and longer. For the first time in moons Snow Hawk yearned to hear the sound of a human voice.

YANU did not hibernate, but forging into the trackless mazes of the interior, paused only at the sunken forested valleys perpetually warmed by the hot springs—a place where the rigors of winter touched but lightly. Here the awed little Kioga steeped his leg daily in the steaming springs and like beasts of the forest, found surcease from pain, and eventually complete, permanent relief. Food was plentiful; but to get his fair share of it, Kioga had to pit his growing young muscles against those of the heavier cubs. Due to this, and the active, exhilarating life in the open, his growth received its first great impetus, and he grew straighter and stronger and taller by far than when he had stolen from the village the previous summer.

Kioga's early ineptitude at climbing had disturbed the old she-bear. But now, with the return of his leg to normal, he frisked through the branches with all the masterful certainty of a monkey, and calculated distances and other facts of the case with rare accuracy. He could drop from branch to branch with greatest ease, and habitually progressed from tree to tree, a thing the cubs seldom attempted for fear of Yanu's punitive paw. He dared dangerous horizontal leaps, and learned to judge the catapult action of a branch, to aid him in spanning ever-longer distances in a single leap.

Of course he sustained frequent falls, but wise Yanu invariably chose thickly foliaged trees with many branches in which to hide her cubs. On one occasion he missed every intervening limb during a fall, and only saved himself serious injury by grasping the top of a

sapling in the descent, which bent and cushioned his fall, so that he touched the ground with little or no shock. Thus he chanced upon a trick which was often to save him injury in the future.

Thus the colder season sped by with little discomfort for those who knew the secret of the hot-spring valleys. Summer found Yanu ranging back once more toward the coast; and with the coming of another autumn, Snow Hawk discovered himself again in familiar territory, and amid scenes which called up memories of his loved ones.

He awoke suddenly to the realization that even Yanu could no longer prevent his return to Hopeka, for he could easily outdistance her by traveling along the lower branches of the trees.

Then, like a flash, he was gone, sometimes bounding along the animal trails he now knew intimately, sometimes hastening along the arboreal midway for miles at a stretch. It was not many hours before he came into view of the familiar stockade. Once so tall, it now seemed to him to have shrunk. His new strength enabled him to scale it with comparative ease. He dropped lightly from its apex into a group of startled villagers.

Then, followed by a string of the curious, he went straight as an arrow to Awena, who burst into tears of happiness at seeing him wholly sound again and so big and strong besides.

THAT night Mokuvi gave a great thanksgiving-feast; at it there was singing and dancing and telling of tribal tales, than which none were stranger than Snow Hawk's—for he was required to recount his experiences in detail.

Wise old men nodded sagely, concealing their disbelief out of respect for Mokuvi, and because the meat was good. Among themselves they scoffed:

"The boy was with some other tribe. His tale is an invention."

"Hu! He has heard stories of Bear People too often. He has dreamed all this, while fasting to obtain medicine-vision."

But Yellow Weasel, who had made a special trip to verify those reported child's tracks beside those vaster prints of the bears in the mud near the stream—Yellow Weasel was silent. And his hatred of the little upstart deepened as he sought to plan his destruction.

**This fascinating tale of the lad Snow Hawk, his friends the wild beasts and his enemy the implacable Yellow Weasel, continues with mounting interest in the next, the May, issue.**

# Call to



**T**ERRY MALONE was born and reared in Clonakilty—a town not in Scotland as you might guess, but in Ireland, in County Cork. He used to speak of it sometimes, his eyes warming at the thought of that cherished spot far beyond the mountains that encircled Carbonate, his ears deaf to the racket of the stamp mills in the gulch. “Ah, Clonakilty!” he would say. “Sure, you should be seein’ it once: the little white houses snug against the long green hills, and the bay outside with the many colors on it, and the wather flashin’ in the sun.”

Terry Malone was born and reared in Clonakilty. Jim Malachy was a Belfast man. There you have it, south of Ireland, north of Ireland: Munsterman, Ulsterman—an old feud, handed down through generations, intensified by a thousand conflicts and sanctified by tradition. One glance, a word or two, and it was alive in them both.

No one who witnessed their first meeting there in the Dawson House has ever forgotten. There was the usual crowd in the lobby that night, their chairs in a loose semicircle about the air-tight stove, although it was late June. The mail had been distributed an hour before; the sunset had faded from beyond the western peaks; and Carbonate had settled down, as it seemed, to an evening of tranquillity.

“Come here, Crum’l!” The old-timers can still hear it, that rich Irish brogue of Terry Malone’s, flooding in from the

darkness of the street. “We’ll shlake in shyle tonight. Pick up your feet, ye craythur, and come in here.”

The group about the stove looked up. He stood in the doorway, smiling in upon them, an amiable vagabond with a battered felt hat on his head and a brick-red face beneath it. The old-timers remember him so well—there was something in that smile of his. It was at once humorous and purposeful and challenging. Turning, he held wide the street door. “Come in here,” he said again. “It’s not all night I’m goin’ to stand here. Are ye comin’ in, or are ye not?”

To whom or what he spoke, the lobby crowd could not tell. They sat straining their eyes, aware of a vague movement without, their conversation silenced, their minds questioning. Then they all started, stared. Not at a person—not at a dog, as they had half suspected they might; but at a burro!

A scrawny, mournful and untidy burro. The animal clipped in delicately on his small neat hoofs, dragging a length of rope from a homemade halter. With a faint air of triumph, his master closed the door. The burro beside him, he walked in a little way and halted. Pushing his battered hat far back on his head, he planted his hands on his hips and let his bright blue eyes rove over the lobby audience, man by man.

“Good evenin’ to ye,” he said at last. “Terry Malone is the name. The beast here,”—he pronounced it “*baste*,”—“be-



# Battle

*Wild Irish and Wild West  
here combine to make a  
story lively indeed.*

By F. O. REPPLIER

Illustrated by Monte Crews



in' only a beast, goes by the name of Cromwell."

He regarded them eagerly, as though hoping that some member of the group before him might be a worshiper of that historical figure. When no one spoke, he asked gently, with a nod at the burro: "Would some one of ye be objectin' to 'im, now?"

Stranger though he was, he seemed fully aware of the offense he had committed in bringing the burro in with him. He knew that the Dawson House rather fancied itself, that it considered itself superior, even, to newer and bigger hotels in Denver. But no one answered him. The lobby crowd sat motionless, their pipes in their mouths, measuring him with appraising eyes. He was not a big man, this Terry Malone, but he looked like a fit one. The honor of the Dawson House, the watchers decided, did not rest with them. Let the clerk object if he wanted to. It was his job.

The newcomer grunted shortly. "It's not very civil ye are. Failin' a good evenin', is there wan of ye would give me a 'Go to hell'?"

His eyes dimmed perceptibly at the continued silence. "Ye'd make an elegant lot of tombstones, so ye would," he told them. "Sure, it's a wonder there's no moss on ye, the way ye sit there."

He started to turn toward the clerk's desk. But as he did so, a thought occurred to him. The glint returned to his eyes. He glanced down at the burro, and idly, one would have said, began to whistle. It was a peculiar tune, double-noted, quavering. Immediately it resulted in something that brought the lobby crowd bolt upright in their chairs, that gave the clerk at the desk such a start that the pen behind his ear fell with a clatter to the floor.

At the first notes of that whistle, the burro Cromwell stiffened. His head came up and his lips parted. Whereupon the decorum of the Dawson House was bruised and battered by such an assault of sound as it had never experienced in all its history. The outburst was like an explosion in its effect. It shook the pictures on the walls. It jarred the lamps suspended from the ceiling. It charged up the stairs, rattled the doors of the rooms above. It rattled the shingles on the roof.

*"Haw-he-haw-he-haw-he-haw!"*

The racket ended as suddenly as it began. Lowering his head, the burro blinked wearily and flicked an ear. In the appalled silence that followed, Terry Malone said approvingly:

"I'm thinkin' the same of them, Crum'l, me boy."

Indignantly the clerk came to life. "You!" he shouted from behind the desk. "Take that jackass out of here. This is a hotel, not a barn."

The Irishman grinned. Here at last was speech such as he had hoped to hear. He was about to reply, when Jim Malachy came in.

IT was a nightly habit of Malachy's to drop into the Dawson House for a chat and a smoke. Although he was sheriff of Carbonate, and a stern man in the performance of his duty, he was by nature a sedate one. He liked the dignity of the Dawson House, the quiet solidity of the men he found there.

He halted in surprise, seeing a burro in the lobby. The clerk brightened. "Oh, Sheriff!" he hailed. "Will you come here a minute?"

The Sheriff came, his gray eyes cold, his lips compressed so that his black beard flowed unbroken from his nose to

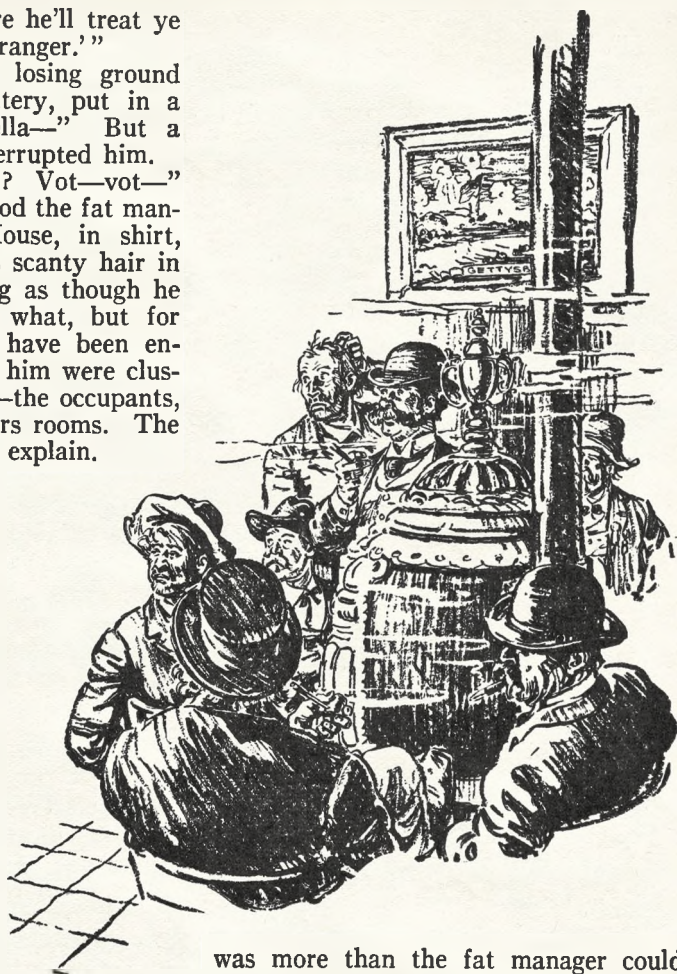


he says. 'Ye can be sure he'll treat ye right, though ye are a stranger.'

The clerk, fearful of losing ground against such potent flattery, put in a word. "Sheriff, this fella—" But a voice from the stairs interrupted him.

"Chorge, vot iss all dis? Vot—vot—"

On the bottom step stood the fat manager of the Dawson House, in shirt, trousers and slippers, his scanty hair in disarray, his eyes looking as though he had been aroused from what, but for Cromwell's bray, would have been enduring slumber. Behind him were clustered a dozen spectators—the occupants, apparently, of the upstairs rooms. The clerk George started to explain.



"Good evenin' to ye," he said. "Terry Malone is the name. The beast here,—bein' only a beast,—goes by the name of Cromwell."

"Save that," the Sheriff growled; and his voice was harsh with exasperation.

"I'll give you just half a minute to get out of here," he informed Terry Malone. Reaching inside his coat, he produced a pair of shiny handcuffs. "If you're not on your way by then, I'll clap these on you."

Terry Malone sighed. "Ah, Sheriff, I'm disappointed in ye, thruly." Sadly, resigned to the harshness of his lot, he pulled his hat over his forehead and looked for the burro.

UNTIL then the burro had been forgotten. He was discovered now, a pace or two behind the Sheriff, nibbling peacefully at the leaves of a large and luxuriant fern.

That fern, as it happened, was the fat manager's pride. He had nurtured it with his own hands for years, with the result that the Dawson House fern had come to enjoy something of a reputation. The sight of its desecration now

was more than the fat manager could stand. With an agonized "Ach!" he scuttled forward and landed a hearty kick on Cromwell's flank.

"Yah! Pfft!" he sputtered. "Vamoose, you chackass, you!"

Cromwell did. That is, he tried to. Startled for once from the languor that possessed him, he got into motion with the swiftness of a rabbit—

Only to be checked by the rope on his halter! Whipping taut, it threw the burro sprawling. But in that he was not alone. The watchers were too amazed by the rapidity of succeeding events to note exactly how they happened. It appears that the Sheriff had a heel on the loose end of Cromwell's rope. At the sudden tug of it, the Sheriff's foot went from under him. Instinctively he flung out a hand, caught at the person nearest him—

Who, as luck would have it, was the fat manager. The manager was quite unprepared. In an effort to maintain his balance, he went through a series of gyrations that might well have been

labeled, "Windmill in a Gale." Wheezing and gurgling, he toppled and fell.

So did the Sheriff. So too did the fern. There followed a brief but effective tableau: the burro, the Sheriff, the manager, the fern, in unstudied attitudes upon the lobby floor. The burro was the first to regain his feet. Malachy and the manager, being more or less involved with one another, not to mention the fern, were somewhat slower.

On his feet again, Jim Malachy looked about him, his face a thundercloud, his eyes promising no good either to Cromwell or his master. "Where—" he commenced, and stopped.

The question was obviously a futile

way forward through the press and halted at the bar.

"So you're not satisfied, eh?"

The Silver Dollar was instantly as quiet as a church. Terry Malone turned his head and smiled in a way that was nothing less than brotherly.

"Why, Sheriff, me boy! How are ye this elegant day?"

Malachy was unmoved. "So you're not satisfied!" he repeated. "It's not enough, the trouble you made at the Dawson House last night. You must bring the ass in here, now."

Terry Malone delayed his response long enough to take a wise precaution. Draining his beer mug of its last swallow or two, he set it down with a thump. He answered soothingly: "Sure, Sheriff, I'd not do that. It wasn't me that brought 'im in here. Crum'l walked in of himself, so he did."



one. Terry Malone and his burro were gone.

The Sheriff came upon them next day in the Silver Dollar. It was afternoon, just after the day shift had come out of the mines, a time when Jim Malachy, intent upon his job, made it a point to be everywhere and see everything. As was usual at that hour, the Silver Dollar was doing business by the barrel. Customers stood two deep along the bar. The place was loud with laughter, the deep-throated laughter of brawny men. In the midst of them Terry stood, his elbows on the bar, his eyes twinkling, his head cocked humorously as he listened to the roars evoked by his latest sally.

The Sheriff frowned as he saw him. When he saw, close beside Terry, the shaggy upraised ears of Cromwell, he did more than frown. He shouldered his

He looked about him for confirmation. There was a ready chorus of support: "Sure." . . . "That's right." . . . "It aint his fault, Malachy."

"Well," said the Sheriff, "however he got in here, he goes out again. And that now. Get moving, you."

"Ah, Sheriff," Terry protested. "Sure, he's doin' nobody the least taste of har-rm."

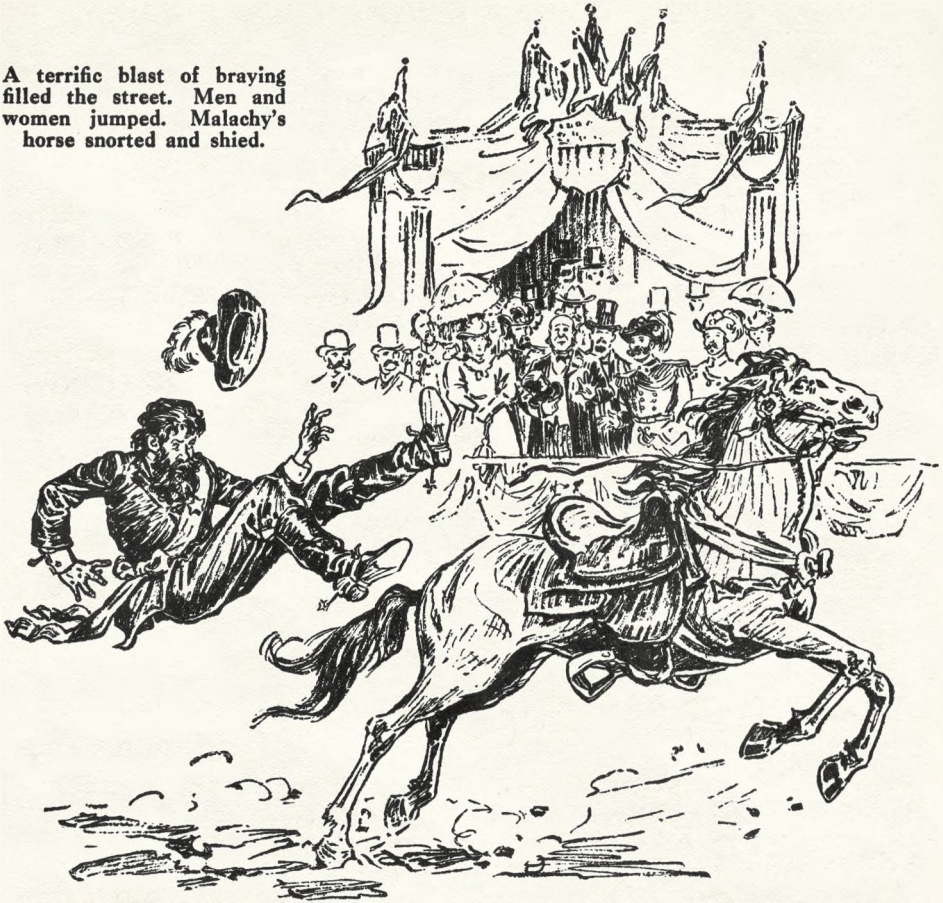
"I'm not arguin' with you," said Malachy sharply. "You heard what I said."

"But the boys was enjoyin' 'im. It's the truth, Sheriff. Ye can ask thim if it isn't."

The Sheriff ignored the invitation. He knew well enough what the boys would say.

The Silver Dollar was full of Little Orphan men, trouble-makers whom he had

A terrific blast of braying filled the street. Men and women jumped. Malachy's horse snorted and shied.



clashed with more than once. He knew, as everyone knew, that the Little Orphan men had no love for him. It angered him to see how promptly the newcomer had found allies. Angrily, he snorted: "You're used to livin' in the stable, havin' the pig and the ass and the goat under the same roof with you. You're shanty Irish. There's some of us have had a better trainin'."

Terry Malone was strangely still. The Sheriff's thrust had gone deep, had wounded memories: Clonakilty and the poverty of his boyhood, a poverty that valued the beasts of the barnyard so highly as to accept them as companions, indoors and out. A flush, an extension of the raw-beef redness that habitually stained his face, spread to the neck, the ears, the scalp of Terry Malone. The twinkle in his eyes changed to something far less amiable.

Then it vanished, and he smiled his easy smile. "Ah now, Sheriff! Sure, spite never shpoke well. There's many a cold night I've had me milk and p'taties, and the pig and the cow standin' over in the corner, if it's that ye

mean. But sure it could have been worse. I give thanks to God it was not Orangemen we had under our roof with us."

A roar went up inside the Silver Dollar. Openly, before the Sheriff's eyes, the Little Orphan men slapped one another on the back. Jim Malachy clenched his fists. "Get out of here!" he said to Terry Malone.

Terry went. He knew better than to tempt the lightning too far. Jim Malachy was the Sheriff; behind him was the majesty and power of the law. But Terry was not greatly worried. He came of a race that had been at odds with the law for generations.

IT was late in June when Terry came to camp. On the Fourth of July, Carbonate held its annual Independence Day festival. It used to be something, that festival. There's nothing like it any more—the grand parade, the drilling contests, with the best hard-rock men in the West sinking steel into granite in a way to make your eyes bulge; the three-legged races, the tugs-o'-war, the

fire-runs, the show at the Opera House to crown it all. People used to come to Carbonate from every gold and silver camp in the vicinity: Ohioville, Bighorn, Silver Strike, Green Gulch—sometimes they even came from Denver.

By the middle of the forenoon, when the parade took place, the streets were jammed. In the reviewing stand on Main Street sat the governor, his staff in their brilliant uniforms beside him. In the reviewing stand sat also the president of the Consolidated Mines, the members of the Williamson Dramatic Company. The reviewing stand was loaded with celebrities—as Jim Malachy may have recalled later on.

Jim Malachy, being a leading citizen as well as Sheriff, was grand marshal of the parade. The office entitled him to appear on horseback; and the horse he chose to ride was Nate Holloway's bay, a handsome animal, but a harness horse, unused to being ridden.

Jim handled him nicely, though. The fact that the horse was nervous only made the Sheriff more impressive as he came down the street at the head of the column. He sat his mount like a cavalrman, his hat pulled low on his forehead, his eyes staring straight before him. Very splendid he looked, with his strong, even features and his smooth black beard. In front of the reviewing stand he snapped his eyes to the governor and saluted; and the horse, feeling the movement in the saddle, tossed his head as though saluting too. It was a happy touch. The ladies in the reviewing stand exclaimed in delight; the gentlemen clapped.

Until then few people had noticed the scrawny burro among the crowd that lined the sidewalk, or the nonchalant man beside him. So now men and women jumped, as a terrific blast of braying filled the street. For one dismaying instant it seemed a toss-up whether a boiler had let go in some shaft-house near the town, or some miner in a playful mood had set off a charge of blasting powder.

**M**ALACHY'S horse was as startled as the crowd. At the burro's first "haw," he snorted, shied—with a violence that found Malachy unwarned. As the braying ended, spectators were astonished to see the marshal seated firmly in the dust, his legs outspread, his hat askew, his face, what could be seen of it, expressing unqualified displeasure.

In the crowd some one snickered. A ripple of laughter broke, but died as the marshal got slowly and painfully to his feet and a man came toward him. A man and a burro, for Terry Malone had Cromwell at his elbow. He halted before Jim Malachy, and the smile on his face was as wide as the Shannon.

"Ah, Sheriff dear," he said, his voice dripping with commiseration. "I'm perished for ye, thruly. Take my advice now, and lave the horse be. The burro here is gintle as a dove. Thry him once, Sheriff, do."

With a gesture that would have honored a blooded charger, he indicated the fleabitten Cromwell.

Jim Malachy stared at him without a word. The crowd howled.

Glowering, his face heating under his beard, the Sheriff thundered: "*You*—you Mayo tinker! You put the ass up to it. You made him bray."

"Sheriff, dear—" said Terry Malone.

"Don't you 'Sheriff dear' me!" Jim Malachy roared. "I've had enough of your sconcing. You put the ass up to it, I say."

**D**OWN the street the parade had come to a disordered halt, the rearward contingents jamming up on those ahead. The Premier Hose Company, directly behind the marshal, decided it was time to do something. Not that they objected to a fight. At any other moment they would have been only too delighted to let matters take their course—or to urge them on. But this was an occasion of ceremony; it was not seemly that it should be marred in such a manner. Forsaking the ropes of their hose-reel, several of the Premiers ran forward and thrust between the two.

"Sure," said Terry Malone, "'tis no fault of mine if the ass takes a notion to bray. For all I know, it was the sight of yourself put him up to it."

*Thunk!* Jim Malachy forgot the crowds, the governor, the fact that he was grand marshal of a parade. With a sudden heave of his body, which the Premiers failed to intercept, he landed a fist in Terry's ribs.

Blithely, Terry Malone replied in kind. But thanks to the Premiers, the ladies in the stand were spared the sight and sound of further blows. They pulled the combatants apart, and one of them, with a hand on Terry, shouted to some one in the crowd.

"Rus! Rus Holland! Come here."



His shouts rolled out again: "Take that home, ye loose-leg. Don't crowd, lads, there's enough for ye all! There, me daisy!"

Rus Holland had anticipated the summons. He was already coming toward them—a lank, sun-dried individual with the badge of a sheriff's deputy on his shirt. He took an authoritative grip on Terry's arm. Terry looked at him in pained surprise. What was all this? He had come forward in a Christian spirit to do a kindly deed for a brother in distress. What were they picking on him for?

"Keep your eye on him," the fireman said. "He's jammed the whole parade."

But Jim Malachy was far from content with that. "Lock him up," he ordered hotly. "He has a thing or two to learn, that bucko has."

By this time, protests from the halted column, shouts from the spectators, were filling the air. The Premiers dusted the Sheriff and recovered his horse, which was not difficult, since the horse, after his first startled jump, had stood by quietly all the while. Amid a constrained silence Jim Malachy mounted. As he moved off, Terry's voice rolled after him.

"Kape a shtrong holt on 'im, Sheriff dear."

IT was the dour Scotch strain in Jim Malachy that made him such a perfect target for Terry Malone. The Sheriff's weakness lay in the fact that he was overserious, overfond of his dignity. He was an important citizen, a man who had earned his position in the community. Until Terry's coming, he had always been respected, even feared. It hurt his pride that he had been held up to ridicule by a no-account like Terry Malone.

It delighted the Little Orphan crowd, however. It was one of the Little Orphan crowd who, chancing to see the Sheriff's vest, with his star attached, lying unguarded on a chair in the Sheriff's office, slipped in and tucked it in his shirt and brought it in triumph to the Silver Dollar.

But it was Terry Malone who found a use for the loot. Cromwell stood at the moment outside the door. Terry brought him in and adorned him with the Sheriff's property. He hung a placard about Cromwell's neck, "HEE-HAW, MALACHY." And then he led the burro along Main Street and tied him to the hitching-rack before the post office for all the world to see.

A crowd collected, of course. Inevitably the crowd attracted Malachy. The Sheriff's face, as he discovered the mischief, was a study in black anger. Looking up, he saw Terry Malone, surrounded by Little Orphan men, grinning hugely from a near-by doorway.

"Which one of you," he barked, marching up to them, "has been turning thief? Is it you, Malone?"

"It is not," said Terry promptly. "And if it is, sure there's no cause for you to bellow about it like Paddy's bull."

"That'll be enough from you," the Sheriff said. "That's your ass there with my badge on him. That's evidence enough to lock you up for a month."

"Evidence?" said Terry. "What evidence is there in that? Is it likely I'd be puttin' your badge on me own burro?"

"Aw, hire a hall, Malachy. You aint wearin' no crown."

This last was from a Little Orphan man. Terry Malone did not wait for the Sheriff to answer it. "Who asked you into this?" he demanded of the miner. "When I'm wantin' your help, me laddy-buck, I'll be lettin' ye know."

He turned to Malachy, anxious to submerge the interruption. "Pay no mind to 'im," he urged. "Bad manners was all his mother ever taught 'im."

He wanted to keep it a private fight. Jim Malachy was a Belfast man; he, Terry Malone, was from Cork. They were enemies by virtue of tradition. What business had a raw outsider to be dipping in?

But matters had passed beyond Terry's control. It is doubtful whether Malachy heard him. His eyes glittering like broken glass, Jim Malachy rapped back at the intruder: "No, I'm wearin' no crown. And for the minute I'm wearin' no badge, either. I've had enough of the sneakin', skulkin' ways of you and your crowd. Put up your hands and step out here."

But the Little Orphan man, having stirred up a hornets' nest, had no wish to face the consequences. "Yeh," he jeered. "I'd be smart to scrap with you, wouldn't I?"

Jim Malachy snorted. "It's man to man," he said. "You can forget I'm Sheriff. Are you goin' to put your hands up?"

His adversary was not. He started to say something, but Jim Malachy cut him short. Not with words. He was through with those. He took two strides. His fist, flashing up quickly, caught the Little Orphan man squarely on the jaw.

The miner staggered back, his arm raised, his body cringing. His comrades steadied him, their faces darkening as they stared at Malachy. No one of them stepped forward to meet him, though. After a moment of waiting, Terry Malone walked away from them, shoved his hat back on his head, and regarded them with disgust. There was an interval of silence. And then, under the hostile eyes of the Sheriff, the Little Orphan men turned and straggled off.

**M**EN of this type are vengeful—in a pack. Malachy had established it as his custom to go home at night, and it was after midnight, usually, when he did so, by way of the foot-bridge that crossed the creek behind Doc Howland's drug-store. The spot was a dismal one, black as a pocket on moonless

nights. There, one moonless night, the Little Orphan crowd set upon him.

There was a sudden rush of feet, a sudden surge of bodies out of the dark. With the instinct of a born fighter, Malachy whirled and dodged. He had no weapon on him; characteristically, he never carried a gun. With no means of defense save his fists, he held them off for a moment. Then, like coyotes, they closed upon him.

**J**IM MALACHY made no outcry; even in his extremity he fought with shut lips, asking aid of nobody. For their part, the attackers were careful to work in silence. Although it was after midnight, the bright-lot spots on Bonanza Street were still wide awake; and there was always the possibility of passers-by who might wonder at unaccustomed noises down by the creek. The soundlessness of the struggle increased its ferocity, somehow. Jim Malachy gave the best he had, but weight of numbers bore him under.

The Little Orphan men swarmed over him, kicking and slugging. They were so intently engaged that it never occurred to them to guard against surprise. The first hint they had of the presence of hostile forces was when those forces fell on them. Forty demons! At least they sounded like forty demons; and the cudgel blows that rained on the heads and shoulders of the Little Orphan men did nothing to dispel the illusion. The attackers broke and fled. Only when they found they were not pursued did they halt and look behind them. Then they discovered that the forty demons were summed up in one lone man.

By his voice they recognized him. From the deserted field of battle the shouts of Terry Malone invited their return. "Come on, darlin's! I'm blue-molded for want of a good ballyhooley. Come get ye a taste of an Irish kippeen."

They could see his blurred figure in the darkness, standing beside that of Jim Malachy. Over his head he brandished the cudgel with which he had wrought such noble execution. The Little Orphan crowd hesitated. Then—

"Come on," one of them growled. "There's on'y two of 'em."

And they surged back to try again.

This time, however, they had their hands full. Their victims were only two; and they, the attackers, were a mob; but they had their hands full just the same. In the interlude furnished



him by Terry's advent, Jim Malachy had found a club of some sort. Armed with this, he was a formidable adversary. He had more than one score to settle with the Little Orphan men. He knew no better way to do it than by cracking heads, no better time for it than right now.

As for Terry Malone, although he had no scores to settle, he was unconscious of any lack. The prospect of a fight was incentive enough for him. Back in his native Cork he had been brought up on the clashes of the Three-years-olds and the Four-years-olds. A love of rough-and-tumble was in his blood. As the Little Orphan men came on, he filled the night with whoops, with echoing yells of purest joy:

"Get a firm grasp on your shillalah, Sheriff. We'll teach 'em a bit of this an' that. Belfast and Clonakilty. *Erin go bragh!* Brian Boru, St. Patrick, and the *Clan na Gael!*"

Back to back, the two men stood. The attackers surged up, and the cudgels of the Irishmen met them as they came. Those in the front rank of the attackers lost much of their enthusiasm, receiving a wallop on the head, a bruising clout on the arm. They fell back on those behind; and those behind were disinclined to take their places. The charge of the Little Orphan men soon resolved itself into a futile milling, well out of reach of the sticks that menaced them. But there was some one with some sense in the crowd, for suddenly four or five of the miners swept forward, formed into a sort of flying wedge that used the weight and power of their numbers to the full. Boring through the mêlée, they crashed into the two defenders, and for the second time that night Jim Malachy went down. Terry Malone, more fortunate, sidestepped, twisted, and got clear. Then, seeing what had happened, he came plunging back.

**HIS** shouts rolled out again, each of them accompanied by the thud of a blow: "Take that one home, ye loose-leg! Have a sovenir, swateheart, from Terry Malone. . . . Don't crowd, lads; there's enough for ye all. . . . There, me daisy, wear that on your nose."

Elbows, fists, feet, shillalah—he used them all. The darkness and general confusion helped him, of course, but no more than his own agility. The Little

Orphan men who tried to grapple with him could never quite hold on to him. More often than not, they ended up in a straining hand-to-hand with one of their own crowd, leaving Terry free to go his way.

Jim Malachy, when Terry reached him, was submerged beneath a three-deep pile of miners. Laying about him for all he was worth, the Cork man drove them back and hauled the Sheriff to his feet. As it happened, there was no need to do more.

Terry's battle-cries had, it seemed, roused half the town. Lanterns twinkled suddenly in the alley beside Doc Howland's store. Feet pounded on the sun-baked earth. The Little Orphan men, who had no wish to be identified, called to one another in warning and departed the scene.

**T**HE first of the lanterns showed Terry Malone and Jim Malachy standing shoulder to shoulder, both of them disheveled, both somewhat mauled, but both belligerent still. They remained for some seconds unaware of their rescuers, hurling challenges into the night. Then the Sheriff blinked at the lights and felt gingerly of certain spots.

"Malone," he said, "I'm grateful. They'd have done me in, but for you."

Terry Malone grinned broadly. "Why then, Sheriff, I wouldn't have missed it for the world. They was a bit careless with their tongues. I heard 'em plannin' this intertainmint for ye."

"Good boy you did," Jim Malachy said. "Will you shake hands, Malone?"

"That I will," said Terry heartily.

They put palm to palm. Their feud was ended—that ancient feud, imported from another land. They were allies now, friends forever.

But as they withdrew their hands, a slow, deliberate smile came to Terry's lips.

"I'm thinkin', Sheriff," he said softly, "that ye've come down a peg, shakin' hands with a man that was raised with the pig and the ass and the goat."

"You shook hands with an Orangeman," Jim Malachy snapped.

"May me old mother in Heaven forgive me!" said Terry Malone.

In the lamplight they stood there, their glances clashing. Once more they were as pronounced enemies—and as true friends—as they had ever been.



## The Bronze

**B**ILL PATTERSON stopped, closed his eyes, opened his mouth for air and gulped down heat; the burning glare of the rice-fields surpassed anything he had ever experienced in the Orient. The rice had sprouted, but had not yet grown sufficiently to prevent the mirror surface of the water from hurling out blinding sheets of blue light. It was a long six miles to the next village.

When the Trans-Pacific Import buyer had left the inn at Kyuyama, he had been in marvelous good humor. He was going to see a white girl. Now, his throbbing head told him that the report was tea-house gossip. One silk-weaver had insisted that he had seen a white woman; a second said it was a man, having short hair and tight leg-covering; Bill could reconcile the statements, although the innkeeper's remark that the stranger was a Chinese did not fit in.

Stified by midday heat, Bill supposed that the visitor would prove to be a German scientist, miserable because Japanese beeru was hardly good cool Pilsener.

*Bill said, turning, "I hid behind the caldron to the right — the one nearest us." . . . Before the ancient caldron they saw several bits of bright color.*



*A young American import buyer  
runs into a wild adventure in  
the interior of Japan.*

By **SIDNEY  
HERSCHEL SMALL**

Illustrated by  
**John Richard Flanagan**

# *Caldron*

There wouldn't be any white girl, and he had been a fool to think it possible.

A clump of shimmering water-willows grew out of the field, several hundred feet from the path. Through the pale green, Patterson saw something more than shadow; he knew it by reputation for an abandoned temple. It should be cool there. He stepped into the hot ooze, determined to rest, and then either go forward, or back to the inn, when the stroke of the sun lessened. Each lift of a leg was followed by a sucking sound. In the first dozen paces he lost one low shoe, and went about the nasty business of finding it, pawing about until he was a mess.

Gradually the ooze became more solid. His feet fell on the ghost of a path; brambles and weeds had fought for ownership until they had about conquered the old flagstones. Bill felt that his were the first feet to tear through the tangle. It was cooler under the willows; Patterson wandered about the temple until he came to a grassy spot in purple

shade, and then stretched out. It was very quiet. He shut his eyes and dozed for perhaps five minutes.

Even in sleep he felt a dragging across his ankles. Raising his head, he saw a thin green snake staring at him. After a solemn beady inspection, it wriggled away. Bill thought: "No wonder it's deserted here. This must be the shrine of that god whose priests were turned into snakes. Maybe they're harmless, but it's no place to rest." It came to him also that when he had dropped to the grass the silence had been complete: now there was a vast hurrying of little noises. Lizards ran down the wood walls; huge flies buzzed; biting red ants voraciously attacked more minute insects; somewhere a rat scratched in the ancient woodwork.

Patterson stood up. He started to circle the temple, carefully watching for rising green heads. He paused, pulling on his soggy shoes, near the spider-web sealed door of the temple, and then reached for a cigarette. The touch of muddy hand on fabric caused him to lean down to wipe his hands on the grass.

In a stooping position he remained. "Funny," he muttered. "Don't remember smoking when I came. I must be gettin' crazy from the heat." He reached a second time for a cigarette, and then decided: "If I'd smoked before, I'd have mucked up my pocket." And yet the bit of white tube in the grass was the same brand as his own.

"Yes, I must have smoked," Patterson supposed. It was the first time heat had ever muddled him. A great green fly bumped against his face, and he jumped back. He stared at the trees, the widely cracked walls of the temple, the webbed



Bill Patterson

door. Near him was a great crack, large enough to slip through.

Spiders' webs hung in gray hammocks, higher than his head, but level with his eyes he saw very few, and these in broken streamers. The temple appeared undisturbed; the rotted fabrics hung down from the altars, and near at hand were the ashes of incense in bronze caldrons, partly hidden by blacker dust.

Bill believed that only the fingers of decay had been at work. Wind had blown the webs asunder. He had smoked the cigarette himself. Heat had made a fool of him. Grinning shamefacedly at his partial expectation of finding some intruder, Patterson knocked shoe against shoe to loosen mud. The impact broke loose a roach-infested board in the roof; it fell, and sunlight from the aperture touched the carved body of a snake on the altar, giving it uncanny life.

The noise made Patterson squat down behind an enormous bronze caldron. He stayed motionless; this heat was making him ridiculous. . . . And then he felt the caldron vibrate in short, silent shakes. In the dark room some one was walking!

From his position Bill could see around the side of the caldron. He could make out altar, hangings, wooden images, but no human figure. At last, against the far wall, advancing circuitously, clockwise, he did see the form of a man, larger than any Japanese. Light from the hole, for one flash of time, shone on the stranger's face, and Bill knew him for a white man.

Two men frightened out of their senses by nothing more than a roach-bored bit of wood dropping from a roof! Another

man, thought Bill, worn by sun and long miles, and resting as he himself rested.

Patterson rose at once; he called cheerfully: "Hello, old man! I'm Patterson, from the hill country, and—"

"Stand still!"

Bill hadn't advanced; he said: "That confounded board scare you too? That, and heat, had me guessing. If—"

"Silence!"

The order was so harsh that Bill said gravely: "Suppose we go outside and see if we can find water—"

"Get out and keep on going."

Up in the rafters the troubled lizards made little clicking noises. Patterson didn't know what to do; the man in dark clothing—a missionary, perhaps unhinged by exhaustion and heat?—might prove dangerous if crossed. Yet the more Bill thought of being driven out into the blazing sun, the less he liked it. Into the ceaseless worrying of the lizards blended a different sound; had the stranger cleared his throat? Staring in the half gloom, Bill believed that the other had turned his head, looking; could there be a third visitor in the abandoned temple?

It would have been a mistake to say anything about the human sound; no telling how the stranger would react. Unless Bill tucked his tail between his legs and left, the only remaining possibility was to try to talk the other man back to sanity. Patterson began quietly: "D'you know, I was thinking, when I left the path, that usually a deserted temple means that the priests departed because they weren't brought enough rice to live on. I think this temple's different. It must've been sacred to the sea-god, whose undutiful priests were turned into—"

"Stuff and nonsense."

"Sure," Bill agreed. He was trying to make talk. "Yet despite the fact that departing priests never leave anything behind, you'd be surprised at the people who rummage around, expecting to find treasure—"

"I'll give you another minute to get out of here."

Patterson's scant store of patience was gone. He said: "Go soak your head. Are you afraid that whoever's with you will hear what I'm saying?"

Roaring sound shook dust from the tattered hangings, followed instantly by the screech of a glancing bullet.

"What's wrong with you?" Patterson cried. The bowl before him hadn't been hit, but the one to the right had been;

the madman wasn't positive which caldron protected Bill. Patterson was angry, and frightened. Was the man a missionary, heat-crazed? Or a fugitive from justice? Bill added: "Put up that gun. This isn't a shootin' gallery in Calle San Miguel."

Silence; then the other shrilled: "O angel Michael, let us fall on this sinful man, and—"

Miguel—Michael. The poor chap must be a missionary. To rush him, even for his own good, was senseless. So Bill began to crawl toward the gap in the wall, under cover of gloom and caldrons. The other was talking, a steady stream of words, as Patterson reached the aperture and pulled himself outside.

On hands and knees, he looked up. His eyes opened wide, and he put his finger to his lips at once. For both coolie and innkeeper had been correct; not a half-dozen steps away stood a wizened Chinese and a white girl—a girl with fear written on her face, but with unabating courage superimposed over the terror. The girl nodded, while Bill, amazed as he was, marked how the sun gave to her hair the warm hue of old and precious bronze.

Inside the temple the harangue was continuing. Standing up, Bill thought it safe to whisper: "Poor devil's crazy with the heat. He must've heard you come too—"

The girl said, in a lovely husky voice: "He followed us here. He isn't crazy. Look at my wrists."

They had been bound, Bill saw; there were long jagged scratches on them now. He said: "How'd that happen?"

"Chung Li was tied too. He—he used his fingernails somehow."

Bill glanced at the old Chinese.

"Hmm," he said. "Well, let's get out of this."

He was thinking: "I'm glad I came. She's the prettiest girl I've ever seen—and that isn't just because I haven't seen any girl for ages."

With a grim determination which Bill found delightful, she whispered: "I hate to go. I promised Chung Li I'd try to find what belongs to him."

"What's that?"

"What the man inside is after—jewels."

Bill said: "You won't find 'em in an abandoned temple."

"Not when a man with a gun is already there?"

Patterson sighed. He said: "Of course, if you put it that way—" And without hesitation made for the hole in the wall.



Louise Whitcomb

He thought he heard the girl say that he shouldn't go, that she hadn't meant what she'd said; and this was pleasant hearing.

He reached the caldron unobserved, and finally broke in on the wild monologue: "Isn't it time for music?" Bill demanded. He must attempt to enrage the stranger; a gun only held so many shells. "I'm gettin' sick of your sermon, man."

"Are you still there?" There was surprise in the other's voice, as if he thought Patterson had actually gone. "Still there? Then I must—"

The old temple shook again with the explosion of the man's gun. The bullet was high, and passed through the thin walls with no sound at all; but coincidentally with the rush of air over Patterson's head, the man fired again; the bronze caldron clanged and rocked back against Bill. He had both hands against it, and held it steady; he crouched as close to the floor as he could.

Twice more the man in black fired; the first shot spanged against the caldron, as did the next, and the tone of the bronze's singing vibration changed. The first blows gave off a deep clear boom, like the pealing of far thunder—*honnng!* And now, mingled with the multiple echo, there was a sort of golden moan, minor, muffled, interwoven into the fabric of silky sound.

The caldron had been cracked, fissured; Patterson felt that another shot might split the bronze like a halved apricot. Did the man have any shots remaining in the clip? It all depended on how many had been placed above the



Morrison raved: "Terrible! Can't keep white man forever in lousy Jap jail. . . . What's life of one damn' yellow priest?" And then: "Let me go. Tell you what old Jap I killed told me."

spring. Eyes again accustomed to the gloom, Bill was able to peer around the side of the caldron; it flashed on him that the other was not watching him, nor the caldron, but was examining the old floor in front of the massive bronzes.

In a taut voice, with something triumphant in it, the stranger said: "I'll give you one more chance. Will you go?"

"No," Bill told him.

"Who are you?"

"I'm not the Mikado, anyhow," said Bill. "So you've concluded your act? No more angels, eh?"

The man's voice changed: "My dear sir, I was affected by the heat. Indeed, yes. I'm an Anglican, sir. I came here to rest. That board dropped and frightened me. . . . This terrible heat—"

Bill asked: "That why you carry a gun?"

"In a wild country, sir, one must be prepared."

"Civilize 'em with a Krag," Patterson hummed.

"One hardly needs a rifle, sir."

Bill asked casually: "This the first time you've been in the Orient?"

"Yes. Oh, yes."

"But you know the tune of that song. Is the heat responsible for that also?" Without giving the other a chance to reply, Patterson said: "You haven't told me your name."

"My name? Hemingway—Hemingway Morrison."

"I couldn't have thought of a better one myself," Bill chuckled. "Now, Mr. Hemingway Morrison, how about putting your gun on the floor and giving it a good kick, just in case the heat should bother you again?"

"Gladly, sir. Gladly." The gun was placed on the floor; Morrison shoved it out of reach with his foot. "And now I suggest we go out and see if we can secure a cool draft of water."

Bill was positive that the girl, and the Chinese, must be listening, and would be careful to get out of sight. Bill wanted a good look at this stranger; after which there would be time to do a bit of talking. Honest men didn't go around Northern Japan binding women's wrists.

AS Patterson stood up, the man in black wailed: "This room—this temple—it's all going around—around. . . . I can't see!"

The stranger flung his hands high, whirled once, and fell face forward to the floor. Patterson had not the slight-

est intention of going to the man; he believed the other was carrying out his characterization of a missionary. It was only an instant before Bill realized that Morrison had fallen cleverly toward the gun; and on the floor, had the clip out and was fumbling a shell against the magazine-follower.

BILL began to run across the ancient boards; the man in black came to his knees, to his feet; his still unloaded gun came up. The swing of the weapon missed Patterson with such force that the wielder was flung sidewise. Patterson clipped the murderous unknown behind the ear, following up his advantage by driving his right just above the heart.

The larger man's mouth jerked open; he let both arms fall, and Bill sank his fist deep into the other's middle. Morrison bent, crumpled, fell.

"Got the old punch left," Bill thought contentedly. "Got him right where he lived." He bent over the fallen man, unbuttoning the coat and reaching inside. If the fellow's heart were bad—

No; he was alive; his heart pounded. Patterson searched for a pocket, to discover who the fellow was before tying him and sending Japanese from the village after him. As his fingers touched paper, he heard two sounds: the girl's, in warning, the Chinese', in alarm. At the selfsame instant the man in black wound his arms about him. If Morrison clung to Bill, the Trans-Pacific man hung on with equal desperation. Morrison might have slipped the clip into place while he had been examining him. For the space of a full minute they lay embraced, and then Bill felt that he was being relentlessly pushed to his side; once turned, the other would be on top.

Patterson worked furiously to retain the upper position, aware that girl and Chinese were near, the Asiatic dancing about furiously. He felt himself being worked to a slant, and then rolled in the direction Morrison was levering him—to his side, under, and, with the force of the motion, to the top again. Dust filled his nostrils chokingly.

The stranger was the stronger; no question of that. Bill decided to waste no more time, but to knock the other cold. As he let go with his right hand, the Chinese darted in, knife high. Morrison shouted, "He wants to roll!" and started to use Bill's own strategy. What happened was too fast for the eye to follow. The Chinese, Chung Li, had



Hemingway Morrison

bent and slashed; had missed Morrison completely, his blade stinging Patterson's right shoulder.

"He wants to roll," Morrison howled. Each increasingly swift turn brought new anguish to Bill's slashed shoulder. He retained his hold with difficulty. Chung Li was circling them, unable to get in another and better-aimed cut.

Then there was a crash as the man in black smashed Patterson against the rotted side wall of the temple, and the pair were on the grass outside. All Bill could do was to hang on, half stunned. Morrison was pressing him to the ground each time he was underneath, and Patterson realized miserably that the other was playing with him—and had been, save for the first lapse, the first surprise in the temple room.

The grass had given way to the mud which edged the water-covered fields. Here the blades were hard, tough, like whips of harsh linen cord. At each swift turn Morrison managed to crush the slighter Trans-Pacific man beneath him, and the game was by now sufficiently advanced for the black-clad fellow to enjoy himself:

"How d'ye like the rolling? Had enough yet?"

Bill had more than enough; his head was no longer his own. In the glare of the sun, his eyes saw sparks of diamond blue and yellow. He managed to say thickly: "Go soak your head."

"I'm going to soak yours," Morrison assured him.

Over and over they rolled, with Chung Li doing a wild dance about him, never able to poise his old frame and slow

muscles for a knife-blow. The girl was near, once so close that Morrison took an instant's time to brush her away with a back-hand swing. Chung Li had dashed in at the time, but was met by the backward-hurled body of the girl.

Three times they rolled in the slop of the rice-field; each time Bill felt the tepid rush of reeking water beneath his head, and Morrison's great chest, against which it was pressed. Once Bill felt the slimy body of a tiny snake against his face, and then it was gone.

Great flies banged at the pair, and the beat of their wings became an accompaniment to the ringing in Bill's head. Into this was woven the *honng!* of the broken bronze caldron. . . . *Honng! Honng!* . . . He fought to keep from gasping in water; slowly he felt his last shred of reason slip away. It was strange; he knew where he was; he could see, with increasing, uncanny brilliance (or thought he saw) the shimmering yellow and blue of the sky. Why, he could even see the girl bending close, telling him that all would be well. . . . And then the sky became black as a Shinto priest's robe. . . .

When his eyes opened again, his first conscious glance told him that the Chinese was on the ground, that the girl was bound again, perhaps with her own clothes, for Bill saw her white neck and shoulders, with streaks of black where Morrison's muddy hands had seized and struggled with her.

Bill actually managed to rise to his knees before the man in black hurled him back into the water, shouting gleefully, "Go soak your head again!" as he pushed him down, down into the slippery ooze. He was under a long time; then his breath came in a bursting gasp as he faintly realized that he could breathe again. Then Morrison repeated the deadly performance. Bill knew that the fellow intended to kill him; he fought to get at the other's hands with his teeth, but was securely pinioned. He had his mouth open in the ooze. . . . Again his head swam, and Morrison was finally forced to shake him back to life.

This time Patterson was permitted several gulps of air; then Morrison said: "Earth to earth's bad, but slime to slime's worse, isn't it? That isn't in any book, but it should be. Men're slimy. . . . I know. I was a minister once." He laughed. "I am the only missionary in the Orient who ever went bad. All of which, in one way, is lucky



for you, brother. I'll say a prayer for you if you like, when you're dead. And after that—"

"Save it," Bill choked out. "You—you're—"

"Just a man," the other chuckled. Holding Patterson, he looked at the girl, as he repeated, "A man, you see. Or—you won't see."

The meaning was clear enough to Bill, with nothing to be done about it. He did not feel unheroic; he merely wished he might close his eyes and cease struggling. What was the sense of all this? The very snake which had crawled under him and been crushed beneath Morrison's body, earlier, knew as much as Bill. Just go to sleep. . . . He fancied he saw a dim glow, and guessed it must be some such vision as comes to dying men. What difference did anything make? Sleepy. . . . Done his best. . . . Diamond blue and topaz yellow—sparks. . . .

There was something he had to tell Morrison before he was dead. What? It was difficult to remember. . . . Yes! The renegade was the sort who'd like what money'd buy. Bargain with him, tell him he could have Bill's own cash if he'd only leave the girl alone.

The urge was so great that Bill squirmed feebly, and found that he was free of the body above him, that he was able to get air. He saw the girl, the Chinese. Where was the renegade? It was a full minute before he was aware that the girl was speaking, excitedly, wildly; only then did he observe that Morrison was lying in the ooze of the rice-field. He saw that the girl was talking, without understanding what she might be saying.

**L**IFE surged through Bill. He was not dead, he was not dying! His head spun, and his legs wobbled, but he was alive. He pushed feebly at Morrison, but was too exhausted to turn him over, and so began shoving him toward the dry mud bordering the field. Knowing how slow the process was, and what being in the mud meant, he lifted Morrison's head, holding it above the water with his left arm. That the man might overpower him again never occurred to Bill. Something had happened, something which utterly changed the entire course of the affair.

Before Bill could reassure the girl that he'd untie her, Morrison writhed in a spasm of agony, lashed out with arms and legs; he was cursing in English, in



Chung Li

Japanese; he raved and shrieked; his face—a moment ago chalk-white—was as red as if boiling lead flowed through his veins. He broke away from Bill, splashing up water and muck, roaring, screaming, shouting blasphemy which curiously changed to bits of real prayer vastly more horrible.

The girl was crying, "Oh—oh—oh!" in horror; she added, her voice strained: "Can't you—do something? He's—it's terrible."

Morrison raved: "Terrible! Can't keep white man forever in lousy Jap jail. . . . Get word consul. . . . What's life of one damn' yellow priest?" And then, with wrinkling lips: "Let me go. Tell you what old Jap I killed told me."

Then blasphemy again. Morrison was completely out of his head; Bill tried to piece together the jerky words. Murder, first—of a Japanese priest. Jail for life. If Morrison hadn't been a foreigner, he would have been sentenced to death. Escape, in the garb of a missionary, and how well the apostate played the part!

The girl asked: "Should we try to carry him to the village?"

Again Morrison screamed. There was sense to his words. "My leg—my knee. It burns!"

Bill jerked up the sodden trousers. Just above the knee, on one leg, were two tiny punctures. The flesh about the marks was almost black, but puffed white in spots as large as a silver yen. Involuntarily Patterson looked about, but saw no snaky head rise. He said aloud: "They never bother you if you don't make 'em mad. When we were rollin' in the mud—"

He stopped abruptly. Morrison had ceased moaning; a smile of mockery curved his lips. Then his jaws worked spasmodically, and his mouth fell open.

"He's dead," Bill said.

Chung Li immediately broke into a song of victory, until the girl cut him short. "A lot of good *you* were!" she said. "First you said we needn't be afraid of him, because you had a knife; and then after he tied us up and we got loose, and the fight began, you still said you would fix everything with your knife, and then—"

"And then," said Chung Li gravely, "Chung Li pray, and plenty happen!"

Bill said: "You two get back into the shade. I've got a job to do."

ON hands and knees Bill began scooping out a shallow grave in the soft ooze on the rim of the paddy. He worked feverishly with his good arm, but had tackled too large a job. At last he pushed the body into the water. "Some day they'll find him," he thought, "at harvest. I don't want to talk about it. Nor remember, ever!" He stared around, and then muttered: "I'll tell the villagers a yarn about a snake as big as the temple, with eyes of jade and a mouth of fire. I'll put a carved piece of the altar over the place he is, and then no peasant'll come near."

He walked up the ancient path. No wind came out of the far hills; the sun beat down hotly but the rays came slantwise through the pale willows; in an hour it would be cooler. A bird hooted. Bill had lived long enough in the East to shiver at the cry of the *ho-to-to-gi-su*, the death-bird. He forced himself to think about the girl; she was waiting for him near the temple.

She said swiftly: "You wonder what it means. How did *you* come here? If you hadn't—"

"You'd have got away anyhow," Bill reminded her. "I messed up everything."

Chung Li cackled: "Mess! Hee! All mud. We look-see in temple now?"

The girl's white face showed Bill how near hysteria she must be; he said calmly: "Forget it. Your hands are clean. I'd like a cigarette."

She lighted one for Bill before saying: "I've got to talk. To tell you. Chung Li has wanted to come here for a long time. His people were priests, once. There was a tale of hidden treasure."

"Same yarn Morrison heard from a Japanese priest," Bill admitted. "I often

wonder how such stories start. They're never true." Which, Bill intended, should be the end of the search. He grinned. "The name is Patterson, lady; and under all the mud there beats an honest—and lonely—heart."

"You don't believe it, do you?"

"Not me," Bill smiled. "Anything else you say I'll swear by. You might tell me that your name's Violetta Rosinkovich Mahoney, and I'd believe it."

"It's Louise Whitcomb. . . . And I'm all right now."

Bill saw that she was, and then he sighed loudly. "It would be," he said. "The Old Man's daughter—I mean Mr. Whitcomb's. . . . And now you can tell him how one of his buyers goes gallopin' around the country when he ought to be lookin' for good brocades."

"Chung Li told Dad, but he only laughed."

"Wise man. All T-P Import men have heard similar legends. Did the Old Man—your father—know you were travelin' around on your own?"

Louise said: "He told me to look you up; that you'd laugh, but show me the old temple."

"Bill, the faithful—that's me! Well, you've seen it. As soon as it cools off, we'll go to my village. I haven't a spare dress, but there are kimonos, and your things can be repaired. Or"—eagerly—"the women can make you new clothes. It would only take a few days."

She looked at Bill, at the mud, the weary face. Then, since Bill's own gaze was so intent, she resorted to Chung Li: "Is it safe to go with this man, Chung Li?"

THE Chinese mourned: "How you say safe? Allo time think man, man! Lotsa man evlywheah; only one temple. We go in. Mebbe-so find allo money, allo gol', allo diamon'!"

"Allo hot air," Bill added.

"Wha' you say?" growled Chung Li. "You want missy go you house, talkee talkee, mushy mushy, kissee kissee. . . . I go inside foh look-see!"

Louise said: "Chung Li gives me a fine reputation."

"You could do worse," Bill ventured.

She rose hastily, keeping a slim body covered as best she could. "Let's all have a look," she decided. "Chung Li won't leave until he's done it."

Wary of snakes, Chung Li began a methodical investigation in the gloom of the deserted temple. Lizards were every-

where now, and it was an uncanny business, since many of the scaly reptiles were hardly smaller than the deadly greenish serpents. The Chinese poked about here and there, sighing, groaning, swearing, while girl and man watched him.

Bill said, turning: "I hid behind that caldron to the right—the one nearest us. It's a good one. One of the few primitives left, probably. If it's originally Chinese, it must be one of the caldrons used to cook food offered in sacrifice at the Altar of Heaven. A good imagination'd make me say that Yü the Great had it cast, back two thousand years ago, but that isn't so. It is possibly of—"

His voice trailed off. The shifting light was on the massive bronze, on the floor before it. Together, Bill and the girl said: "Oh!"

**B**EFORE the ancient caldron they saw several bits of bright color, each of different hue. A splash of brilliant blue—glowing blood-crimson—the magnificent green of old ice. A shine like that from a thousand-faceted mirror. Sapphire, ruby, emerald, diamond!

Something serpent-green skittered out of darkness and into the pool of light; one of the precious bits vanished as the lizard mouthed it, and hurried by Chung Li's shriek of rage, vanished again up the wall and into the rafters.

Bill said: "So that's what happened! That's why Morrison stared in front of the caldron, why he wanted me out of the temple without seein' what was up!"

The ancient temple bronze had shattered from Morrison's bullets. At the base the split had started and had followed a double flaw, so that a wedge-shaped piece of metal had fallen out. The sides of the caldron were curiously wrought. They were hollow, of two pieces fused only at the upper rim, and the jewels must have been safely entombed for centuries, until they were spoken about only as fable. Unbelieved, save by the sly renegade Morrison, who was ready to grasp at anything!

And by the credulous Chung Li, who was pawing the floor and cursing all lizards, their ancestors, and any descendants they might dare to have.

Bill rapped against the damaged caldron; it spoke its golden note, *honng!* And a distant temple bell also began to hum in the still air, announcing the prayer-hour, a small lovely echo of the

singing of the ancient bronze. "You'll get all overheated, Chung Li," Patterson suggested. "The half-dozen gems are plenty to buy everything you can want. Quit yellin'. Or do you want to tear down the temple and look for the jewels the lizards stole?"

"Six have got," wailed the Chinese. "Two foh Chung Li, to buy wife foh col' weathah. Two foh Chung Wa my son, to get shop. One foh Chung Chang my son's son, to have plenty boys. One foh missy. One foh you, b'cause help me. . . . No can do allo thing. Too bad."

"Forget about me."

Chung Li stared at him, and then began to grin. "Can do," he said. He faced the girl abruptly. "I not give one you, missy. I give him to man. He give him to you. Allo same fashion white people! He kissee kissee, say, 'You put stone in ring.' . . . Allo fix' fine. *Hai-ya!*"

Louise was laughing naturally. She said to Bill: "He's not only proposing for you, but accepting for me."

"I liked him the first time I saw him," Bill grinned.

Chung Li sensed the object of their amusement. English became too much for him; he cackled into Cantonese. "You stand beside a man with bare shoulders, and do not think it necessary to become his wife? He looks upon your beauty, and you believe he will be satisfied until he becomes your husband? Have you no sense at all?"

Bill asked: "Know what he's saying?"

"It's probably just as well we don't," Louise smiled.

"At that," said Bill, "I wouldn't be at all surprised if he were right. . . . You didn't say: are you goin' to have your dress fixed, or can you take the time to pick out some silk and have new clothes made? It wouldn't take long—just a day or two."

Louise said no word about her ample bag in the southerly village. "I could stay a day or so," she admitted. "Dad won't worry; he'll know I'm with you."

"With me," Bill agreed.



# The Star Sapphire

*A clever detective novelette by an able new writer.*

DAN MURPHY had checked in at this California hotel at four this afternoon.

You would like Dan Murphy at first sight. He was lean and hard. His gray eyes held a twinkle at times. His strong, wide-lipped mouth could don an infectious smile. Having dined well, he decided to go over the evening paper in his room and perhaps go out to a movie. He could do no business until the morrow, in any event. His business, it might be stated, was decidedly unusual.

He gained the fourth floor and headed for his own room which, as always, he had left unlocked—a gentle hint that nothing was there worth taking. He flung open the door, stepped in—and halted in astonishment. The lights were on. Also, a woman, standing before the mirror, had swung around at his entry. She stared blankly at him.

"Hello!" exclaimed Dan Murphy cheerfully. "Get lost?"

"I—no, not exactly," she stammered. Murphy swung the door shut, and his gray eyes chilled.

"Evidently not. I see you were at my bag."

"I was not!" She drew herself up angrily. Murphy pointed to his large locked bag on the stand. Its entire side was slit.

A gasp broke from her.

"You were wasting your time, my dear," he observed calmly. "They're not in that bag."

"But—but I wasn't! You must believe me!" she flashed. "I just came in a moment ago, really! This is my brother's room. He gave me his key, but the door was unlocked. . . . Look!"

She indicated one of the hotel keys, which she had tossed on the bed. Then anger rose in her face.

"Just what do you mean by all this?" she demanded. "You're the one who has no business here. How dare you walk in like this?"

Dan Murphy whistled softly, as he glanced at the number on the key tag.

"I suppose you know this is Four Fifty-three?" he asked.

"No! It's Five Fifty-three. I didn't—oh, it's impossible!" Conflicting emotions leaped across her face. "You don't mean—"

"Listen, young lady, you're not getting away with anything," said Dan Murphy, a twinkle replacing the chill in his level gaze. "Your brother's name?"

Her cheeks flamed.

"Don't you believe me?" she asked. "Is it true—the wrong floor—"

"It might be," said Dan Murphy, "and again it might not. This is my room, certainly. And you're in it, unfortunately for yourself. But your story is easily verified. Your brother's name?"

She made no response. Only with an effort did Dan Murphy keep his stern pose; with this girl, suspicion was so quickly downed! Blue eyes, yellow hair, and a laughing, merry countenance—just now clouded over, yet none the less instinct with character.

"Please!" she said, abandoning pretense. "Won't you let me go, without insisting?"

"No," Dan Murphy said calmly, and gave his name. "Two reasons against it. First, there's my slit bag, which cost fifty dollars. Second, I rather like your looks. You might be worth knowing. Any girl who can so nearly put it over on Dan Murphy, has something on the ball. Your brother's name?"

"Thanks for the compliment," she said scornfully. "If you must know, my brother is Larry True, the film star."

MURPHY whistled. Larry True, eh! He turned to the telephone.

"Wait!" Her voice checked him. "Don't ask the office—don't!"

"Why not? Afraid they wouldn't back up the stall?"

"Oh! You're contemptible!" she exclaimed angrily. Then her anger vanished in a half-dismayed laugh. "But I suppose you're right. I must tell you the truth—I suppose I can trust you."

# Murders

By GORDON KEYNE



Murphy swept the burly, cursing Sondag backward. . . . Sondag reeled, lost his balance.

Illustrated by Austin Briggs

"I fear you're wasting time," said Dan Murphy, with amiable friendliness. "I can't be vamped. I'm impervious; in my business, I must be!"

"Listen, please!" she exclaimed impatiently. "My brother took the room here under his real name of Lawrence Masterson; he keeps it permanently. The hotel management knows the truth but nobody else, even the desk clerks. He needs a place where he can get away from people! I'm his sister, Anne Masterson. If you insist, the hotel manager will confirm this. He uses the room as a hide-away during the day, to escape from all the silly people who annoy a prominent player. I came up from San Diego to see him, today. He told me to

use the room while I was here. I came in here just a moment before you did—I hadn't even noticed the mistake—"

"You expect me to believe this?"

"Yes!"

Dan Murphy bowed gayly. "Heaven forbid that I should shatter your expectations! You win. I'll not even ask why Larry True, who has one of the biggest houses in Hollywood—"

"He has trouble with his wife. She detests me, and I detest her," flashed out the girl. "Will you kindly see if anything is missing from your bag, before I leave?"

"Nothing is missing. Whoever was after my valuables, made a bad mistake; they're always in my pocket—or in the hotel safe! Very well, Miss Masterson; let us remember only the pleasure of a mutual acquaintance! I think there's



Jimmy the Finger

dancing in the big ballroom this evening. Will you do me the favor of meeting me in the lobby, say in an hour—and sharing my evening?"

Dan Murphy, it was said, could get away with anything. Anne Masterson met his gay eyes, read aright the fine, clean lines of his face. She gave him a quick smile, and held out her hand.

"Thank you. I'll be very glad to."

Then she was gone, taking the key of Five Fifty-three with her.

**MURPHY** whistled softly to himself. What an actress! Her story was true, of course; to a certain extent. She had brave, honest eyes—not the eyes of a thief! Yet—

He turned to his slit bag. A special lock, yes: but he never trusted locks. No special messenger of Herrison, Ltd., the chief jewel-insurance firm in the world, would trust a lock—especially when carrying some of the finest jewels in existence!

His jewelers' glass showed no fingerprints on the polished leather. Everything in the bag had been disturbed; yet he missed nothing. Kneeling, he looked around thoughtfully. Against the wall near by was a wastebasket, empty. He drew it toward him. His eyes lit up.

On the paper at the bottom of the basket, was a razor-blade.

"Ah! Slit the bag with it, and dropped it in there! Ten to one we get prints."

At the telephone, he summoned a bell-boy, then wrote a short prescription. When the boy came, Murphy gave him this paper and a bank-note.

"Lead oxide powder, at the drug-store—and hurry!"

The boy departed. Dan Murphy began to dress; then a sudden thought occurred to him. Was it possible that two, instead of one, had been in the room?

He turned out the room lights and went to the window. The blind was nearly but not quite pulled down; he had left it entirely closed. Right! Some one might have waited on the fire-escape outside until the room lights were switched off. The window might have been unlocked all the time, as hotel windows usually are. . . . Yes, it was unlocked now!

Taking a flashlight from his bag, Dan Murphy opened the window. He examined the sill, then the painted grating of the fire-escape outside. No doubt of it! Fresh scratches.

"That lets the girl out," he thought, with a nod. "She might have been after the same thing, of course, but she didn't slit the bag. Whew! I'm popular in Hollywood! Only—"

The sole other person who knew that Dan Murphy was here, and who he was, had been Gloria Charteris—the wife of Larry True, herself a blazing star of the film firmament, though now slightly under eclipse. If True had sent the girl to have a try at the pearls, then had Gloria Charteris sent some one else?

Dan Murphy finished dressing. The bellboy arrived with the lead oxide and departed. Murphy carefully fished the razor blade from the waste-basket, holding it by the ends, and over both sides dusted some of the powder. He blew it away. There were revealed, where the powder clung to the prints, tiny spirals and loops and lines.

"Good!" He slipped the blade into an envelope. "A camera will do the rest."

With a final pat to his dress tie, he went on down to the lobby, where Anne Masterson joined him five minutes later.

**I**N the ballroom, they sat over coffee and cigarettes, danced, conversed, became acquainted. This girl fascinated Dan Murphy—and puzzled him. She was an interior decorator, making her own living. Her only relative was the brother, famous under the name of Larry True.

Suddenly, when they had finished a dance and he was holding a match for her cigarette, Murphy opened fire.

"You'd love to confide in me—if you only dared tell the truth! Right?"

Her brows lifted.

"I don't know what you mean!"

"I'll tell you," Murphy said coolly. "Six months ago Gloria Charteris lost the Bonaparte pearls—the beautiful, historic, valuable pearls that Napoleon gave Josephine. They were stolen from her in New York. The insurance firm, Herrison, Limited, investigated the loss and confirmed it. They paid the insured value of seventy-five thousand dollars—far more than these pearls could be sold for in the open market, at today's prices. You follow me?"

SHE nodded, but there was a trace of pallor in her cheeks.

"I represent Herrison, Limited," resumed Murphy. "By their insurance contracts, if lost jewels are recovered within a year's time, they are returnable to the owners. Thus, Miss Charteris must now pay back the seventy-five thousand dollars and take her pearls—because I have them with me. That is my business here in Hollywood."

She gave him a sharp, startled look.

"I got in this afternoon and sent Miss Charteris a telegram, asking her to communicate with me here. I have heard nothing. . . . Now, just between you and me, Gloria Charteris is rather a bad actor."

"I can't discuss her with you, Mr. Murphy," she answered quietly.

"Faith, why not? You and she aren't friends! Well, well—just remember I'm Dan Murphy, and not *Mister*. More is going on in this business than you're aware. Larry True and his wife haven't been doing so well lately, I understand. They can't afford to refund Herrison, Limited, such a sum of money, I fear."

She looked at him steadily. "Are you trying to get information out of me?"

"Yes," assented Dan Murphy coolly.

"For your own sake, and his. I'm no scoundrel, my dear, but this part of the world crawls with them. Now—"

A bellboy came up to the table.

"Beg pardon—are you Mr. Murphy? The head-waiter said you had reserved this table."

"Telegram?" Murphy asked.

"No sir. There's a gentleman at the desk, asking for you."

"Will you excuse me?" said Murphy.

The girl nodded. "Of course. I'll be here when you get back."

Murphy followed the boy from the room. At the desk he found a short, slim young man in chauffeur's whipcord.

"Mr. Murphy? My name's Johnson," he said. "I'm the chauffeur for a lady—she's outside in the car. She doesn't want to be recognized, and wanted me to ask if you'd step out and speak with her. The car's just outside the door, down the side-street. She said you might know who she was."

"Oh, of course!" Gloria Charteris, no doubt, anxious to avoid notoriety. Dan Murphy slapped the chauffeur heartily on the shoulder. "Lead the way, my lad!"

The other grinned. A scar beside his right nostril gave his features an oddly off-balance expression, but his grin held an impish quality which rather fascinated Murphy. Following his guide out to the street, Murphy saw that cars were parked all along the curb here. The chauffeur preceded him, and halted at the first car this side the alley—a large roadster, whose door he flung open.

"Here's Mr. Murphy, Miss," he exclaimed, and stepped back.

Murphy came up. He stooped to look in and speak—and Johnson propelled him violently from behind. Something hit his head with a crash.

DAZEDLY, Dan Murphy regained his scattered senses. The car engine was being started.

"He aint got it on him!" came a deep, resonant voice from beside him. "Jimmy the Finger, huh? You're a hell of a wise guy, aint you? This is twice you've fallen down."

"Hold on," said the voice of Johnson, alias Jimmy the Finger. "It aint on him. It aint in his room, as we know. Then it's in the hotel safe! He'll have a receipt for it. Gimme his wallet—and be ready to slam him if he wakes up."

Dan Murphy kept his eyes closed. He felt the slender wallet being taken from his breast pocket. He was bundled on the car seat beside the unknown man. Jimmy the Finger, who was standing on the curb, uttered a cry of satisfaction.

"All right, this is it. I'll get the stuff. We'll dump him out later."

"Aint you taking chances?" sounded the voice of the man under the wheel.

"Hell, no! All they need is the receipt to give up the stuff."

Very true, reflected Dan Murphy; he had been careful there. He heard the brisk steps of Jimmy the Finger departing, and ventured to open his eyes a little. The car door, on his right, was still open. On his left was a dark, silent

figure, half lighted in the glare from the parking-space across the street. The profile showed plainly—a straight brow and nose, heavy, brutal jaw. The man's hand was on his knee, ready, a "persuader" in his grip.

Suddenly Murphy's hands shot out.

One clamped on the man's wrist. The other tore loose the slung-shot. Before the amazed rascal could move or even cry out, the weapon was turned upon him. The blow was swift and deadly. He slumped over the steering-wheel.

The car engine was still running.

Five minutes later Jimmy the Finger came briskly up to the car. He ducked to enter by the still open door, and spoke rapidly.

"I got it! Step on the gas—"

He pitched forward with a grunt, as the slung-shot fell.

From the man's side pocket, Dan Murphy took a fat brown envelope. He tore it open, took out the morocco case, opened it, felt for the pearls, found them there. Then he climbed out of the roadster, shoved the limp figure of Jimmy the Finger inside, and slammed the car door.

"No need of having those fingerprints checked up now!" he reflected cheerfully, as he strode back to the hotel entrance. "He was the man, no doubt of it. Well, I've got a sore head—and the pearls. Probably Anne would like to have a look at them, eh?"

SHE was still sitting at the table, and looked up at him with a smile.

"It's all right, my dear," said Murphy, laying down the morocco case. "There are the pearls, if you'd like to look at them."

She was startled, incredulous, hesitant. Dan Murphy patted her hand.

"I've learned the whole thing," he said gayly, "so cheer up and be merry! Poor Miss Charteris has had luck in her agents. Your brother sent you, and you had bad luck too, eh? Well, forget it! Do you want to look at the pearls?"

"No," she said, tragedy in her eyes. "It's true, yes. They can't return the money. They're swamped by debts, have made no pictures in months! You don't know half of it. Poor Larry is desperate, frantic! Oh, I'm horribly ashamed—but I did try to help him. And he's in trouble with her—"

"And has been drinking, and so forth," said Murphy. "I can imagine it. Well, my dear, not a soul shall ever know. I don't blame you for trying to help him,

heaven knows! You're true blue. It'll be a good lesson for you, too! Now, shall we dance?"

"Please—no." She smiled faintly. "You're very good! I think we'd better say good night now—perhaps to meet again sometime."

"Most assuredly, if I have anything to say about it! And I beg of you, don't be ashamed; don't think of the matter again; I know only too well how you feel about it—but buck up!"

"Thank you," she said. "Good night."

DAN MURPHY turned in the morocco case at the desk, and this time ordered it released only to himself personally and on his signature.

At seven in the morning his telephone began to ring. At seven-five he rolled out of bed and made sleepy answer.

"Mr. Murphy—Dan! This is Anne Masterson."

"Great Scott, girl! Haven't you been to bed yet? Know what time it is?"

"Listen, please!" The frantic urge of her voice silenced him. "Can you come up to my room at once, please? It's terribly important!"

"Right," said Murphy. "In just five minutes."

He dressed hastily, and going up to the next floor, knocked on the door of the room above his own. It was opened to him by a stranger—a man in evening clothes, disheveled, hair ruffled, eyes wild. Only at a second glance did Dan Murphy recognize the darling of the screen, Larry True.

"Come in, Murphy," said the actor wearily. "I met you a year ago in New York, eh?"

Before the dresser stood Anne Masterson, hastily putting the final touches to her hair. She swung about quickly.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came! I don't know what to do. Tell him, Larry!"

Larry True dropped into a chair, shrugged, and lit a cigarette.

"You and me both, old girl," he exclaimed. "Murphy, my wife's been murdered. I came home half an hour ago, slipped into the house, and found her dead in her room."

"Just a minute," said Dan Murphy. He went to the telephone, found that the night manager of the hotel was still on duty, and got him. "Mr. Murphy speaking. I'm in Five Fifty-three with Mr. True and his sister, Miss Masterson. I want you to send us up some coffee, toast and bacon—and rush it! And suspend



all the hotel rules, if you don't like the looks of things. I'll explain later."

"It's quite all right, Mr. Murphy," came the reply. "I'll rush the order."

Dan Murphy turned to the actor.

"Who else knows about the murder?" he demanded.

"Nobody, I suppose. Servants aren't around yet. I've been driving for the past hour or two, trying to sober up before going home. Been down at a beach party most of the night. You know how this is going to look. Lord knows who did it! I left the house, started to find the police, then decided to come here and tell Anne to scram. Can't have her mixed up in it. This will ruin me."

"Of course." Murphy looked at the girl. "Are you going to clear out?"

"Do you think I would?"

He smiled. "Why call me in?"

"Because you seem to know what to do," she replied. "You're cool and keep your head. You—well, that's why!"

"All right. Now, Larry, when do your servants get around?"

"I don't know. We hardly ever get up before ten, when we're not working. They have orders not to call Gloria. I don't suppose they'll discover it for hours."

"Then we'll get a bite to eat and go back there. I'll look the place over. If we can learn who did it before the police start wild theories, so much the better. Or did she kill herself?"

Larry True shivered. "No. She had been hit with something. On the head."

"This must have happened long before she had intended to retire," Murphy reflected. Then as he looked, his eyes widened.

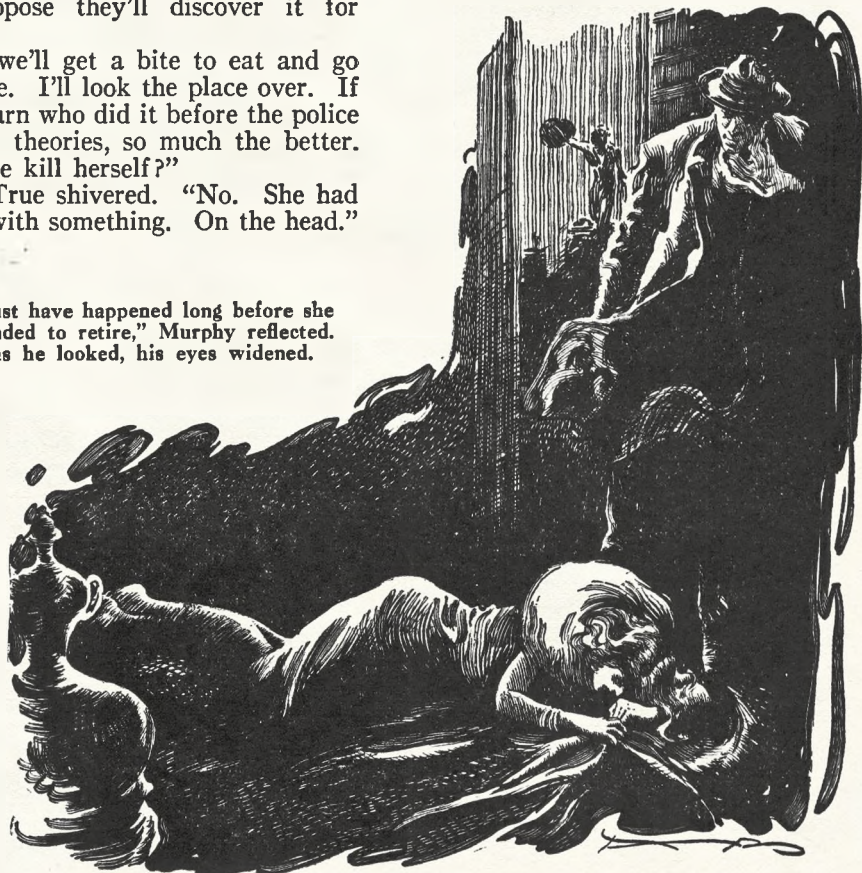
"You're up against it," said Murphy quietly. "Who's her heir?"

"I am. She has only some distant relatives." The actor looked up defiantly. "We made wills leaving everything to each other. I suppose they'll pull that old hokum about my killing her to inherit." He laughed harshly. "Not much to inherit! You won't get your money back for those pearls."

"Know about them, do you?"

"Yes. I was there when your telegram came. She was in a frightful mess over it, and we had a row. I came over here to meet Anne. Went back and dressed, and got out. Haven't been back until—this morning."

The waiter arrived with table and tray. When he was gone, Anne poured coffee, and Murphy forced Larry True to eat a bit and down the coffee. Then all three piled into True's big roadster. He drove out Sunset at a terrific pace, turned off, and presently drew up before the house, secluded behind its hedge and iron fence. Leaving the car in the street, he led the way in. They met no one. The servants, if up, were not in evidence.



Murphy glanced around at the huge living-room, the luxurious dining-room, and then followed up the great central stairs to the upper hall. Larry True halted and pointed to a door on the right.

"I—I can't," he said brokenly. "You go ahead."

Murphy looked at the girl. "Stay with him. Go downstairs, both of you, and put in a call for the district attorney's office. If you can find anyone there at this hour, report the murder."

"Why not to the police?" demanded Larry True. "They'll come anyhow."

"Yes, and they'll be in actual charge. But this is one of the few cities where the D. A. does investigate. His man will be presumably in charge of the case, and you'll get a bit better break than if the police alone were here."

"But they can't really believe I did it!" gasped the actor. Dan Murphy shrugged, pushed open the door True had indicated and stepped into the room of death.

Gloria Charteris lay face down on the floor, her famous platinum hair drowned in dark dried blood. She wore an evening dress. About her shoulders and the back of her head was an ermine wrap, as though she had been dressed to go out. The electric clusters on either side of her dressing-table were blazing wanly in the morning sunlight.

Dan Murphy glanced at her empty hands, clutching at the rug on which she lay. Then he turned and inspected the room critically. It was a glorious, gaudy room, but seemed in perfect order. The windows were closed. There were only two dissonant notes. One, that of a bottle of whisky on the dresser, two glasses beside it. Murphy walked over and saw that both of the glasses had been used. Then, turning, he saw the second oddity—a strange patch of white beside the dead woman's hair.

"A handkerchief—that's odd!" he reflected. "This must have happened long before she had intended to retire, but after her maid had put the room in order. She had just dressed to go out, perhaps."

**A**PPROACHING the body, he looked at the handkerchief. Apparently it had been dropped there by the murderer; it was speckled with blood, but still folded. Then, as he looked, Murphy's eyes widened. He bent lower, and picked it up, staring.

It was his own silk handkerchief, bearing his own monogram!

Startled, Dan Murphy tucked the damaging bit of silk into his pocket. He was on the alert now; no matter how it had come here, the intent was clear enough! What else? No one would have been satisfied with leaving this clue alone.

Then he saw it—a bit of yellow, under the woman's hand, which lay palm down on the rug, fingers extended. He stooped, and drew out a crumpled ball of yellow paper. Even before he opened it out, he guessed what it was.

Correct. The telegram he had sent her the previous afternoon!

"**F**AITH, whoever did this was a cool devil!" thought Murphy. "This, and the handkerchief that seemed to have slipped from my pocket, eh? Here was my name, to tell 'em whose initials were on the handkerchief! Not bad!"

He thrust the telegram, also, into his pocket. As he did so, the door opened and Anne Masterson came into the room.

"I wanted to tell you," she said quietly. "We got the district attorney's office and a man is coming. I've talked with the servants. No one came last night at all. Gloria's maid doesn't live in the house. She went home about nine—Gloria was going out. If anyone came, Gloria must have let him in herself."

Dan Murphy nodded, his gray eyes cold and narrowed. He was suspecting her, suspecting everyone.

"Thanks," he said curtly. "Go and keep your brother quiet, will you? Don't let him do any more drinking."

She nodded and departed.

Murphy went to the windows. All overlooked the gardens; no roof below, no chance for anyone to have entered. Gloria Charteris must have let in whoever killed her. Singular!

"Doesn't ring true," thought Murphy. "Suppose, now, suspicion were directed at me! It might be alleged that I was here, that she had admitted me, that she had brought me up to this room. The natural thing—a flirtation—any such wild yarn would go over big with the papers! But—"

He knelt above the body. With a pencil, he carefully lifted the ermine wrap. It was stuck to her hair by blood, at the edge. He did not dislodge it. The blood, however, had run sidewise from the wound.

Odd, then, that the hair on the back of her head should be all blood-smeared—and the white lining of the wrap itself!

Like a flash, the explanation struck him. He rose, strode out of the room, and descended the stairs swiftly. Anne and Larry True were in the dining-room, talking, two servants there also, coffee on the table. Murphy disregarded them entirely. He glanced at the front door, then turned to the left, took the two steps down into the living-room and looked around, every sense on the alert.

He was trying, now, to reconstruct what must have happened last night. In front of him was a huge overstuffed divan upholstered in dusky green, as were the chairs in the room. Near it, a table and a chair. The chair was turned toward the divan; another chair stood at one side in the middle of the floor.

Murphy glanced at the table. A book, a large reading-glass, cigarette box, ash-tray. He frowned thoughtfully, then picked up the reading-glass and went to the divan. He examined the plush at the top of the piece, then the back, with the greatest attention. A gleam of satisfaction came into his eyes. He crossed to the hearth. Striking a match, he ignited the telegram, and from this the handkerchief, which he shook out. Both consumed, he stirred the ashes vigorously and then came back to the table.

"At any rate, we'll just cross Dan Murphy off the suspected list!" he reflected grimly. "Lord! What a break that she dragged me into it!"

He looked at the ash-tray. The stubs of three cigarettes lay there. One, half-consumed, was an expensive Turkish cigarette from the near-by box. The other two were of a popular and cheap brand, both smoked well toward the end.

"I've got everything—if I play my cards right," he thought, and turned toward the dining-room. He dismissed the servants curtly and dropped into a chair.

"True, you're all washed up," he said abruptly. "No matter what the outcome of this business, it'll be played up by the press, and your finish as an actor is in sight. You'd better make up your mind to it, and be making plans against the future—"

"See here, I don't intend you shall talk to me like this—" began True.

"Shut up," snapped Dan Murphy. "I'm talking as a friend, though I don't know yet how much you deserve my help. Larry True's done for! You are Larry Masterson from now on—probably without a friend in the world, done for, facing prison. All your fair-weather friends will drop away. You've got just



this girl here, who's worth a hundred of all the rest, and me."

"Why you?" demanded True.

"Because I represent Herrison, Limited. You and your wife both had plenty of insurance with us on other stuff than the Bonaparte pearls. I notice there is apparently little jewelry on her body, certainly no necklace, though she was dressed to go out. I'd like to know at once whether anything is missing. You're the only person who can tell me."

True stared. "Do you mean—you want me to go up there—"

"Damn it, be a man and not a jelly-fish! You're not overcome by grief; you're just plain selfish, worried about what's going to happen to you. It'll be plenty! But it'll be a lot worse if you don't take my advice. Get up there and do it quick. Don't touch the body or anything in that room. Don't touch that whisky bottle, or it may put you in the chair! Find out if any jewels are missing, and snap into it!"

The vigorous, steely voice of Dan Murphy was like a whip to the shaken man before him. Larry True pinched out his cigarette, rose and left the room.

"Do you have to be so brutal about it?" said Anne.

"Yes. You know perfectly well I do."

"Well—I suppose so," she sighed.

"But it's terrible! And what makes it worse is that if this took place last night, he hasn't any alibi."

"He said he was at a beach party!"



Even before Murphy opened it, he guessed what it was—the telegram he had sent!

"He was, a poker party at Malibu. But he didn't get there until twelve. He went to a cinema on the way—saw one of his own pictures at a Beverly Hills theater, and dropped in. He was alone. He wore blue glasses and nobody recognized him."

Dan Murphy whistled softly and lit a cigarette. Here was something so obviously true that nobody would believe it.

Larry True entered excitedly.

"You were right!" he exclaimed. "With that dress, she always wore either her imitation pearls, or the necklace I gave her for a wedding-present—ten star sapphires. Cost me twenty-five thousand. It's gone!"

Dan Murphy nodded. He knew the necklace. He had a list of every jewel insured by this couple.

"Sure it wasn't stolen from her jewel-case?"

"Nothing else is touched—a secret drawer in her desk. And she had the necklace yesterday. It had just come back from being cleaned up and getting one of the mounts made more secure."

"You touched nothing in the room?"

"Only the secret drawer." Larry True hesitated, then went on. "We had some cash hidden there in case of need. Ten thousand. I've taken it."

"All right. Say nothing about it to anyone else, and better let your sister take charge of it right now. They may search you."

Larry True passed an envelope to the girl. At this minute the doorbell rang. Murphy went to the door and admitted three men: Sanford, of the district attorney's office, and two under-cover men from police headquarters. Introductions effected, the three went on upstairs.

PRESENTLY the three officers came downstairs. Sanford came up to Dan Murphy, offered a cigarette, and spoke quietly.

"Harrison, Limited, eh? I've heard of you. O'Brien, the office chief, has told me about a case he and you handled together in Chicago."

"Oh! I didn't know he was out here!" said Murphy. "In the city?"

"No; away on vacation." Sanford, a clean-cut, efficient man with spectacles, gave Dan Murphy a look. Murphy caught it, and they sauntered out into the hall. The under-cover men were bringing in the servants.

"What do you know about this?" asked Sanford. "From what O'Brien has told me, you are liable to know a lot."

"Faith, I do!" said Dan Murphy whimsically. "How do you hit it off with the police?"

"Same old story. Cat and dog. Did you ever know police and D. A. men who were anything else?"

"I thought so. I'll give you something to spring on 'em, as soon as the routine stuff gets done. Meantime, let me account for my presence here."

He did so, briefly, and they returned to the dining-room. The questioning was taken up, nothing of the least importance being elicited from the servants. Gloria Charteris' maid entered the house while this was going on. Her statement was brief. She had been dismissed the previous evening at nine, as Miss Charteris was going out and had no further need of her. She had left at once. Where had Miss Charteris been going? To a party near by, at the home of her former director. She had intended to walk, as the distance was only a couple of blocks. She had been going alone, had expected no visitors.

For the next hour the house was a busy place. Coroner, more officers, newspaper men beginning to swarm outside, photographers from both police and D.A. office. Questioning was confined to the dining-room, the living-room having been barred, at a tip from Dan Murphy to Sanford.

Larry True bucked up to meet the worst, as it became more and more clear that he would be charged with the murder. The servants told of dissension between husband and wife; the previous night's quarrel was laid bare; his lack of an alibi was brought out. His statement about the vanishing of the star-sapphire necklace became only more damaging, under the charge that he was setting up a robbery motive in weak self-defense. Anne Masterson had telephoned his lawyer, who now arrived.

Sanford beckoned Dan Murphy into one corner of the hall.

"Come through if you have anything," he said. "They're convinced; I'm not. We'll have to hold him. I rather fancy this robbery story, however. Can it be backed up?"

Murphy nodded. "Have you examined the two glasses by the whisky bottle upstairs? I thought not. The two don't match. Here's what happened: She took a drink before she went to answer the doorbell. Later, the killer got out another glass, probably from the bathroom, and poured some whisky into the bottom to make it seem used."

"Wouldn't the killer take a drink?"

"Hardly. The murder may not have been intentional. Finding Gloria dead, instead of merely knocked out, they worked desperately to cover it up. They were too sharp to take a drink. Apparently not murderers by profession."

"They?" Sanford gave him a searching look. "See here, what are you holding out? Do you want that poor devil True charged with the crime?"

Dan Murphy shrugged. "He needs a few jolts. Go on and do that errand. I'll give you a theory and some evidence that will bust up the police bandwagon!"

Sanford departed hurriedly up the stairs, after getting his photographer and laboratory expert to accompany him.

Presently he came down again, with word that Murphy's theory about the two glasses might be correct. Only a technical examination could tell—which would be made at the office. Five minutes later Larry True was on his way to jail, held for questioning!

ANNE MASTERSON gave Murphy one long, silent look of stricken reproach. He came to her side and spoke quietly, under his breath.

"It's all right. Can't explain now. Meet me at the hotel for lunch—and

buck up! He's not arrested yet, and won't be, except on suspicion."

Sanford had kept his technical aides, and the living-room was still barred. As the crowd of newspaper men and other thinned, Dan Murphy smoked in stoical silence. He had no compunctions about having destroyed the false evidence against himself. Although this left the onus of blame on Larry True, he felt ready to balance the score at once. Sanford came up to him with a nod.

"The maid says she had that necklace laid out to wear last night, Murphy. Darned if I don't think the man's telling the truth about it! The theory is that he took the necklace and threw it away. They're searching the garden and his car now."

Dan Murphy shrugged. "The killers have it. They will think the crime fastened on another man."

IF there was a double meaning in the words, Sanford did not catch it.

"Well," he replied, "I'm tired of hearing you talk about killers. Come across! Were there two men up there when she was killed?"

Dan Murphy smiled. "What makes you think she was killed up there?"

"Good Lord, man! It's plain as the nose on your face—"

"That she *wasn't*! Did you examine the Oriental rug she lay on? A very thin and slippery one. A person standing on it, and struck down, would certainly wrinkle it. This lay undisturbed except where she had clutched it. But that's only an indication. . . . Now I'll give you some actual evidence, so fetch your experts and I'll show you where she was killed."

And he started for the living-room.

"You don't mean to say that she was killed downstairs?" ejaculated Sanford.

Murphy nodded.

"Let me tell you just what happened, Sanford—reconstruct it for yourself. Perhaps she was upstairs when she heard the knocker at the front door. You should examine that front door, and listen to the bell—which sounds in the kitchen. The bell isn't easy to find, unless one knows where to look for it. The knocker is in plain sight. Thus, the servants heard no one ring. Miss Charteris answered the door, admitted two men, motioned them into the living-room here, and followed them."

"Do you know who these men were?" snapped Sanford abruptly.

"Certainly I do. However, I am offering you evidence, not theory. Miss Charteris dropped on the divan, there—the end near the table. She took one of her own cigarettes from the box on the table, and lit it. The two men took their own accustomed cigarettes. The three of them talked, perhaps in a heated manner. As you can see, Miss Charteris pressed down her cigarette-stub with angry force, even bursting the paper!

"The visitors occupied those chairs. One of them facing her, the other at the end of the couch. This second man, out of her range of vision, struck the blow. She had just risen. She was angry, furious! The fellow struck in vicious panic, harder than he realized; instead of stunning, the blow killed."

"ALL very fine! But you said evidence—" Sanford began.

"Look at the back of the divan—at the top you will find a trace of rouge on the dusky green plush, as her head fell sidewise. Over the top, on the back, you will find a smear of blood, which they tried to rub out. Go on and look! Settle it!"

The three men obeyed. Sanford lifted away his spectacles, told his men to make careful scrapings, and looked amazedly at Dan Murphy.

"You may be right. Only chemical analysis can prove it. But there's only a tiny smear here. Such a wound would have left more blood—"

"You forget her ermine scarf," Murphy said quietly. "Examine its lining, and you'll find the whole thing sopped with blood, which certainly never came from her head as she lay there on the floor. The wrap was under the back of her head as she fell here. They found she was dead, and promptly wrapped the ermine about her head as she lay. If you will use that enlarging glass, I think you will observe several white hairs from the ermine, on the plush."

Sanford seized the glass and obeyed.

"Good Lord, Murphy—you're right!"

"Of course I'm right. She had told them she was alone here. They lifted and carried her upstairs, her head still wrapped in the scarf. In the bedroom, they laid her on the rug as we found her, took the necklace as loot, and consulted. One of them brought another glass from the bathroom, poured a little whisky into it, made it appear as though two people had been drinking. Content with their loot, they slipped quietly away."

Sanford stared, swallowed hard.

"Say, O'Brien certainly told the truth about you! But if they carried her upstairs, some of the blood must have escaped—"

"An excellent idea!" Murphy broke in. "Good! Get to work, and you may find a few drops. That would prove the whole theory."

Sanford nodded. "If you know so confounded much, I suppose you can even guess what Miss Charteris was angry about?"

"Easily,"—and Murphy smiled. "She was angry because these fellows had failed in the errand she had set them. This was, to enter my room at the hotel, or otherwise to get hold of certain jewelry. I had wired her—"

He told briefly about the Bonaparte pearls.

"I don't know that these were the same two men," he concluded. "That's guesswork. But if one of them did enter my room, I've got his fingerprints there. You might run me back to the hotel and pick up that razor-blade. After leaving the two rascals in their car, I tossed the slung-shot in after them. Undoubtedly this was the very weapon with which Gloria Charteris was killed."

"My Lord!" gasped Sanford. "Why, this—this will knock the police theory cold! It'll force them to release Larry True, eh?"

"I trust so. The man who was with Johnson, alias Jimmy the Finger, wasn't mentioned by name. He's up to you. And now, if you're ready—"

TEN minutes later Sanford, in Murphy's room at the hotel, took the envelope containing the razor-blade, examined the cut bag, and then departed hurriedly for his office. . . .

It was close to noon when a ring came from Anne Masterson, and Murphy descended to meet her in the lobby. To his delight, she was cool enough, and composed. They went in to luncheon; and Murphy, in few words, told her what had taken place.

"But—you never told me, last night!" she exclaimed, staring at him. "About those men! And how did you know that she had sent them?"

"I didn't. In fact, the whole thing flashed over me as I picked up this evidence. Too late to keep your brother out of being questioned—but now things will turn brighter for him. Sanford is going to spring all this on the police as

his own discovery. He'll make the afternoon two-o'clock editions of the papers, and your brother's lawyer will do the rest. Sanford promised to give me a ring here, too, the minute our theory was confirmed by the laboratory findings."

"Then it's really all right?" she exclaimed, radiant. Murphy nodded gayly.

"So far as Larry True is concerned—bright and lovely, my dear!"

HE had already found that the silk handkerchief was gone from the pocket of his evening clothes. Therefore he had either lost it while engaged with the two rascals in the roadster, or while dancing. And as he met the beaming eyes of the girl across the table, he was quite positive he had lost it while in the roadster.

"If only you had made your discoveries before Larry went to jail!" she said.

"To tell the truth, I did," confessed Murphy. "But I had to play the cards right, or it would have fizzled out. By the way, here's a noon extra. Makes things look bad for your brother. Want to see the pictures they took?"

He handed her the newspaper. She turned to the inner pages, shrinking from the flaming banners, and glanced at the pictures there. Then something caught her attention and she looked up at Murphy.

"Why, this is funny! I'm sure I know this man—he used to be Gloria's chauffeur!"

"Eh? What man?"

"The one who was picked up dead this morning on Sunset Boulevard—supposedly shot in some gang war. Unidentified. Didn't you see about it?"

Murphy shook his head. She handed the paper to him. His gray eyes suddenly lighted as he scanned the words.

A body found in the early morning hours by a police radio car—two bullets through the body, the life blown out of him—unidentified. Small, dark, whipcord uniform, scar on the right nostril—Murphy lifted amazed eyes to the girl.

"Why, he's my man! Jimmy the Finger—no doubt of it!"

At this moment a waiter approached with a telephone, Murphy having left instructions to put in any call here. He dropped the newspaper and took up the instrument. Sanford was calling.

"Hello, Murphy! Well, it worked out. Glasses, rouge, stains, and a couple of drops from the stairs. Perfect chain of evidence."

"Good. What about those fingerprints?"

"Unlisted, so far, but we may learn more later. The police know nothing of Jimmy the Finger, or Johnson. We've sprung the whole thing on them, and they're staggered. The chief himself has okayed this theory, with the evidence behind it. I've just seen Larry True, who will be released sometime this afternoon. True knows nothing of such a man as you describe, or how his wife might—"

"Well, take the dope on it," broke in Dan Murphy brightly. "Faith, I have to give you lazy devils everything! There's a story in the papers about a supposed gangster who was picked up early this morning, shot to death. Unidentified."

"Sure," said Sanford. "We're not so slow, really! We tried his fingerprints, and they're not on record. Also, I compared them with those on your razor-blade. Not the same."

"The hell you say!" For an instant Murphy was taken aback. Then he chuckled. "Well, I'll tell you who the supposed gangster is. He's Jimmy the Finger, who got after me last night. Description leaves no doubt of it. Furthermore, he was formerly chauffeur for Gloria Charteris. This explains her acquaintance with him."

"MY Lord!" burst out Sanford excitedly. "Is this a fact? Then True can verify it! He'll probably know this chap by some other name. But why would he be murdered?"

"Ask him," said Dan Murphy dryly. "Clear enough, isn't it? The Finger was the one Gloria knew and had hired for the job. He was the one she was talking with. The other man sat in the chair at the end of the divan—he's the one who struck the blow! A dark, heavy-jawed fellow; name was not mentioned.

"Later, of course, he and the Finger fell out. They were panicky about the murder, or Jimmy the Finger was. The other fellow was afraid Jimmy would snitch on him, or perhaps wanted all the loot for himself—and shot Jimmy. And it was the other fellow who was in my room, and who left that razor-blade! Keep trying to get his fingerprints!"

"Oh, sure; but it's slow work, as you know. Say, this is great, Murphy! I'll get right after the matter. Call you later if anything turns up."

Murphy hung up and turned to the girl. She was jubilant at his news.

Sondag



"Oh! I'll have to get back and tell Larry at once! Anyway, I promised to return there this afternoon. Splendid! But about this man—you think he was really killed that way?"

Dan Murphy nodded, with a smile at her excitement.

"Undoubtedly. What do you know about him? His name?"

"No, except that they called him Arthur. Larry fired him six months ago. Gloria liked him, and they had an awful row about it. However, she gave in. Larry had found that this chauffeur had an interest in some joint up the beach, and was using his position to get information about people and so on. So he fired him."

Murphy's brows lifted. "I see. What sort of place did he have an interest in?"

"Hm! I remember it was called the Sun-spot—a sort of road-house up above Malibu on the coast highway. It had been a fashionable place to go at one time, but you know how these things change. I know Larry said it was a rotten sort of place now and was pretty worked up about it all when he learned of Arthur's having an interest in it."

"I see. Well, I think I'll look over the place this afternoon," said Murphy lazily.

She gave him a quick look.

"You mean—to find the other man?"

"Yes. It's just a bare chance. The fellow doesn't know me by sight, as Jimmy the Finger did—or rather your friend Arthur!"

"But you should take police along!"

Dan Murphy broke into his gay, whimsical laugh.

"Nonsense, my dear! This is no raid! Probably I'll learn nothing whatever. It's merely a question of hiring a car, running up there, and looking over the place. If I do drop on to something, I'll tip off Sanford and let him do the dirty work."

"Oh! In that case,"—and Anne pushed back her chair,—"I'll change my clothes and get back downtown. Larry will be delighted to get my news! I can't wait to tell him!"

**I**N a small hired car, Dan Murphy sped merrily out to the coast highway and headed north past Malibu, in search of the Sun-spot.

Once beyond this outpost of the film stars, he found the coastline more wild and deserted, although traffic was continuous. It was nearly four o'clock when he sighted his destination. The shore being here inaccessible to the public, the Sun-spot was located on the inland side of the highway—a low, sprawling structure painted bright yellow, evidently with large dancing space, and a parking area for cars at one side.

Beyond slowing down, Murphy made no pause. While the place was clearly open for business, it bore a deserted look. Since there were no customers about, it was better to wait for an hour or so, when he would attract less attention.

Accordingly he drove on, halted at a roadside booth five miles farther, and over a bottle of beer and desultory conversation with the proprietor, killed more than an hour of time. When at length, after leisurely driving, he came again within sight of the Sun-spot, it was close to six o'clock, and a number of cars occupied the parking space. To these, he added his car, then sauntered inside.

A waiter met him. Dan Murphy halted and glanced about the place—the low, square front room with dancing floor and orchestra pit, the cashier's desk, the swing doors to the kitchen; the wings extending to either side, with half a dozen tables occupied. All quite ordinary—no sign of anything out of the way.

"When does the music start?" Murphy asked, as he followed the waiter to a corner table in the left wing.

"Not until nine, sir." The waiter held back a chair. He noted with a glance Dan Murphy's tailored clothes and careful grooming, and scented a good tip. "Just stopped in passing, sir? Might be



worth your while to stick around, if you've time. We put on rather a good show here, and it's a free-and-easy crowd. Cocktail, sir?"

Murphy smiled cheerfully.

"Of course! And if you recommend the chicken you advertise, all right. By the way! A chauffeur of one of my friends recommended this place to me last time I was in Los Angeles—what the devil was his name? Said to ask for him if I came around here, that he had an interest in it. I remember now! But I can't place his name—"

"Mr. Sondag, perhaps?" suggested the waiter.

"No, no." Dan Murphy frowned. "Hm! He was a small chap, rather, with a scar on his cheek or nose—"

"Oh, you mean Mr. Calloway! He used to be about here a good deal, sir," answered the waiter rather uneasily. "Haven't seen him for a long time now. I really don't know about the ownership."

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Murphy carelessly. "You haven't an evening paper, I suppose? I'm just driving down from the north and haven't seen a paper in years!"

The waiter laughed, bustled off, and returned with an afternoon Los Angeles green sheet—a two-o'clock edition. With this, Dan Murphy settled down.

Sanford had been as good as his word. The startling discoveries made by the district attorney's office apparently absolved Larry True of any suspicion in his wife's murder, and his lawyer predicted that he would be released very shortly. Murphy ran through the account of the matter with a smile, noted that the hitherto unidentified body, supposedly of a gangster, was now identified as one James Calloway, and that this man was linked up with the crime—and then laid aside the paper with a nod, as his cocktail came.

"Somebody," he thought to himself, "is going to be damned uneasy at finding no mention of the handkerchief and telegram—and of Dan Murphy! I wonder, now! Could that somebody be the fellow with a queer name here? Sondag?"

HE dared ask no further questions. These waiters looked, in general, like tough customers. The man at the cashier's desk was apparently a Greek. The cocktail and the meal itself, however, proved to be excellent. Dan Murphy resolved to leave any further in-

vestigation here to the police, and devoted himself to his dinner.

He was just lighting a cigar, over his coffee, when he saw his waiter approaching, followed by a stranger in evening dress—a rather burly, square-faced man with swarthy features and bushy black hair. The waiter smiled ingratiatingly at Murphy.

"I was telling Mr. Sondag about you asking for Mr. Calloway," he said. "Mr. Sondag is the manager here."

MURPHY looked up and nodded, as he met the gaze of Sondag. The waiter departed. Sondag drew out a chair. "You a friend of Calloway's?" he asked abruptly.

Dan Murphy smiled. "Hardly that. I've met him, but some time ago."

A thrill ran through every vein, though he repressed the least sign of it. That voice! No doubt whatever about it now. That deep bass voice he had heard in the roadster! And the profile was that of the man under the steering-wheel.

He was face to face with the murderer of Gloria Charteris—and Jimmy the Finger!

"We aint seen Jimmy around here for a long while," said Sondag slowly, his gaze on Dan Murphy. Suddenly his face changed. A hoarse gasp escaped him; his eyes protruded, a mottled white crept into his cheeks.

"What's the matter?" Murphy exclaimed in alarm. "You ill?"

"It—it's nothing—a seizure—I get 'em at times," gasped out Sondag. He mopped his face with a silk handkerchief. Then he tried to rise. "I got to get to the office—medicine in there. Gimme a hand, will you?"

"Sure." Dan Murphy was on his feet instantly. That something had caused the man a frightful shock, was no question. He took Sondag's arm. The waiter came hurrying, and then came another, as they crossed the floor.

"Open the door—office!" rumbled Sondag. To the left of the orchestra pit, a door was held open. Beyond this showed a passage, doors on either hand. Reaching it, Sondag drew himself up, and half turned.

"Come along, will you?" he said. "I'm all right now. Want to talk to you."

Behind Murphy's back, his hand gestured swiftly.

With a nod, Murphy accompanied him into the passage. The two waiters followed. The door behind them swung

shut. Sondag halted at the first door on the right and threw it open.

"Here we are," he said, striding in.

Suddenly, Dan Murphy looked down. He caught a flicker of white from his breast pocket. The monogrammed corner of a handkerchief was protruding—one of his own handkerchiefs, with his distinctive monogram. And only last night, this man had found one of those same handkerchiefs in the roadster, and had made diabolically clever use of it!

The two waiters were closing in behind. Dan Murphy knew he was caught.

All in the flash of an instant—all as he glimpsed the corner of white silk. No wonder Sondag had nearly had a stroke on recognizing that monogram!

Murphy's hand flew out, caught the door, slammed it shut behind him. Sondag was already whipping around—had caught up a pistol from the desk. Dan Murphy laughed lightly.

"Come, come! None of that," he said coolly. Sharp voices rose from the two waiters outside. "Send your men away. This is for us to settle—if you want to make ten grand out of it! Yes or no?"

Sondag started. He was glaring at Dan Murphy, his eyes bloodshot, his breath coming in hoarse gasps, the pistol held close against his side. But the words checked him, and Murphy's perfect coolness. He backed away a step or two and raised his voice.

"Go away! If I send for you—then break in!"

Dan Murphy took the cigar from between his teeth. A slim chance—he must take it, at all costs.

"I'm quite unarmed, Sondag," he said cheerfully, and opening his coat, patted his vest, turned his back deliberately to show his hip pockets. "Miss Charteris told you who I am—insurance. I don't belong to the police. I came here alone, to see you. Ten thousand dollars in it for you. Interested?"

"**Y/ES,**" growled Sondag. He was aflame with suspicion now, his eyes crafty, avid, greedy. A hard man to trick, this brutal rascal.

"You needn't have slit my bag with that razor-blade," went on Murphy, replacing the cigar and eyeing the other amusedly. "That's the only thing I hold against you—it was such a darned good bag, Sondag! I don't blame you for the handkerchief trick, and the telegram; it was quick thinking, only I was too sharp for you. Now, shall we talk business?"

The burning eyes widened a trifle.

"I don't know what you're talking about," rumbled the man uncertainly.

"Insurance." Dan Murphy removed the cigar, inspected it critically, then seated himself on one corner of the desk and regarded Sondag with perfect nonchalance. "Did you see in the papers that I've offered ten thousand reward for the return of those star sapphires—and no questions asked? Oh, you didn't? Well, I suppose you haven't seen the evening editions yet, that's true. You see, that's my business—insurance. I hope you bear no hard feelings for that crack over the head? Left no mark, I see. It balances the one you gave me."

"You're too damned smart!" snapped out Sondag. "Do you know—"

Murphy waved his hand. "Oh, never mind recriminations, if you get the word! What I'm after is results. We're alone here together. Nobody will know what took place. Not a thing to incriminate you—why not talk business? Ten grand."

**S**USPICION lessened before greed. "You're right, I guess," admitted Sondag. He was perspiring heavily now, but the pistol remained immovable.

"Sure! You'll need the ten grand to make your get-away, before the police find the same trail that brought me here—Calloway's trail," said Dan Murphy. "You're too wise to pass up a good thing. If you haven't the stones, there's nothing against you, is there?"

"Are you talking cash?" grunted Sondag.

"Naturally!" Dan Murphy laughed a little. He took the cigar from his mouth, reached out, and knocked the ash into a tray on the desk—a tray already half full of ash and cigarette stubs. He moved it closer to him, closer to hand. "If you've got the stones and want to trade, say the word!"

"Let's see your money," demanded Sondag. Dan Murphy threw back his head, laughed, and waved his cigar.

"What? When I don't even know you have the sapphires? Nonsense!"

"Never mind that. They're here," said Sondag. "If you've got that much cash—"

"Oh, all right!" With an easy gesture of assurance, Dan Murphy leaned over and put his cigar into the ash-tray. It fell from the edge on to the desk. With a grunt of irritation, he leaned forward, caught at the ash tray—and sent its contents flying into the other man's face. A desperate, frantic, gamble with death!

With the same motion, he flung himself forward, flat down upon the desk—his hands caught at Sondag, and he dragged the man down as he fell.

The pistol exploded twice—above him. The gamble was won!

Dan Murphy grappled his antagonist, holding the pistol-wrist in a grip of iron. The two men thrashed about the floor. The pistol was knocked away—went slithering under the desk. Realizing this, Murphy wrenched himself free, came to one knee. There was a window before him, clear egress to the night outside and his own car, could he make it!

Then Sondag was upon him like a fury; and the man could fight. Murphy blocked him, then backed away, got to the door, shot the bolt. A smash to the jaw rocked him on his heels, but he bored in swiftly, hammered home blow after blow, swept the burly, cursing Sondag backward. A terrific drive to the pit of the stomach. Sondag reeled, caught his foot against a chair, lost balance, and his head struck a corner of the desk. He lay sprawled out, senseless.

Dan Murphy, panting, darted to the window. Voices were at the door, fists were thudding at it. No time now to get the sapphires! His own escape was paramount. Even if he could not get away in his car, he could at least dodge pursuit afoot. He tore at the window. It came open. There was no screen outside. Before him showed the parking space, the cars, highway, dimly lit by the Sun-spot radiance.

Behind him, the door was being crashed inward.

He did not hesitate. He clambered into the window-opening and then dropped to the ground, a few feet below. As he did so, two men wearing the white aprons of waiters closed in upon him from either side. . . . Next minute they had him pinioned.

His hands bound firmly, twisted behind his back, Murphy was led across to a closed garage and halted by his two captors. Another man appeared, hastily darted back into the building with word of his taking.

**T**HE incipient confusion in the road-house itself was being quieted. When Murphy attempted to speak, he was struck heavily across the mouth, with a growl to be silent. He obeyed. The game was up now—no escape whatever.

Presently Sondag appeared, another waiter with him, striding across the

lighted space of ground to the garage. He halted in front of Murphy, peered at him, and uttered a low laugh. Then he turned to the waiters with a curt order.

“Open up. Run my car out.”

The doors were slid away. The car inside—a roadster, Dan Murphy noted—was backed out and the engine was left running. The headlights, switched on, illumined the interior of the garage. Sondag whipped out a pistol, jerked his head toward the garage.

“In there! Turn up that engine, one of you—open the exhaust!”

The engine began to roar. Dan Murphy spoke, quietly.

“Sondag, you’re not going to murder—”

“Shut up! March in there!”

The man’s face was eloquent. Murphy turned and started into the garage, helpless. One shot, and it would be over. Sondag followed, shoved the pistol against his back.

“Now, then—take it, you damned—”

“Just a minute, there!” interposed a voice—a new voice, high, piercing the roar of the engine outside.

Sondag turned his head.

In the opening behind him was a State trooper, pistol leveled. The waiters had frozen as they stood, other police appearing dimly. As Sondag perceived what had happened, he jerked around with a roar—and the trooper was upon him. The heavy service pistol crashed into his face, sent him staggering. His own weapon roared vainly. Then he was down, handcuffs clicking on his wrists.

**H**ELLO, Murphy!” exclaimed Sanford, coming into the garage as Murphy stood rubbing his chafed wrists. “Just in time, eh? Good thing the young lady tipped us off about where you were! We were all set to jump the place, when the shots rang out in there. We waited to see what had happened.”

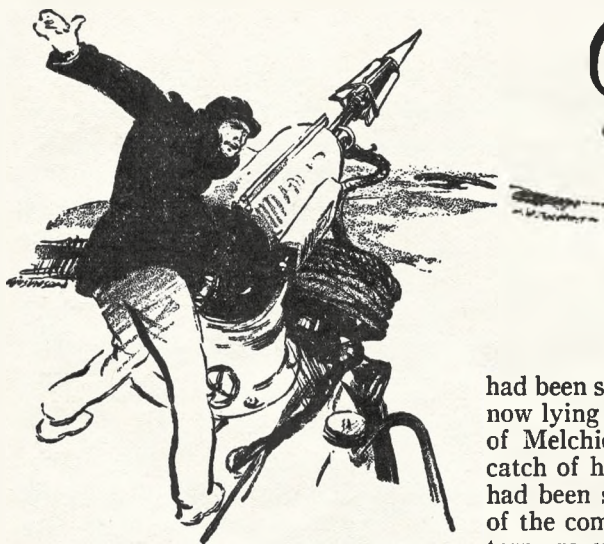
“Thanks,” said Dan Murphy coolly. “By the way, you’ll find the star sapphires somewhere in Sondag’s office—probably in his desk.”

“And,” replied Sanford, “if you’re interested, you’ll find Miss Masterson in my car, about two hundred yards down the road.”

“Oh!” said Murphy. “You mean—she came out here herself?”

“If you doubt it, try to argue with her!”

A chuckle broke from Dan Murphy. Ignoring the tumult all about, he started down the road, a gay tune on his lips.



# The

*A thrill-filled story of  
desperate adventure on  
wild Antarctic seas.*

**T**HROUGH the little whale-catcher's shrouds shrilled a moderate gale. Mush ice heaved in soiled patches upon a thrashing sea obscured by stinging flurries of snow-squalls. Yet the *Finhval* drove relentlessly ahead, shipping monstrous seas, her decks awash like the glistening flanks of the leviathan she hunted. The Antarctic whale-chasers are foul-weather craft, and the *Finhval's* gunner, at the helm in the narrow wheel-house, was a foul-weather man. In these ships the harpooner is sailing-master, and this harpooner was Ivar Skantarp. He drove his ship and he drove his men; they knew it and would not have had it otherwise. It was a mark of distinction to hunt with old Ivar.

Bucking and plunging as she shouldered the crashing Antarctic seas, the little whale-catcher drove to the westward some three hundred miles south of Cape Horn, to the last wild haven of the mighty leviathan. It was the short summer season of the fin and the blue whale-hunt, yet the ferocious cold bit to the very bone, and the weather side of the *Finhval's* belching stack and every rope and bolt of her was ice-covered and salt-caked. There is little comfort, and less room, on deck and below in these compact tug-like craft which are used in a hard and dangerous life.

Young Nelson Graham reflected on this with a wry grin as he balanced himself in the lee of the little wheel-house, his mittened hands sunk deep in a hair seal jacket, the ear flaps of his fur hat tied securely by the tapes under his chin. But he hadn't come to the South Shetland cruising-grounds for comfort. He

had been sent down with the factory ship, now lying at anchor in an iceberg harbor of Melchior Island waiting for the first catch of her brood of restless rovers. He had been sent by the American interests of the company to hunt with Ivar Skantarp, reputed the best harpoon gunner out of Norway, to hunt whales—and a whale wolf. His experience in Greenland seas counted for very little among these grizzled Norse veterans. They eyed him with a brutal frankness; not so much with suspicion or resentment as with obvious doubt of his fortitude and his intrepidity. He was a very young man compared to these icy-eyed sea dogs: he would have to win his spurs.

Nelson knew all this as his narrowed gray eyes swept the bleak seas from his perch on the heaving deck. His stare lifted to the truck of the violently arcing foremast, and as he saw the black shadow half hanging out of the lookout's barrel aloft, his arm outflung in a pointing gesture, he mentally conceded these hardy and bearded Norse whalers their adage: If you have never felt the weight of an Antarctic snorter, stiff with ice and sleet, south of Sixty—where the mammoth blue whale flings his spout—you have never been to sea. . . .

What the lookout had sighted Graham saw the next moment through the whipping scud as the *Finhval* churned to the crest of a curling graybeard: a smear of smoke against the sullen sky and a black foam-spattered hull beneath. It could not be either of the company's two other whale-chasers, for they hunted far apart. And meeting a ship in those forbidden wastes could mean but one thing; a whale-hunter or—

Nelson Graham stiffened suddenly and clutched the jackstay with both fists. Kwal der Pappen, the Dutch whale pirate! Nelson had not thought they would cross the outlaw's wake so soon. But as the *Finhval's* course was altered

# Whale Wolf

By JACLUND MARMUR

Illustrated by L. R. Gustavson

slightly so that the two craft would pass within a stone's throw of each other, a faint smile twitched the corners of Graham's lips. A hundred-odd years of proud Nantucket blood had had its part in the molding of his gaunt six-foot frame. He had waited eagerly for this first meeting ever since the resident manager of the company in Hull had sent him off on his enigmatic mission by telling him in an offhand but decidedly meaningful way that there was only one way to secure justice south of Sixty: only one way—and there was no appeal.

FROM inside the wheelhouse, Graham heard the low growl of the harpooner as he turned over the helm to a seaman. A moment later Ivar Skantarp joined young Graham on the narrow little bridge. His abrupt appearance was typical of his character and his mental attitude. Ivar never kept out of the sight of an enemy or shirked a responsibility.

He stood in absolute silence beside the youthful company man, swaying instinctively to the crazy motion of the whale-chaser in a marvel of balance, staring with unblinking eyes into the distance as the two hulls wallowed closer. He was a man well over fifty, with gray at his temples and glittering beads of ice on the white beard he never cut during the whale season. The skin of his face was brown and grooved as old saddle-leather and his brilliant blue eyes, intricately webbed at their corners from much boisterous laughter, were always half closed as are the eyes of men intent ever on distant horizons. Short, sturdy, of amazing strength and vitality, he seemed carved from a block of solid granite; a Norse whaler of the Antarctic fishery; a warm, lovable, vital old man beneath the hard outer crust. He said nothing, for the ice and the sea are breeders of silence. Nelson Graham looked at him quickly: then his stare

darted back across the stretch of frothing sea that narrowed steadily as the two whale-chasers came together.

"Do we meet Kwal der Pappen soon?" he asked.

Ivar merely grunted and moved out against the wing of the bridge. Graham surveyed the approaching craft carefully, reading her name, *Nitigo*, under the fore-castle bulwark just aft of the open bow rails where the forerunner line of her decrepit harpoon gun lay coiled and secured. Ill-found, the rusted craft bounced on the seas like a dead turtle, half a dozen Patagonian savages lining the boiling rail amidships like a heathen pirate crew prepared for boarding a merchantman. On her dirty bridge a swarthy giant stood waving his arms, bared teeth glistening in a black stubble of beard, the ear flaps and tapes of his fur hat flying in the wind on either side of his square fleshy head. As the two craft neared, the *Nitigo* floundered about on her heel and kept abeam of the driving *Finhval*. The figure on her bridge let off his arm-flailing suddenly and roared:

"*Wilkommen, Ivar!*" He boomed hoarse laughter, and his crew of Patagonians at the rail beneath him looked up at their skipper and echoed his mirth in stupid soundless grins. "Welcome to the whale grounds!"

"*Farn!*" Skantarp spat calmly over the side and uttered the typical Norse oath in a low bass growl. The gesture expressed perfectly his reticence, his opinion, and his determination. There was need for no other word. Graham, balancing himself beside the veteran harpooner, said nothing.

KWAL DER PAPPEN, a shaggy brute perched on a shaggier ship, dropped both fists to the rail.

"Is dat an answer to a friendly welcome?" he demanded throatily. "In such a bitter sea as dis? You speak little,

hey? I hear of dat before. Ivar Skantarp! Ivar, the whale-killer! I wish you good hunting!"

Skantarp's two fists tensed suddenly where they clutched the stay. His massive chest expanded fully with the angry hiss of his breathing.

"*Farn!*" he spat out again, and turned his back to the sea so that Graham saw the welted lines of his rigid throat cords.

Kwal der Pappen's laughter rumbled again like far-off thunder, cut short by a barked order. The *Finhval* drove ahead. Her lookout aloft shook his fist in rage at the *Nitigo* falling away astern before he turned his face to the bitter gale, searching the seas again for a whale.

Nelson Graham nodded his head toward the *Nitigo* disappearing in a flurry of snow.

"He follows like a shark's pilot-fish. Hey, Mr. Skantarp? But why *you?*"

"He knows where hunting is best." Ivar said this without arrogance, but calmly as a simple statement of fact: then he added with his swift flashing smile, "—And I smash his nose two year ago in Grytvik!"

He made to move away. Graham touched his arm.

"How can he—" he started to ask, but Ivar stopped short and looked sharply at him.

There was a level icy sheen in that look, for Skantarp knew the question and he knew the answer. He looked at the youngster in brutal appraisal, as a veteran looks at a neophyte in whom qualities must be found which have not yet been proved. Then of a sudden the broad nostrils of his nose quivered and he shook the snow from his beard with a downward swoop of one immense hand.

"Because there is no law south of Fifty," he said calmly, "and below Cape Stiff, no God!" Then he disappeared inside the wheelhouse.

LEFT alone, young Graham stared aft where the *Nitigo* was already little more than a shadow lost in hazy distance. He had meant to ask old Ivar how it was that this Kwal der Pappen, brutal spawn of the Antarctic, had successfully pirated the whale-fishery season after season with impunity. A man couldn't tuck a monstrous mammal, ranging from forty to upwards of eighty tons, in an odd pocket of his jacket! And he'd had his answer: "There is no law south of Fifty: and below Cape Stiff, no God!" It fitted in perfectly with the

enigmatic advice of the resident manager in Hull.

Young Graham's lips turned upward again in his whimsical smile. He had tired of the Greenland coast. He wanted to become an Antarctic whaleman, accepted as such in that hard fraternity of the fishery. New scenes, new stirrings of adventure, new dangers. Well, here was something to stir his blood! No doubt he would discover soon enough the meaning of the decrepit *Nitigo*, her bull-like master, and his piratical crew.

WHAT Nelson knew of der Pappen the whale wolf, was a mixture of myth and truth, brought north in brutal tales by the grizzled veterans of the whale-hunt. The Dutchman had transformed an old merchant tramp steamer into a factory ship for boiling down whale blubber, its carcass and its bones, into the various grades of fine oil and fertilizer. This ship lay anchored now, Graham had no doubt, in some unknown iceberg cove, waiting for the gleanings of her wolf's breed. Der Pappen reasoned, logically enough, that to augment his own meager catch it was easier and less expensive to pirate whales than to equip expensive chasers for the hunt. The gain was greater, the risk and the need for skill much less.

Nelson, one hand on the handrail of the bridge ladder, was still ruminating upon the sudden meeting with the Dutchman, when a shrill excited cry from the lookout froze him in his tracks.

"*Da er blaast! Er blaast!*"

His head snapped up. Aloft, the lookout hung far out of his dancing barrel, one arm outflung, outlined sharp and black against the windy sky as he repeated again his long-drawn scream:

"*Blaast! Er blaast!*"

Instantly every hand on the *Finhval* sprang to the deck. Graham followed the pointing gesture, straining for first sight of the leviathan. A moment later he spotted it, for his training on the northern cruising-grounds had not been in vain. Mingling with the flying spindrift above the sea's face and marked against the lowering horizon like a delicate plume, he saw the bushy jet of vapor. Once, then an interval, then again. Then a faint black whir as flukes upended in the distance and the monster sounded the icy depths. Exactly what distinguishes the species, not even the grayest veteran of the whale-hunt can put into words. The size of the blow,

how it blows, and the duration of the blowing, is the nearest approach to an explanation. It is a matter of instinct and training. Graham breathed softly through set lips:

"A finback! And a big brute."

The *Finkval* plunged in pursuit. Ivar Skantarp came charging out of the wheelhouse for the deck. The transformation of the man was startling. His little blue eyes burned. His leathery face was hard as rock and his breathing hissed sharply. The mask of calm sobriety fell from him like a discarded cloak. His stocky powerful frame became the hunter incarnate, a fighting man, a throwback to wild brine-blooded ancestors. As he raced for the gun platform far forward in the open bows—he was surprisingly agile for so heavy a man—two sailors barred his path. Without swerving to either the right or the left, Ivar swept them into the scuppers with both hands and lumbered on. They staggered upright in his wake, grinning at each other. They knew him—Ivar the whale-killer! His normally restrained voice roared:

"*Full fahrt! Harter over!*"

The *Finkval* rolled rails under and leaped ahead. Every man aboard caught the contagious excitement of their leader, seeming to anticipate his every order. Graham sprang to the boiling main deck and took up his position beside the huge braking engine that controlled the 240-fathom whale-line. In the very eyes of the chaser, Ivar stood to his gun on the reeling platform, bent half over at the waist as he conned the slashing seas.

**T**HE huge finback rose in due time, green seas sliding from its flanks, a plume of vapor at its head. It was an old bull that had evidently felt the cruel chase before. With a preliminary smack of mighty flukes it boiled ahead, making in the direction of the faint line of reefs on the horizon that marked the bleak crags of Anvers Island.

Skantarp, still bent intently over the Svend Foyn harpoon gun, gestured with his arms, now this way, now that, without ever once taking his eyes from his prey as he guided the chase. In the little wheelhouse the helmsman kept his stare glued on that humped-over figure sheeted in spray in the open bows of the *Finkval*. The whale sounded again but rose almost at once, for he had had no time to finish his series of blows. The chaser gained. At forty yards Ivar's great fists came down on the gun brace.



Graham's left fist snapped out in a short jab that caught the Dutchman in the midriff, and his right crossed to the jaw. Der Pappen staggered backward with the force of the two blows.

It moved in a short arc on its swivel, and swift as a flash, he fired. The report roared like thunder and the forerunner rope, coiled just beneath the gun, snaked out from the ship.

It was a difficult shot: an astonishing thing happened. The harpoon, instead of entering the whale, glanced off his flank, springing into the air like a rocket; and the grenade tip exploded in the air.

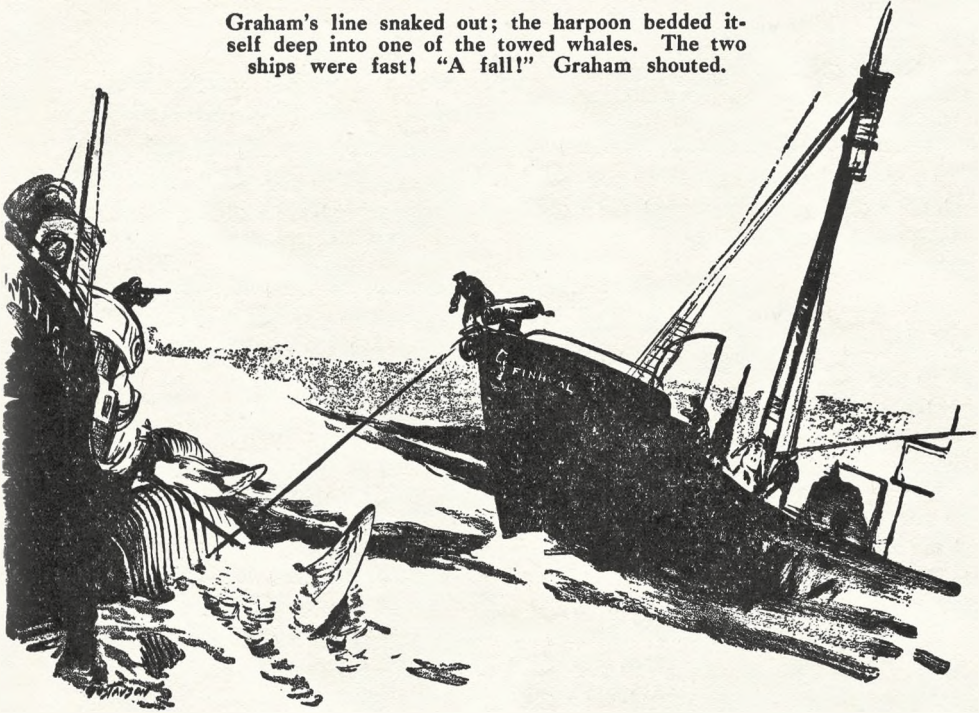
Skantarp started upright, lifting both clenched fists above his head.

"A thousand devils!" he shrieked.

Then, whirling about, apparently oblivious to everything and everyone about him, he lurched across the deck and sought out his cubicle cabin below. The men stood aghast for an instant at the unexpectedness of the freak shot. That the harpooner should forsake the hunt after a miss did not surprise them. It is a traditional code of Antarctic fishery. Ivar Skantarp missed but seldom, and what he thought of down there in his solitude no one knew.

The whale meanwhile tore straight for Anvers Island reef. Nelson Graham took in the situation at a glance. If the leviathan was to be captured it must be made fast to, before crossing that reef. His blood set up a tingling in his fingertips and a loud pounding at his temples. What he did was done in the fever heat

Graham's line snaked out; the harpoon bedded itself deep into one of the towed whales. The two ships were fast! "A fall!" Graham shouted.



of the whale-chase. He had no right to take charge, despite his semi-official capacity aboard. But he felt an old fever in his blood and answered blindly to it—the heritage of his Nantucket forbears. Without quite realizing how he got there, Graham found he had leaped in one spring to the gun platform.

"Load!" He cried the order harshly, his lean face hard and set. "Reload!"

Two sailors sprang up after him. A linen bag of gunpowder was rammed down the muzzle, followed by a few handfuls of cotton waste and oakum. Then a round flat piece of rubber that fitted the gun-bore snugly went home to serve as wadding and to prevent injury and bending of the iron by the violence of the exploding gunpowder. The hundred-pound harpoon followed, barbed with prongs that expand laterally once imbedded in the flesh of the whale. At the head of this harpoon was the killing grenade with its contact detonator. From the slotted shaft of the harpoon the twisted wire threaded its way to meet the hempen forerunner swiftly re-coiled below the gun platform. The forerunner was overhauled by expert hands and made fast again to the whale-line proper, two hundred and forty fathoms of finest manila that ran under rollers beneath the gun platform, up through the tackle of the accumulator blocks on the foremast, then down to the drums of the

brake winches and into the locker below decks.

All this was done in a matter of moments, and Graham whirled about to face the tumbling seas. The whale, sorely pressed, drove with less energy toward the foaming teeth of the reef. He had evidently used that barrier of rock and exploding surf before as a refuge and there was little time to be lost. Graham, his back toward the wheelhouse, his arms wildly gesturing, guided the chase. The *Finhval* heeled over, then straightened as she found her pace again, and went crashing through the icy seas. Sheathed in spray and flying scud, a fierce flame of exultation burned every other thought from young Nelson's mind. He had become a whaleman, every fiber of him intent on the hunt of his prey.

Swiftly he took aim, sensing even as he did so the dangerous proximity of the surf-lashed reef. The gun roared: the hemp line sang as it uncoiled: the harpoon found its mark.

"A fall!" Graham bellowed. "A fall!"

Whirling and coming upright, he gestured savagely downward with both arms. The engines of the *Finhval* stopped. The men at the brake winches yelled excitedly as they sprang to the throttles. The accumulator tackle now came into action. Its powerful springs took up at once the terrific strain of the struck whale, the manila ropes smoking



up the blocks, the springs beneath automatically hauling and releasing slack as the tension slackened or increased with the monster's struggles, the winches racing to keep the line ever taut.

THE *Finhval's* engines fought now for sternway to assist in checking the mad plunge onward of the stricken whale. Yet in spite of her weight and her reversed engine the craft was dragged inexorably forward.

"A powerful bull!" Graham roared: and the Norsemen shouted fiercely.

"Cut! Cut!" some one shrieked, for the whale still hauled the little *Finhval* toward the jagged rocks. "Cut! He sounds for the reef!"

"No! No! My whale!" Graham answered in a shriek. "First blood!" He hurled the sailor aside. "'Vast all!"

The winch brakes locked. The engines stopped. The whale-line sent up tendrils of smoke with the terrific strain. The great springs of the accumulator tackle were exerted to their utmost. But slowly the terrific pressure told on the wounded mammoth; still, at his depth, he struggled. The bows of the little chaser dipped deep into the icy sea, her stern rising almost perpendicularly clear of the water. The men waited with bated breath. Then suddenly the *Finhval's* counter slapped the water again with a terrific smash. She shuddered through every beam of her; but ahead, slowly the monster gyrated upward like a great blue island rising from the sea. Washing the surface, the huge beast belched blood-red froth from his spout.

Young Nelson Graham was fast to his first Antarctic whale—not half a league from a bleak and rock-bound lee reef!

It was not until then that he realized fully what had happened and what he had done. He stood on the gun platform, panting. He noticed then for the first time that Ivar Skantarp, aroused by the wild familiar commotion, had come unnoticed on deck. He stood in the *Finhval's* waist, eying the scene with a puzzled quizzical expression in his half-shut blue eyes. Graham sprang to the deck and swayed up to him.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Skantarp. I had no right to—"

Ivar silenced him with a gesture.

"A whale," he growled shortly, "is a whale. It is good luck to make fast to the first sighted fish of the season. See to it your first blood reaches the blubber pots!"

And he went straight forward with his lumbering stride to supervise the lancing of the finback and the insertion of the air hose. The dead leviathan was soon pumped up to keep it afloat, the ends of the mighty flukes severed and the chain cables secured. With the carcass fast at the *Finhval's* bows, the lookout climbed once more to his perch at the fore-truck and the little whale-chaser again took up her hunt. The gale was making steadily; Kwal der Pappen and the whale-wolf's chaser, the *Nitigo*, were nowhere in sight in the narrow circle of visibility.

An hour later Graham was startled again by that shrill, excited long-drawn call of the chase:

"*Er blaast! Er blaast! Da er blaast!*"

Once again he saw a strong man go berserk as the *Finhval* made after a pod of blue whales. Skantarp hunted grimly and fiercely; this time the harpoon went straight and true. . . . Three times that day Ivar's wild sea spirit infused the crew of the whale-hunter. Toward night-fall four carcasses were chained to the chaser's bows, and she turned her eyes into the teeth of the gale with Antvers Island on her lee.

WITH the coming of dark the gale gained strength. Monstrous seas, the whole sweep of the Antarctic barrier ice behind their rearing crests, thundered upon the ship. The wind howled like a million infuriated demons. A new danger threatened the little chaser: With each violent surge and heave of the ship the whales lashed at her bows swung outward; then, as the *Finhval* dived into the sickening trough, the massive weight of the carcasses came crashing against her sides with the force of battering-rams. With that drag of dead weight, the *Finhval* made leeway steadily; astern, the seas exploded against the reef.

Graham kept the watch with Ivar Skantarp. The harpooner had lapsed into silence. Killing a whale was one thing; bringing it safely through that hell to the factory ship was another!

The watches changed in silence. Each man, relieving the helm, looked at Skantarp's frigid features with a mute question in his eye. But they said nothing, and it is doubtful if the harpooner so much as saw them. Until four bells in the mid-watch he held on like grim death, wincing perceptibly each time the impact of the dead whales sent convulsive shudders through the *Finhval's* timbers. Then he gave the only order possible:

"Waif the whales and cast loose!"

It is the last resort of the whaler—freeing the catch. Gloomy and somber, he supervised the dangerous job. A waif pole with the company's brand on its shaft and the company pennant fast to its peak to mark the ownership of the dead mammals was rammed into each carcass. Then the precious catch was set adrift. Skantarp, a stocky broad-shouldered figure obscured in the semi-darkness by sheeting spray, watched the hulks disappear into the wild night; then he climbed stolidly back to the bridge.

But, relieved of their weight, the *Finhval* made better weather of it, shouldering aside the Antarctic graybeards and fighting her way desperately clear of the thundering reef. For twenty-four hours the gale raged, and when the dismal gray light of the second day dawned it revealed a wilderness of frothing sea with steel blue icebergs driving before the wind. Tattered scud flew dizzily overhead. There was nothing anywhere but ice, a soiled and ragged sky, and the tumble of bitter seas. But the gale had lost its raucous boom, and with the first eerie light Ivar ordered the helm up and sent the *Finhval* driving before the wind in search of his whales.

IT was old Skantarp, haggard-eyed and tense, who first sighted the black smudge of smoke on the horizon, and he flung up his arm toward it.

"The whale wolf is after his carrion!" he spat out harshly.

Graham, beside him on the tossing bridge, was puzzled, but he kept his silence. The *Finhval* tore on, lifting the stranger's hull quickly. A waif pole drifted by in the moderating sea and young Nelson, spying the bedraggled pennant, began to understand. All hands lined the *Finhval's* rails, staring across the narrowing water, for they knew well enough what to expect.

The rust-patched side of the *Nitigo* was plainly apparent now, her Patagonian savages busily engaged in making fast to her ice-encrusted bows the last of four bloated whale carcasses. Kwal der Pappen himself stood in the bridge wing, a grounded rifle at his heel, waiting in a grinning calm as Ivar maneuvered the *Finhval* within hailing distance. The two craft bounced and tossed not a quarter-mile apart. Drift ice loomed to the westward. The wind came in icy gusts. Overhead the sky showed pools of blue. Ivar dashed the spray from his beard

with that characteristic downward swoop of his right paw.

"How now, Skantarp! No whales?" the Dutchman roared without shifting his pose. "Can Ivar not hunt except in a dead calm?"

"When you pirate a waifed fish, der Pappen," Skantarp bellowed in his lion's voice, "next time make sure to draw the harpoon! I recognize my iron in the blubber. Cast off from my fish!"

THE Dutchman threw back his head; his shaggy jowls shook with mirth.

"So den! The iron marks him yours?" he boomed. "Does Ivar the whale-killer never lose a fish once his harpoon touches its skin?"

"Never!" the harpooner roared in response. Then with a sidelong glance at young Graham beside him that was startling in its swiftness, he added hoarsely: "Never—once my iron is fast!"

"And what you want now?"

"Cast off from my catch!"

"A whale belongs to the man who is fast to it! *Verstanden?*"

"Not a waifed fish, you wolfish black-guard!"

"The whales are mine!"

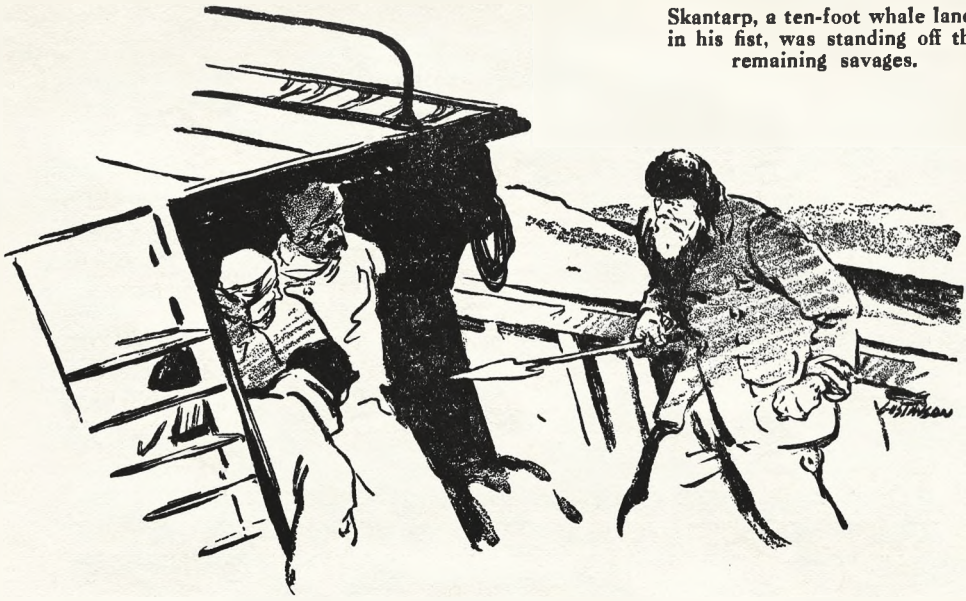
"You lie!"

"Then come and take them, Ivar!" der Pappen bellowed tauntingly. "Even with four whales atow, I show you my heels into an ice channel you dare not follow!"

A moment of silence followed aboard the *Finhval*. This was what Ivar had feared when he held on so grimly to his dangerous tow during the fury of the gale before casting the fish adrift. The Dutchman could be heard snarling an order. The *Nitigo's* screw lashed the sea to foam in her wake. Her savage crew stood in her waist, a line of brown heathenish faces marked by glittering grinning teeth.

Ivar Skantarp stood without stirring for the fraction of an instant, his two great knobby fists clenched, the cords of his wrinkled neck rigid, his little blue eyes ablaze. Beneath him, on the deck, a sailor uttered a terrible oath and the sound of that single Norse word ignited the flame of the old harpooner's rage.

"*Farn!*" he bellowed. "By God, and I will!" He whirled like a flash on young Nelson who had been standing beside him watching the tense drama in silence. "You!" Skantarp grated at him. "You have shown us you can kill the whale! Can you—" He broke off, his wrinkled old face aflame with the intensity of his



Skantarp, a ten-foot whale lance in his fist, was standing off the remaining savages.

emotion. "You," he demanded violently, "—have you a stomach for a fight?"

Graham's face lit up with a swift grin. "Try me!" he snapped.

Ivar spun about. Below him on the main deck the men stood with faces uplifted to his.

"Do we stand here like lobster-fishers?" he roared. "Helmsman! Inside there! *Harter over! Full fahrt!*"

The *Finhval* fought ahead in a churn of foam, rolling her rails under as she spun about on her squat counter. Graham clutched the old harpooner's forearm. The thrill of the chase was on him—a tingling was in his fingertips and loud pounding at his temples.

"Bring her abeam, Skantarp," he barked. "Bring her abeam, then drive her in. The gun post is mine! It was my first blood!" He straightened up and leaped in one spring for the main-deck. As he raced forward he swung his arm toward the Dutchman's ship as a lookout would toward the spout of a big bull whale. "*Er blaast!*" he cried at the top of his lungs. "*Da er blaast!*"

His wild call found an answer in the hearts of the men. Gnarled hands instinctively sought the sheathed knife each one of them carries by a lanyard about his throat. Graham made the gun platform and ripped off the spray-canvas. On the bridge Ivar Skantarp, hearing that familiar hail that could mean but one thing, and seeing the unmistakable act of the youngster, sprang inside the wheelhouse. His cracked old face was wreathed in a queer grin, for he

understood at once what Graham intended to do. Young Nelson on the gun platform, old Ivar at the helm—for the hunt of the whale wolf!

They knew, every man on the throbbing deck of the *Finhval*, that those four whales were theirs by right of capture. They knew also that there was but one way to reclaim them: but to board the *Nitigo*, even though she towed the dead weight of four monstrous and valuable sea beasts, was no child's play.

Skantarp brought the *Finhval* close in, to windward of the Dutchman. Both ships belched dense smoke that streamed fanwise to leeward, low over the heaving sea. To make fast for boarding seemed an utter impossibility, but unless this were done Kwal der Pappen could laugh in his beard, for the whales were his. Beam to beam, less than a quarter-mile apart, Ivar held his course. Unhampered as she was by any tow, the *Finhval* crept ahead of Kwal der Pappen's pirate craft. The old Norse harpooner's head jutted out of the open wheelhouse window, his strong heavy features set and hard. His breath hissed sharply with each intake and expiration as he gauged the distance and the speed of the two craft. Suddenly he whirled the wheel-spokes to a blur. The *Finhval* spun on her heel, lifting green seas across her forward deck with the violent change of course. At right angles now—the forward speed of the *Nitigo* compensated for expertly by the distance the *Finhval* had drawn ahead before the maneuver—the whale-chaser drove straight for the whale wolf's beam.

Crouched low over the Svend Foyn gun in the bows, Graham shot a swift look back over his shoulder toward Skantarp in the wheelhouse. A broad grin lined young Nelson's dripping face. Ivar knew what he was about! Turning, he reached far forward and unscrewed the detonator from the tip of the heavy harpoon jutting from the muzzle of the gun. He did not want the grenade to explode. Then, bent half over at the waist, the flying spray sheeting over him, he stared intently ahead. Closer and closer the two chasers plunged. A hundred yards, fifty yards, forty— Graham depressed the gun slightly on its swivel, took a swift careful aim, and fired.

A roar of dismay and surprise went up from the deck of the whale wolf. Graham's line snaked out. The harpoon, hurtling through the intervening space like an arrow of light, bedded itself deep and fast into the fleshy part of one of the towed whales, just aft of the tail cable that made it fast to the *Nitigo's* bows. The two ships were fast!

"A fall!" Graham shouted, coming up-right on the gun platform. "A fall!"

He waved his arms in signal toward the wheelhouse. Ivar instantly stopped the *Finhval's* engines and sent them astern to check her from overrunning the prey. The men at the brake winches flung wide the valves. The stout whale-line went taut as wire, shuddering in the air and sending drops of spray dancing from it with the strain. The entire weight of the *Finhval* was added to that of the carcasses the *Nitigo* towed. In vain her screw flailed the water to fury.

"Stand by the slack!" Ivar bellowed from the wheelhouse. "I come ahead!"

The crack of der Pappen's rifle sounded: the lead ball bedded into the wood of the pilot-house. The men on the *Finhval* ducked under the bulwarks for shelter, but Ivar, as if he had heard neither the report nor the sound of the striking lead, yanked the little telegraph viciously to slow ahead.

"Cut! Cut that line, you fools!" der Pappen was bellowing to his terrified savages, who expected to see their craft cut in two under their very feet.

**B**UT the *Finhval's* sharp bows had already met the huge bulk of the whale that separated it from the iron sides of the *Nitigo*. The sharp nose buried deep in the blubber and flesh, heeling the whale wolf's craft far over on her side. There Ivar held her, his en-

gines turning just enough to keep the two vessels as if glued together. The next moment he came out of the wheelhouse and sprang heavily to the deck.

At the head of the Norse crew, Graham meanwhile had led the way, boarding to the *Nitigo's* low deck from the *Finhval's* gun platform.

"Stay for'ard, Skantarp!" he roared. "For'ard and unleash the cables!"

He raced for the bridge. Kwal der Pappen's shaggy head towered high above him, and the weaving muzzle of his ancient rifle. Nelson dropped to the deck just as the gun roared; the ball whistled over his head. Instantly he leaped to his feet again and took the bridge ladder in two bounds. Close in, der Pappen's weapon was useless now. Graham's left fist snapped out in a short jab that caught the Dutchman in the midriff. His right crossed to the jaw, all his lean gaunt weight behind the blow. So sudden and unexpected had been the *Finhval's* maneuver and the harpooning of the dead towed whale to make fast the two ships for the subsequent boarding of the *Nitigo*, that the actual fighting was over almost before it had begun.

**D**ER PAPPEN staggered backward drunkenly with the force of the two blows. His rifle dropped from his nerveless fingers, and glassy-eyed, he crashed through the forward bridge rail to the deck beneath. Here he lay unconscious.

Nelson lunged at once for the rifle, came upright, and took in the scene at a glance. On the afterdeck the Patagonians shrieked in sudden terror as three of Ivar's sailors made for them with bared knives. Forward, Skantarp stood with a ten-foot whale lance balanced in his fist, standing off the remaining savages. Nelson brandished his rifle.

"Stand clear!" he shouted from his point of vantage on the bridge. Then to Ivar's men: "For'ard all! Loose the tow cables!"

The *Finhval's* sailors looked up at him, grinning. Kwal der Pappen's men cowered against the bulwark. With Graham on the bridge and Skantarp on the foredeck, the *Nitigo's* crew had little stomach left for the fight. Kwal der Pappen himself still lay where he had fallen, moaning dully.

Swiftly the chains that secured the dead whales were passed from one bow to the other until all were fast to the *Finhval's* fore bitts. This done, the men backed off for the deck of their own

craft, Graham and Skantarp going last. Ivar severed the singing harpoon line with a hack of his lance. The *Finhval's* engine stopped, then went astern. Toward the last the pressure of her bows, with the dead carcass for a mammoth collision mat, alone had kept the two craft together. The moment that pressure was released, the two vessels drifted rapidly apart.

"Good hunting to you, Kwal der Pappen!" Ivar yelled for the last time.

As he boomed out the words he pitched his whale lance and hurled it across the widening water. It fell short with a splash. Skantarp and Graham stumped up to the bridge. The *Finhval* churned ahead, turning her bows to the eastward and Melchior Island, with her reclaimed catch. Three whales she towed with their flukes fast to her bitts and the fourth, with the chaser's cutwater still bedded deep in its side, washed the water loudly as the little *Finhval*, like a hammer-headed shark, rolled her way toward her factory ship.

Once Graham looked back, just before they lost sight of the *Nitigo*, already low on the horizon. He thought he made out the black speck of a man on her bridge, a man who shook impotent fists across the icy seas. He touched Skantarp's arm and passed the binoculars to the old harpooner. Ivar looked, then lowered the glasses with no more than a grunt. A change had come over him. The fever of the hunt was gone. He was stolid again, silent, almost morose.

"I guess Kwal der Pappen can limp back to his outlaw factory ship empty-handed. We've clipped the whale wolf's tail, Skantarp," Graham said soberly.

The old Norseman grunted again, then looked sharply up at the tall youth.

"Say Ivar, not Skantarp," he growled harshly, as if the words were hard to force out. "Your name is Nelson Graham," he went on after a pause, without ever taking his little blue eyes from the flattening sea. "I call you Nels," he announced simply. "You would make a good Norseman."

He lumbered toward the wheelhouse door and disappeared.

LATE that evening they steamed into the still water of the iceberg harbor where the mother ship waited at anchor for the catch of her brood of three chasers. The little *Finhval* set up a shrill blowing of her whistle to announce the arrival of whale meat for the boiling-

pots: and the factory ship answered with deep-throated blaers that echoed thunderously from the steel-blue ice walls, announcing the fact that Ivar's catch was the first of the season.

The little whale-chaser came alongside like a small tug making fast to a giant ocean liner. Grizzled faces peered down at them from the rail as Graham followed Ivar up the ladder. There would be a short respite for them now while the *Finhval's* whales were taken to the flensing stages and her coal-bunkers replenished; then out again for the hunt, for the season is short, and there is time enough for rest when the toil is done.

THE master of the factory ship met them at the head of the ladder.

"First blood, Ivar!" he announced in a loud hoarse bass. "First blood of the season is yours—as always. You are a lucky man, Ivar."

Skantarp grunted, remembered, and stopped short.

"No," he growled. "First blood," and he jerked a thick thumb toward Graham, "—first blood is his!"

The master turned on Nelson with brows uplifted in disbelief.

"And how do you like the Antarctic fishery?" he asked with a smile, thinking it some joke of Ivar's.

Graham grinned, but before he could answer Skantarp cut in angrily.

"You do not ask such stupid questions of a whaleman! Come below, Nels." He moved off grimly. "A spot of rum—and a little sleep. There's little enough time."

"Do you run your whales down now, Ivar, instead of using the harpoon?" the master shouted jovially after him.

Ivar did not so much as turn his head. Graham followed him below.

A half hour later, before he dropped off into exhausted sleep in the luxury of a bunk over smooth still water instead of the interminable crazy motion of the hunting whale-chaser, Nelson was still grinning vaguely to himself. In that delicious moment before unconsciousness overtook him, young Nelson Graham knew only that they had met the whale wolf and beaten him on his own ground. Clearly, the words of Ivar came to him: "There is no law south of Fifty; and below Cape Stiff, no God."

The Norse harpooner had offered him the greatest tribute possible from such a hard-bitten old sea dog: He was accepted as one of them. It was an honor to be called a whaleman, by Ivar Skantarp!

# Gangway for Justice

By ARTHUR K. AKERS

**S**KITTISHLY "Bugwine" Breck, the vice-president of the Columbus Collins detective agency (for Colored) stalked his dingy place of employment. With Columbus freshly critical of a boy's brains as he was, a sawed-off sleuth had to watch his step.

Then Mr. Breck saw something that shot him behind a telephone-pole in one leap. Just ahead of him and angrily entering the agency, strode one "Steamboat" Burroughs. And knowing in time whom the husky Steamboat was mad at, might beat a whole peck of apples for keeping the doctor away from a boy's bedside.

Shortly afterward Bugwine's ears took up where his eyes had left off, as: "Quit hollerin', so I can hear you," sounded the impatient tones of Columbus Collins during a lull in the bellowings of Mr. Burroughs. "You say some crook is done set fire to your taxicab?"

"And burnt it down to a motorcycle—before I finishes payin' for it, too!" the rafters rang with Steamboat's confirmation. "Wid de boy what sell it to me fixin' to git his lawyer on me, he say, to collect de balance."

"So you craves for us to take de case for you, sniff out who burnt it up—"

"Sniff him out? *Sniff* him out? Boy, I craves for you to *fotch* him out whar I can git to him!" boomed Mr. Burroughs. "Aims to beat dat nigger to a foam!"

"Always gits our man," Columbus launched glibly into his standard sales-talk—then tripped mentally over what he had just glimpsed outside. "*Bugwine!*" rasped the ensuing summons.

Reluctantly Mr. Breck surrendered his shelter. What he had just heard was the call of a case: a tough one, or Mr. Collins wouldn't be delegating it to him. And—disappoint a client the size of Steamboat, and an assistant sleuth was liable to have to outrun him, to live!

"Uh—I is jest tellin' Mist' Burroughs here,"—his tall, derby-hatted superior greeted him with a scowl,—"how you always gits your man, Bugwine—from now on."

"Sho is," Mr. Breck tried to sound convincing in the face of his record.

Columbus cast a further withering glance over the overalls and twin left shoes of his aide; then to his client he purred: "Bugwine here's regular human bloodhound, Mist' Burroughs—so good he's got fleas!"

Mr. Breck wriggled uneasily.

"He smells 'em out whar others jest sniffs about," climaxed Columbus. "He's de head of de agency's arson squad—also de squad—"

"Aint care is he lap up a whole mess of arsenic for breakfast eve'y mornin'," interrupted the oversized Steamboat. "P'int is, can he fotch me de crook I craves?"

"Crook's in de bag now," assured Mr. Collins warmly. "—Wid Bugwine after him! Fuss you hears is old Bugwine bayin' on his trail. Bugwine, tune dem tonsils!"

"Five bucks in it for you when you delivers over dat arsenic boy to me," summarized Mr. Burroughs sourly. "And make haste 'bout it, too: I got to drive a truck to pay for dat dead-hoss taxi I aint got no more—and dat makes me sore. Sho messes up de landscape when I's sore!"

With the client gone, Mr. Breck watched his troubles resume. Due to a couple of bad intellectual breakdowns on his own part lately, his professional status was fast nearing the last round-up, with fumbling this newest case bound to be of no help to him. His business had him backed into a corner where he had to make good, or else—

"Why aint you try pourin' turkentine on 'em?" his chief sharply interrupted his forebodings.

"Pour turkentine on what?" Mr. Breck's eyes began to show a lot of white.

"Dem brains of yourn. Stimulate 'em about! Done got me all wore down, from havin' to have *all* de sense round de agency. All *you* does is gum up everything you touches! Why aint you git bright in de head like me? Now,

*With that human bloodhound Bugwine Breck baying on the trail, a dark criminal is brought to his doom.*

Illustrated by Everett Lowry

git bayin' on de spoor of dat burnt-up taxi, before I busts you one! Sniff out de motive and smell out de crook; else you gwine come in here some mornin' and find a *new* vice-president a-vicin' around here—wearin' dat duck-huntin' coat and two-billed hat of yourn!"

Sensing the skids behind his chief's tirade, Mr. Breck stirred up a dust-cloud with both feet, in the direction of the barbecue-stand of Mr. Bees'-knees Thompson, with the agency's bear-trap—that pinch-hit for handcuffs—clanking mournfully at his heels.

But today hanging around Mr. Thompson's center of news and nourishment for Baptist Hill proved of no benefit. Gossip was all of Steamboat's loss and none of who had caused it, or why. Motives were even scarcer than clues, in the comment. Not a suspect was in sight. Ever and anon the stricken Steamboat himself rumbled p-rst, morose at the wheel of the truck that sustained but humiliated him. Paying for a lost taxi by truck-driving was clearly a hair-shirt to him. Less and less to Mr. Breck did he resemble a client whom it would be well for a short sleuth to disappoint.

**WHEREUPON**, the only bright spot in Bugwine's business was the entry of Mr. Rhetoric Anderson. Since disbarment proceedings had never reached low enough to net Rhetoric, he was still a lawyer. More, he was a sort of left-handed client of the Collins agency, therefore he might possibly slip a sleuth a sandwich on account.

But, "Done e't your last eatin'-vittles off of me till you shows results," the plump barrister instantly answered the visible yearnings in Mr. Breck's frogged eyes. "As a business-getter you been worth about as much to me as a spare tire to a fish."

"Gallops noble to de accidents, seein' is us can sign up damage-suits clients for you eve'y time dey's a wreck on de Hill," defended Mr. Breck feebly.

"Yeah, you gallops; but dat other lawyer Fiscal Peters' new-business boy al-



ways gits dar first, in his car; gits de business for Fiscal while you is still tryin' to git dat old Spanish-war motorcycle of yourn *started*," derogated Mr. Anderson.

"Fixin' speedify de motorcycle: two more parts, and she's brand-new—"

"Git me a cash-client, and *maybe* I can see you wid a couple of hamburgers next time," weakened the attorney inadequately. "Right now, I wouldn't spend a nickel to phone de veterinary for you, was you sick—besides havin' important insurance-business to see about. Insurance somethin' you all time got to watch."

Rhetoric had hardly finished rebuffing Bugwine, moreover, when Bees'-knees was at his elbow, with: "If dey wa'n't so many dumb detectin'-boys hangin' round here, might be room for de *customers* to set down."

Mr. Breck didn't like the accent on "customers," and went out—to head for the detective agency, as a last resort.

Peering cautiously into its dim depths before entering, he beheld that which rocked him on his weakened foundations. Columbus must have meant that last threat, then, when he made it! No other interpretation could be placed upon what now greeted Bugwine's outraged optics. For within the agency a stranger, a tall, dark, sleek-looking stranger, was wriggling into the plaid duck-hunting coat that was Mr. Breck's newest pride; while from its nail on the wall Mr. Col-

lins was calmly lifting down the plaid helmet that on more professional occasions completed Bugwine's resemblance—in his own mind—to *Sherlock Holmes*.

The squawk of Mr. Breck at this sacrilege was rudely interrupted by the palm of his chief, clamping firmly over his features. Then, "Meet your successor, Bugwine," Columbus gestured with his free hand in the silence thus secured: "—Mist' Z. Clarence Wofford . . . de man wid de brains! Vice-president and chief detective, next to me, in de agency. Takes a smart man to hire a smart man—anybody can hire a dumb-bell like *you* is been."

Ex-vice-president Breck's eyes indicated suffocation complicated with indignation. "*Splwurrff!*" was his nearest approach to language as his chief's grip suddenly shifted to his neck.

"You," growled his superior at this, "is been promoted backwards—down to treasurer, and chauffeur on de motorcycle gwine to crimes."

"Treasurer of *what?*" Bugwine's despair mounted to a yelp.

"Big money, now dat us is got a scientific detective in de agency. Bein' smart enough to hire a sho-nough sleuth, in place of you, is whar I shows I got all de brains."

The splutterings of Mr. Breck changed back to a choke.

"I done warned you—and you kept right on bein' dumb in de konk. Look like hangin' round a smart man like me, even, aint catchin' wid you," Mr. Collins continued relentlessly. "So you's out, and Mist' Wofford, what uses his brains, is *in!*"

"Applies de deductive formula to all cases." Mr. Wofford flicked the ash elegantly from a cigar so classy it wore a band about it. "I solutions de most bafflin' by studyin' out de interchangeability of de correlated information."

**B**UGWINE'S mind flopped like a headless chicken before this onslaught. Mr. Collins gasped proudly as he came up for air. His had been the brain that thought up hiring Mr. Wofford—and now listen to him surpass his advertising!

"Ascendancy of de mind over de foot-steps, is first principle I employs in unravelin' de ramifications of de inscrutable," Z. Clarence further hung a couple of sleuths over the ropes.

"Next case what comes up, Mist' Wofford show you what he means," Columbus recovered sufficiently to side-

step what he didn't understand either. Only an intellectual giant, he glowed, could have hired such a sleuth as this!

Bubbles indicated where Mr. Breck had just gone down intellectually for the third time.

**I**N the midst of these confoundings, a case suddenly and fortuitously broke. There was no mistaking the sound—or its import to the Collins agency. From farther down Baptist Hill there clanged the crash of colliding cars, followed by the sounds of showering glass and the outcries of the wounded that ever distinguished traffic accidents in Ash Street.

Instantly Columbus leaped at its implications. "Dar your case!" he whirled upon the startled Mr. Wofford. "Step on it! Beat Fiscal Peters' salesman to de wreck! Git de damage-suits for Rhetoric Anderson, first! . . . Bugwine, rally wid de motorcycle! Stick Mist' Wofford in de side-car, and chauffeur! *Gangway for justice!*"

And gangway it was! Out of Hogan's Alley into Ash Street roared the ancient bathtub-type motorcycle, Bugwine at the handle-bars and Z. Clarence crammed in the side-car, hat clutched and garments streaming in their own wind.

Then, from afar—but not far enough—came a familiar if dreaded sound: the siren on the competitive car of Attorney Fiscal Peters' new-business department, also buzzard-bound for the wreck.

"*Step on it!*" urged Mr. Wofford harshly. "*Gangway for justice!*"

Bugwine stepped on it, with large foot and misgivings. Two hens and a duck fled from beneath his chariot-wheels. But still the wailing siren of Rhetoric's legal rival gained. Ash Street turned out ecstatic and *en masse* to view and cheer the race.

"Step on it, runt. . . . I can still see de ground!" hissed Z. Clarence from his careening side-car.

"All you seein' is whar de ground *wuz!*" Mr. Breck grazed a fire-hydrant in the interest of a sleeping dog.

"Says you! Step on—*Ow! Look out!*" But too late Mr. Wofford's warning split the air. Squarely across their path, in the street-intersection before them, rumbled a truck. Shriek of Bugwine and of brakes was cut off by the thunderous crash of skulls on steel, while the motorcycle shot east as the truck-driver shot west—to start rolling up his sleeves for combat while he was still in midair.



From the first wreck, still two blocks away, moreover, a gallery of the more foresighted began to gather at a gallop. This, their speed indicated, was going to be worth watching!

"Whar dey? Who dey? *Le' me at 'em!*" the bellowing truck-driver hit the pavement first, shouting as he struck. "Bustin' into my truck! T'arin' up my truck! Dentin' it all up! I say where—"

From underneath it, as yet too dazed for focusing either eye, emerged that which had been Mr. Wofford. Even had he still been himself, Mr. Wofford could not have recognized his own features at the moment, due to what the impact had just done to them. Beside him dragged Mr. Breck, looking more intelligent than usual, for being half-stunned.

But at first sight of them, an unholy joy seemed to seize the burly truckman. He swelled, towered, yearning with flexing fists. Through the mists that shrouded his mind, Mr. Breck took one fleeting look, and—too late—saw all! *En route* to a prospect, he had collided with a client! With one terror-shot squall of "*Steamboat!*" he whirled frenziedly to flee.

The berserk in Mr. Burroughs merely mounted, at this possibility of being cheated of his prey. With one swift movement he had the panicked Bugwine by the collar. With another he gathered in the unrecognizing and unrecognizable Z. Clarence.

Like one drowning, then, Mr. Breck caught an agonizing glimpse, not of his past but of his future—of himself attempting to explain this collision with a client to Columbus, in the event Steam-

boat let him live! Whereupon he despaired hideously and with both lungs, prior to the sudden *swish!* and stunning *clonk!* with which his granitelike skull met that of the scientific Z. Clarence as Mr. Burroughs brought both together murderously in midair.

Words followed through the fog. "Busted into my truck, huh!" Bugwine felt himself soaring again for a fresh fall. "While you's lookin' for who burnt up my taxi, you got to wreck my truck, huh!" *Wham!* Then Bugwine found himself in a further new rôle: that of a living club with which the mighty Steamboat was battering an over-scientific sleuth now too fuddled to flee. Mr. Wofford stuck around like a horse in a burning stable, and took what he could not dodge.

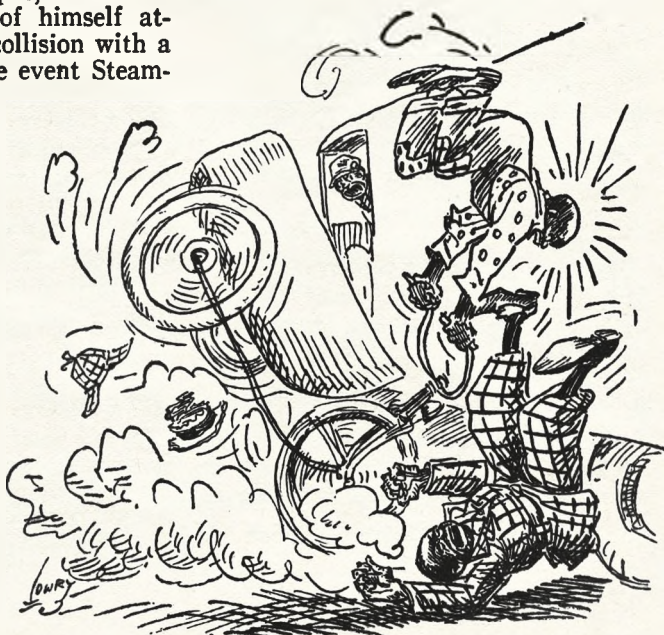
"And *next* time you runs into me," the satiated Steamboat at length cast two quivering forms from him, "I gits *rough!* Now *scram!* Me and de truck gwine."

Turtlelike, and after due passage of time, Mr. Breck lifted the collection of knots and bumps at one end of him that was his head, and looked about. Near by the stricken Mr. Wofford stirred, groaned, sat up, and began trying to pick flowers from the cement pavement.

"What hit me?" he at length sought pertinent data.

"Steamboat—"

Perplexity distorted a damaged countenance. "A steamboat? I thought it was a truck—"



Shriek of Bugwine and of brakes was cut off by the thunderous crash of skulls on steel, while the motorcycle shot east as the truck-driver shot west—to start rolling up his sleeves for combat while he was still in midair.

"Steamboat de name of de boy what drivin' de truck—"

"Says *huh?*" Revival seemed setting in with a rush—as if some new angle had suddenly struck Z. Clarence.

"Says us runnin' into Steamboat's truck aint suit him, and he beat you up—"

"*Us?* You was de engineer on dat motorcycle!"

"Steamboat aint play no fav'rites—"

"You mean tell me,"—Mr. Wofford grew menacing,—"*dat* a boy named Steamboat beat *me* up?"

"And how! Busted you plumb on down to your right size! After dat truck done mess up your face till your own mamma wouldn't know—*Ugh-oh!*"

AT this precise point Bugwine left off speech and began giving tongue like a deranged guinea-hen, before the impact of a new realization upon a brain which could stand no more. For the first time, the full facts in his case came home to horrify. In wrecking the agency's motorcycle and its standing with its client Steamboat, Bugwine had done far more—he had re-ruined all hope of restoring nourishing relations between Rhetoric and the agency. While Steamboat was mauling him and Clarence, they had *again* let Fiscal Peters' scout beat Rhetoric to a case—putting Mr. Breck irreparably in the position of having now gummed up two cases with a single brain. And this just when Columbus was already regarding him as a halfwit. All Bugwine had done was to prove that Columbus was right!

Yet for Mr. Breck, newly devastated by this discovery, there was no time now to sit and brood; for the previously impaired mind of Mr. Z. Clarence Wofford suddenly cleared sufficiently not only to function but to boil over. And, with a yowl, "*You's* at de bottom of all dis!" he leaped simultaneously to a conclusion and for Mr. Breck's throat.

But the injuries of both proved more painful than paralyzing. Gathering his legs under him like some stunted gazelle, Bugwine broke swiftly and noisily for Hogan's Alley, with Z. Clarence, hot at the blur of his heels, making it unanimous that *everybody* was mad at him now!

"*Ow-wow! Ow-wow!*" screeched Mr. Breck above the *slap-slap* of his speeding soles on the sidewalks. Too hard-pressed to turn, he shot past his familiar refuge beneath the old freight-depot—

to realize, appalled, that he was now in transit without destination, and with his mind in no shape to be called upon for one.

Louder, farther, higher, rang the despair of Bugwine at this—and at the further dismayed recognition that again his feet had betrayed him! They were taking him straight toward the Collins agency—the last place in the world for a sleuth to be who had all these new bunglings hung upon him! Ahead of him was his president, Columbus; behind him pounded his vice-president. Into the closing jaws of this trap, without hope of escape or recourse, Bugwine galloped now, in the midst of a new mess of his own making.

"*Now* what?" an astonished Columbus leaped aside, startled, as Mr. Wofford made a close second through the agency doorway.

In Z. Clarence, profanity fought with language to a deadlock.

"*Eeek!*" volunteered Bugwine even less helpfully from beneath the sink.

"This aint makin' no sense," decided Mr. Collins ominously. "What Bugwine done *now?*"

When wrath permitted, Mr. Wofford told him. At which recital new rage, like lightnings, leaped from crag to crag of Mr. Collins' contorted countenance as he contemplated the handiwork of his aide, the new high in idiocy just achieved by Detective Breck. "You means tell me,"—his restraint grew menacing as he dragged that wall-eyed little sleuth ignominiously from his sanctuary,—"*dat* you done ruint two clients wid one wreck?"

"*Ulp!*" shuddered Mr. Breck from the basement of his being.

"*Besides* wreckin' de agency's motorcycle against de truck," Mr. Wofford forgot nothing derogatory to Bugwine.

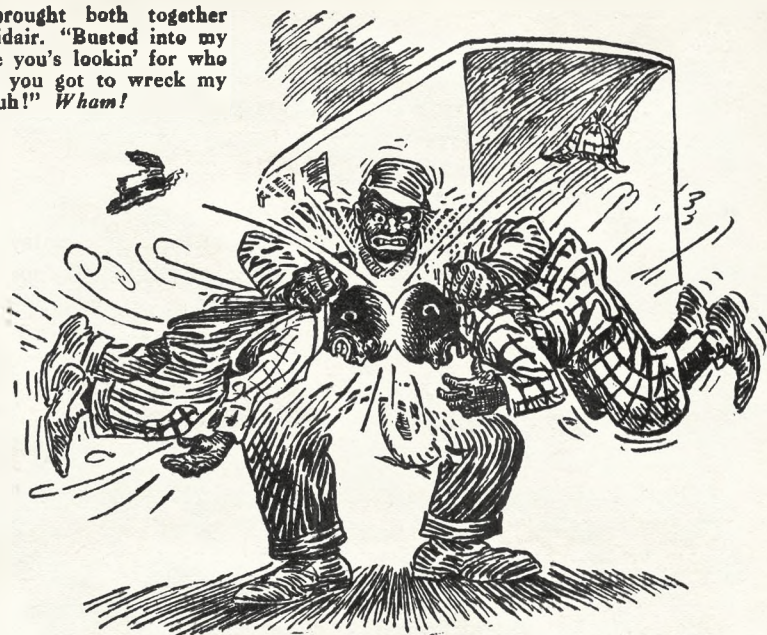
"**D**E motorcycle? De—de—you *wreck de motorcycle, too?*" Mr. Collins clutched wildly at his own neck for air.

Corroboratory moans distinguished Mr. Breck amid his own ruins.

"Here I promotes you back to treasurer, so your dumbness aint ruin de agency!" rang the sufferings of Mr. Collins, "and what is you do? Goes out and runs over de best client us *is* got, tryin' to git new business for de second best—and den, *den* you aint even git it! Makin' your score, one run, one hit, and two errors—"

"Three," corrected Mr. Wofford blood-

Mr. Burroughs brought both together murderously in midair. "Busted into my truck, huh! While you's lookin' for who burnt up my taxi, you got to wreck my truck, huh!" *Wham!*



thirstily; "he gits de hell beat out of me, too, on de side—for which I is fixin' to take him apart directly, and den lose four or five of his best pieces!"

Mr. Breck gazed dully upward at earthworms going by overhead, he was so low spiritually.

"Not *only*," raved Mr. Collins as he further regarded the fatal record, "is you got to have *twice* as much sense as you is now, to be half-witted; but it overworks *me* in de brains havin' to have all de sense dey is round de agency becaze you aint got enough to prime a stunned gnat's mind! Every time you does right, it's a accident—and it's No-Accident Week all de time wid you! All time gittin' your business in a jam, and den steppin' both dem left foots of yourn in de jam! Git scientific, why aint you!"

"Science is what does it," corroborated Mr. Wofford as Mr. Collins' breath failed him. "Which is different from dis here little louse on de loose gittin' my face ruint against a truck, and den gittin' beat up by de truck-driver, when I was so stunned I aint know him, and my face so busted-up against his truck my own mamma wouldn't have knowed me—*Arrh!*"

But in the latter roar a vice-president cheated himself of his prey. At it, with the squall of the damned, Mr. Breck broke wildly, to plunge headlong and heedless through the nearest window—which happened to be closed. . . .

In the fix he was in, Mr. Breck—blocks away—said to himself in transit, it was the job of a boy's feet to get his mind to a place where it could start functioning. This described the space underneath the old freight-depot perfectly. And this time Bugwine didn't miss it.

"*Whuff!* Sho is— *Oomph!*" In a cloud of his own dust, he brought up against a brick pillar in its darkness. Then, "Brains, do your stuff! Foots done brang you, now strut yourself! Columbus all time hollerin' round us aint got no sense, so now put up or shet up! Rally to de rescue."

FOR an hour there was only the wheeze and stir of Mr. Breck in the throes of thought. To end abruptly in a new sound—Mr. Breck cheering feebly for his own intellect.

"*Hot ziggity dawg!* *Whoo-oof!* Old brains done had pups!" pæaned a sleuth who saw light at last. "Couldn't be no brighter was you twins, and both of dem smart! What a boy in de jail-house do when he craves to square hisself? *Git a lawyer!* *Good* and guilty, he git hisself about *six* lawyers! Starts squarin' myself wid a lawyer now. Gits right wid Rhetoric, and he gits me right wid de rest! If Steamboat beats up Clarence, I gits Rhetoric to handle Clarence's case against Steamboat, for assault and damages. Knocks one bird off of four limbs: Rhetoric gits a case, Clarence gits cash—

damages, I gits couple hamburgers and starts standin' good wid Rhetoric, and de agency gits de credit—givin' Columbus somethin' to rub on his pain about me. . . . Everybody fixin' git happy but Steamboat. And he cain't git happy nohow, long as he's still bellerin' round about who burnt up his taxi. But, keep old brains boilin', and I's liable think up who done dat too—or find somebody to hang it on. Feets, git stirrin'! You's hooked on to de bottom end of a smart boy what's fixin' to prove it!"

Creeping forth as evening fell, Mr. Breck found further omen that times were mending: when he needed a messenger, one "Wormholes" Ford chanced past on his bicycle, and was approachable with respect to bearing a message to Rhetoric Anderson.

After which Bugwine repaired to the rendezvous named, the barbecue-stand of Bees'-knees. Fortunately no other members of the Columbus Collins agency were embarrassingly present there.

"Gimme couple of hamburgers on account," Mr. Breck assumed his best man-of-affairs manner and accent as the aproned Bees'-knees leaned skeptically toward him, muscular hands outspread on the scarred table-top.

"On *whose* account?"

"Rhetoric Anderson, de lawyer boy. He fixin' to owe me—"

"Yeah? Well, when *Rhetoric* say he fixin' to owe you'll be soon enough to talk about you doin' no eatin' *on account* in here! Between now and den two cash dimes—both bit by me, pussonal—is de price of hamburgers to you."

"All right—git horsy!" retorted Mr. Breck. "I sets here till he come, den takes de dimes and de business to Gladstone's fish-stand. I done sont for Rhetoric to meet me here—"

"De minner done sont for de whale, too—but he aint come yit!"

**B**UT here repartee was interrupted by arrivals that had the swift effect of lowering Bugwine in his chair until only worried eyes and forehead showed above the level of the table-top. Yet no sooner had these newcomers—none other than Columbus and the battered Z. Clarence Wofford, the one-man brain trust—settled themselves four tables away when there was again a stir at Bees'-knees' front and only entrance; and through it strode Attorney Rhetoric Anderson.

Picking out Bugwine at last among the diners, "You sont for me here?" the

suspicion that ever met Mr. Breck's enterprises bristled in the question. "I got whole gang of insurance-business to straighten out: cain't mess long wid short folks."

"Got a damage-suit for you to handle," placated Bugwine. "Boy gits busted up in a wreck wid a truck driv' by another boy what's got money you can git away from him for your client."

**R**HETORIC'S manner toward him improved four hundred per cent.

"Kind of too weak to talk now," horse-traded Mr. Breck, "but was I to build myself up wid couple of hamburgers—"

"A *couple* of hamburgers? It's a hold-up!" flared Mr. Anderson angrily. Then, perceiving that Bugwine held the whip-hand now, "All right, then, bleed me! —*Bees'-knees*, two hamburgers, snappy, for de stool-pigeon! *Bugwine*, git on wid it!"

"Well," Mr. Breck advanced information on account, "one of dem—de boy what got messed up by de truck-driver—is settin' over dar at de fourth table yander; wid Steamboat nor not even his own mamma able to know him, account what de truck done to his face."

"De jury will rem'dy dat. Go on."

"His name is Z. Clarence Wofford, de sci—"

But a startled Bugwine was destined not to finish. At the name, Rhetoric Anderson leaped wildly to his feet. Full-throated there burst from him a cry that still quivered horrid upon the smoky air—when pandemonium burst forth within the stand of Bees'-knees, pandemonium starting as an eminent attorney leaped three tables and kicked aside a fourth.

Again, while customers strove to climb the stovepipe and swung pre-evolutionarily from the stand's chandeliers, there rang above the uproar the call of an embattled barrister, the hunting-cry of Attorney Anderson; to be followed by the awful squallings of Z. Clarence Wofford as he went down beneath an inexplicable and unexpected onslaught.

From precarious perch atop a dish-cupboard, an all-but-gibbering Bugwine gazed down petrified upon his handiwork. Again his brain had betrayed him—this much was clear from the riot below—but how? Always, when he tried to help, hell broke loose in his sector!

High above all the mêlée now rose the voice of Mr. Anderson. A leg that he had plucked from a smashed table rose and fell too. Highest of all, even though



Again there rang above the uproar the call of an embattled barrister, followed by the awful squallings of Z. Clarence Wofford as he went down beneath an onslaught.

slightly muffled by his having his teeth sunk in the leg of Mr. Anderson, rose the outcries of Mr. Clarence Wofford beneath blows from the table-leg.

Yet of the language loosed by Rhetoric Bugwine still could make nothing. Disconnected allegations of, "Tries to double-cross me on my split, is you, huh?" alternated with, "Short-change me on de pay-off, huh?"

Until, with further bellowed evidence that when thieves fall out honest men gain their due, came the light—light so clear and bright that even Bugwine could not escape its revelations! And so overwhelming were these as to bring him crashing down from his perch to the floor, to land upon his head and be so brightened by the blow that he saw all—and seeing, seized the spotlight fearlessly for the finish. Again for him accident had surpassed design for ferreting out the guilty, and assault administered had not been misplaced after all.

Into the thickest of the battle forthwith plunged Bugwine Breck. There was a familiar *click!*—and holding vociferously to the chain of the Collins agency's bear-trap handcuffs, there shortly emerged from the ruck a victorious and bugling Bugwine with one foot figuratively in the face of a badly boomeranged Columbus, and the bear-trap firmly on the leg of Z. Clarence Wofford. All loose threads were gathered, contained, and explained in the still-echoing roar of a legal luminary:

"—So, Mist' Z. Crook Wofford, you sold dat taxi *twice*, huh? Once to Steamboat, and once to de insurance company, when you sot it afire and collected de insurance-money you tried to crook *me* out of, you—"

But here recrimination grew dwarfed and drowned before fresh strange sounds issuing anguished from beneath a furthestmost and splintered table: sounds apparently an open book to the newly restored Bugwine; for, "Dat fuss?" he made joyous reply to unspoken questions all about him—"dat aint nothin' but old smart-boy Columbus, makin' up his mind to make *me* vice-president again after I shows him up for bein' so *damn'* smart dat he hired de crook us was lookin' for, as a detective in my place!"



Illustrated by John Clymer

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

MARTIN BURNSIDE telephoned that he had a surprise for me. This queer old chap, who collected arms and armor and things connected with them, was full of surprises. When I walked into his study he peered up at me over his spectacles, and waved a hand at the object on his desk before him.

"Know what that is?" he rasped.

Naturally I did, and said so. It was a

clay model of an Egyptian chariot, not over six inches long, handsomely painted; it had been baked, of course.

"Rather a crude thing," I observed loftily, and he grinned in delight.

"You would say so. Oh, my Lord, that tickles me!"—and he cackled anew. Burnside was not a lovable person at times. He leaned back in his chair, and by the look in his eye I knew something sharp was coming.

# ARMS and MEN

*In this remarkable series Mr. Bedford-Jones follows down the ages the development of fighting mankind's weapons. "The Spear of Gleaming Willow" and "The Iron Knife of Wild Amon" have appeared. "The Bow of Ulysses" and others will follow.*

## III—Wheels of Doom

"Do you know when and how the chariot started as a weapon of war? No, you don't. It's time you did. You know that chap Lawton, who was in the Sudanese police so long? He brought this home with his stuff last week and gave it to me. He got it in Upper Egypt some years ago, where some fellahin had uncovered a tomb. He got that and four rolls of papyrus, which he's had translated. Smuggled it out of the country, of course, and has lent it to me. There's the translation of the papyrus. The mummy in the tomb, by the way, had been stolen. Go ahead, take it home, and see what you make of it."

I was not particularly up on Egyptian stuff, but took the translation home and pored over it. Somewhat to my own surprise, it began to interest me once I got under the skin of the thing, with its queer turns of phrase. Rather, I should say, the people in it interested me, for they were alive. And the place—the same four thousand years ago as when I saw it but yesteryear.

The same, but the barracks were different. Low white houses huddled along the wind-driven sand hills of the shore, a temple of Ra lifted dumpy pylons to the blazing sun, and beside the wells that gave the place existence ran the camp and the huge store-sheds and the fort. The same fort, destroyed and rebuilt times innumerable, which four thousand years later was to reëcho to Bonaparte's guns, and still later to the tramp of Anzac contingents.

For this was El Arish, the desolate outpost of Egypt on the frontier of Syria.

On one side, the glinting Mediterranean; on the other three sides, desert sands and death. In the great sheds lay provisions, war material, supplies for a whole army; there was always danger

of raids from the Khita, the fierce warriors whose empire embraced all Syria and beyond, and in case of alarm, carrier pigeons could summon fifty thousand men hither in a week's time to hold the frontier.

In Egypt ruled a new Par-aa, or "Great House," as the lord of the land was known. He whom the Greeks called the Pharaoh Sesostris. And in El Arish commanded the young noble Heptshefa, greatly loved and greatly hated—as must be any strong man.

IN the long, pleasant coolness of the potter's shop, adjoining the house of Tanis the priest, Heptshefa was wont to spend much time. He was impatient of caste restrictions, and in El Arish their importance dwindled; besides, Petros the Greek potter was a shrewd fellow, who had found clay-banks up the coast and turned them to use. He was young, also, and was a man of dreams and kindling imagination. A dangerous fellow, some said, for it was whispered that he scoffed at kings and lords.

From the house adjoining, Neferu the priest's daughter came often with her two women, to sit under the cool arcades and talk as she made pretense of working or sewing. Those three were much in company. Petros would look at the slim, lovely Neferu with a glory of devotion in his face, a sensitive, thoughtful face. Heptshefa would regard her with a glitter in his hawk's eyes, a laugh on his lips, rapture in his heart. But if she loved either or both, Neferu said not.

Upon a day, Heptshefa came striding into the place, a cotton robe over his erect figure. Neferu looked up, laughing.

"What, no clank of armor? Our warrior wears the robe of a slave?"

"Bah! It's too hot for ceremony!" And Heptshefa took a seat opposite her.

He looked at the potter, who was painting a bit of baked clay. "What's that you're making? A miniature manure cart for some farmer's tomb-burial?"

**T**HE sunny features of Petros glinted amusement at the gibe.

"Such a cart as you've never seen, at least," he rejoined. "This is a new weapon, with which you nobles and soldiers may kill each other off the better, and a good riddance, too! Too bad you can't all be killed off at one stroke."

Heptshefa laughed. "Explain it!"

"Not I; it's not done yet," said the potter, and flung him a sharp glance. "You look worried. More Khita spies?"

"Yes! A caravan of merchants got in last night. Merchants! They look like soldiers, to my eye. Spies, no doubt of it."

"Father is worried, too," said the slim, lovely young woman. "He says it's a bad sign when those Sidonian traders crowd that temple of theirs down by the shore. And the sacrifices in our own temple have shown evil omens."

Heptshefa grunted. "With reason. In the past month, we've heard nothing from our spies up north. None has returned. Nothing to worry about, of course. We have two thousand men in camp here—plenty to hold the place against any force, until help arrives from the Delta."

"So?" queried the potter softly. "Well, I don't love you aristocrats and nobles, but I'll give you a tip, Heptshefa, because you're not a bad sort."

"Thanks," said the Egyptian, with a smile. "A tip on the warrior's trade, potter?"

"Precisely. Do you know what I'd do if I were a Khita prince?"

"Aye; carry off Neferu here."

"But first get rid of you," Petros replied, with his imperturbable good humor. "Establish a thorough search of all caravans, so that no spies or messages could reach you, while the Khita host was preparing for a descent on El Arish. Then plant spies here, with definite work to do. Poison your wells, for one thing."

"And what else?" queried Heptshefa, a glint in his harsh, eager eyes.

"Make certain that you could send no message to Egypt."

"The pigeons, you mean?" Heptshefa whistled softly. "That's an idea! But the birds are kept in the fort."

"Where these merchants from the north peddle trinkets and women slaves

to the soldiers every day. And those Nubian archers of yours can be bribed, my friend."

The soldier's stern brows drew down. "Right. By the gods, right! I must look to that."

"Bah! You're both getting too serious altogether," broke in the girl, laughing. "You've finished painting that cart, Petros? Come, tell us what it is."

The potter regarded his miniature cart of baked clay, then looked up at them, a glow in his face.

"You never saw a cart like that, either of you!" he exclaimed. "Narrow. With two wheels. So it can pass through the winding streets of a town, or across desert sands without sinking. A small semi-circular platform on the axle, open in back, with a high front and sides; a pole in front, by which two horses could draw it swiftly. Well, soldier? Have you no imagination? Can you see nothing in it?"

"Devil a thing," said the puzzled Heptshefa, frowning at the model. Petros leaned back, laughing a little, his eyes on the girl rather than on the soldier, as though he sought her interest and approbation chiefly.

"Well, look at your trade, soldier," he rejoined. "Your archers are mounted, your infantry can march hard and far under the sun. But what happens in skirmishes with the Khita? They are heavily armed, trained to close formation, which your Nubian archers cannot break. Their slingers disrupt the attack, put the horses into confusion. You must depend on long-distance arrows to shatter them, or do it with your infantry at a heavy cost of life."

"True,"—and Heptshefa laughed curtly. "But we shatter them."

"At cost, yes." Petros shoved out his model. "Now look at this little cart, this chariot; imagine two men standing in it, one to drive, one to shoot. Imagine it flying along the flanks of the enemy, or charging straight into their serried ranks! Then multiply the one chariot by a hundred, by a thousand—"

**H**EPSHESHA leaped to his feet, eyes ablaze, keen features afire.

"By Ra the Glorious! Man, what an idea—what a stroke of genius! Here, give me that model. I'll send it to the Pharaoh at once, suggesting that a thousand of those carts be made and armored with hippopotamus hide. Why, behind that high front, the driver him-



self might crouch in safety under an arrow-flight! Give it me."

"Not I," said Petros coolly.

"What?" Heptshefa eyed him sternly. "Petros, this is a tremendous thing. It promises something new in warfare—mobile transport of fighting-men, protected, able to smash through an enemy's line, able to withstand a cavalry charge—why, it's almost beyond conception! You can't refuse to give this invention to Egypt?"

"I'm no Egyptian," said the potter complacently. "Besides, what do I know of a soldier's trade?" he added, with a grin. "Seriously, my friend, do you find it good?"

"Admirable. Egypt must have it."

**N**EFERU leaned forward, her dark eyes shining.

"Oh, Petros, you must do it, you must!" she cried. "Think what it would mean to Egypt, to us all!"

"Aye," said the potter slowly, looking into her eyes. "Then, since you ask it, Neferu, Egypt shall have the model—at a price."

Scorn filled the hot eager eyes of Heptshefa.

"What price?" he demanded curtly. "Name it. I'll recommend it be paid."

"A price that you and the priest of Ra can pay here and now," said Petros, and rose to his feet. He put off his streaked, stained apron. "You represent Pharaoh, and the price comes from Pharaoh and from the gods. Make me an Egyptian, and a noble."

The two men stood eye to eye, the fine glowing features of Petros meeting the blazing anger of Heptshefa with calm insistence. All three knew what the demand meant. Only as a noble Egyptian could this potter seek the hand of Neferu in marriage.

Heptshefa flushed, then paled again. He glanced at the girl, who stood wide-eyed and glorious in her beauty; and his lips clenched. That sharp eagle-face of his set like rock.

At this instant a slave broke in upon them, hurriedly.

"Lord!" he addressed Heptshefa. "The captain of the fort is outside, seeking you, with prayer for instant speech."

Some emergency, then. . . . Heptshefa turned and left the long, cool shop and came to the outer entrance where the captain impatiently waited out of the sun. The other turned at his approach, caught his arm, spoke rapidly in a low,

tense voice. Heptshefa's gaze went past him to the soldiers waiting in the street.

"Very well," said Heptshefa curtly. "Bring in four men after me, seize this potter, and lay him by the heels in the jail at the fort. Let him have speech with no one, but see that he is comfortable. Follow."

So saying, he turned back into the cool arcades, the officer and four men behind him. Before the astonished Petros realized what was under way, he was a prisoner.

"You opened your mouth too wide, my friend," said Heptshefa grimly. "What you predicted, has come to pass. For the present, you're under arrest."

The Greek was dragged away. Heptshefa turned, as the angry and indignant Neferu broke out in swift questions and protests. He caught her by the arms,

"Peace!" Heptshefa said brusquely. "Stop your vain screeching, Neferu."



heedless of her two women, and looked into her dark eyes, and smiled grimly.

"Now it is life or death for us all, my heart," he said. "Distrust Petros? No; but I'm taking no chances—none! Go to the temple gateway and see what happens. The reason? The carrier pigeons have been poisoned this morning. All of them. Tell your father to offer double sacrifices and to pray the gods for aid. And, Neferu! I love you; I love you, do you understand? Love you!"

His powerful arms drew her close. Under his dominant spell, under the force of his powerful spirit, his eager strength, his quick passion, she was crushed against him; her lips yielded, her hands caught him close in one swift embrace. Then he was gone, striding out into the burning hot street. But she, crouching, covered her face.

**I**T was a matter of minutes ere the Nubian drums began to mutter, and from the fort trumpets rang out. The caravan of northern traders, assembling at the wells to take the desert road, was surrounded by squads of soldiers. All those men were slain, without question or mercy—all of them. The justice of Egypt was swift and terrible.

Through the streets and houses came bands of soldiery. The Sidonian merchants, the outland men, were sought out and slain, very quickly. Their women and slaves were taken to the camp, their houses looted. Within an hour, there was no person—but Petros—left alive in El Arish, save those of Egyptian birth.

There was reason enough. Not only the pigeons were attacked, but the wells; from them were drawn the bodies of poisoned animals, cunningly placed there. Heptshefa worked clean; once aroused, he ruthlessly purged the entire place of possible danger, for it was life or death in very truth. But Neferu sat on the pylon of the temple, and wept for the friends who lay dead in the streets, and the smiling merchants who would smile no more, and the dark slim Khita and Sidonian women with whom she had laughed and jested, now the sport and prey of the camp.

"I hate him!" she cried out bitterly to her father, the shaven priest of Ra, who watched at her side. "He is a beast, a thing of iron—I hate him!"

"By the gods, he does a soldier's work!" said Tanis the priest, recking not her tears and hot words. "Better they perish today, than we tomorrow."

Heptshefa, a cool slim wide-shouldered figure in his plain white robe, sat in the gateway of the fort and gave his orders. The dead were collected and flung into the sea. The wells were cleansed. Horsemen set forth, and men on camels, to carry letters to the Delta; but they had far to go across the hot sands, and many a weary day would pass ere the armies of Egypt came pouring out to the frontier.

Calling the captains and the scribes before him, Heptshefa ordered that all the soldiers who were artisans be marched apart. There were no trees in El Arish, for during the last Khita raid all had been cut down; only seedling date palms of small growth remained.

Presently parties of soldiers went through the buildings of the town and tore them apart, and carried the beams and woodwork to the camp of the artisans. Tools were issued. When he had sent forth scouts to the north, and brought arms and food from the sheds to the fort, Heptshefa went into the town himself and into the house of Petros the potter, and came out bearing the little cart of freshly painted clay. This he took to the camp of the artisans, and set it for all to see on a block of stone.

"Who touches this, dies," he said curtly. "Touch not, but study it well. Thanks be to Ra, we have no lack of wheels in the sheds, for the use of transport wagons. Write an order for them, scribe. Where is the captain of the mounted archers?"

"Here, Lord,"—and an officer pushed forward with a salute.

"Dismount half your men," Heptshefa ordered. "I have need of their horses. Drill them in foot formation."

**J**ARS of oil were broken open, so that when night came there were flares to light the camp of the artisans, who labored on in relays without pause. Thus, with all done that could be done, Heptshefa laid aside his work and went to the temple. There he spoke for a while with Tanis the priest, then asked for Neferu; but she sent back word that she would not see him. At this, Heptshefa strode angrily into the women's quarters, and stood before her as she sprang up in furious greeting.

"Peace," he said brusquely. "Stop your vain screeching, Neferu."

"Oh, what a brute you are!" she exclaimed, more calmly, yet trembling with her anger. "What you have done

this day, what you have done to the man whom you called a friend—”

Her words died before the cold smile of Heptshefa.

“If you speak of Petros, I have certainly saved his life,” he rejoined calmly. “Now listen to me. I have told you that I loved you. Your father agrees that you are to marry me; you will marry me, and like it. But if you would give me one smile—”

Neferu struck him across the face. He shrugged, and laughed a little.

“Very well; tomorrow, next week, next month, you’ll change your tune. Remember, you are as my wife!”

Then he turned and walked out.

**T**ANIS the priest of Ra, who was a greedy man, laughed long and loud at Neferu’s anger. He could well afford to do so, since Heptshefa came of a great and wealthy house in Lower Egypt, and was like to rise to greater heights before he died.

“You’re like all the rest, Neferu,” he said, chuckling. “Can’t abide the thought of him! Yet, once married and settled down, you’ll swear he’s the noblest man in Egypt. I suppose you’re in love with that fool of a Greek potter?”

“Perhaps I am,” she said, her dark eyes flashing. “And what of it?”

“Why, nothing at all!” and her father laughed again. “Nothing at all—just like that, my dear.”

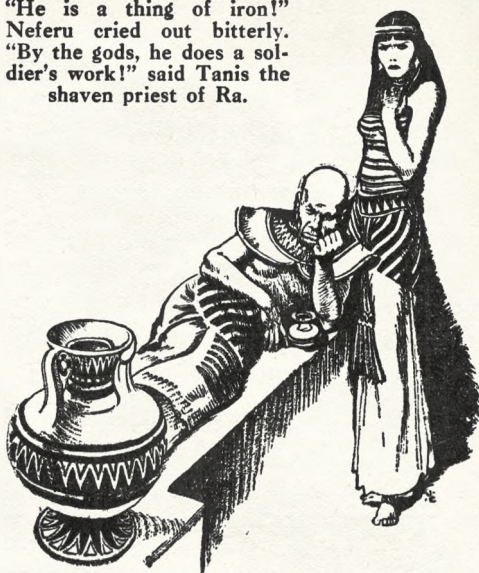
A bitter true word was this, though spoken in jest. Nothing could come of it. And, when her anger had run its course into death, Neferu sat with despair in those dark eyes of hers. . . .

Three days of feverish activity passed, the smithies roaring and the soldier-artisans laboring day and night. Heptshefa slept like his men, when he could, by fits and snatches. He was ever in the ranks of the artisans, consulting, ordering, testing, and as gradually there came some semblance of order from this chaos, one morning he met Neferu as he passed through the camp. She was standing before the great block of stone on which stood the little painted clay model of the chariot, and as Heptshefa drew near, she turned and greeted him with hot words.

“Thief! So this is what all the work is about—you have stolen the idea of Petros, you are making carts like this one he invented!”

Heptshefa laughed. “You do well to call me thief, since that word means

“He is a thing of iron!” Neferu cried out bitterly. “By the gods, he does a soldier’s work!” said Tanis the shaven priest of Ra.



taker as well,” he said. “What Egypt needs, she takes. What I myself need, I take. As I shall take you, lovely creature—as I take you now!”

And his powerful arm swept out, held her against him, while he laughed down into her eyes.

Neferu struggled for a moment; then she said angrily:

“Beast! You would treat me like a slave-girl in front of all the camp?”

“Not so; like my loving wife, as you shall be!” And Heptshefa’s aquiline features were eager in their flashing strength. “Closer, my heart, closer! You shall yet sit beside me upon the throne of a viceroy, I promise you!”

She ceased to struggle, and looked up at him as he held her tightly against his breast.

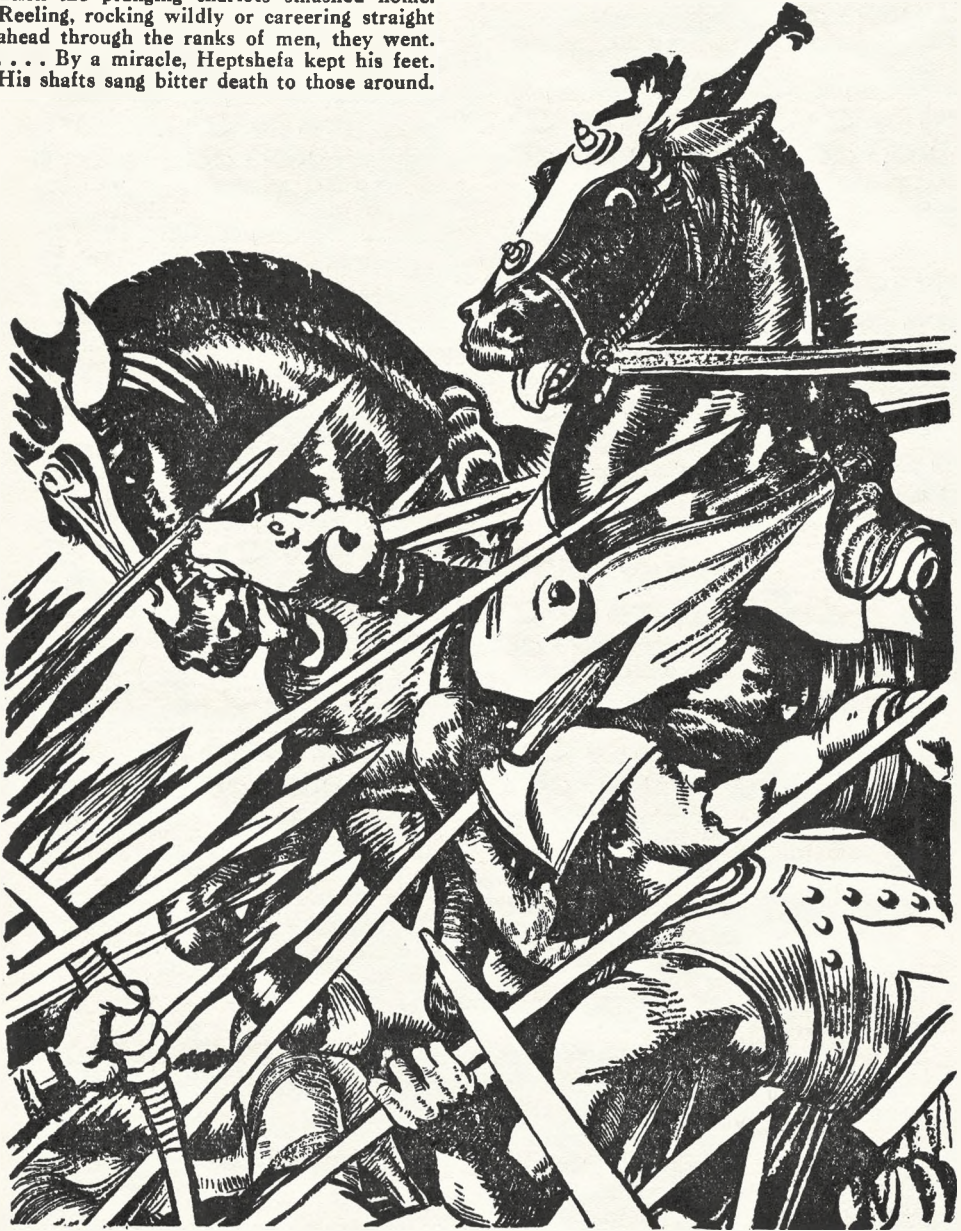
“Well, thief, who am I to fight against you?” she said slowly. “Take the body, if you want it; the heart and soul, the *ka*, the spiritual self, you shall never have.”

“Bah! Talk like a woman, not a girl,” said he impatiently. Then his expression changed to amused tolerance. “By the way, what’s this I hear about you having visited the fort last night and left gifts at the jail? Think you that you can bring dainties to a prisoner and no word of it reach me?”

“Have I denied it?” she said proudly. “If you had the generosity of a man in your heart of flint, you’d let me talk with Petros and comfort him.”

A laugh broke from Heptshefa, and loosing her, he called one of the scribes who followed him.

Then the plunging chariots smashed home. Reeling, rocking wildly or careering straight ahead through the ranks of men, they went. . . . By a miracle, Heptshefa kept his feet. His shafts sang bitter death to those around.



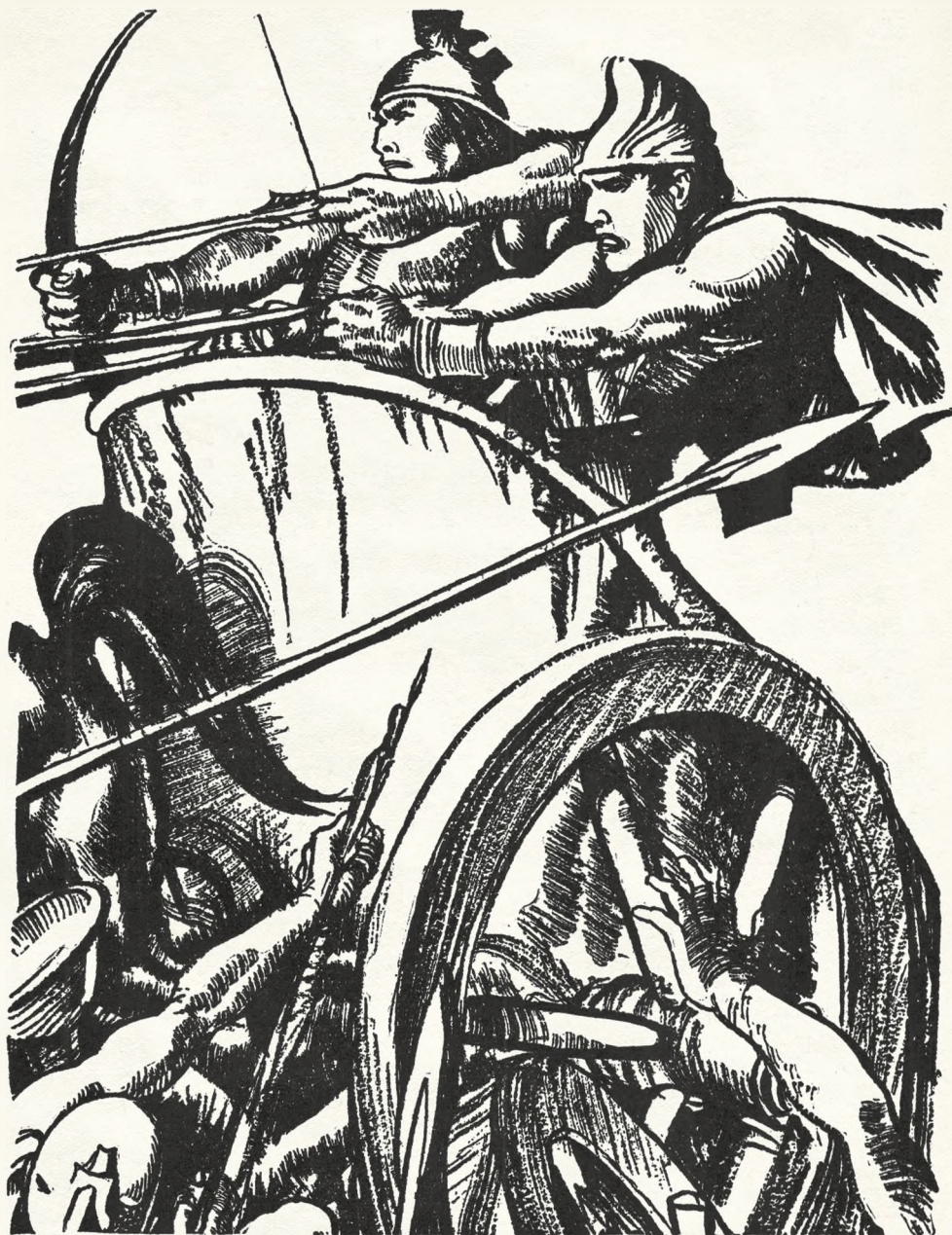
"Write the Lady Neferu a pass to any portion of the fort she wishes to visit," he said, and flung her a careless, merry gesture: "There you are, my dear; and now I'm too busy to bother with you further. Farewell."

Late that afternoon one of the scouts came in and hurriedly sought out Heptshefa where none other could hear.

"Lord, we have made contact with the Khita," he said. "They are three days' march from here; we caught one of

them and tortured him. Ten thousand men, half bowmen, half heavy infantry; behind comes a huge train of supplies, and behind this, the main Khita army, fifty thousand strong. This main force will not be up for two weeks. The vanguard is sent to wipe out our force here and secure the wells. The water means life."

Heptshefa rewarded him and sent him away. Then, with the priest of Ra at his side, he gathered his captains about



him and told them the news. There was time to send away the women and children of the force.

"Let them remain," said one officer calmly. "Should they not be with us when we cross the dark waters? Let them remain and fight with us, and die for Egypt."

There was a growl of assent from the others. Heptshefa looked at the priest.

"Well, Tanis? Shall not I send you and your daughter and household away?"

"I remain," said the priest curtly. "As to Neferu, she is in your hand."

"Then let her remain also," and Heptshefa laughed, and stretched forth his fist, his eyes glittering fiercely. "You shall have fighting, you wolves!"

The captains shouted, and the name of the Pharaoh resounded in thunder.

After the meeting, Heptshefa went by himself to the jail of the fortress and there spoke with the chief guard, and passed quietly within. He came to a

cell where a dim light burned, and looked in to see Neferu sitting there, with the head of Petros on her breast and his arms about her. When Heptshefa walked into the cell they drew apart, the girl standing proudly before him, Petros in bitter anger.

"Nay, go on and comfort him!" said Heptshefa, with a smile, but at this Neferu cursed him angrily and departed. He met the gaze of Petros, and his smile died out. "Well, my friend, I have saved your life. You're the only foreigner left alive in this place; and in three days the Khita will be here."

"You still think me a spy?" snarled Petros. The brows of Heptshefa lifted.

"My dear fellow, I never thought so; but others might. Your tongue wags too much. By the way, I'm about to make use of your little cart."

"So I hear," said the other harshly. "Afraid to give the payment I sought, eh?"

Heptshefa eyed him with cool scrutiny.

"The letters to Pharaoh are written, signed and sealed by me and by the priest of Ra. You are at liberty to carry them yourself, and to depart when you like. As there are ten thousand Khita in the vanguard alone, it will scarcely be a fair test of your invention; so if you wish to remain alive to catch the fruits of it, you'd best get off in the morning. We who stay here will not live to see the result."

"You mean—I am free to go? It is no trick?" cried Petros, staring.

"Am I a liar, then? Of course you're free to go."

"Ah! And Neferu?"

"Egyptians don't run from death, my friend. She remains."

"You force her to remain! You give her no choice!"

**H**EPSHEFA turned, summoned a guard, and spoke curtly.

"Bring the Lady Neferu. I think she has not gone far."

She had not, indeed, and presently she came into the cell again.

"Petros is free to depart in the morning for Thebes," Heptshefa said to her, "with letters to the Pharaoh. If you desire to go with him, you may go. To remain here is death, as you know."

"What?" she cried. "I may go—with him?"

"Of course," and Heptshefa smiled a little. "Why not, if you so desire?"

"Oh! And my father is going?"

"The priest of Ra? Not likely; he has already refused. Egypt is here, you see."

"Egypt—is here!" she repeated slowly, and her eyes widened, and a quick pallor came into her cheeks. "Egypt—is here! Oh, you devil! You man with heart of iron! Well do you know that I could not go, after those words. Desert, run, flee from death—am I not an Egyptian, also? No. I remain. Petros, go, go, I command you with my love!"

She went out of the cell, and the two men looked one at another, and in the face of Petros was mingled hatred and a grudging admiration.

"A devil you may be, Heptshefa, but you are the greatest of men!" he said. "Keep your letters. I am skilled in the ways of horses; when the Khita come, give me armor and one of those chariots to drive."

"Good!" The deep eyes of Heptshefa kindled, and he put out his hand. "You and I shall drive one of them together."

And Petros gripped his hand on the bargain.

**W**ITH morning, there was fear in all the camp. Men came, trembling, to tell Heptshefa that during the night the little clay model of the chariot had vanished from its place on the stone block. This was told him as he left the temple of Ra, and in keen anger he had the night guards brought before him. They could tell nothing; they had seen no one, yet the little clay chariot had disappeared.

"Slay them," said Heptshefa, and it was done there before the temple. On the pylon above, Neferu stood and looked down at the scene. . . .

From his prison came Petros that morning, and took command of the work. Now the chariots began to take form and be assembled. By night, ten of them were ready for use. Forty more would be done by the next night—fifty in all. Harness was quickly made up, and with morning, chosen horses from the cavalry stables were broken to the work. Before nightfall, all fifty chariots were careering over the sand, one man holding the reins, an archer beside him to fight.

Tall and high were made the front guards of these chariots, and covered with leather or hippopotamus hide that would turn arrows and darts. Hide shields were made for the horses, also.

More scouts had come in this day. The

Khita were close at hand, and would be at El Arish by the next night. Heptshefa called his captains before him.

"We meet them as they arrive from the long day's march," he said curtly, and appointed officers to take command if he fell. "I lead the chariots. We take position on the ridge a mile north of the town. When the time comes, I will give the orders; not until."

"Shall we not harass them with our cavalry as they advance?" asked the captain of the mounted archers. Heptshefa looked at him.

"No. Remain at my side and take my orders when the moment arrives."

**A**S only a hundred horses were required for the chariots, there still remained nine hundred archers—enough to worry the solid ranks of the Khita, who would be worn with the desert march, their cavalry weak and perishing from thirst. The scouts had brought word that they had a thousand cavalry, most of their force being the heavy-armed fighters who had made the Khita name terrible in the north.

With the next morning, Heptshefa practised his horses and chariots and men a good two hours, then bade them rest. When the shock of battle came, he said grimly, few of them would keep their footing in the chariots, and swords would be better weapons than bows to carry. To the captains of each ten chariots, he gave explicit instructions, and there let the matter rest until the enemy appeared.

Scouts came in thick and fast. By noon, the solid masses of the Khita were in sight to the north, skirmishers and scouts advancing in their van. Two hours later, Heptshefa sent forth his legions to the chosen position, where the enemy scouts were already halting. These were swiftly driven off by the cavalry.

On the brow of the ridge, facing the long slopes of sand below, the Egyptian ranks took post, and within the squares of infantry were ranged the chariots by tens. In that where Heptshefa stood, Petros was by his side, full armored, holding the reins. The cavalry waited on the flanks, their captain anxiously bidding by the chariot of Heptshefa. Two great clouds of horsemen appeared to right and left of the advancing Khita, and presently swept forward to attack the two thousand on the ridge above.

"You see them?" Heptshefa said to the leader of his cavalry. "The horses

are slow and weary with the hot sun. Well, break them! And when they have broken, call off your men under pain of death. Call them off, understand? And keep them for the slaughter that will follow—if so the gods decide. Go!"

The trumpets sounded. To right and left, ten chariots swept out on either hand, and with them the companies of Nubian horsemen. They swooped and like a darting falcon fell upon the ranks of the Khita horse. The chariots smote them asunder, shattered them, and not all of those chariots returned from the meeting. Then the Nubians rode into the gaps, their arrows showered, and their long Egyptian swords ravaged through the host.

Back on either wing fell the Khita horse, broken and smashed, back in wild panic from the chariots that survived. Then the Nubians wheeled and came trotting back up the slope. The solid ranks of Khita infantry had halted, but now came on once more, steadily surging on, wave upon wave, to overwhelm the Egyptian lines by sheer might and weight. Their wings opened up, and their center showed the standard of their leader. Heptshefa flung his orders swiftly. His captains ran and sprang into their chariots. He touched Petros on the arm, his eyes glittering fiercely.

"Go!" lifted his voice, and a trumpet blared.

Forward, down the slope, swept the Egyptian ranks. They opened. From between them swept the forty remaining chariots. Those surviving that first encounter swung about to join the mad rush. Behind followed the spearmen.

Beholding this charge headed directly at their center, the Khita halted and wavered. The spectacle of those chariots hurtling down upon them was new and terrible. Even before the great crash and clangor that was heard clearly back in El Arish, the serried ranks wavered. Then the plunging chariots smashed home. Reeling, rocking wildly, turning over or careering straight ahead through the ranks of men they went, death and confusion around them even when they tipped and went to ruin.

**B**Y a miracle, Heptshefa kept his feet in that wild shock. Straight through the lines drove his chariot under the cunning guidance of Petros, straight upon the standard of the Khita leader. The shafts of Heptshefa sang bitter death to those around, and in the tall chariot

he was above their strokes or protected. There was a whirl and din of struggling men, then a deeper yell as the Egyptian infantry smashed home.

Rank upon rank crumpled up. The Khita standard was down. Back they drove in mad panic upon the lines behind, and close behind them poured the Egyptians.

Upon all that host seized fear and wild terror, and the serried ranks became a mad mob of fugitives. From the flanks, the Nubian horsemen swept in upon them, and drove them down upon the shore of the sea and slew without ceasing until darkness fell.

But Heptshefa was not with them. A wild shock, and one wheel was broken. The chariot sagged, the horses came to a halt among the welter of wounded and dead.

Heptshefa looked at the man beside him, for Petros was laughing strangely into his face.

"A good test, a good test!" cried out the Greek. "Take another chariot, Lord, for this one is done—and the driver as well—"

And he drooped down as he spoke. Heptshefa caught him, and saw that a shaft had sped in under his armpit; and as he looked, Petros sagged down and died at his side.

OF that array, only twelve chariots returned to El Arish, blood splashed upon wheels and bodies and horses. The Khita were scattered like leaves on the blast, and few of them would live in the burning deserts of sand. And, when Heptshefa came back to the fort, he found that a carrier pigeon had arrived from the Delta. His first messengers had won through, and already the armies of Egypt were gathering. In two weeks the clouds of cavalry would be at El Arish, said the message. At this, a grim, harsh laugh of exultation broke from him.

"Two weeks! The main army of the Khita will not have arrived then—this blow will halt them and give us time. Egypt is saved, saved!"

Then he added, looking down at the dead and strangely smiling face of Petros: "Saved indeed, by one who goes unrewarded. . . . Well, that's life for you!"

Then the softness died from his eyes, and his shoulders went back, and he

strode out into the torch-lit camp to give quick, curt orders. If he thought at all of his promised wife, he had no time to spare on her this night.

So ended the story of the papyrus; or rather, so I thought it ended, but there I was far wrong.

WHEN I saw Martin Burnside again and laid the sheets on his desk, and with them the little painted clay model of a chariot, I remarked on the oddly abrupt ending.

"Indeed?" he said testily. "But you don't know the ending, my boy. By the way, that was the first introduction of chariots into war, so far as we know exactly—"

"Damn the chariots!" I broke in. "I'd like to hear what became of Heptshefa, and of that girl Neferu."

"Well, I can tell you in a few words," and Martin Burnside peered at me over his spectacles. "I've been going into the matter. In his account of the Sudan, Sir Wallis Budge tells how, in 1915, Dr. Reisner of Boston found the actual tomb of Heptshefa there. At Assiut, far in the north, a splendid tomb had been prepared for him, but it was never used; that, also, has been opened. Heptshefa died as viceroy of the Sudan, and there he was buried."

I frowned, puzzled.

"But I still don't get it, Martin!" I protested. "I thought you said this chap Lawton had found his tomb? In fact, that it was from Heptshefa's tomb this tiny clay chariot came, and also the papyrus."

"Not at all; from the tomb of Neferu his wife," said Martin Burnside, and gave me a significant look. "Does that suggest the ending of the story to you, my boy? She also died in the Sudan, probably after he did. He was the greatest warrior, the most famous military leader, of his day and dynasty; but nothing of his was laid in her tomb. Nothing was buried with her except the papyrus story of Petros, the man she had loved; and the little clay model Petros had made so long ago, and which she had kept in secret so many years. Does it suggest anything to you from the book of life, my boy?"

It did. . . . It suggested so much that I remained silent, and touched the little painted clay model of a chariot with reverent fingers.



*A very real and vital story of an airplane pilot's desperate dilemma and heroic courage, by the able author of "Murder Island," "The Ship of Prey" and "The Dark Horizon."*

By **LELAND  
JAMIESON**



# You Never Know

**H**EZ THOMPSON fought down rising panic and tried to focus on the brightly lighted, blackly lettered cardboard twenty feet before his eyes. He could read the top line, and could guess roughly at the second one. The third was indistinct, and he had to read it. He couldn't, but he *had* to. Desperately he strained to make it out.

It wasn't any use. So he called out the letters of the second line, and dabbed his handkerchief at the perspiration on his upper lip. Doctor Mitchell's even voice came distantly, beating on his eardrums. "You'll have to do better than that, you know," he said. "Try the next line down." The Doctor shifted a small paper square from Thompson's one eye to the other, and added: "Now."

Thompson strained his eye to bring the letters out. But it wasn't any use. They were blurred, until he couldn't see them. He'd have to guess at them. If he guessed wrong, if he missed more than two of the letters, he'd be grounded. With so much at stake, he tried to hold his voice to a steady flat pitch and hide the fright sawing at his nerve ends. He enunciated doubtfully: "*B—X—U—T—L—A—M.*" and waited breathlessly.

Doctor Mitchell moved for a moment in the corner, making faint clicking noises with a tray of wedge-shaped lenses. . . . Suspense built up unbearably within Hez Thompson, until finally he demanded in a too-loud tone: "Well, what about it?"

There was a moment's silence, a moment's hesitation before Mitchell turned slowly, snapping on the ceiling lights. He searched Hez Thompson's young-old face, seeming to make a detailed scrutiny of everything he saw: the long, flat

cheeks, the firm, narrow mold of chin, the determination—almost grimness—of the lips, the high square forehead with thinning brownish hair brushed back from it. But the pilot's eyes were what Doctor Mitchell studied most. He had just subjected them to a complete examination. They were fine eyes, blue and steady, faintly dilated. But they were weak eyes, after all these years.

"How long," Mitchell asked carefully, "have you been flying, Hez?"

Hez Thompson tried to grin, remembering how long. But something happened to his facial muscles, and he couldn't; he could tell from Mitchell's manner that his eyes had washed him out. He'd known—almost always he had known that some day this would happen. He'd passed his flight examinations fairly well at first, but nine years ago he'd failed to pass, and his first waiver had been issued. Today, he knew, he'd lost the waiver—and his flying license, and his job.

"A little more than nineteen years," he answered the Doctor's question, very softly. "But I guess that's over, now."

Mitchell nodded almost imperceptibly, and his tone was sympathetic. "I'm afraid so, Hez."

He'd sensed it, known it. But at this confirmation of the thing as fact, a sick fear drained through him, bleeding him of strength and courage.

He grasped Doctor Mitchell's white-clad arm, voicing a desperate, hopeless plea: "Let me try again. I'm going to pass that test. I've got to! You don't know what this means!"

Doctor Mitchell's glance reflected helpless sympathy. He was a kindly



"Try the next line," said Dr. Mitchell. . . .  
If Hez guessed wrong, he'd be grounded.

man, a flyer himself, an examiner of air-line pilots for the last half-dozen years. He knew the facts in Thompson's case.

"All right, Hez. We'll try again." He snapped out the dome-light, leaving the white square flooded. With the little paper shield he covered Thompson's left eye, and instructed with forced cheerfulness: "Don't strain. Read the third line from the top."

There was an interval of tense silence, broken only by Hez Thompson's exhalations. And then a queer, choked sound escaped from him, and his voice was utter anguish. "I can't read them, of course. . . . Doctor Mitchell, for God's sake, isn't there something you can do for me?"

Doctor Mitchell sat down on a white-enameled stool there at his side, perturbed, and sad, and puzzled. This was an affection of the optic nerves, and there was nothing that he, or any other doctor in the world, could do for Hez. This was an insidious, certain approach to blindness eventually complete.

Naturally, Hez couldn't keep his pilot's license. It was amazing that he had flown these last few months without a crack-up. Mitchell questioned with forced casualness: "Have you enough money to be able to retire?"

Thompson looked up quickly.

"God, no! Two years off my run, and I'll be on my uppers! But, Doctor Mitchell, I can still see enough to fly! Re-

member, I'm not a kid just soloing. I've flown constantly for almost twenty years, and as long as I can see at all, I can go on doing it. I can see enough to take off and land, and in the air I fly by instruments. I always have a co-pilot with me, and he watches out for other ships, if there are any. You've got to realize I can fly, regardless—you've got to realize my position!"

His voice, rising, was passionate and desperate. "If you take my waiver away from me, look what you do: I've been flying all my life, and that's all I know. I'd starve, without it!" He paused, and when he spoke again, it was with a note of bitter poignancy. "You know about Jean—how she got cracked up in a race. Well, they've assured us she can be completely cured—be as good as ever—in another year or so of treatment. But it's expensive. So I've got to fly, or I can't take care of her. Don't you see that?"

The physician nodded thoughtfully, and his tone was filled with pity and regret. "I've thought of all that, Hez. I thought of some of it five years ago, the first time I examined you. I suspected this might happen, then—but there was nothing I could do." He looked up, meeting Thompson's blue eyes squarely, holding them. "Now, I don't know what to do. There's no fellow-pilot I admire more than I do you. But your vision is only 7-20, and I can't pass you, for any kind of waiver. I can't—"

"DO you think I'm dangerous in the air, just because I don't see as well as other pilots?" Thompson broke in, challengingly. "Don't you think that twenty years of aviation would have taught me how to do my job even with a handicap like this?"

"Possibly you could do the job, Hez. But you're flying people up and down your line, and you have no right to jeopardize their safety. If something happened to you, and you cracked up and killed a lot of people, I'd always feel I'd murdered you, and them. If you were in my place, and I in yours, regardless of facts, what would you do?"

"I don't know. . . . I hope to God you never get in my position." Hez shook his head, and sighed, and added finally: "Yes, I do know what I'd do. I'd feel sorry as hell for you, and I'd feel like a dog—and I'd slap you on the ground." His voice husked faintly as emotion ripped him, and he cursed with sudden

savagery. "But you've got to tell me the truth of this. Is there going to be an end to it before I lose my sight, or am I going blind completely? It's been developing pretty fast the last two months."

"It's hard to say just how far a thing like this will go, Hez; but it's better not to worry too—"

"Don't hand me stuff like that! You're an eye-specialist, and you know what's going to happen. You aren't doing me a favor, trying to minimize it. I've got to know the truth—and I can stand it."

Doctor Mitchell, very harried, ran fingers through his mop of reddish hair.

"Out with it!" Thompson snapped with unaccustomed viciousness. "Whatever it is, I guess I can take it."

**M**ITCHELL tried to take the sting from words he was slowly framing. "A difficulty with the optic nerves, like this one, can't be predicted, Hez. It's certain that you will become entirely blind, but whether that will be a matter of months, or question of years, I'm unable to say. . . . There's not a thing anyone can do." He watched the other man, and saw shock trace down from eyes to mouth. He put his arm around Hez Thompson's shoulders, adding softly, "Old man, I needn't say I sympathize. I know how hard it hits you. But life doesn't need to end, even if your eyes do go back on you."

Thompson sat there, nodding with short, mechanical repetition. A wave of terror gripped him, turning his thoughts completely incoherent for a time. He'd known that it was serious, but he'd thought it was only an impairment. It crossed his fevered brain that thousands in the world were totally without sight, and that it was not an insurmountable deficiency. Yet he felt that in his case, peculiarly, it was.

What would happen to Jean, if this atrophy became complete? Jean, down there in the car, hugged tight in a plaster cast because of his ambition that she learn to fly. And what would happen to him? There was a bitter, chilling irony in finishing a career like this. Thrown out on a disability! He wished suddenly that he had gone out through the crash route. It was the way he wanted to go, when his time came.

Considering the drab and weary years ahead, he debated what to do. Blindness, or—death. He might obtain a

ground job for these few remaining months; but when his eyesight went, the job would cease. His insurance—thirty thousand dollars—eventually would lapse, or he would have to borrow on it. Almost all the money he had made these last few years had gone to provide medical attention for his wife, in an effort to correct the harm which he felt that he had caused her.

But now, if he went on living, his existence would rob her of all possibility of complete recovery, and in addition would saddle on her a husband more helpless than herself.

No, he decided, he couldn't go on. It wasn't fair to Jean; it wasn't fair even to himself. Through his mind coursed the small, insidious idea of suicide. But he knew he couldn't do it, that way. Jean, afterward, would learn of the difficulty he had been having with his eyes, would learn that he had been going blind, and would understand his action.

Yet he had to do something. Moving in a daze of numbness, he walked with Doctor Mitchell to the door, and said good-by and rode the elevator down. He felt alien, alone, desolate as he tried to frame his words to Jean. She would have to know, of course, but perhaps he could delay the dreadful news until he could get to the field and talk with Clayton, the operations manager. It wouldn't seem quite such a violent blow, if he had another, lesser job he could step into. He would tell her nothing of the total blindness that might come.

**S**TEPPING from the curb toward his car, he saw Jean sitting there, head bent, reading. There was a lovely vitalness about her, and a strength which always had defied adversity. From here he could see the soft curve of her throat and cheek, a curling strand of golden hair beneath her hat. That was all. Yet, as he opened the car door, he sensed something else, a tensivity, a strain that had crept into her face. And when she looked at him in quick reaction to the clicking of the door-lock, her deep eyes were direct yet veiled, and he thought he fathomed a thinly concealed terror.

The enforced levity that he had summoned for this meeting was forgotten. "What is it?" he said gently.

"Another ship has crashed," she answered tautly. "Monty Carrigan was testing it." She lifted a last edition from her lap; the headline was still damp:

TWO KILLED IN PLANE TEST

A queer prickling sensation was on Hez Thompson's scalp, and he demanded in a jarring voice, "What happened?" as he passed the paper back to her and slid beneath the wheel.

He understood why Jean's first question had not been about his routine semi-annual physical examination. It was odd how every crash struck through them both. For a moment, looking at her, he remembered sickeningly the crack-up she had had four years ago: a tiny speed-ship on a pylon turn, with Jean in the cockpit, leading the whole field. He had stood on the hangar line in breathless pride, watching her tilt vertical. He had taught her all she knew, had insisted that she fly; and she had had the stuff of champions. But in a turn she went too low, and a wing-tip burned grass for a moment. Then— He closed his eyes and reached across and found her hand. His mind snapped back to Monty Carigan. "What happened?" he repeated. "The second one this week, on test. A damn' good thing the company refused to put them into scheduled operations until they'd had some shake-down runs! Why didn't Monty jump?"

"He only had a thousand feet. There was an explosion, and the tail came off. Nobody knows what really happened."

Hez Thompson's eyes took on a distant look. "You never know," he mused, and lapsed into an absorbed contemplation of the possibilities.

**B**UT he couldn't figure it. In this crash, and the one preceding it, a peculiar pattern had been followed. Each plane had apparently exploded, the tail had come off, the ship had plunged to earth at dizzy speed.

Yet, in general, the cause was obvious. These were new planes, sleek, bright works of engineering art, fast almost beyond belief. They would do better than two hundred miles an hour: the fastest and the cleanest commercial air-line jobs that had ever been designed.

But somewhere in their design was a "bug" that had not shown up in the factory-test flying before they were delivered to the air-line company. It was coming out now, under the heartless strain of daily test schedules at high speed. Three planes had been delivered, and two of them had crashed. The wisdom of these "break-down" tests was clearly shown.

Jean broke the silence that hung over them. "Hez," she reminded him, "you're

scheduled out with a new ship in the morning, aren't you?"

"I was scheduled," he admitted. When Mitchell's report reached Clayton, he would be grounded for all time, his flying career closed as abruptly, and to him as tragically, as that of Monty Carigan. "These ships won't go on passenger service, now, until it's found out what is wrong. Clayton thought the first crash was possibly pilot error, for there was no positive proof of an explosion. The second one stood up ten hours a day for ten days, and nothing happened—until this. The factory insisted that the ships were perfectly sound, but it won't insist that now. You can't go taking chances with a lot of passengers."

He lapsed into silence, thinking. If Mitchell hadn't grounded him, and if this crash hadn't come just when it did, he might have gone out in the morning with a new ship, and piled up. That would have solved his problem. It was irony that it hadn't happened, after all.

But a pattern of a plan suddenly took shape within his mind, and he spoke quickly: "If somebody could take this third ship up very high, and fly it until it breaks up under him—and just sit there and watch what breaks, he could tell the engineers enough so they could fix up the place that's weak. . . . They've got to find the trouble, somehow."

Jean said, with a faint sarcasm: "If dead pilots could talk, that would be very practical. Monty had a parachute, you know."

"It's already practical. Monty wasn't high enough. He should have been high enough, when the trouble started, to describe the trouble over radio, just in case he didn't get out with the 'chute. We'll never know the trouble, until somebody survives a crash. I think I could do it."

**J**EAN started, and tried to laugh, but failed. "You can't, Hez! Think how it would leave—" She checked herself, with a discipline developed through the years. She never let him go into the air carrying a reflection of her own apprehension or emotion, however much she was affected: she wouldn't handicap him in that way. He loved aviation, and if he did this now, it would be in an effort to advance it.

He looked away, and then back, seeing the quickened pulse against the whiteness of her throat. He understood the

struggle she was undergoing. How grand she was, how strong! It made him unutterably sad to think of leaving her alone. But—

The smile he gave her was a little drawn. "All I'm going to do is take this ship up and test it. I'll be careful. I'll wear a 'chute, and get high enough to use it!" Impulsively he leaned and kissed her, and then backed from the parking space and turned toward home.

**A**T the house he carried her inside, and placed her carefully on the couch.

Jean, leaning lightly against him, said: "Darling, tell Maybelle to fix something cold. You look burnt out. How was your examination?" She tried to seem completely natural, to show nothing of the strain she felt. But fervently she hoped Hez would change his mind about this test flight.

He patted her knee with a quick little movement, and crossed the room to speak to Maybelle in the kitchen. How much should he say to Jean about his eyes? Nothing; there was no point in answering the question, if it could be evaded.

Back with her, he handed her a cigarette and took one for himself. He should be getting to the field soon, but he seemed physically unable to tear himself away.

Jean, leaning her head back and staring at the ceiling, said casually: "Let's go to Colorado on our vacation this year, Hez. I can stand the trip. It's far too hot to stay all summer here."

His throat ached, and it required a moment to marshal self-control. It wrenched him, watching Jean, and looking at the future. Three weeks from now— But he said: "Maybe we could wangle Clayton for some passes. Tight

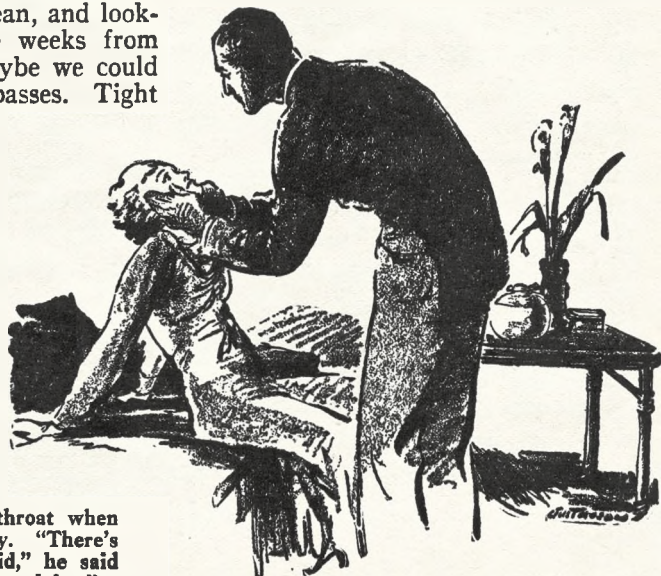
old coot, that guy!" He laughed, too heartily. Maybelle came in with some punch, and they sat there drinking it in silence. He wanted to spend hours here, talking with Jean, and looking at her. But now he couldn't seem to talk; he was inarticulate and almost mute. . . .

It was incredible how fast time passed, now when he had so little of it left. He'd been here forty minutes; and he had to go, if he was going. Tomorrow it would be too late, for tomorrow he would not be allowed to fly an airplane again. He had to go—now. . . .

His breath caught in his throat when he tried to tell her good-by. So he didn't say it. He held her face between his hands, searching her eyes this final time. With a melancholy tenderness in his heart, he kissed her once more, gently, and said lightly: "Now, there's nothing to this business, kid. I know what I'm doing. You know I know what I'm doing, too, don't you, sweet?" He forced her to reply.

She smiled, but it was a little tremulous. She nodded: "Of course, Hez. You always know what you're doing. So I won't worry—not one bit!"

When he arrived at the flying-field, he found the long, low plane ready, its two engines ticking leisurely in throaty unison, a mechanic in the cockpit waiting. Upstairs, Thompson and Clayton were going over last details. Clayton, a thin-faced, almost dour man, said tersely: "You don't have to make this test flight, but I appreciate your attitude in volunteering. Personally, I



His breath caught in his throat when he tried to tell her good-by. "There's nothing to this business, kid," he said lightly; "I know what I'm doing."

don't think you'll learn anything this time. Yet I hope to God you do." His voice grew sharp. "If it does bust up, for God's sake don't wait too long before you jump!"

"Okay," Hez Thompson answered, tight-lipped, unsmiling. Now that he was free to go, a nervous tension had descended on him. "I'll be on the radio every minute. And I'll stay up till something breaks, or I run out of gas."

Clayton nodded grimly, and a haggard weariness showed itself around his mouth. He had been harried almost to distraction by these crashes. "This ship has been flown almost as much as the other two were when they 'exploded.' If it's metal fatigue that's causing it, it may show up. But likely you'll have to bring it down again."

Briskly, Thompson went through the corridor and into the pilots' room. He glanced into his letter-box, and found his last mileage pay-check there. With an eerie feeling of finality, he endorsed and mailed it to his bank. He had a hunch this ship would break up, as the others had. Nodding to employees here and there, he crossed the passenger waiting-room, went through the long marquee and stepped into the plane.

A parachute was lying in the rear seat, for him to use. He swung his shoulders into the wide straps, sidled up the aisle and said to the mechanic: "Is this crock gassed up, full?"

"Yes. . . . I checked the cockpit hatch,"—indicating,—“so all you have to do to get out is pull this lever. But you won't need it. My theory is somebody put bombs in those other crates. Airplanes don't just go exploding here and there around the sky. Some gangster put some nitro in there, and went off and forgot it, like as not."

**G**RINNING in reply, Thompson took up the seat-cushion, to make depth for his 'chute. He sat down at the controls, adjusting the belt, checking gas-valves. His heart was thudding gently in his ears, and his perceptions seemed accelerated, so that ordinary routine movements took a long time to accomplish. Every nerve throughout his body seemed taut to the breaking-point, like a bowstring just before the arrow is released. This wouldn't do, he told himself. After all, he was going into this deliberately. If he didn't take this ship up now for test, some other pilot would be called upon to take it, later. Some

one had to take the risk, and perhaps some one had to die. Who had less reason to desire the life left for him, than he?

He ran the motors up until the exhaust bellowed out across the field. With the brakes released, he gunned the ship around upon the ramp and taxied to the runway end, and lined up for the take-off. It was odd to be here in an empty ship, with no co-pilot and no stewardess, no passengers behind you. He looked down the runway, and the hangars on the far side of the field were blurred and indistinct.

"These damned eyes of mine!" he growled, and with a quick intake of his breath, shoved the throttles open.

**T**HE plane moved out. It lagged, slow to respond to the snarling engines, then seemed suddenly to leap ahead. It was the first time Hez Thompson had flown these jobs unballasted. Once under way, the acceleration was amazing. The wheels, at seventy miles an hour, hit a rough place in the runway, and the plane bounced off, climbing at two thousand feet a minute.

Hez Thompson throttled quickly, holding his revvs to 1800 in the climb. Now that he was in the air, his mind seemed clearer, more acute, less morbid than it had been on the ground. His perspective was a little changed. He wondered how, deliberately, he had contemplated suicide; for he knew now that he could never have gone through with it. This flight was not suicide. The ship might stay together. If it did break up, "explode," as the others apparently had done, he might get out alive. He didn't think, now, that he would be able to bail out. Blindness or no blindness, he would report the damage as it happened, and then fight to free himself. It seemed strange that he hadn't realized that, on the ground.

His senses were acutely tuned to any strange vibration in the plane, for it was his opinion that vibration had somehow crystallized the thin shell of the fuselage and finally cracked it, in the two ships that had crashed. But there was none, as he spiraled upward. The exhausts blended in a steady thunder. The instrument-needles were firm and steady on their marks, the rate-of-climb at fifteen hundred feet a minute.

Below, the Chicago municipal airport was a wide rectangle with black run-

ways radiating from its center, with hangars on the south and east. Cicero lay sprawled in the August sun to the northeast, the first line of duplexes and apartment-houses clearly visible, the background of them merging invisibly with the brassy sky. He could see no more than that. Bitterly he realized that Doctor Mitchell was entirely right: it was unsafe for him to fly a run.

Steadily he went on up. Three thousand, and then five. The earth was fading now, turning to a dark smooth surface, blurred by objects that had little form. He plunged into a mat of cloud, and the ship jostled in the rising currents; but by his instruments he continued in the climb. Eight thousand. . . . Ten. He meant to go on up to twenty, if this ship would make it. At twenty thousand he would cruise in circles; and if, or when, the structure of the craft let go, he'd have fifteen thousand feet to fall while he described the trouble, and then five more to jump—

But he didn't get that high. At twelve thousand he darted into the black, wet depths of a larger cumulus, and the plane, caught in a sudden violent upthrust, was shivered suddenly from nose to tail. The engines, freed partly of their load for the period of the upthrust, revved up until the tachs went almost to their pegs. The turn-indicator flicked nervously to one side, and the artificial horizon bar dipped up in swift reaction. And in that instant, when everything was momentarily out of his accurate control, the thunderous explosion came.

Shock passed through the trim, lean plane like the concussion of a high explosive shell, shivering it. He had one hand on the throttles, to ease them back; but he never got them back. The explosion came, and the control-wheel was ripped away from him. He snatched the microphone from its hook the instant he realized there was nothing he could do for this screaming, plunging plane.

**A**LREADY the tail section had snapped off. His rudder pedals were empty, useless things, and he had felt the tail go. Already the nose had started down; and the plane, from what he could learn from the reactions of the instruments, was tumbling end over end on the axis of the wings.

He did manage to snap the switches, but not before the left engine had taken up a chattering vibration that tore it bodily from its mount and dropped it

free. The nose of the ship was partly gone. Half a dozen things took place in the space of five terrific close-spaced seconds.

Violent shock ripped through Hez Thompson as he realized the completeness of this thing, as he understood exactly why the other ships had crashed. He was sitting here, descending straight toward earth, with thirty seconds between him and death. But the discipline of years was on his shoulders; and after the first momentarily cataleptic fright had rippled through him, he pressed the button on the microphone and tried to modulate his voice so Clayton, on the ground, could understand.

"Left prop-blade let go," he said, trying not to shout, yet knowing that his voice was wild. He compressed his words, giving only the description of the actual damage. "Vibration from left motor shook it from nacelle. Vibration going through ship snapped off tail-section. Prop blade went through nose." He glanced at the altimeter; and then, as the plane plummeted from the cloud, down at the ground. He couldn't see it clearly. The altimeter read eight thousand feet. He went on crisply: "I ran into a strong up-current in a cloud. The engines revved to twenty-four or twenty-five hundred. At the peak of acceleration, the prop-failure occurred."

**H**IS eyes were fastened on the altimeters. The needles were swinging downward. The Kollsman hand was circling its dial once in each three seconds—measuring a thousand feet each time. The ship was down to six thousand feet. Thompson could get quick glimpses of the blurred earth each time the fuselage turned over in its tumbling descent. There wasn't much time left. He'd have to tell Clayton the rest of it.

"Nothing seems wrong with the structure of these planes," he said quickly. "The propeller-blade came off with an explosion and a shock hard enough to snap off any tail. The other cases were props too, no doubt. That's all. I'm going to get out now."

He released the microphone, and reached up and pulled the lever that released the hatch. His mind was working at tremendous speed as the end neared. The ship, tumbling rapidly at first, seemed to have slowed down. Everything had slowed down. But that was just his mind, accelerating. He wasn't frightened now. That had passed. Not

being frightened, he could see things more clearly than he had done previously. It was easier to die than he had thought. All he had to do was sit here and go in with the ship. There'd be no pain. It would be quick. The way he'd always wanted to go out. Next year he'd be blind. Next year Jean and he would be destitute. He owed it to her to sit here and go in, and on a sudden impulse he decided to. But she mustn't know that it hadn't been an accident.

The hatch-cover flapped open and banged down against the fuselage with a report like a shotgun in his ears. He must make it appear that he'd tried to get out, and had failed. Deciding on this course, he somehow felt relieved. The altimeter showed three thousand feet now, and there was lag in it. He was nearer the ground than that. He didn't have to wait long, now. As the ship turned over, he could see the field down there, off to one side a little way. He snapped off his belt, to climb up into the hatchway, to be there when the plane went in. It would look exactly right.

It was difficult to climb up through, with the ship turning over and over. But he did it. Holding on, he pushed his head up through, into the screaming blast of air that smashed against his ears. And when he got in that position, he saw something that struck terror through him.

The radio antenna was completely gone. Something had struck it, knocking down the mast and sweeping off the wires. It crossed his mind that his report to Clayton had never been received! This ship was crashing, just as the others had crashed, and no one except himself knew what had happened. If he died, now, somebody else would have to run a test on another ship. Perhaps a lot of pilots would be killed, if he could not get out in time.

SO he had to get out, to take this information down. He would go blind, and become a miserable, useless man. Jean would go through life an invalid. But he couldn't help it. He couldn't let a lot of people die, just because he didn't want to live, or just because of Jean. He fought to climb up and get clear of the ship, before it was too late.

The ground was close, and he was afraid it was too close. He could see cars on a highway, and buildings. Just glimpses of them. He crawled out through the hatch, sometimes upside

down, sometimes on top. The wind pressure almost flattened him against the fuselage. But he fought and scrambled to get out on a wing, so the broken end of the fuselage wouldn't smash him when he tried to get away.

He was scared now—choked with fear. It seemed to take forever to get out there in position. The wind was terrible. It shrilled against his ears, blotting out his vision. He held onto the stub of the antenna mast, and shoved himself away, violently.

**A**FRAID to wait, he pulled the rip-cord instantly. That ground was close! The 'chute, exploding over him, jerked him to a momentary standstill in the air—jerked him with such force that it cracked his collar-bone. He didn't know that then. He was dizzy, from the tumbling of the ship; but he got oriented, and looked down. Just then, at the end of the first oscillation of his 'chute, he was flung harmlessly onto the ground with a force that sprawled him there.

He got up, and his senses and perceptions seemed to decelerate to normal. Wondering if the plane had hit yet, he heard the roar of flames and looked around to find the sound that came from a writhing column of black smoke and flame a hundred yards away. He hadn't seen the airport, those last few seconds, and he wondered where he was. Somehow, he was intensely grateful for being here alive; yet beneath that was a lurking worry and an apprehension over what Jean and he were going to do. Maybe he should have gone on and got it over with; he didn't know. The future seemed more desolate than ever now. A car came up at high speed, slid to a stop beside him. Mr. Clayton and Doctor Mitchell jumped from it and ran toward him.

"Hurt?" Mitchell asked excitedly.

"I'm all right," he said, reflecting that he had let Jean down.

"God, you frightened us!" Clayton gasped. "You waited too damn' long. I thought you wouldn't make it, man! What let go up there?"

Hez Thompson bundled up his parachute and got into the car with them. "A prop let go," he said, and described the breakage in detail as Clayton drove back to the field. Then he turned to Doctor Mitchell with a deep resentment: "You wasted no time getting out here to pass around the word, I see!" He had not thought Mitchell was like



that, and the realization of it gave him a sudden helpless feeling that the world was in conspiracy against him.

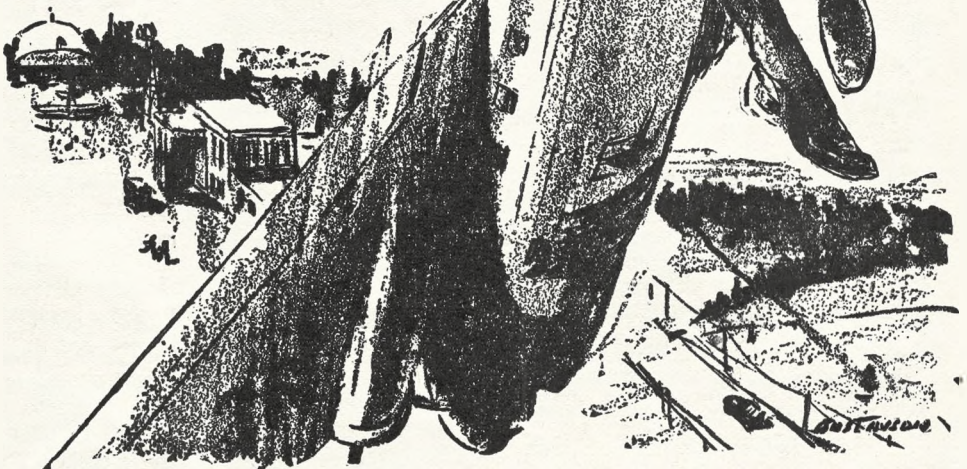
Mitchell said easily: "I went by your home, to have a talk with you. Your wife told me why you'd come out here." He hesitated. "I was afraid you'd do something—well, rash."

Unreasonable anger swept Thompson, at knowing Mitchell had understood the working of his mind. He blurted: "I couldn't do it this time, because the radio antenna got knocked off the ship, and I had to bring the information down." He felt frustrated, friendless.

Clayton cut in: "Doctor Mitchell and I have had a talk, Hez. I've felt for a long time this company needs a kind of adviser for its pilots—some one they respect. You've been flying twenty years, and you know pilots and their problems thoroughly. They admire you, and will especially, after this thing you did today. I'd like to see you take the job."

"Charity," Thompson rasped bitterly. "Not charity," Clayton contradicted flatly. "I'm going to hire somebody, no matter what you do."

Hez Thompson said: "If I could really be an asset—really do the job—" His voice broke. Something had him by the throat, and he couldn't say another word. He thought of Jean, and what this meant to her. To him! Blindness was a tragedy, all right, but as long as he could live a useful life, he wouldn't lose his nerve. It was the prospect of his utter uselessness that had so frightened him. Life was like flying, all the way. You never knew what was coming next.



That ground was close! The 'chute, exploding over him, jerked him to a momentary standstill in the air—with such force that it cracked his collar-bone.

# SWORDS of MARS

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

*The climax of John Carter's terrific adventure via space-ship beyond the sun.*

## *The Story Thus Far:*

EVER since I—John Carter of Virginia, an emigrant from Earth—had become Warlord of Mars, I had been seeking to extirpate the vicious criminal organizations which infest that planet. I finally decided to go alone, secretly and in disguise, to the city of Zodanga—nearly two thousand miles from my capital Helium—which is headquarters for the most powerful guilds of assassins on Mars; and one night I set forth in a fast one-man flyer. Next day, evading the patrol planes, I slipped into the city. Here I contrived to become acquainted with a professional assassin called Rapas the Ulsio (the Rat). This man offered to introduce me to his employer, the wealthy inventor Fal Sivas, and Fal Sivas hired me as his bodyguard.

That night a girl burst into my quarters and begged me to hide her.

"Fal Sivas' greatest invention," she told me, "is a ship that travels through interplanetary space, controlled by a mechanical brain. To duplicate the human brain, he needs slaves like me, whom he tortures to death in his experiments."

Next day I selected this girl Zanda for my slave, and so contrived to protect her. Later, with Fal Sivas' permission, I undertook a scouting raid upon the headquarters of Ur Jan's guild of assassins.

Meanwhile Fal Sivas had shown me his marvelous airship controlled by a mechanical brain; secretly I discovered it would obey my thought-commands quite as well as those of Fal Sivas.

Several days later I chanced to overhear Ur Jan's plan to kidnap my wife, the princess Dejah Thoris, take her to the planet Thuria in a space-ship flown by Gar Nal—an inventor-rival of Fal Sivas—and hide her there while negotiating for a huge ransom.

My hurried return to Helium to safeguard my princess proved too late; she had been abducted the previous night. So, taking with me the young padwar Jat Or, I returned to Zodanga, seized

control of Fal Sivas' huge ship, and started for Thuria, with Jat Or and Zanda.

The journey to Thuria through the dark reaches of space proved uneventful save as it demonstrated the incredible speed of the space-ship and its uncanny ability to respond to thought-control.

At dawn we reached Thuria; discerning Gar Nal's ship grounded in the courtyard of what seemed a deserted castle, we too landed there. From a lofty tower came the voice of Dejah Thoris, anxiously warning us of danger; then as we started for the castle, we were seized by invisible hands, overpowered, bound and propelled inside.

I was thrown into a tower room where was likewise incarcerated a weird cat-man—a creature with one enormous eye centered in his forehead, rudimentary ears, and two mouths—a toothless upper one for sucking the blood of his prey, and a lipless lower one equipped with fangs. We became friends, and soon I learned his language. He was Umka of the Masenas, he told me, and our captors were the Tarids, a sun-worshipping people who had developed a hypnotic power of rendering themselves invisible and inaudible to their enemies. But, he said, this invisibility could be pierced by strong mental effort; and within a few days, I succeeded in visualizing the Tarids, who proved to be of human conformation, fair-skinned and handsome.

The very next day Umka and I were conducted to the throne-room. There, under guard, were Jat Or, Zanda, Ur Jan with another of crafty mien—I knew this must be Gar Nal—and my princess Dejah Thoris. We had time only to declare a truce with Ur Jan and Gar Nal, effective until we should escape, when the Tarid tribunal began.

Ul Vas, ruler of the Tarids, decreed that the men of our party, with Umka the Masena, be sacrificed to the Fire God seven days later, but the two women be spared. His young and beautiful Jed-



Illustrated by Robert Fink

By the second night we had filed our prison-bars through. I concentrated upon the mechanical brain, directing that the ship come to the window and luckily it soon obeyed. We entered it, then circling widely dropped unseen to the courtyard beside Gar Nal's ship and with the two ships side by side, floated to the window displaying the scarf-signal. But just as the rescue of the women seemed sure, an alarm was raised outside, warriors burst in the door, and in the fierce fighting which followed Gar Nal seized Dejah Thoris and fled in his ship. While Zanda, with Jat Or and Ur Jan, boarded the other craft safely, I stopped to rescue Ozara—and had time only to command the ship to start in pursuit of Gar Nal, before a blow rendered me unconscious.

I regained my senses to find myself in a cold stone cell in absolute darkness. Sometime later a guard bringing me food said that Ozara and I would soon be executed. But by his torch-light I saw beams extending across my cell, and after he left I succeeded in leaping upward and drawing myself upon one. Here I crouched until I heard a guard approaching. When he looked in and did not see me, he stepped cautiously inside. In one hand he carried a torch, and in the other he gripped a keen long sword.

Very slowly he started across the cell; and in the darkness above, I followed along the beam, like a panther stalking its prey. He passed beneath me; and as he did so, I sprang. (*The story continues in detail.*)

dara tried unavailingly to plead for us. After we had been re-imprisoned—the women being confined separately—I told my companions of our death sentence.

Shortly after, the Jeddara Ozara sent for me. After I admitted I could see and hear her, she told me she was no willing consort of Ul Vas; he had stolen her from her own country of Domnia, and now he would have her killed, in order to take Dejah Thoris for his new Jeddara. Ozara urged our escape together and agreed to send me, by her maid Ulah, tools with which to sever our bars. I directed that she join Zanda and Dejah Thoris and show a scarf at their window to identify their room.

**T**HE screams of the warrior seemed loud enough to bring every fighting-man in the castle upon me, as I launched myself upon him and brought him to the floor.

As the man went down, the light of the torch was extinguished; we fought in total darkness. My first aim was to quiet his screams, and this I did the instant that my fingers found his throat.

It seemed almost in the nature of a miracle that my dream of escape should be materializing, step by step, almost precisely as I had visualized it; and this thought gave me hope that good fortune might continue to attend me until I was safely out of the clutches of Ul Vas.

The warrior with whom I struggled upon the stone floor of that dark cell beneath the castle of the Tarids was a man of only ordinary physical strength, and I soon subdued him.

Possibly I accomplished this sooner than I might have otherwise; for, after I got my fingers on his throat, I promised I would not kill him if he would cease his struggling and attempted screaming.

With me, time was an all-important factor; for even if the man's outcry had not been heard by his comrades above-stairs, it seemed quite reasonable that if he did not return to his other duties within a reasonable time, a search for him would be instituted. If I were to escape, I must get out at once; and so, after I made my offer to the man and he ceased his struggling momentarily, I released my grip upon his throat long enough for him to accept or refuse my proposition.

Being a man of intelligence, he accepted.

I immediately bound him with his own harness and, as an added precaution, stuffed a gag in his mouth. Next I relieved him of his dagger, and after groping around on the floor for some time I found the long sword that had fallen from his hand when I first attacked him.

"And now good-by, my friend," I said. "You need not feel humiliated at your defeat; far better men than you have gone down before John Carter, Prince of Helium." Then I went out and closed and locked the door of the cell after me.

**T**HE corridor was very dark. I had had but one glimpse of it, or rather of a portion of it, when my food had been brought to me the previous day.

It had seemed to me then that the corridor led straight away from the entrance to my cell, and now I groped my way through the darkness in that direction. Probably I should have moved slowly along that unknown passageway; but I did not, for I knew that if the warrior's

cries had been heard in the castle above, there might be an investigation; and I most certainly did not wish to meet a body of armed men in that *cul-de-sac*.

Keeping one hand against the wall to guide me, I moved rapidly forward; and I had gone perhaps a hundred yards when I discerned a faint suggestion of light ahead of me. It did not seem to be the yellowish light of a torch, but, rather, diffused daylight.

It increased in volume as I approached it, and presently I came to the foot of the stairway down which it was shining.

**A**LL this time, I had heard nothing to indicate that anyone was coming to investigate; so it was with a feeling of at least some security that I ascended the stairway.

With the utmost caution, I entered the level above. Here it was much lighter. I was in a short corridor with a doorway on either side; ahead of me the passageway ended in a transverse corridor. I moved quickly forward, for I could now see my way quite clearly, as the corridor, although extremely gloomy, was much better lighted than that from which I had emerged.

I was congratulating myself upon my good fortune as I was about to turn into the transverse corridor, when I bumped full into a figure at the turn.

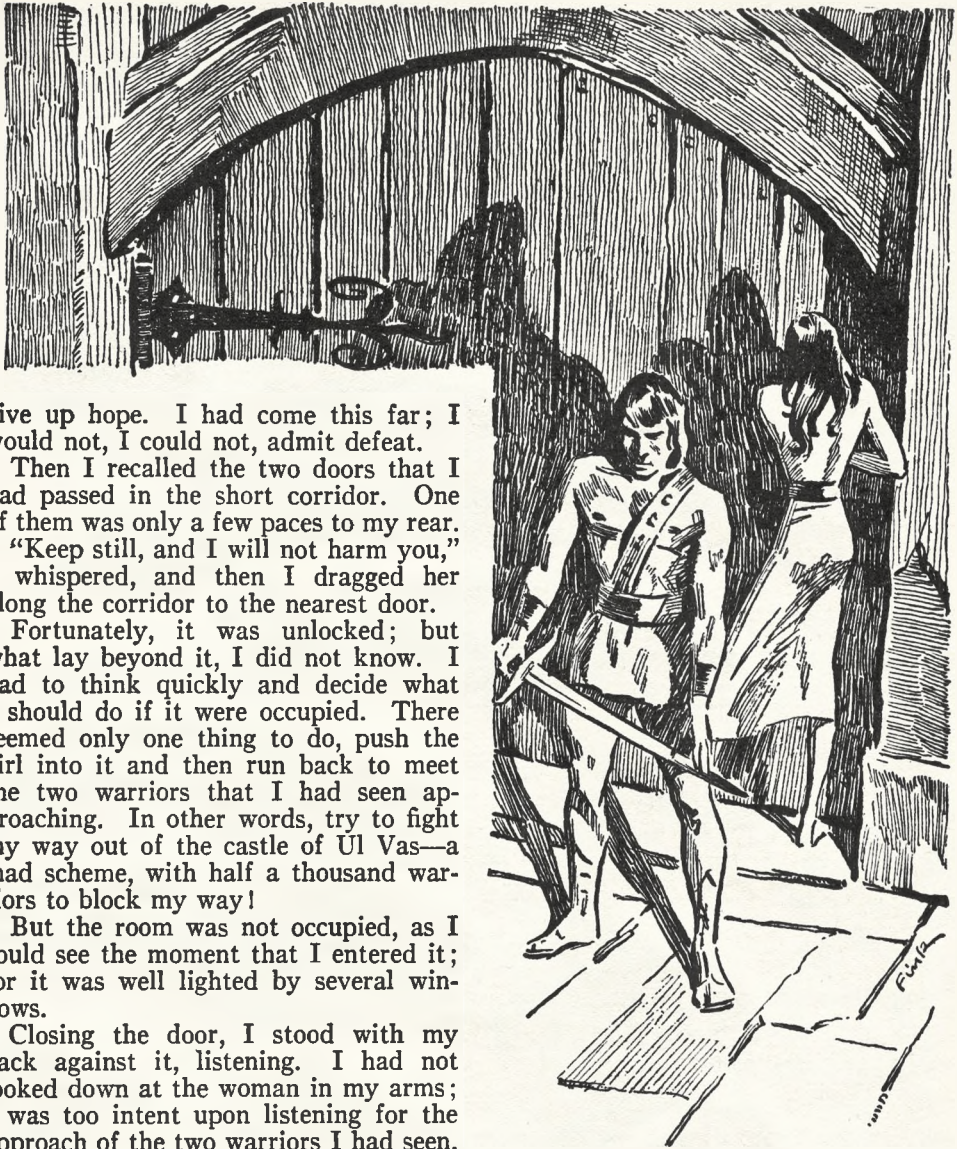
It was a woman. She was probably much more surprised than I, and she started to scream.

I knew that, above all things, I must prevent her from giving an alarm; and so I seized her and clapped a hand across her mouth.

I had just turned the corner into the other corridor when I collided with her; its full length was visible to me; and now, as I silenced the woman, I saw two warriors turn into it at the far end. They were coming in my direction. Evidently I had congratulated myself too soon.

Unencumbered by my captive, I might have found a hiding-place, or, failing that, I could have lain in ambush for them in this darker passageway and killed them both before they could raise an alarm; but here I was with both of my hands occupied, one of them holding the struggling girl and the other effectually silencing her attempt to cry out.

I could not kill her, and if I turned her loose she would have the whole castle on me in a few moments. My case seemed entirely hopeless, but I did not



give up hope. I had come this far; I would not, I could not, admit defeat.

Then I recalled the two doors that I had passed in the short corridor. One of them was only a few paces to my rear.

"Keep still, and I will not harm you," I whispered, and then I dragged her along the corridor to the nearest door.

Fortunately, it was unlocked; but what lay beyond it, I did not know. I had to think quickly and decide what I should do if it were occupied. There seemed only one thing to do, push the girl into it and then run back to meet the two warriors that I had seen approaching. In other words, try to fight my way out of the castle of Ul Vas—a mad scheme, with half a thousand warriors to block my way!

But the room was not occupied, as I could see the moment that I entered it; for it was well lighted by several windows.

Closing the door, I stood with my back against it, listening. I had not looked down at the woman in my arms; I was too intent upon listening for the approach of the two warriors I had seen. Would they turn into this corridor? Would they come to this very room?

I must have unconsciously released my pressure upon the girl's lips; for before I could prevent it, she tore my hand away and spoke.

"John Carter!" she exclaimed in a low tone.

I looked down at her in surprise, and then I recognized her. It was Ulah, the slave of Ozara, the Jeddara of the Tarids.

"Ulah," I said, earnestly, "please do not make me harm you. I do not wish to harm anyone in the castle; I only wish to escape. More than my life depends upon that, so very much more that I would break the unwritten law of my caste even to killing a woman, were

Ozara was still fumbling with the door; from the end of the corridor I saw a detachment of warriors racing toward us.

it necessary to do so to accomplish my purpose."

"You need not fear me," she said; "I will not betray you."

"You are a wise girl," I said; "you have bought your life very cheaply."

"It was not to save my life that I promised," she said. "I would not have betrayed you in any event."

"And why?" I asked. "You owe me nothing."

"I love my mistress, Ozara," she said simply.

"And what has that to do with it?" I asked.

"I would not harm one whom my mistress loves."

Of course, I knew that Ulah was romancing—letting her imagination work overtime; and as it was immaterial what she believed so long as she helped me, I did not contradict her.

"Where is your mistress now?" I asked.

"She is in this very tower," she replied. "She is locked in a room directly above this one, on the next level. Ul Vas is keeping her there until he is ready to destroy her. Oh, save her, John Carter, save her!"

"How did you learn my name, Ulah?" I asked.

"The Jeddara told me," she replied; "she talked about you constantly."

"You are better acquainted with the castle than I am, Ulah," I said; "is there any way in which I can reach the Jeddara? Can you get a message to her? Could we get her out of that room?"

"No," she replied; "the door is locked, and two warriors stand guard outside it day and night."

I WENT to the window and looked out. No one seemed to be in sight. Then I leaned out as far as I could and looked up. Perhaps fifteen feet above me was another window. I turned back into the room.

"You are sure that the Jeddara is in the room directly above this?" I asked.

"I know it," she replied.

"And you want to help her to escape?"

"Yes; there is nothing that I would not do to serve her."

"What is this room used for?" I asked.

"Nothing, now," she replied; "you see everything is covered with dust. It has not been used for a long time."

"You think it is not likely that anyone will come here?" I asked. "You think I might hide here safely until tonight?"

"I am sure that you are perfectly safe," she replied; "I do not know why anyone should come here."

"Good!" I exclaimed. "Do you really want to help your mistress to escape?"

"With all my heart," she replied. "I could not bear to see her die."

"You can help her, then," I said.

"How?"

"Bring me a rope and a strong hook. Do you think you can do it?"

"How long a rope?"

"About twenty feet."

"When do you want them?"

"Whenever you can bring them with-

out danger of detection, but certainly before midnight tonight."

"I can get them," she said. "I will go at once."

I had to trust her; there was no other way, and so I let her depart.

After she had gone and I had closed the door behind her, I found a heavy bar on the inside. I dropped this into its keeper so that no one could enter the room unexpectedly and take me by surprise. Then I sat down to wait.

Those were long hours that dragged themselves slowly by. I could not but constantly question my wisdom in trusting the slave girl, Ulah. What did I know about her? By what loyalty was she bound to me, except by the thin bond engendered by her foolish imagination? Perhaps, already, she had arranged for my capture. It would not be at all surprising if she had a lover among the warriors, for she was quite beautiful. What better turn could she serve him than by divulging the place of my concealment and permitting him to be the means of my capture and perhaps thereby winning promotion?

Toward the end of the afternoon, when I heard footsteps coming along the corridor toward my hiding-place—the first sounds that I had heard since Ulah left me—I was certain that warriors were coming to seize me. I determined that I would give a good account of myself; and so I stood by the door, my long sword ready in my hand; but the footsteps passed by me. They were moving in the direction of the stairway up which I had come from the dark corridor leading to my cell.

Not long after, I heard them returning. There were a number of men talking excitedly, but through the heavy door I could not quite catch their words. When they had passed out of hearing, I breathed a sigh of relief; and my confidence in Ulah commenced to revive.

NIGHT fell. Light began to shine in many of the windows in the castle visible from the room in which I hid.

Why did not Ulah return? Had she been unable to find a rope and a hook? Was something or some one detaining her? What futile questions one propounds in the extremity of despair!

Presently I heard a sound outside the door of the room. I had heard no one approaching; but now I knew that some one was pushing on the door, attempting to enter. I went close to it and put my



The beasts charged almost instantly, but I reached a point of safety before they could drag me down.

ear against the panels. Then I heard a voice: "Open—it is Ulah."

Great was my relief as I drew the bar and admitted the slave girl. It was quite dark in the room; we could not see one another.

"Did you think I was never going to return, John Carter?" she asked.

"I was commencing to have my doubts," I replied. "Were you able to get the things I asked for?"

"Yes, here they are," she said, and I felt a rope and a hook pressed into my hand.

"Good!" I exclaimed. "Have you learned anything while you were away that might help me or the Jeddara?"

"No," she said, "nothing that will help you, but something that may make it

more difficult for you to leave the castle, if that were possible at all, which I doubt."

"What is that?" I demanded.

"They have learned of your escape from the cell," she replied. "The warrior who was sent there with your food did not return; and when other warriors went to investigate, they found him bound and gagged in the cell where you should have been."

"It must have been they I heard passing the door late in the afternoon," I said. "It seems strange they have not searched this room."

"They think you went in another direction," she explained. "They are now searching another part of the castle."

"But eventually they will come here?" I asked.

"Yes," she said; "eventually they will search every room in the castle, but that will take a long time."

"YOU have done well, Ulah," I said.

"I am sorry I can offer you nothing more in return than my thanks."

"I shall be glad to do even more," she said; "there is nothing that I would not do to help you and the Jeddara."

"There is nothing more that you can do," I told her; "and now you had better go, before they find you here with me."

"You are sure that there is nothing more I can do?" she asked.

"No, nothing, Ulah." I opened the door, and she went out.

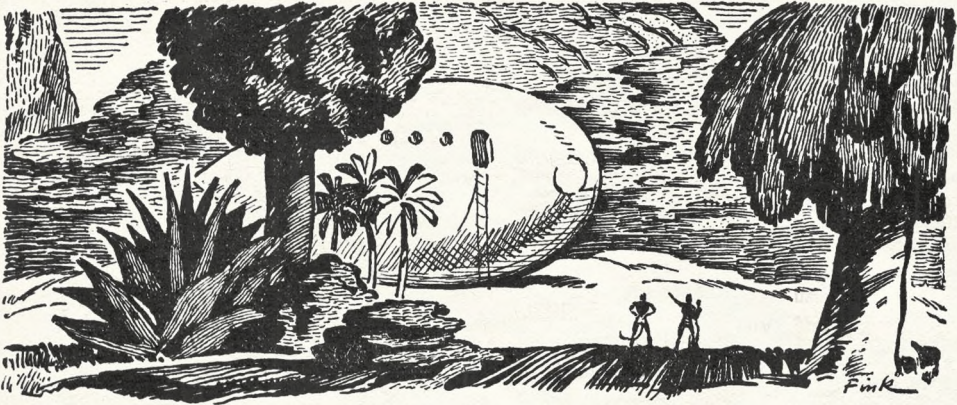
"Good-by, and good luck, John Carter," she whispered, as I closed the door behind her.

I went at once to the window, after rebolting the door. It was very dark outside. I preferred to wait until after midnight and until the castle was asleep before I attempted to put into practice the plan I contemplated for the rescue of Ozara, but the knowledge that they were searching the castle for me forced me to put aside every consideration except haste.

I fastened one end of the rope securely to the hook that Ulah had brought me. Then I sat on the window-sill and leaned far out.

I took one end of the rope in my left hand where I grasped the frame of the window, and held the hook in my right hand, permitting the slack of the rope to fall free beneath me against the side of the tower outside the window.

I gauged the distance upward to the sill of the window above. It seemed too



Umka led Ozara and me to the spot where the landing had been made.

far for me to hope to make a successful cast from the position in which I was sitting, and so I arose and stood on the sill of the window. This brought me a few feet nearer my goal and also gave me a little more freedom of action.

I was very anxious to be successful at the first cast; for I feared that if I missed, the rattling of the metal hook against the side of the tower might attract attention.

I stood there several minutes gauging the distance and going through all the motions of throwing the hook except actually releasing it.

When I felt that I had the timing and the distance as accurately gauged as it was possible to do in this manner, I swung the hook upward and released it.

I could see the sill above me, because a faint light was coming from the room beyond it. I saw the hook swing into this light; I heard it strike the sill with a metallic ring; then I pulled down upon the rope.

The hook had caught! I put considerable weight upon the rope, and still the hook held. I waited a moment to see if I had attracted the attention of Ozara or anyone else who might be in the room with her.

No sign came out of the silence above, and I let my body swing out upon the rope; but I ascended very carefully, for I did not know how secure a hold the hook had upon the sill above.

I had not a great distance to climb, yet it seemed an eternity before my hand touched the sill.

First the fingers of one hand closed over it; then I drew myself up until I could grasp it with my other hand. Slowly, by main strength, I raised myself until my eyes were above the level of the

sill. Before me was a dimly lighted room, apparently vacant.

I drew myself up farther until I could get one knee upon the sill, and always I was careful not to dislodge the hook.

When, at last, my position was secure, I entered the room, taking the hook in with me lest it slip and fall to the bottom of the tower on the outside.

Now I saw that the room was occupied. A woman rose from a bed upon the opposite side. She was looking at me with wide, horror-struck eyes. It was Ozara.

Raising a warning finger to my lips, I approached her. "Make no sound, Ozara," I whispered; "I have come to save you."

"John Carter!" She breathed the name in tones so low that they could not have been heard beyond the door. As she spoke, she came close and threw her arms about my neck.

"Come," I said, "we must get out of here at once. Do not talk; we may be overheard."

Taking her to the window, I drew in the rope and fastened the lower end of it around her waist.

"I am going to lower you to the window of the room just below," I whispered. "As soon as you are safely inside, untie the rope and let it swing out for me."

She nodded, and I lowered her away. Presently the rope went slack, and I knew that she had reached the sill of the room below. I waited for her to unfasten it from about her body; then I engaged the hook over the sill upon which I sat, and quickly descended to the room below.

I did not wish to leave the hook and rope as they were, because, in the event



that anyone should enter Ozara's cell above, this evidence would point immediately to the room below; and I did not know how long we might have to wait here.

As gently as possible, I shook the hook loose and was fortunate in catching it as it dropped and before it could scrape against the side of the tower.

AS I entered the room, Ozara came close to me and put her hands upon my breast. She was trembling, and her voice shook as she spoke.

"I was so surprised to see you, John Carter," she said. "I thought that you were dead. I saw them strike you down, and Ul Vas told me that they had killed you. What a terrible wound; I do not see how you recovered. When you faced me in the room above and I saw the blood dried upon your skin and in your hair, it was as though a dead man had come back to life."

"I had forgotten what a spectacle I must present," I said. "I have had no opportunity to wash the blood from me since I was wounded. What little water they brought me barely sufficed for drinking purposes; but as far as the wound is concerned, it does not bother me. I am quite recovered; it was only a flesh wound."

"I was so frightened for you," she said; "and to think that you took that risk for me, when you might have escaped with your friends."

"You think they got away all right?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, "and Ul Vas is very furious about it. He will make you and me pay, if we do not escape."

"Do you know of any way by which we can escape from this castle?" I asked her.

"There is a secret doorway, known only to Ul Vas and two of his most faithful slaves," she replied. "At least, Ul Vas thinks that only those three know of it; but I know. It leads out to the edge of the river where the waters lap the walls of the castle."

"Ul Vas is not well-liked by his people. There are plots and intrigues in the castle. There are factions that would like to overthrow Ul Vas and set up a new Jeddak. Some of these enemies are so powerful Ul Vas does not dare destroy them openly. These, he murders secretly; and he and his two faithful slaves carry the bodies to this secret doorway and cast them into the river."

"Once, suspecting something of the kind, I followed him, thinking that I might discover a way to escape and return to my own people in Domnia; but when I saw where the passage led, I was afraid. I would not dare to jump into the river; and even if I did, beyond the river there is a terrible forest. I do not know, John Carter, that we would be much better off either in the river or the forest than we are here."

"If we remain here, Ozara, we know that we shall meet death and that there will be no escape. In the river or the forest beyond, there will be at least a chance; for often wild beasts are less cruel than men."

"I know that all too well," she replied; "but even in the forest there are men, terrible men."

"Nevertheless, I must take the chance, Ozara," I told her. "Will you come with me?"

"Wherever you take me, John Carter, whatever fate befalls us, I shall be happy as long as I am with you. I was very angry when I learned that you loved that woman from Barsoom," she said; "but now she is gone, and I shall have you all to myself."

"She is my mate, Ozara."

"You love her?" she demanded.

"Of course," I replied.

"That is all right," she said, "but she is gone, and you are mine now."

I had no time to waste on such matters then. It was apparent that the girl was self-willed; that she had always had her own way, had everything that she wished, and could not brook being crossed, no matter how foolish her whim might be. At another time, if we lived, I might bring her to her senses; but now I must bend every effort to escape.

"How can we reach this secret doorway?" I asked. "Do you know the way from here?"

"Yes," she replied; "come with me."

WE crossed the room and entered the corridor. It was very dark, but we groped our way to the stairs that I had ascended from the pit earlier in the day. When she started down these, I questioned her.

"Are you sure this is the right way?" I asked. "This leads to the cell in which I was imprisoned."

"Perhaps it does," she said; "but it also leads to a distant part of the castle, close to the river, where we shall find the doorway we are seeking."

I hoped that she knew what she was talking about as I followed her down the stairway and through the Stygian darkness of the corridor below.

When I had come through it before, I had guided myself by pressing my right hand against the wall at my side. Now Ozara followed the opposite wall; and when we had gone a short distance, turned into a corridor at our right that I had passed without knowing of its existence, because I had been following the opposite wall; and of course in the absolute darkness of the corridor, I had not been able to see anything.

We followed this new corridor for a long distance, but finally ascended a circular stairway to the next level above.

Here we came into a lighted corridor.

"If we can reach the other end of this without being discovered," whispered Ozara, "we shall be safe. At the far end a door leads into the secret passageway ending at the door above the river."

We both listened intently. "I hear no one," she said.

"Nor I."

As we started down the long corridor, I saw that there were rooms opening from it on either side; but as we approached each door I was relieved to find that it was closed.

WE had covered perhaps half the length of the corridor when a slight noise behind us attracted my attention; and, turning, I saw two men step from one of the rooms we had recently passed. They were turning away from us, toward the opposite end of the corridor; and I was breathing a sigh of relief, when a third man followed them from the room. This one, through some perversity of fate, glanced in our direction; and immediately he voiced an exclamation of surprise and warning.

"The Jeddara!" he cried. "And the black-haired one!"

Instantly the three turned and ran toward us. We were about halfway between them and the door leading to the secret passage that was our goal.

Flight, in the face of an enemy, is something that does not set well upon my stomach; but now there was no alternative, since to stand and fight would have been but to insure disaster; and so Ozara and I fled.

The three men pursuing us were shouting at the tops of their voices for the evident purpose of attracting others to their assistance.

Something prompted me to draw my sword as I ran; and it is fortunate that I did so; for just as we were approaching a doorway on our left, a warrior, attracted by the noise in the corridor, emerged. Ozara dodged past him just as he drew his sword. I did not even slacken my speed but took him in my stride, cleaving his skull as I raced past him.

NOW we were at the door, and Ozara was searching for the secret mechanism that would open it to us. The three men were approaching rapidly.

"Take your time, Ozara," I cautioned her, for I knew that in the haste of nervousness her fingers might bungle the job and delay us.

"I am trembling so," she said; "they will reach us before I can open it."

"Don't worry about them," I told her. "I can hold them off until you open it."

Then the three were upon me. I recognized them as officers of the Jeddak's guard, because their trappings were the same as those worn by Zamak; and I surmised, and rightly, that they were good swordsmen.

The one in the lead was too impetuous. He rushed upon me as though he thought he could cut me down with his first stroke, which was not the part of wisdom. I ran him through the heart.

As he fell, the others were upon me but they fought more cautiously; yet, though there were two of them, and their blades were constantly thrusting and cutting in an endeavor to reach me, my own sword, moving with the speed of thought, wove a steel net of defense about me.

But defense alone would not answer my purpose; for if they could keep me on the defensive, they could hold me here until reinforcements came; and then, by force of numbers, I must be overcome.

In the instant, following a parry, my point reached out and pricked one of my adversaries sharply above the heart. Involuntarily, he shrank back; and as he did so I turned upon his companion and opened his chest wide.

Neither wound was mortal, but they slowed my adversaries down. Ozara was still fumbling with the door. Our situation promised to be most unpleasant if she were unable to open it, for now at the far end of the corridor I saw a detachment of warriors racing toward us; but I did not warn her to hurry, fearing

that then, in her excitement, she would never be able to open it.

The two wounded men were now pressing me hard again. They were brave warriors and worthy foemen. It is a pleasure to be pitted against such, although there are always regrets when one must kill them. However, I had no choice, for now I heard a sudden cry of relief from Ozara.

"It is open, John Carter," she cried. "Come! Hurry!"

But now the two warriors were engaging me so fiercely that I could not break away from them.

But just for an instant was I held. With a burst of speed and a ferocity such as I imagine they had never beheld before, I took the battle to them. A vicious cut brought down one; and as he fell, I ran the other through the chest.

The reinforcements running toward us had covered half the length of the corridor as I hurried through the doorway after Ozara and slammed the door behind me.

Now again we were in complete darkness. "Hurry!" cried Ozara. "The passageway is straight and level all the way to the door."

Through the darkness, we ran. I heard the men behind me open the door, and knew that they were in the passageway at our rear; fully twenty of them there must have been.

Suddenly I ran full upon Ozara. We had come to the end of the passage, and she was standing at the door. This door she opened more quickly; and as it swung in, I saw the dark river flowing beneath us. Upon the opposite shore was the gloomy outline of the forest.

How cold and mysterious this strange river looked! What dangers, what terrors, lay in the sinister wood beyond?

But I was only vaguely conscious of such thoughts. The warriors who would seize us and carry us back to death were almost upon us as I took Ozara in my arms and jumped.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE SINISTER FOREST

**D**ARK, forbidding waters closed over our heads and swirled about us as we rose to the surface; and, equally dark and forbidding, the forest frowned upon us. Even the moaning of the wind in the trees seemed an eerie warning, forbidding, threatening. Behind us, the war-

riors grouped in the doorway shouted curses upon us.

I struck out for the opposite shore, holding Ozara in one arm and keeping her mouth and nose above water. She lay so limp that I thought she had fainted, nor would I have been surprised, for even a woman of the strongest fibre might weaken after having undergone what she had had to during the last two days.

But when we reached the opposite shore, she clambered out on the bank in full possession of all her faculties.

"I thought that you had swooned," I said; "you lay so very still."

"I do not swim," she replied; "and I knew that if I struggled, it would hamper you." There was even more to the erstwhile Jeddara of the Tarids than I had imagined, evidently.

"What are we going to do now, John Carter?" she asked. Her teeth were chattering from cold, or terror; and she seemed very miserable.

"You are cold," I said; "if I can find anything dry enough to burn, we shall have a fire."

**T**HE girl came close to me; I could feel her body trembling against mine.

"I am a little cold," she said, "but that is nothing; I am terribly afraid."

"But why are you afraid now, Ozara? Do you think that Ul Vas will send men after us?"

"No, it is not that," she replied. "He couldn't make men come into this wood at night, and even by daylight they would hesitate to venture into it on this side of the river. Tomorrow he will know that it will be useless to send after us, for tomorrow we shall be dead."

"What makes you say that?" I demanded.

"The beasts," she said, "the beasts that hunt through the forest by night; we cannot escape them."

"Yet you came here willingly."

"Ul Vas would have tortured us," she replied; "the beasts will be more merciful. Listen! You can hear them now."

In the distance, I heard strange grunts and then a fearsome roar.

"They are not near us," I said.

"They will come," she replied.

"Then I had better get a fire started; that will keep them away."

"Do you think so?" she asked.

"I hope so."

I knew that in any forest there must be dead wood; and so, although it was

pitch dark, I commenced to search for fallen branches; and soon I had collected a little pile of these and some dry leaves.

The Tarids had not taken away my pocket pouch, and in it I still had the common Martian appliance for making fire.

"You said that the Tarids would hesitate to enter the forest on this side of the river even by day," I remarked, as I sought to ignite the dry leaves with which I hoped to start my fire. "Why is that?"

"The Masenas," she replied. "They often come up the river in great numbers, hunting the Tarids; and unfortunate is he whom they find outside the castle walls. It is seldom, however, that they cross to the other side of the river."

"Why do they hunt the Tarids?" I asked. "What do they want of them?"

"Food," she replied.

"You don't mean to say that the Masenas eat human flesh?" I demanded.

She nodded. "Yes, they are very fond of it."

I had succeeded in igniting the leaves, and now I busied myself placing small twigs upon my newborn fire and building it up into the semblance of something worth while.

"But I was imprisoned for a long time with one of the Masenas," I reminded her. "He seemed very friendly."

"Under those circumstances, of course," she said, "he might not try to eat you. He might even become very friendly; but if you should meet him here in the forest with his own people, you would find him very different. They are hunting beasts, like all of the other creatures that inhabit the forest."

**M**Y fire grew to quite a respectable size. It illuminated the forest and the surface of the river and the castle beyond.

When it blazed up and revealed us, the Tarids called across to us, prophesying our early death.

The warmth of the fire was pleasant after our immersion in the cold water and exposure to the chill of the forest night. Ozara came close to it, stretching her lithe young body before it. The yellow flames illuminated her fair skin, imparted a greenish tinge to her blue hair, awakened slumberous fires in her languorous eyes.

Suddenly she tensed, her eyes widened in fright. "Look!" she whispered, and pointed.

I turned in the direction that she indicated. From the dense shadows just beyond the firelight, two blazing eyes were flaming.

"They have come for us," said Ozara.

I picked a blazing brand from the fire and hurled it at the intruder. There was a hideous, blood-curdling scream as the eyes disappeared.

**O**ZARA was trembling again. She cast affrighted glances about her.

"There is another," she exclaimed presently, "and there, and there, and there."

I caught a glimpse of a great body slinking in the shadows; and all about us, as I turned, I saw blazing eyes. I threw a few more brands, but the eyes disappeared for only a moment to return again almost immediately, and each time they seemed to come closer; and now, since I had cast the first brand, the beasts were roaring and growling and screaming continuously—a veritable diapason of horror.

I realized that my fire would not last long if I kept throwing it at the beasts, as I had not sufficient wood to keep it replenished.

Something must be done. I cast about me rather hopelessly in search of some avenue of escape and discovered a nearby tree that looked as though it might be easily scaled. Only such a tree would be of any advantage to us, as I had no doubt that the creatures would charge the moment that we started to climb.

I took two brands from the fire and handed them to Ozara, and then selected two for myself.

"What are we going to do?" she asked.

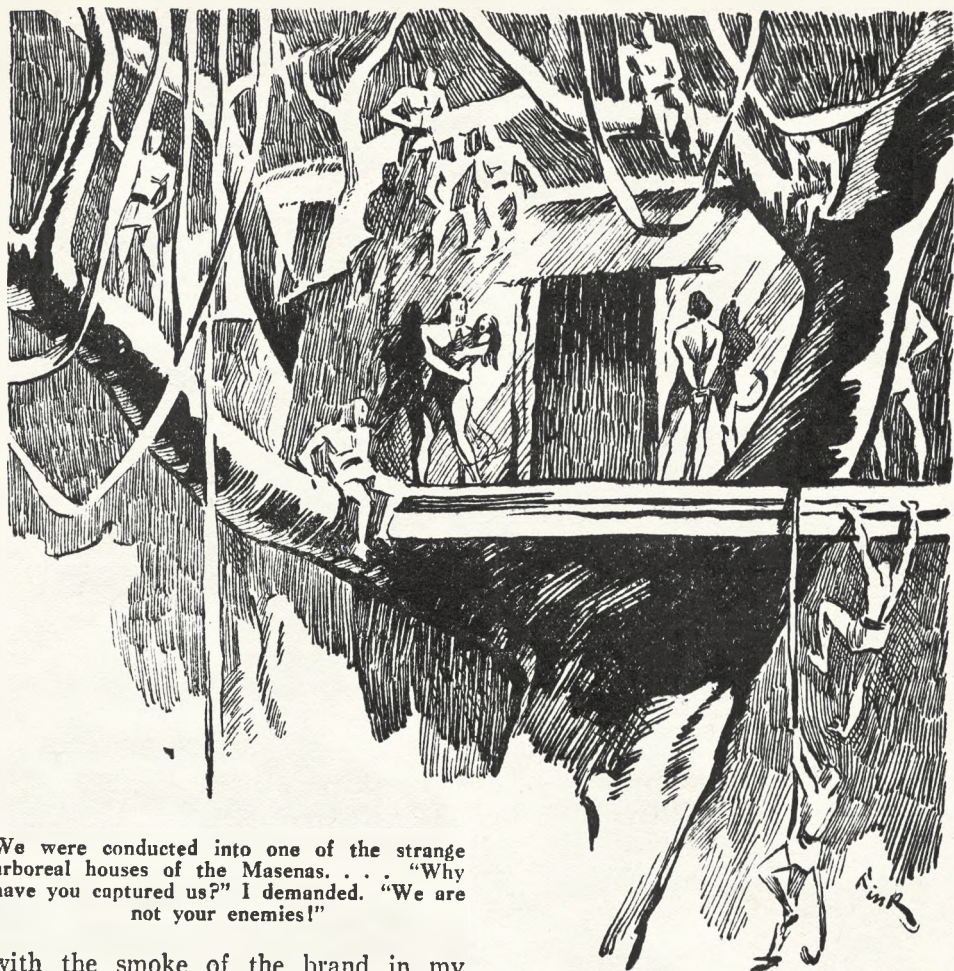
"We are going to try to climb that tree," I replied. "Perhaps some of these brutes can climb, too, but we shall have to take a chance. Those I have seen look too large and heavy for climbing."

"We will walk slowly to the foot of the tree. When we are there, throw your brands at the nearest beasts; and then start to climb. When you are safely out of their reach, I will follow."

Slowly we crossed from the fire to the tree, waving the blazing brands about us.

Here, Ozara did as I had bid her; and when she was safely out of the way, I grasped one of my brands in my teeth, hurled the other, and started to climb.

The beasts charged almost instantly, but I reached a point of safety before they could drag me down, though what



We were conducted into one of the strange arboreal houses of the Masenas. . . . "Why have you captured us?" I demanded. "We are not your enemies!"

with the smoke of the brand in my eyes and the sparks being scraped off against my naked hide, I was lucky to have made it at all; but I felt that we must have the light of the brand, as I did not know what arboreal enemies might be lurking above.

I immediately examined the tree, climbing to the highest branches that would support my weight. With the aid of my light, I discovered that no creature was in it, other than Ozara and myself; and high among the branches I made a happy find—an enormous nest, carefully woven and lined with soft grasses.

I was about to call down to Ozara to come up, when I saw her already ascending just below me.

When she saw the nest, she told me that it was probably one of those built by the Masenas for temporary use during a raid or expedition into this part of the forest. It was certainly a most providential find, as it afforded us a comfortable place in which to spend the remainder of the night.

It was some time before we could accustom ourselves to the noises of the beasts howling beneath us, but at last we fell asleep; and when we awoke in the morning, they had departed and the forest was quiet. . . .

Ozara had told me that her country, Domnia, lay across the mountains that rose beyond the forest and that it might be reached by following the river down for a considerable distance to the end of the range, where we could follow another river up to Domnia upon the opposite side.

The most remarkable feature of the following two days was the fact that we survived them. We found food in plenty; and as we were always near the river, we never suffered for lack of water; but by day and by night we were constantly in danger of attack by the roving flesh-eaters.

We always sought to save ourselves by climbing into trees, but upon three occasions we were taken by surprise;

and I was forced to fall back upon my sword, which had seemed to me a most inadequate weapon of defense against the ferocious beasts that assailed us.

However, in these three instances, I managed to kill our attackers, although I must confess that it seemed to me then, and still does, wholly a matter of luck that I succeeded.

**B**Y now, Ozara was in a more sanguine frame of mind. Having survived this long, she felt it was entirely possible that we might live to reach Domnia, although originally she had been confident that we could not come through the first night alive.

She was often quite gay now, and she was really very good company. Especially was this true on the morning of the third day as we were making good progress toward our distant goal.

The forest seemed to be unusually quiet; and we had seen no dangerous beasts all that day, when suddenly a chorus of hideous roars arose all about us; and simultaneously a score or more of creatures dropped from the concealing foliage of the trees about us.

Ozara's happy chatter died on her lips. "The Masenas!" she cried.

As they surrounded us and started to close in on us, their roaring ceased and they commenced to meow and purr. This, to me, seemed far more horrifying. As they came closer, I decided to make our capture cost them dearly, though I knew that eventually they would take us. I had seen Umka fight, and I knew what to expect.

Although they closed about me, they did not seem anxious to engage me. By pushing close to me on one side and then on the other, by giving way here and then there, I was forced to move about considerably; but I did not realize until it was too late that I was moving in the direction that they wished me to move and in accordance with their designs.

Presently they got me where they wanted me, beneath the branches of a great tree; and immediately a Masena dropped upon my shoulders and bore me to earth. Simultaneously, most of the others swarmed on top of me, while a few seized Ozara; and thus they disarmed me before I could strike a blow.

There was a great amount of purring after that, and they seemed to be having some sort of discussion; but as it was in their own language, I did not under-

stand it. Presently, however, they started down-river, dragging us along with them.

After perhaps an hour, we came to a section of the forest from which all the brushwood had been cleared. The ground beneath the trees was almost like a lawn. The branches of the trees were trimmed to a considerable distance above the ground.

As we reached the edge of this park-like space, our captors set up a loud roaring which was presently answered from the trees we were approaching.

We were dragged to the foot of a great tree, up which several of our captors swarmed like cats.

Then came the problem of getting us up. I could see that it puzzled the Masenas, as well it might have. The bole of the tree was so large in diameter that no ordinary man could scale it, and all the branches had been cut off much higher than a man could jump. I could easily have entered it, but I did not tell them so. Ozara, however, could never have succeeded alone.

Presently, after considerable meowing and purring and not a little growling, some of those in the tree above lowered a pliant liana. One of the Masenas on the ground seized Ozara around the waist with one arm and the liana with his free hand and both his feet. Then those above hoisted this human elevator until it could find secure footing for itself and its passenger among the branches above.

In like manner, I was hoisted into the tree; thereafter, the climbing was easy.

We ascended only a few feet, however, before we came to a rude platform upon which was built one of the strange, arboreal houses of the Masenas.

**I**N every direction, I could see similar houses as far as my eyes could penetrate through the foliage. I could see that in some places branches had been cut and laid from tree to tree to form walk-ways between the houses. In other places there were only lianas where the Masenas must have crossed hand over hand from one tree to its neighbor. The house into which we were now conducted was quite large and easily accommodated not only the twenty-odd men that had captured us but fully fifty more that soon congregated.

The Masenas squatted upon their haunches facing the far end of the room where sat, alone, a single male whom I took to be their king.

There was a great deal of meowing and purring as they discussed us in their language, and finally I became impatient. Recalling that Umka had spoken the language of the Tarids, I thought it not unlikely that some of these others might; so I addressed them in that tongue.

"Why have you captured us?" I demanded. "We are not your enemies. We were escaping from the Tarids, who are. They had us imprisoned and were about to kill us. Do any of you understand what I am saying?"

"I understand you," replied the creature whom I took to be king. "I understand your words, but your argument is meaningless. When we leave our houses and go down into the forest we may mean harm to no creature, yet that does not protect us from the beasts of prey that feed upon the flesh of their kill. There are few arguments that would satisfactorily overcome the cravings of the belly."

"You mean that you are going to eat us?" I demanded.

"Certainly," he replied.

**O**ZARA shrank closer to me. "So this is the end," she said, "and what a horrible end! It did us no good to escape from Ul Vas."

"We have at least had three days of freedom that we would not otherwise have had," I reminded her; "and, anyway, we must die some time."

The Masena king spoke to his people in their own tongue, and immediately they set up a great meowing and purring, as, with savage growls, a number of them seized Ozara and me and started to drag us toward the entrance.

They had almost reached the doorway with us when a lone Masena entered.

"Umka!" I cried.

"John Carter!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here, and the Jeddara of the Tarids?"

"We escaped from Ul Vas, and now we are about to be eaten by your people," I told him.

Umka spoke to the men who were dragging us from the room; they led us back before the Masena king, whom Umka addressed for several minutes.

After he had ceased, the king and others in the room carried on what appeared to be a heated discussion. When they had finished, Umka turned to me.

"You are to be set free," he said, "in return for what you did for me; but you must leave our country at once."

"Nothing would suit us better," I replied.

"Some of us are going with you to see that none of our people attack you while you are still in the land of the Masenas."

After we had set out with our strange escort, I asked Umka to tell me what he knew of my friends.

"After we left the castle of the Tarids," he explained, "we drifted around idly in the air for a long time. They wanted to follow the man who had taken the woman away in the other ship, but they did not know where to search. To-day I looked down and saw that we were over Masena, and I asked them to put me on the ground. This they did, and they are still there for all I know, as they were taking fresh water aboard and were going to gather fruits and hunt for meat."

It developed that the landing had been made at no great distance from where we then were, and at my request Umka led us to the spot.

As we approached it, the hearts of two of that party almost stopped beating, so great was the suspense. Finding the ship might mean the difference between life and death for Ozara and me.

And then we saw it, the strange craft, lying in a little clearing among the trees.

Umka thought it best that he and his fellows should not approach the craft, as he might not be able to restrain them in the presence of these others whom they had not promised to protect; so we thanked him and bade him good-by, and he and his weird companions melted into the forest.

None of the three on the ship had noticed our approach, and we were quite close to it before they discovered us. They greeted us enthusiastically as two returned from the dead. Even Ur Jan was genuinely pleased to see me.

**T**HE assassin of Zodanga was furious with Gar Nal because he had broken his oath; and now, to my astonishment, the fellow threw his sword at my feet and swore eternal fealty to me.

"Never in my life," he said, "have I fought shoulder to shoulder with such a swordsman, and never shall it be said that I have drawn sword against him."

I accepted his service, and then I asked them how they had been able to maneuver the ship to this point.

"Zanda was the only one who knew anything about the mechanism or its control," explained Jat Or; "and after a

little experimenting, she found that she could operate it." He looked proudly at her, and I read much in the smile that passed between them.

"You seem none the worse off for your experiences, Zanda," I said; "in fact, you appear very happy."

"I am very happy, *Vandor*," she replied, "happier than I ever expected to be in my life."

She emphasized the name *Vandor*, and I thought I detected a smile lurking deep in her eyes.

"Is your happiness so great," I asked, "that it has caused you to forget your vow to kill John Carter?"

She returned my bantering smile as she replied: "I do not know anyone by the name of John Carter."

"I hope for his sake that you never meet him, Zanda," I said, "for I am rather fond of him, and I should hate to see him killed."

"Yes," she said, "I should hate to kill him, for I know now that he is the bravest man and the truest friend in the world—with possibly one exception," she added, with a sly glance at Jat Or.

We discussed our situation at length, and tried to make plans for the future, and at last we decided to act upon Ozara's suggestion that we go to Domnia and enlist the aid of her father. From there, she thought, we might more easily conduct the search for Gar Nal and Dejah Thoris.

I SHALL not take up your time with an account of our journey to Ozara's country or of the welcome we received from her father and the strange sights that we saw in this Thurian city.

Ozara's father is the Jeddak of Domnia. He is a powerful man, with political affiliations in other cities of the nearer moon. His agents are everywhere among the peoples with whom his country has relations, either amicable or otherwise; and it was not long before word reached him that a strange object that floated in the air had become disabled and had been captured in the country of Ombra. In it were a man and a woman.

The Domnians gave us explicit directions for reaching Ombra; and, exacting a promise from us that we would return and visit them after the conclusion of our adventure, they bid us good-by.

My parting with Ozara was rather painful. She told me quite frankly that she loved me, but that she was resigned

to the fact that my heart belonged to another. She exhibited splendid strength of character then that I had not believed she possessed; when she bade me farewell it was with the wish that I find my princess and enjoy the happiness that I deserved.

AS our ship rose above Domnia, my heart was filled with elation, so great was my assurance that I should soon be united with the incomparable Dejah Thoris. I was thus certain of success because of what Ozara's father had told me of the character of the Jeddak of Ombra. He was an arrant coward, and almost any sort of a demonstration would bring him to his knees suing for peace.

Now we were in a position to make a demonstration such as the Ombrans had never witnessed; for, in common with the other inhabitants of Thuria that we had seen thus far, they were entirely ignorant of fire-arms.

It was my intention to fly low and make my demands for the return of Dejah Thoris and Gar Nal to me, without putting myself in the power of the Ombrans.

If they refused, which I was quite certain that they would, I intended giving them a demonstration of the effectiveness of the firearms of Barsoom through the medium of the ship's guns that I have already described. That, I was confident, would bring the Jeddak to terms; and I hoped to accomplish it without unnecessary loss of life.

We were all very gay as we sailed off toward Ombra. Jat Or and Zanda were planning upon the home they expected to establish in Helium, and Ur Jan was anticipating a position among the fighting-men of my retinue and a life of honor and respectability.

Presently, Zanda called my attention to the fact that we were gaining considerable altitude, and complained of dizziness. Almost at the same time I felt a weakness stealing over me, and simultaneously Ur Jan collapsed.

Followed by Jat Or, I staggered to the control room, where a glance at the altimeter showed me that we had risen to dangerous heights. Instantly I directed the brain to regulate the oxygen supply in the interior of the ship, and then I directed it to drop nearer to the surface of the satellite.

It obeyed my directions insofar as the oxygen supply was concerned, but it con-



tinued to rise past the point where the altimeter could register our height.

As Thuria faded in the distance astern, I realized that we were flying at tremendous speed, a speed far in excess of that which I had directed.

It was evident that the brain was entirely out of control. There was nothing more that I could do; so I returned to the cabin. Here I found that both Zanda and Ur Jan had recovered, now that the oxygen supply had been replenished.

I told them that the ship was running wild in space and that our eventual fate could be nothing more than a matter of idle speculation—they knew as much about it as I.

My hopes, that had been so high, were now completely dashed; and the farther that we sped from Thuria, the greater became my anguish, though I hid my personal feelings from my companions.

It was not until it became apparent that we were headed for Barsoom that even hope of life was renewed in the breasts of any of us.

As we drew near the surface of the planet, it became evident to me that the ship was fully under control; and I wondered whether or not the brain itself had discovered the power of original thought, for I knew that I was not controlling it nor were my companions.

It was night, a very dark night. The ship was approaching a large city. I could see the lights ahead, and as we drew closer I recognized that the city was Zodanga.

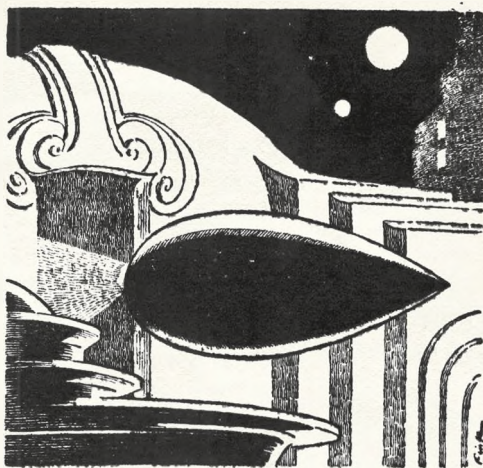
As though guided by a human hand and brain, the ship slid silently across the eastern wall of the great city, dropped into the shadows of a dark avenue, and moved steadily toward its unknown destination.

**B**UT not for long was the destination unknown. Presently the neighborhood became familiar. We were moving very slowly. Zanda was with me in the control room, gazing through one of the forward ports.

"The house of Fal Sivas!" she cried.

I recognized it, too, and then just in front of us I saw the open doors of the great hangar from which I had stolen the ship.

With the utmost precision, the ship turned slowly about until its tail pointed toward the hangar doorway. Then it backed in and settled down upon its scaffolding.



At my direction, the doors opened and the ladder dropped out to the floor; and a moment later I was searching for Fal Sivas, to demand an explanation. Ur Jan and Jat Or accompanied me with drawn swords, and Zanda followed close behind.

I went at once to Fal Sivas' sleeping-quarters. They were deserted; but as I was leaving them, I saw a note fastened beside the door. It was addressed to me. I opened it and read the following:

*From Fal Sivas  
Of Zodanga  
To John Carter  
Of Helium*

*Let this be known:*

*You betrayed me. You stole my ship. You thought that your puny mind could best that of the great Fal Sivas.*

*Very well, John Carter, it shall be a duel of minds—my mind against yours. Let us see who will win.*

*I am recalling the ship. I am directing it to return from wherever it may be and at full speed. It is to allow no other brain to change its course. I am commanding it to return to its hangar and remain there forever unless it receives contrary directions from my brain.*

*Know you then, John Carter, when you read this note, that I, Fal Sivas, have won; and that as long as I live, no other brain than mine can ever cause my ship to move.*

*I might have dashed the ship to pieces against the ground and thus destroyed you; but then I could not have gloated over you, as I now shall.*

*Do not search for me. I am hidden where you can never find me.*

*I have written. That is all.*

There was a grim finality about that note and a certain authority that seemed to preclude even faint hope. I was crushed.

In silence, I handed it to Jat Or and asked him to read it aloud to the others. When he had finished it, Ur Jan drew his short sword and offered it to me hilt first.

"It is I who am the cause of your sorrow," he said. "My life belongs to you. I offer it to you now in atonement."

I shook my head and pushed his hand away. "You did not know what you were doing, Ur Jan," I said.

"Perhaps it is not the end," said Zanda. "Where can Fal Sivas hide that determined men may not find him?"

"Let us dedicate our lives to that purpose," said Jat Or; and there, in the quarters of Fal Sivas, we four swore to hunt him down.

As we stepped out into the corridor, I saw a man approaching. He was tiptoeing stealthily in our direction. He did not see me instantly because he was casting an apprehensive glance back across his shoulder, as though fearful of discovery from that direction.

When he faced me, we were both surprised—it was Rapas the Ulsio.

**A**T sight of Ur Jan and me standing side by side, the Rat went ashen. He started to turn, as though to run; but evidently he thought better of it, for he immediately faced us again, and stood staring at us as though fascinated.

As we approached him, he affected a silly grin. "Well, Vandor," he said, "this is a surprise. I am glad to see you."

"Yes, you must be," I replied. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to see Fal Sivas."

"Did you expect to find him here?" demanded Ur Jan.

"Yes," replied Rapas.

"Then why were you sneaking in on your tiptoes?" inquired the assassin. "You are lying, Rapas. You knew that Fal Sivas was not here. If you had thought that he was here, you would not have had the nerve to come, for you knew that he knows now you were in my employ."

Ur Jan stepped forward quickly and grasped Rapas by the throat. "Listen, you rat," he growled; "you know where Fal Sivas is. Tell me, or I'll wring your neck."

The fellow commenced to grovel.

"Don't, don't; you are hurting me," he cried. "You will kill me."

"At least you have told the truth for once," growled the assassin. "Quick now; out with it. Where is Fal Sivas?"

"If I tell you, will you promise not to kill me?" asked the Rat.

"We will promise you that and more," I said; "tell us where Fal Sivas is, and I'll give you your weight in treasure."

"Speak up," said Ur Jan, giving the fellow a shake.

"Fal Sivas is in the house of Gar Nal," whispered Rapas, "but don't tell him that I told you; don't tell him that I told you or he will kill me horribly."

**I** DID not dare turn Rapas loose for fear he would betray us, and furthermore he promised to gain entrance to Gar Nal's for us and lead us to the room where we would find Fal Sivas.

I could not imagine what Fal Sivas was doing in the house of Gar Nal, unless he had gone there in Gar Nal's absence in an attempt to steal some of his secrets; nor did I question Rapas about it. It was enough that Fal Sivas was there, and that I should find him.

It was half after the eighth zode, or around midnight earth-time, that we reached Gar Nal's. Rapas admitted us and led us to the third level of the house, up narrow ramps at the rear of the building where we met no one. We moved silently without speaking, and at last our guide halted before a door.

"He is in there," he whispered.

"Open the door," I said.

He tried it, but it was locked. Ur Jan pushed him aside, and then hurled his great bulk against the door. With a loud splintering of wood, it burst in. I leaped across the threshold; and there, seated at a table, I saw Fal Sivas and Gar Nal—Gar Nal, the man whom I had thought to be imprisoned in the city of Ombra on the nearer moon.

As the two men recognized Ur Jan and me, they leaped to their feet; their evil faces were studies in surprise and terror.

I sprang forward and seized Gar Nal before he could draw his sword, and Ur Jan fell upon Fal Sivas. He would have killed him offhand, but I forbade it. All that I wanted was to learn the fate of Dejah Thoris, and one of these men must know the truth concerning her. They must not die until I knew.

"What are you doing here, Gar Nal?" I demanded. "I thought that you were a prisoner in Ombra."

"I escaped," he replied.

"Do you know where my princess is?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

A cunning look entered his eyes. "You would like to know, wouldn't you?" he asked with a sneer; "but do you think Gar Nal is fool enough to tell you? No, as long as I know and you don't, you will not dare to kill me."

"I'll get the truth out of him," growled Ur Jan. "Here, Rapas, heat a dagger for me. Heat it red-hot." But when we looked around, Rapas was not there. As we had entered the room, he had made good his escape.

"Well," said Ur Jan, "I can heat it myself; but first let me kill Fal Sivas."

"No, no," screamed the old inventor. "I did not steal the Princess of Helium; it was Gar Nal."

**T**HEN the two commenced to accuse one another, and presently I discovered that after Gar Nal's return from Thuria, these two master inventors and great scoundrels had patched up a truce and joined forces because of their mutual fear of me. Gar Nal was to hide Fal Sivas, and in return Fal Sivas was to show him the secret of his mechanical brain.

They had both been certain that the last place in the world that I would look for Fal Sivas would be in the house of Gar Nal. Gar Nal had instructed his servants to say that he had never returned from his trip with Ur Jan, giving the impression that he was still upon Thuria; and he was planning to leave that very night for a distant hiding-place.

But all this annoyed me. I did not care about them, or their plans. I wanted to know but one thing, and that was the fate of Dejah Thoris.

"Where is my princess, Gar Nal?" I demanded. "Tell me that, and I will spare your life."

"She is still in Ombra," he replied.

Then I turned upon Fal Sivas. "That is your death-warrant, Fal Sivas," I told him.

"Why?" he demanded. "What have I to do with it?"

"You keep me from directing the brain that operates your ship, and only thus may I reach Ombra."

Ur Jan raised his sword to cleave Fal Sivas' skull, but the coward went down upon his knees and begged for his life.

"Spare me," he cried, "and I will turn the ship over to you and let you control the brain."

"I can't trust you," I said.

"You can take me with you," he pleaded; "even that will be better than death."

"Very well," I said; "but if you interfere with my plans or attempt to betray me, you shall pay for your treachery with your life."

I turned toward the door. "I am returning to Thuria tonight," I said to my companions. "I shall take Fal Sivas with me, and when I return with my princess (and I shall not return without her), I hope to be able to reward you in some material way for your splendid loyalty."

"I am going with you, my prince," said Jat Or; "and I ask for no reward."

"And I, too, am going," said Zanda.

"And I," growled Ur Jan, "but first, my prince, please let me run my sword through the heart of this scoundrel," and as he spoke he advanced upon Gar Nal. "He should die for what he has done. He broke the word he gave you."

I shook my head. "No," I said. "He told me where I could find my princess; and in return for that, I have guaranteed his safety."

Grumbling, Ur Jan returned his sword to its scabbard; and then we four, with Fal Sivas, moved toward the door. The others preceded me. I was the last to pass out into the corridor; and just as I did so, I heard a door open at the opposite end of the room we were just leaving. I turned to glance back; and there, in the doorway across the room, stood Dejah Thoris.

**S**HE came toward me with arms outstretched as I ran to meet her.

She was breathing very hard and trembling as I took her in my arms. "Oh, my prince," she cried, "I thought I should not be in time. I heard all that was said in this room, but I was bound and gagged and could not warn you that Gar Nal was deceiving you. It was only just this instant that I succeeded in freeing myself."

My exclamation of surprise when I first saw her had attracted the attention of my companions, and they had all returned to the room; and as I held my princess in my arms, Ur Jan leaped past me and ran his sword through the heart of Gar Nal.

# Crook Word Puzzle

*A brief and quaint monologue in thieves' argot.*

By MAURICE  
BEAM

*(A Pickpocket Speaks:)*

"I WANT you to slant for me," Jimmy says.

"Oke," says I. "Gimme the duty."

"It's casing a jug."

"On a pick-up or a surety?"

"Pick-up."

"Stir-grift?"

"No. We'll do a push-grift."

"Oke. A tip's a better play, always."

Sure enough, in the clank, we got a pick-up and tailed him to a short. Jimmy, a super-whiz, gandered the wad at the wicket. It was scratch, and he saw it was a play for a pit. I skate into the tip with the sucker. Then Jimmy comes in. Just to make sure, I went over the Hoosier's breeches and his uptowners, for he was a goof. There was a ticker in his jerb, but it was anchored twice. Jimmy gets my office and goes for the pit, but the mark wouldn't hold still for the tog; so when he rounds, I stuck him and Jimmy kissed it off hot without using a tool. But the Hoosier gaffles him, and I had to split him out to take the jacket off. We take it on the Arthur, but the gee makes Jimmy's kisser.

It was a fair touch—several yards of scratch and a few pieces of ridge.

Next day, we're slanting a Special when some fuzz from the whiz-squad makes Jimmy. He gets sneezed and I do a powder.

But I had the skin we had made, and Jimmy had some juice in the slab, so he righted up the captain and squared the beef. As we had quite a few bees knocked off, we decided to duck the heat and blew east.

TRANSLATION: "I want you to act as my confederate," Jimmy says.

"Okay," says I. "What do you want me to do?"

"It's finding a victim in a bank."

"Is it somebody definite or just anybody?"

"Anybody who looks good."

"Will you work among the few people in a bank?"

"No. We'll follow him to a crowded place."

"Okay. A crowd's a better place to work in."

Sure enough, in the bank we found a victim and followed him to a street-car. Jimmy, an expert pickpocket, had got a look at the money at the wicket (when the man had withdrawn his money). It was paper-money and Jimmy saw it was put away in an inside pocket. I edged into the crowd (on the car) with the victim. Jimmy followed us. Just to make sure, I went over the victim's hip-pockets, his side coat-pockets and his uptowners (trouser-pockets with slanting-tops) for he was a countryman (not stylishly dressed). There was a watch in his watch-pocket but it was secured by a double-chain. Jimmy got my signal and reached for the inside pocket, but the victim moved about too much, so when he was facing Jimmy, I fell against him and held on for a moment while Jimmy boldly grabbed the wallet from the pocket without using any tool. The victim grabbed Jimmy, and I pulled him off. Then we ran, but the man who had been robbed got a good look at Jimmy's face.

It was a good haul, several hundred dollars of paper-money and a few pieces of gold.

Next day we're trying to pick the pockets of a Japanese when a copper from the pickpocket-squad recognizes Jimmy. He is arrested but I get away (take a run-out powder).

I had the money we had taken, however, and Jimmy had influence in the town, so he approached the police-captain in charge and had the complaint quashed. As we had quite a lot of money, we decided to get away from trouble so we went east.



# Karang

By WARREN  
HASTINGS MILLER

Illustrated by Alfred Simpkin



*An American shoulders a dangerous share of the White Man's burden in the tropics when he undertakes to manage a Malay tin mine.*

THE Mahatma Gandhi would have approved of that tin mine. It agreed with his utterances on what was good for the East: the spinning-wheel, the hand-loom, the tonga cart, the ship-yard on the river-bank where the sole tools were an adz and an auger-bit for tree-nails of ironwood. And a free man working at them. No railroads, no factories, no steamships, no crowding herds of wage-slaves—evils, all, in the opinion of the Mahatma.

Lee Boardman agreed with him about yet another Oriental industry, tin. This mine of his was a modest hole in the ground in Sumatra, where Nature capriciously distributes tin ore. The black *karang*—or oxide of tin, in metallurgical parlance—was being dug by brawny brown Malays in turbans and sarongs of violent colors. It was being barrowed to a primitive furnace of burned clay and bamboo bellows, worked by a water-buffalo treading the piston levers. Its ingots were being cast in loam sand under a shed of palm thatch. The river proas that took them down to the seaport of Kwala Kampar waited at a sketchy wharf constructed of teak piles and tapang planks.

He was a tall lean young American,



Lee Boardman, keen, gray-eyed. He was happy with this mine, and unambitious about improving it. Ore-tracks, tip-cars, cast-iron and fire-brick furnaces that the great corporations put on—running the plant with hordes of imported Chinese coolies—no overhead like that for him! The explorer's reward was enough with just this, Lee thought: Discovering this deposit of *karang*, discovering that much more priceless asset, a stanch friend in the Rajah Asahan who ruled the nearby village of Tratak Bulu; and then all hands to work with such materials as nature gave them—clay, bamboo, teak.

Lee was an independent. He drew no salary from any concern. The Explorers' Club in Penang thought him a queer duck and his ideas on mining archaic. But he had gone his own ways on coming out here. The result was this new deposit discovered near Tratak Bulu, the friendship of Rajah Asahan, and this native tin-reduction plant.

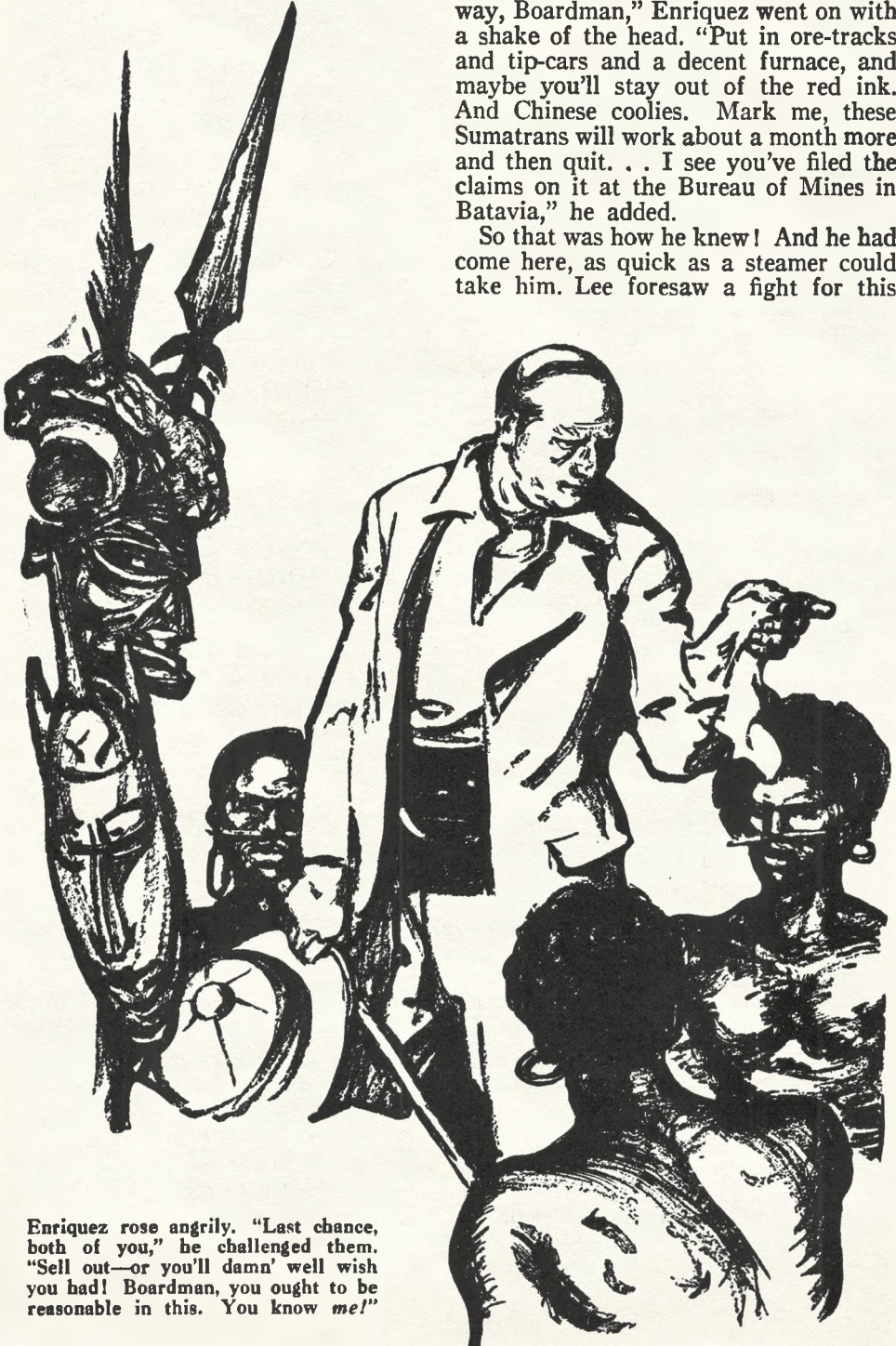
"*Harumph!* Foolishness—but it's good black *karang*."

Lee turned with annoyance. He had been enjoying the shady freshness of the ravine in the cool of the morning, the gorgeous Sumatran Malays at work like

animated bronze statues, the peace and leisure of this native industry. That energetic, "*Harumph!*" was characteristic of Enriquez, the explorer for the Universal Tin Plate Corporation. But how Enriquez had stumbled on him was not apparent.

"You'll never make any money this way, Boardman," Enriquez went on with a shake of the head. "Put in ore-tracks and tip-cars and a decent furnace, and maybe you'll stay out of the red ink. And Chinese coolies. Mark me, these Sumatrans will work about a month more and then quit. . . I see you've filed the claims on it at the Bureau of Mines in Batavia," he added.

So that was how he knew! And he had come here, as quick as a steamer could take him. Lee foresaw a fight for this



Enriquez rose angrily. "Last chance, both of you," he challenged them. "Sell out—or you'll damn' well wish you had! Boardman, you ought to be reasonable in this. You know *me!*"

mine. Enriquez was ruthless with independent prospectors who would not see the wisdom of selling out to Tin Plate.

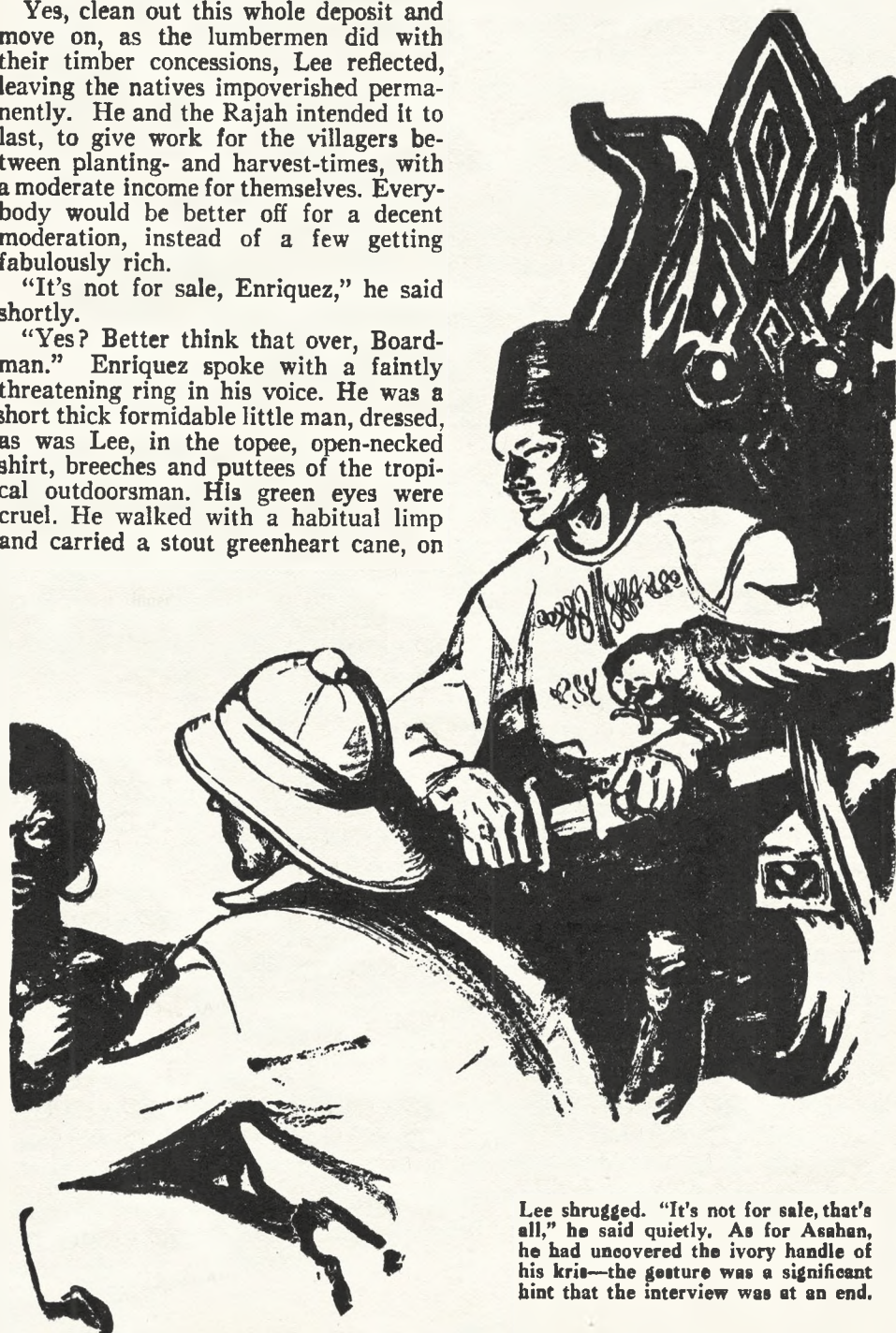
"Come! How much?" urged Enriquez. "Put in modern equipment here and it will be worth something. I'll take this *karang* off your hands just as it stands. The pocket is not very big, true; but it's worth shipping an outfit in here for."

Yes, clean out this whole deposit and move on, as the lumbermen did with their timber concessions, Lee reflected, leaving the natives impoverished permanently. He and the Rajah intended it to last, to give work for the villagers between planting- and harvest-times, with a moderate income for themselves. Everybody would be better off for a decent moderation, instead of a few getting fabulously rich.

"It's not for sale, Enriquez," he said shortly.

"Yes? Better think that over, Boardman." Enriquez spoke with a faintly threatening ring in his voice. He was a short thick formidable little man, dressed, as was Lee, in the topee, open-necked shirt, breeches and puttees of the tropical outdoorsman. His green eyes were cruel. He walked with a habitual limp and carried a stout greenheart cane, on

which he leaned back now as he eyed Lee aggressively. That cane was a legend in Sumatra. With it alone for protection, Enriquez had limped from one end of Acheen to the other in search of tin deposits. And that at a time when scarce less than a platoon of Dutch troops dared move there. He had left a trail of dead



Lee shrugged. "It's not for sale, that's all," he said quietly. As for Asahan, he had uncovered the ivory handle of his kris—the gesture was a significant hint that the interview was at an end.



men behind him—Achinese bandits who had a penchant for the casual knifing of lone white men. The Dutch *controleurs* rubbed their fat palms over it and did not press inquiries; their districts were well rid of these gentry! The bandits were usually found lying dead in the jungle with a small puncture somewhere on the body, ascribed to the poisoned darts of the hill tribesmen. . . .

"Who is this Rajah Asahan whose name is on the claim with yours? Partner?" Enriquez pursued his investigation.

Lee wished that he would take his *No* for final answer, and give it up. But there was not a hope of that. If there was any way to muscle in on this claim you could count on Enriquez to find it and act promptly in behalf of Tin Plate. They would cut off his salary if he did not turn in at least one new deposit a year, it did not matter whose.

"Yes, he's my partner," Lee said. "I discovered this little hill of *karang* awhile back and went in with him on it, fifty-fifty. There's not much of it. It's not worth your while, really, Enriquez."

The scout looked up the ravine with an eye used to judging the limits of a tin-ore streak. He estimated its tonnage with a practised glance.

"*Harumph!* More than you think, Boardman. I'll buy up this Rajah's half and show you how it ought to be done, *heim?*" He grinned mischievously. "You would like Tin Plate for a neighbor?"

Lee wouldn't. He could see this ravine

turned into a dusty, sweaty hole, torn and ripped into dirt benches laid with tracks, tip-cars rattling, huge smoky furnaces, gasping Chinese under the foreman's lash—then silence and desolation, everything gone, the last of the tin ore shipped down-river to the big steamers and the company operating somewhere else. And what good would the village get out of it? Not one cent spent here! The world would take their tin and move on.

"You can try Asahan if you like," he said wearily. "Here he comes now."

A cheerful, "*Tabek, Tuan!*" was sounding from up the ravine in the direction of the village. A gorgeous Oriental potentate with a bodyguard of young warriors was coming down to look over the day's work. Rajah Ameen Asahan was part Arab, part Malay, a rather handsome hawk-nosed native with sparkling brown eyes. Of medium height, his bronze limbs shone supple and strong in the sunlight where not covered by his gold-embroidered sarong and girdle, his white *baju* or jacket bordered with silver thread set with jewels. He wore the gold-leaved cap of a district rajah.

LEE presented Enriquez, who at once was all Spanish-American suavity and charm. The Tin Plate explorer knew enough not to bring up any negotiations about the mine for at least a day or so—until all of the Oriental courtesies and beatings about the bush had been exhausted. The Rajah eyed him enigmatically and inquired after the health of the Dutch *controleur* at Siak.

"Mynheer Blok sends you his compliments, Rajah," Enriquez assured him cordially. "I was his guest at the Residency last night. He is pleased over this—*harumph!*—new mine, and hopes that you will soon modernize it."

"That may be, Tuan," said Asahan evasively. He glanced at Lee. "What does this fellow want?" his eyes asked. Lee's eyes flashed him a message: "Beware!"

"The Tuan will come to my *balei* for refreshments?" Asahan invited with dignity.

They went up to the village, a typical Sumatran one, with horn-roof houses of thatch and vertical teak boards ornamented with elaborate carving, each house set in its small garden of papayas and the inevitable betel-nut palms, like broom-handles fifty feet high. The *balei* or council hall was larger, roof sheathing



out of roof to terminate in sweeping horns of black palm fibers. Its posts and lintels were decorated with inlaid mother-of-pearl and red jasper. All one side of it was open to the monsoon breeze.

"Yes, you can make something out of this, Rajah, if you handle it right," Enriquez was saying after Asahan had taken his throne with his bodyguard around him and the two white men provided with chairs. "Our young friend here,"—he glanced at Lee,—“understands how to run a modern tin plant. If it is money you lack for a decent outfit, I shall be glad to put in.”

The Rajah considered that. "All our young men are working now," he said gravely.

"Yes—and how?" Enriquez laughed. "With home-made barrows that break a man's back, and runways of bamboo! You ought to have iron cars and track. Besides, it's coolie labor, anyhow. Only Chinese do that sort of work." He hinted a none-too-subtle disparagement of such toil for the lordly and lazy Sumatran.

There were murmurs of agreement in the populace squatting in rows down the hall. They had all come along to listen in, as usual in every conference with visiting white men. Lee could see what Enriquez was driving at. The villagers were perfectly content to labor for good silver *ryksdaalers*—until some one suggested that it was beneath their dignity. Then they would leave it to the lowly and industrious Chinese.

Asahan frowned. This line of talk was equally displeasing to him. He had a contented village and proposed to keep it so. "What does the Tuan want?" he asked Enriquez directly.

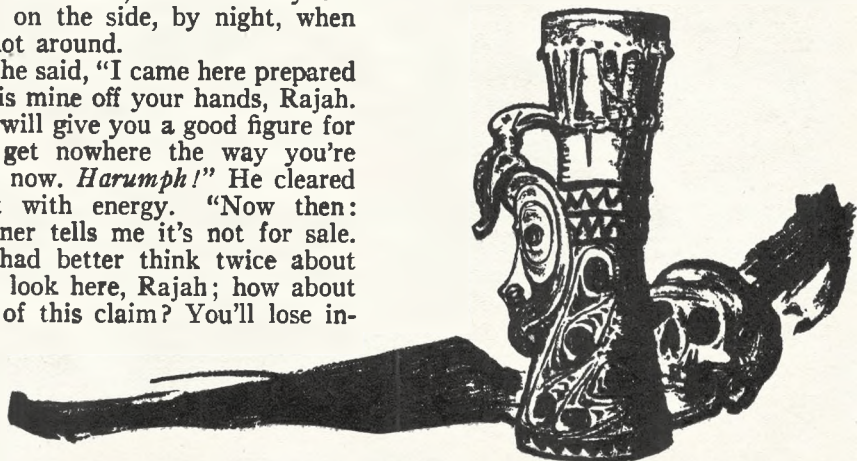
Tin Plate's man looked at him in some surprise. He had expected the usual Malayan evasiveness, and then maybe a quiet deal on the side, by night, when Lee was not around.

"Well," he said, "I came here prepared to take this mine off your hands, Rajah. Tin Plate will give you a good figure for it. You'll get nowhere the way you're running it now. *Harumph!*" He cleared his throat with energy. "Now then: Your partner tells me it's not for sale. You two had better think twice about that! But look here, Rajah; how about your half of this claim? You'll lose in-

terest in this thing mighty soon. Your young men will get tired of digging and wheeling and sweating over that flower-pot of a furnace you've got. And then where are you? You can't *make* 'em work. Have an insurrection on your hands if you do! *Harumph!* I'll give you a good price for your half and put in a modern outfit. Or you can take a royalty on every bar of tin we cast. Boardman, here, can keep on fooling along, if he likes. He'll sell out when he gets good and ready! But my best price is *now*, gentlemen. Take it or leave it."

IT was an impressive and persuasive oration. But the Rajah only smiled brightly at Lee. "Do I hear that we are to part?" he asked with sarcasm. "Tuan," he said to Enriquez, "I tell you this: My people are happy. There are *ryksdaalers* to spend, between planting the rice and harvest, because my brother, the Tuan Boardman, showed us this *karang* that we knew not of. There is contentment; and the young man digs when he pleases or sings when he pleases. No one says that he must be at work when the gong rings. Our ways may be ancient, but they cost us nothing. Our ingots bring much silver to the village and a little for the Tuan Boardman and myself. It is enough. . . . And you, who would destroy our peace, who would fill our ravine with machinery and stinking coolies and our river with coal barges and more coolies—I say you have not gold enough in all Batavia to bring a plague like that into my district! No, Tuan, my half of the mine is not for sale either—"

Enriquez' face had darkened with fury as the Rajah's words gathered fire and power. "You won't *have* any district



with that sort of talk, if the *controleur* hears of this, Rajah!" he interrupted. "My corporation brings in money, progress, increase in your population, boom times—but all that is nothing, eh? Well, we'll see about that!" He rose angrily. "Last chance, both of you," he challenged. "Sell out; or you'll damn' well wish you had! Boardman, you ought to be reasonable in this. You know *me!*"

Lee shrugged at the threat. "It's not for sale, that's all," he said quietly. "Nor to be had by force either, Enriquez."

As for Asahan, he had uncovered the ivory handle of his kris that had been ceremoniously covered by the girdle flap. The gesture was a significant hint that the interview was at an end and Enriquez *persona non grata* so far as the ruler of this district was concerned.

ENRIQUEZ bowed himself out huffily. He got into a car that had been waiting in the village, and drove off toward Siak. The partners looked at each other with uncertain grins.

"A good kris at your back, Tuan, would be well from now on," said Asahan, smiling. "Also a bodyguard. . . . I shall detail two stout young men to be always at hand, if the Tuan permits." His eyes narrowed shrewdly and with warning.

Lee did not believe that he was in any personal danger. But this was Malaya, where men died swiftly. This was the land of sudden assassinations, poisonings, of mysterious disappearances when you stood in a man's way. He permitted a bodyguard of two husky young Sumatrans, who kept at his back with girdle-flaps off their kris handles—a sign that the Tuan was not to be approached without seeing them first.

For the mine had become a personal matter between him and Enriquez now, and the latter would not fight fairly. Remove Lee, and the Rajah would be easy to handle. Asahan knew nothing of the technique of metallurgy, reduction of the ore, or casting of the ingots. Enriquez would seize the mine ruthlessly, with or without the permission of the *controleur* at Siak, and move in his ore-cars, his tracks, his coolies and all the paraphernalia of civilization. But to do this, Lee would have to be out of the picture. So he was on his guard.

For a week they heard nothing of Enriquez, which was ominous; and nothing from the *controleur*, which was encouraging. It must mean that the Dutch official was deaf to chicanery, once a

claim was properly filed in Batavia, as theirs was. Then the storm burst. . . .

It began with a fire. Lee turned out of his bungalow after midnight with the great gong in the Rajah's *balei* ringing furiously and red tongues of flame licking up fiercely through the slatting banana leaves of the gardens. All Tratak Bulu was in an uproar. The men were gathering to fight the fire, the women climbing their own roofs with bamboo pails to guard their thatch. A house was blazing near the village rice-bin, that tall structure with white plank sides and teak beams topped by a high gable of thatch, where all the communal rice harvest was stored. Famine stared them in the face if it went! It was surrounded by ladders, and a bucket brigade passed water from the river as Lee came running to help. The burning house was being pulled apart with pole hooks and its fiery rafters were falling in showers of sparks. He hustled a second brigade into action to subdue it before more houses in the surrounding gardens could catch. And then, with all Tratak Bulu weaponless, and frantic as a disturbed nest of ants, there came yells and war-whoops, javelins slithering through the air and krisses slashing in the firelight, as a mob of strange Battaks from the hills burst upon them out of the jungle. A riot ensued—stones, sticks, firebrands, villagers snatching their weapons from their shrieking women, bellows of Singapore muskets, confusion. The Rajah and his bodyguard put up what fight there was against the *datu* from up-country who was leading this attack.

THE thing looked suspicious to Lee, as he ran for his bungalow to get his revolver and join in the defense. Some one had set that fire so as to distract them all just at this time. The hand of Enriquez was in it! One step in taking possession of this mine would be to depose the reigning rajah for one more complaisant, by fomenting a rebellion up-country. There were always *datu*s ready to listen. . . . The other step would be to—

He glanced around warily as he neared his bungalow. His two guards had forgotten about him, in the excitement of the fire. He was alone. A turmoil of shots and battle was sounding around the Rajah's *balei*.

As he came out, the revolver in his hand—he would load it as he joined the defense—he paused, listening; there was

a rustle in the bushes bordering on the sandy lane and the clumping run of a lame man. Lee whirled to ward off Enriquez' slashing cane. But the second blow crashed down on his bare head—and he saw stars and fell limply.

WHEN he came to he was in a car, whirling southward along the government highway to Palembang. Enriquez sat beside the driver in the front seat. Lee cursed silently as he found that he was tied hand and foot. Twisting his head, he saw the pink summit of Gunong Sambilan volcano far to the north. The village and the mine lay at the foot of those conical slopes.

Enriquez had engineered this whole thing: the raid from up-country; firing the house near the rice-bin; the abduction of one of the partners of the mine. The other, good old Asahan, was probably in flight to the jungles of Gunong Sambilan at that moment. It certainly gave Tin Plate a free hand with their mine—at least till Lee could get back, if ever he did.

There are all kinds of ways to cut free of rope-ties on one's wrists—but not in the upholstered back seat of an open car. Lee gave it up after several futile efforts. Before dawn the car had reached the outskirts of Palembang and turned east toward the oil tanks. A steamer lay at the wharf there with steam curling from her escape pipe. She was a tanker bound for Los Angeles and she would stop nowhere across the Pacific. Lee groaned inwardly. He was to be shanghaied aboard that boat, and it would be at least three months before he could return.

The car stopped on the wharf near the tanker's high iron sides and there were hails from her bridge: "Got him, Mr. Enriquez?"

"Oh, yes. He'll make you a good fireman, Captain! Don't turn him loose till you get well at sea, though."

A confident laugh. Lee was bundled aboard and saw money passed. It was nearly hopeless, fighting a big corporation like Universal Tin Plate! They probably had a man on the board of directors of this tank line, and anything Enriquez did would be winked at. They all worked together. Lee lay on deck like a trussed pig while the steamer cast loose her moorings and got under way down the Palembang River. Enriquez had started back to the mine in that car. He would be on the ground again by ten

this morning. Rajah Asahan was driven into exile in the jungle by now. A new *datu* sat on the throne in the *balei*. It would be months before the *controleur* at Siak would ever hear of it. And by that time Enriquez would be established with a modern Tin Plate equipment. He could rig up a story that would convince the *controleur*. These natives were always changing their rajah! As for young Boardman, he had beat it and never come back. You know how it is when these young fellows go on a spree in the port towns. . . .

Lee was worrying over what he should do on landing in Los Angeles, penniless except for some fireman's pay, no credit-book on the Chartered Bank in Palembang where he kept the mine's funds, no passports, nothing. A month to Los Angeles in this waddling tanker; a month getting back, even if he could raise the funds. . . . He would have to do better than that.

AT dawn they unbound Lee. The steamer had passed the last of the fish seines offshore and had turned up the Java Sea. The mate kicked him down to the fireroom with orders to report to the chief engineer. That breezy Irishman introduced him to a shovel, and that was that.

Lee passed coal, thinking. She would be a day or so in the Java Sea before heading across for the coast of Sarawak. Right now she was paralleling his land route coming down from Tratak Bulu. The Java Sea was glassy and calm. There were native proas on it. The thing to do was—

Off his first watch, a tired and dirty fireman stood getting a breath up by the fiddley hoist. A boat was in chocks along the rail; near it a life-buoy hung in its canvas slings. Lee watched the mate pacing the bridge. As he left to walk to starboard, Lee snatched the life-buoy out of its pocket and with it dodged behind the boat. At the next turn of the officer he flung the buoy far out, then dived instantly.

A long fetch under water, while the thumping screw passed him and he was seized and whirled by eddies. He came up, to note that all view from the ship was hid by her superstructure aft. He took a breath and sank again. When next up, she was far ahead. He was attracting no more attention than a floating coconut. Lee saw the officer's white-clad back on the port bridge; then he

turned and disappeared behind the superstructure. They were unconscious of his escape.

The buoy was floating near by. Lee swam to it, got inside and rested his arms over the cork rim. There was not much danger from sharks this far out. Miles away to the west he could see the thin green line of mangroves bordering Sumatra's shore. Far in the interior a hazy line like an undeveloped photographic plate was the serrated chain of its mountains. The rest of his horizon was the vast glassy rim of the Java Sea.

IT was two hours later that a coastal proa hove in sight, billowing before the southeast monsoon in a cloud of peaked lateens and jibs. She loomed high in the mirage as Lee waved an arm vigorously out of his buoy. Then she changed course and bore down on him. About thirty brown Malays in mop turbans and colored sarongs lined her rails, their bodies glistening with sweat. They hailed the buoy excitedly, then with wonder, as they saw that a white man was in it.

"I fell off a ship," Lee called to them in Malayu. "Where are you bound?"

"Kwala Kampar, Tuan."

Lee chuckled in relief. This was the port they shipped their ingots down to. A small Dutch boat touched there once in two weeks. He could be back at Tratak Bulu within two days.

A rope snaked over to him as the proa slacked way. Lee was hauled aboard and shook hands with her captain, one Si Pajong, a sea *datu*. Lee's statement that he was a friend of Rajah Asahan brought: "Aiee! You are the Tuan of the mine? In the name of Allah, what befell thee, Tuan?"

As Lee told them about the fire and the insurrection, the crew laid hand on kris and growled. Asahan had treated them like a prince; this new *datu* from up-country—there would be heavy taxes on the river proas that brought the tin down! Lee saw that they were organized; they all worked together, the sea proas, the river lighters. This shipowner had relatives taking Lee's pay for ferrying ingots down to Kwala Kampar.

"Go to, now," he told them. "This new white Tuan who has stolen the mine that the Rajah managed so that it gave work to ye all, he will have none of ye! There will be a launch and big iron barges manned by Chinese coolies. What say you? I was going alone up to Tratak Bulu to fight the new Tuan for our mine.

... But with stout men bearing kris and javelin at my back, we can depose this usurping *datu* and restore the government. Who is for war—and justice?"

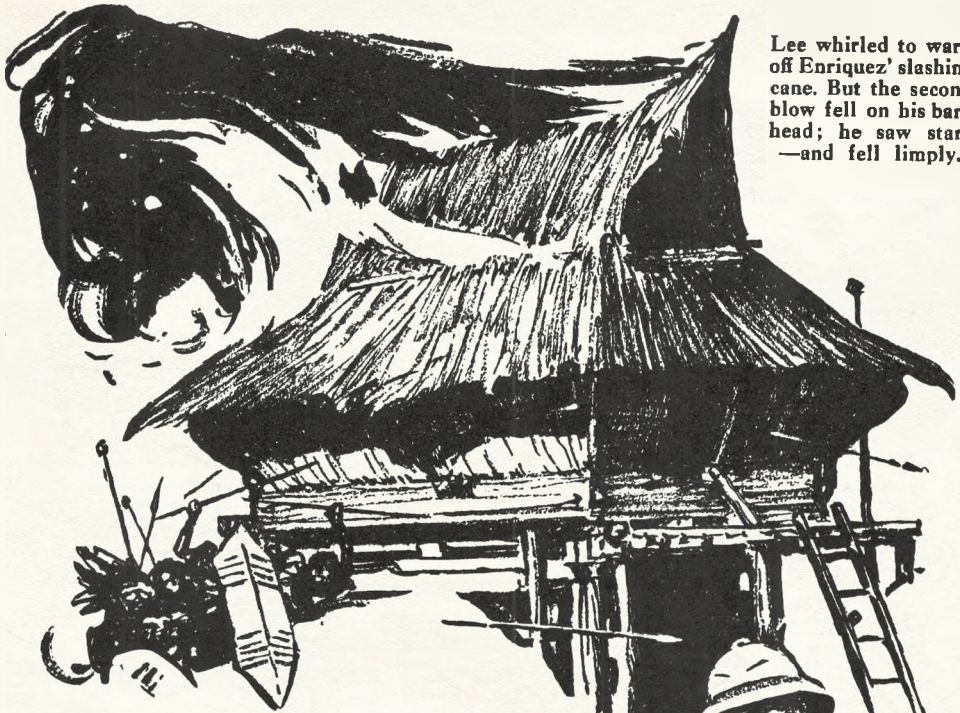
He need not have asked them; they were all pirates when piracy could be profitable and no Dutch gunboats around! No proa in these seas went unarmed. With warlike shouts they gave Lee a following immediately for the counter-revolution which he proposed to stage as soon as he could get in touch with the Rajah.

By evening the proa was soaring in toward the coastal mangroves, with the white bar of surf off Kwala Kampar dead ahead. She close-hauled and wallowed in over the breakers. Fishing-huts, nets on lines of stakes; then they were idling up a lagoon with a Sumatran town on piles bordering the shores under the inevitable line of leaning coconut palms. Lee's proa was surrounded by canoes and sampans as soon as they perceived the white clothing of a Tuan on board. The town seethed with excitement. The news from up-river had come in; Rajah Asahan was driven into the jungle, a new *datu* sat on the throne; many trucks were coming down the Government road laden with iron cars and track-lengths and coolies.

Enriquez was losing no time in getting himself established, Lee noted vengefully. The whole affair had been well planned. But as the town elders came aboard asking only to be led against the new rajah, he felt that Enriquez would not find it so easy to muscle in on a peaceful Sumatran district this way!

LEE took charge of the rebellion that was ready to his hand, only wanting a leader. "Two fast runners who can find the Rajah Asahan this very night, O *Datu* Ali Sabut," he told the town's local ruler. "He and those that are faithful to him will be found up in the jungle on Gunong Sambilan. There be men in Tratak Bulu who can tell the runners where our rajah is hiding. Let him be guided around the town and meet us on the river-bank below. At dawn we attack. Call thou out thy warriors, *datu*. As many as wish can go up the river with me in the lighters."

Presently he had an army. It was a typical Malayan mob that gathered at the lighters that evening, gorgeous in finery, picturesquely armed. A revolver of some uncertain British make that certainly dated from the time of Mars-



Lee whirled to ward off Enriquez' slashing cane. But the second blow fell on his bare head; he saw stars—and fell limply.

den in Sumatra, was produced for the Tuan Boardman's weapon. Lee knew that they were all prone to run away whenever the fighting began to look unfavorable. But the usurper's men would run just as quickly. With Asahan beside him they could be controlled. That proa crew he had with him would be the backbone of his attack. As for Enriquez, he had reserved that ruthless agent for a personal argument. Lee feared not the famous cane; he was pretty good at single-stick himself! He had borrowed a ceremonial staff of the *datu's* that he trusted in more than that antique curiosity of a revolver.

All that night the long line of lighters were poled up the Sungei Kampar. They were crowded with fighting-men and manned by river-polers who had many times taken Lee's silver *ryksdaalers* for bringing his tin down-river. The jungle and its people were good, Lee reflected comfortably as they wound up the bends of that sluggish stream characteristic of the lowlands of Sumatra. People called the Malays lazy. But they prized their personal independence above all things. They would work hard at whatever pleased their fancy, but not in gangs, or factories, or other herding schemes of the white man. They were going on this dangerous expedition with Lee, not because they were ordered to, but each man individually volunteering.



A low whistle on the bank and the pale gleam of starlight on spears told Lee that the Rajah had made the detour successfully and was at hand to join him. He steered the leading lighter in, and Asahan jumped aboard. They clasped each other's shoulders.

"*Habibi!* It is the power of God! What befell thee? Men said you lay dead in the jungle."

"Shanghaied," said Lee succinctly. "Enriquez. . . He took me to a ship out of Palembang. But it didn't work. I've got the crew of sea people here who picked me up." He introduced Si Pajong and his men, who crowded the first lighter. "And what happened to you the night of the uprising?"

"Alas, we were too few! I and a few of my bodyguard escaped to Gunong Sambilan. The pestilent *datu* Mahomet Rimbau reigns in my stead."

"Mahomet-the-Tiger, eh?" Lee laughed. "Enriquez has done this stunt before, Rajah; but it isn't going to work this time. I'll run him out at the mine; you attend to this Mahomet. I've got about all your people from Kwala Kampar in these lighters. Take 'em and go to it!"

THE lighters were disembarking. Asahan recruited a hundred men under the *datu* Ali Sabut. Lee picked thirty, including his crew. He had learned that Enriquez had about fifty coolies at the mine and had started benching and putting down track. His Chinese would huddle in their tents like sheep; but there would be an armed guard over them who would show fight—renegades from all over the Dutch East, Portuguese and beach-combers, but well armed. The Corporation always kept hired guards over their coolies, who were addicted to civil wars among themselves.

Asahan sent a man ahead to go from house to house in Tratak Bulu warning the villagers. The advance started up the river-bank trail in the dark before dawn. Silently they came to the wharf below the tin mine and silently they parted. The Rajah set off for Tratak Bulu. Lee spread out his men in a thin line and they moved up the ravine. The ruthless destruction by big business was already marring its beauty in slashings of young trees and embankments of grubbed-out bushes, wilted and dead, where gradients were being made for steel track.

A sharp challenge barked from one of the mine guards. Lee spoke up. "Put down that rifle and come here!" he called out authoritatively.

For answer the man flung himself behind a stump and fired. The bellow of Ali Sabut's Singapore musket crashed out in reply, and they rushed over him and up the ravine. More shots blazed out in the darkness as the guard turned out. Awakening Chinese gabbled in their lines of tents. Lee's men were filling the night

with thunder, but they were not advancing farther. That fire from modern rifles in the hands of the mine guards was altogether too rapid and deadly for them to cope with, with musket and spear. Over toward Tratak Bulu Lee could hear the racket of the main attack and the harsh Malay *sorah* or battle-yell. Then sounded the stumping of a lame foot running and Enriquez' voice: "Hold them there, you men! I'm coming!"

The way to beat him was by strategy. Lee hadn't much chance against that handful of well-armed guards if they stuck together on the defensive. But Enriquez was taking charge now. He would investigate this!

Lee called over softly to Ali Sabut: "Tell your men to keep quiet and fall back down each side of the ravine. Lay a good ambush, and you take charge of it. I'll stay here. They'll be coming out pretty soon."

"*Sahya, Tuan!*" All moved off to gather his men. A silence fell over the ravine. Lee could hear a distant dog-fight going on over in the village and hoped that Asahan was driving the usurper out. Up near the coolie lines Enriquez was giving sharp orders to quiet the Chinamen and was haranguing his guards. He was laboring under the delusion that this was part of the native row going on in the village and all he had to do was to brush away this attack on his mine.

"Forward, men!" came Enriquez' harsh order. "Clean out that ravine, clear down to the wharf. Keep about ten paces apart. And shoot to kill if you see anyone!"

Lee effaced himself behind a bush. He heard the breaking of sticks and the crunch of boots on gravel as the mine guards advanced slowly. They passed him in a long irregular line that swept the ravine from bank to bank. He saw the pale gleam of their rifle-barrels poised and could have knocked down the nearest of them with a stone. Then some moments later, a lone short figure in tropical whites came drifting through the gloom—Enriquez, following his men. . . . He limped along an embankment, aided by that heavy cane.

LEE stepped out from behind his bush. A short, grim laugh escaped him.

"*You!*" It was a rasp like the snarl of a tiger, that amazed yelp of recognition from Enriquez.

"Yes, *me!*" Lee rasped back through clenched teeth. "On guard, Enriquez!

Let's see how good you are at single-stick. . . . Just us two."

Enriquez bared his teeth in rage. "Single-stick? Hell!" he growled furiously as Lee's staff poised in both hands. He wrenched at the cane. There was a metallic click and a long rapier blade drew out of it. Enriquez tossed the scabbard part aside. "Now! This time you won't come back—*hein?*" His grating laugh was confident, merciless. "—Ha!"

A thrust of the steel accompanied that ejaculation. Lee warded the slithering point with a dexterous twist of his staff, but it was no fair match for a rapier. He knew he hadn't a chance. That rapier explained the trail of dead men supposedly wounded by hill savages' darts. The staff was but a clumsy weapon against it.

ENRIQUEZ had become silent, purposeful, as he warmed to the work, his rapier more deadly than any cobra. Its point slithered like a steel tongue darting in and out for Lee's life. He had need of his utmost skill to parry those thrusts, let alone get in a blow himself. The staff twisted and turned, wood against steel, rapid as the play of light, while steadily Lee's wrists tired. And always just beyond the end of his staff that malignant face leered. Lee kept him guarding half the time with saber cuts to the head that were stopped by that resilient sliver of steel—and then the *riposte* that had to be turned, in the barest fraction of time, or it would come on clean through him! It all had not lasted three minutes—but both were gasping hoarsely for breath, with Lee the more tired.

Then he heard a volley of shots down the ravine—groans, curses, the blood-curdling Malay yell. Enriquez too heard it; and for a second worriedly slackened his attack. And in that second Lee saw his chance. His staff shot home in a sudden thrust, hard for the solar plexus. Enriquez staggered back with both hands gripping involuntarily at his stomach. A swift rap on his sword-hand disarmed him. The single-stick had won.

"Guess that's all," said Lee briefly. Enriquez was helpless, retching, every atom of breath gone out of him. But if looks could kill—

Lee kicked the rapier out of the way and stood guard over him, watching. "When you can talk, we'll have an understanding, Enriquez," he said coldly. "Your methods won't work here. This district happens to be loyal to its rajah,

you see. . . . Asahan's back on his throne by now. And you know well the *Controleur* will back him up. Also assault with intent to kill is punishable with banishment in these islands. . . . Do you want to stay as Tin Plate's representative?"

Enriquez was getting back his breath. "You haven't won yet," he gasped. "*Tômas! Pépe!*" He raised a shout for his guards to come back.

They did. But with them was the *datu* Ali Sabut and his men. They were all wounded and without their rifles, those six. Ali stopped in wonder to see his Tuan standing guard over the other Tuan, and the long rapier lying near by.

"By the sending down of the Book!" he exclaimed. "And thou didst prevail with my old staff, Tuan? And he, with the bolo?"

"Remember it, Ali—and all of you! In the Kumpanie court it may be necessary to take oath that it was so." Lee smiled maliciously at Enriquez. "How about it, Enriquez? It's all between friends in the Explorers' Club, you know, but—"

Enriquez swore. "All right. Have I your word you'll keep this quiet?"

"Sure. It goes no further than right here. Pick up your cane and sheath it before the Rajah sees it, is my advice! I think he's coming now."

IT sounded like an election parade. Log drums boomed; there was a wild squealing of pipes and the nasal twang of stringed instruments. The rejoicings of a whole liberated village was approaching. In the graying dawn Rajah Asahan appeared, at the head of his people. He was bandaged. It had been a fine fight apparently, and Mahomet Rimbau had been chased off into the hills where he belonged.

"You've got back our mine?" the Rajah hailed happily toward the village.

"Guess so," said Lee. But he knew it was so. Enriquez would not trouble them further. "I'll take that track off your hands, Enriquez," he added, conceding that much. "You clear out with your coolies, and it's a go."

"Done!" Enriquez started to limp off toward the lines. But he was a bad loser. He turned and cleared his throat. "*Harumph!* You can have your half-pint hole of *karang*," he screeched, "and to hell with you!"

He stumped off, with his guards following sheepishly. Lee and the Rajah exchanged satisfied grins.



# Arctic

By BURT M.

THE *Karluk*, on which our Arctic expedition had embarked the previous summer, had been frozen in the ice off the north coast of Alaska, and had drifted into the Great Unknown in September, 1913.

Unfortunately for Stefansson, the commander of our expedition (and for all concerned, as things turned out), he had decided to take a small hunting-party ashore to hunt caribou. He knew, from long association with the Eskimos, that fresh meat is the only known preventive of scurvy. So he brought us ashore over the ice, with two dog-teams, and camping and hunting equipment. But even before we reached the mainland a north-east gale came up and blew the ice, in which the ship remained frozen, off to the westward. We never saw the *Karluk* again.

All thoughts of hunting were forgotten, and we hastened along the shore ice, stopping at night at Eskimo villages. But all attempts to reach the ship—even to catch a glimpse of her—were in vain. She drifted past Point Barrow, within full sight of the inhabitants, a week before we arrived. On board were Captain Robert Bartlett, Peary's former skipper; and twenty-four members of the expedition and crew.

It was not until almost a year later that I learned what had happened to the ship: She was crushed by the ice and sank a thousand miles to the westward. Bartlett brought the twenty-four people, with the exception of two parties of four men each, over the jagged white ice-prairie to Wrangel Island, which lies about a hundred miles to the north of Siberia, on the 180th parallel. There he left them in camp, while he and a young Eskimo hunter proceeded with a dog team over the moving ice to the main-

land of Siberia. Mushing down the coast to a point below East Cape, he encountered a whaling vessel, which took him to the mouth of the Yukon. There he was able to send a wireless message to the outside world.

The U. S. Government Revenue cutter *Bear* happened to be near at hand, and her skipper was instructed to steam to Wrangel Island and take off the survivors. This was in May, and when I saw the *Bear* at Point Barrow in August, she had made one attempt at rescue, but stopped by impenetrable ice fields, had returned to the Alaska mainland.

At that moment there appeared at Point Barrow, in his small power schooner, Captain Olaf Swenson, an old friend.

I went to Nome with him; and I suggested to him that he set a course for Wrangel Island independently of the Revenue vessel. The island was six hundred miles to the northwest; to undertake a rescue meant that Swenson would have to abandon his walrus-hunting and trading for that year. Nevertheless he set out from Nome, taking me along.

We reached East Cape, Siberia, the next day, and took on board fifteen Tcheukchee natives and a skin boat, or umiak. Such a boat, covered with walrus hide, could be dragged over the ice which might surround Wrangel Island, launched in the open water, and paddled to the next ice field. And so on.

We passed great herds of walrus without stopping to hunt them, although their hides and ivory tusks would have meant thousands of dollars to Swenson and his firm. Even an hour's delay was not to be thought of; the freeze-up might come at any time—then there would be no hope whatever for the castaways.

The tiny vessel, equipped with gasoline engines, forged her way doggedly through the loose pack-ice, and skirted the heavy pressure ridges. Some of these were almost as high as her masts. Sometimes, when the pilot sent the schooner full speed into an ice field, she would

**REAL EX.**



# Rescue

MCCONNELL

slide up on the edge of the floe, like a polar bear struggling out of the water, and break it down with her sheer weight.

In this fashion we fought our way through a belt of moving sea-ice a hundred miles wide, bumping, crashing, and grinding along. Finally we came within sight of the precipitous granite cliffs and sandy beach at Rodgers Harbor, where Captain Bartlett had told us the survivors would be found. We could see a tent, but no sign of life; a flag-pole without a flag; and a cross. There were no sleds or dogs—and we had expected to find at least twenty people!

We blew the ship's siren. Soon a man emerged from the tent on hands and knees. The castaway did not wave to us and shout for sheer joy at the prospect of deliverance from this icy prison; he simply stood upright and gazed at us, and brushed his hand across his eyes.

Presently, without even a friendly wave of the hand, he disappeared into the tent, and emerged a moment later with a flag in his hand. This he raised to half-mast. Two more men appeared. But where were the other twenty? Our worst fears seemed about to be realized.

The trio stood and gazed at us as we put the umiak over the side, clambered into it, and paddled to the beach. As we were about to step ashore, one of the Eskimos uttered a cry of fear; the leader of the castaways was walking toward us, taking a rifle from a case as he came! He seemed to be loading the magazine.

"Him crazy!" muttered a native. And we all felt that the castaway had cracked under the strain. But it would not do to exhibit fear, so we advanced to meet him. And what a sight he was! His shaggy, matted hair streamed down over his face in wild disorder. His grimy countenance was streaked and furrowed with lines and wrinkles. His skin clothes were in tatters, and caked with seal oil, blood and dirt. His reddish, unkempt beard effectually hid the emaciation of his cheeks, but his sunken eyes told of

In the belief that truth may be as interesting as fiction, we offer each month prizes for the best five stories of Real Experience submitted. (For details of this prize contest, see page 3.) First an Arctic explorer tells of the loss of the *Karluk* and the rescue of the survivors.

suffering and want. He was so thin and weak that we refrained from questioning him. He did, however, explain that two of the party had died during the spring; that eight had been lost between the shipwreck camp and Wrangel Island; that one had died as the result of an accident. Nine others, he said, were camped forty miles to the eastward. His first question was of Captain Bartlett and Stefansson. We assured him that Bartlett was safe on the *Bear*, and that Stefansson was adrift somewhere on the ice a thousand miles to the eastward. It was quite apparent that this survivor, Chief Engineer Munro, was not insane; he had been taking the cartridges out of his rifle, not putting them in. . . .

I left a note attached to the ridge-pole, for the guidance of any rescuers who might arrive later, and we took the survivors and their scanty equipment on board the steamer. The tent was left standing as a beacon.

The plight of these three men was pitiful in the extreme. Less than ten pounds of meat stood between them and starvation; they had but twelve rifle cartridges remaining with which to sustain themselves for ten months—until a rescue ship could be counted among the possibilities. They had matches, but their clothing was insufficient for another winter. Long ago they had given up hope of ever being rescued. They had not enjoyed a bath in half a year, or a change of clothing. In all those dreary months they had not sighted a sail or a smudge of smoke. And now they were in the warm galley of a schooner; they could have a bath, clean clothes, and anything they wanted to eat! And what do you suppose they asked for? Condensed milk—to a man!

**PERIENCES**

Within half an hour we were under way, headed for the camp of the other nine. When we came within sight, they not only ran up and down the beach to attract our attention, but sent one of their number out to the edge of the ice (about a mile) to intercept us. He felt my arms and shoulders to make sure that I was flesh and blood.

The others were in the same sad predicament as the Rodgers Harbor group; there is no doubt but what these men would have perished of starvation had we not arrived. They had not tasted such luxuries as coffee, sugar or tobacco in months. One of them had frozen the great toe of one foot, and it had been amputated with a knife and the tin shears; but on the whole, the party was in good health. However, the nerve-racking suspense while waiting to be rescued must have been terrible. And they knew that Wrangel Island is sometimes utterly inaccessible. As Munro said:

"You came just in time. We have been on less than half rations for months. One day, when our food supplies were entirely gone, I managed to creep to within a hundred yards of a seal, which was asleep on the ice. At intervals of half a minute, he would raise his head and look around, then doze off again. Finally, at about ninety yards, I decided to shoot. Then I almost collapsed when I realized that my hand was too unsteady to make my aim certain. Here was meat enough to last us a week, blubber for our lamps, and skin for clothing and boots—and I was too nervous to risk a shot.

"Clenching my teeth, I began to mutter a string of cuss-words, directed at my spineless self. From that I switched to the seal, calling him names. Finally, when I had got a grip on myself, and felt certain that I would not miss, I pulled the trigger. The seal gave one convulsive shudder, and lay still. But we got only one seal during the last three weeks. So, you see, you came just in time."

Meanwhile, our little power schooner fought her way through a belt of loose ice a hundred miles wide. On the outside we found the Revenue cutter, which took us all on board and brought us to Nome, on September 13, 1914. Here the castaways, cut off from civilization for a year, read their first newspaper accounts of the start of the World War. And just to show how tough human beings are, most of them enlisted!

**Another Explorer's Story is scheduled for an early issue.**

*Mountain-climbing may be dangerous enough, but when you're under enemy fire and certain to be shot as a spy if captured, you're running a real risk.*

By **W. LINDSAY**

**BIBB**

## *Death on*

**A**LL my life I have had a yen for precipitous climbing, such as scaling steep mountains and tall boulders. Before I was nineteen I had felt the thrill of the mountaineer who reaches the summit. . . .

When America entered the World War I was among the first of General Pershing's soldiers sent over. After a few months my regiment, then located in southern Flanders, was detached and sent to a quiet sector in the east to train with French soldiers, who had pushed eastward at an early stage of the war to help the Italians check the threatened advance of the Austrians.

Between the Allies and the Germans was a stretch of rugged country known as "No Man's Land." The tall peaks, rock-ribbed walls incredibly bold, with gnarled ledges and wicked gashes, made airplanes impractical for strategic purposes. It was therefore deemed necessary to make observations from the top of huge mountain boulders. One monstrous boulder-peak lifting its summit into the skies was selected as our vantage point. This strategic peak was outside the Allied lines.

A call came down the lines for volunteers to make a reconnoitering trip into No Man's Land. Many volunteers responded, but few could qualify as expert climbers. I was elected to undertake the dangerous mission of negotiating the walls of this formidable boulder.

I was given the option of discarding my uniform or wearing it, and the privilege of employing a guide. I discarded my uniform and donned baggy trousers, the latter permitting long, free steps in climbing the sheer, jagged walls. I fully realized that to be caught inside the enemy's lines in any garb other than my uniform gave me the status of a spy, and



## *the Mountain-side*

instead of being held as a prisoner of war, I would be shot.

The young men of the community had been conscripted by the German army. The older men left, most of them professional mountain-climbers, were glad to hire out as guides. The man chosen to serve as my guide was a strong grizzly-faced Austrian, Noah Shultz.

Our objective peak was a rock-crowned, jagged obelisk, and Noah explained to me that the peak could be negotiated only on the east side. One had to descend over the same route he had climbed. The opposite or west side was virtually a sleek slab, except about two hundred fifty feet up from the bottom, there was a deep fissure in the wall and a jutting rib, or overhang. Among the lesser boulders near the foot of this peak was an abandoned rock hut. Reports from our patrols showed no enemy had been seen in this vicinity.

**WE** made plans, Noah and I, to reach the abandoned hut early at night, get some rest, and begin the ascent at dawn. It was inky dark when we approached the hut. A small light shone through the rocky cracks. I stopped but Noah insisted on investigating the light, and barged into the hut.

I could hear Noah making conversation with a man, but could not catch its meaning. Having misgivings and doubts, I drew near the door. At this juncture Noah came out, and the man followed him to the door. "Hello!" he greeted, and eyed me critically from head to foot. We passed a few words. The fellow was tight-lipped and divulged no information about himself—simply said good-night, and walked away.

"He doesn't belong in the local community," was all Noah had to say.

Noah roused me before daylight, and by dawn we were on the face of the peak ready to rope up. We began to climb.

We had reached a table-like ledge about two-thirds the way to the summit, and relaxed, unlocking our muscles and stretching them. Peering over the ledge, Noah snapped out:

"Somebody! A light!"

We made out the figures of some half-dozen men climbing. I knew when the sun cleared away the heavy mists they could see us plainly. My worst fears were being realized, for there was no way to come down that monstrous boulder, save the way we went up.

We hurried to the summit, and I brought my binoculars into play, scanning the side of the wall. I saw the men were German soldiers, and were climbing industriously.

We were in a bad fix. As indicated, there was no way to negotiate a descent, except on the east side and meet the men who sought to capture us. We were blocked.

Finally Noah broke the painful silence: "On west side down to about two hundred feet from the bottom is a crevice cut deep into the side of the wall. It is hidden from the top. We can get down to that," he said. "But from there down to the bottom, no! The wall is almost a sleek slab, and we have less than seventy-five feet of rope."

"Let's go!" I snapped.

We scrambled down the west side to the ledge of the crevice. I had difficulty getting around the overhang; but old Noah was as sure-footed as a squirrel. Once we were on the ledge and under the protecting wings of the overhang, we were safe from sight and attack. But blasts of wind swept over our hide-out, and cut like a scythe. We fell silent.

No ray of hope penetrated the black despair that clutched me.

We started at a noise of scraping and kicking against rock; small pebbles cascaded down the wall by our hide-out. I looked out, and saw a soldier descending. Shortly he went back, evidently deciding he was doing a foolhardy thing, for he could be shot as he reached our overhang. It was a suicidal attempt.

Confused talk in German wafted down to us from above, but it was unintelligible. Finally Noah caught the words, "Spy—American! Come out!" shouted in German.

I had already felt sure we could thank the mysterious man we met at the hut for the relentless pursuit by the soldiers.

WE suffered intensely from biting winds; we had to keep our bodies in motion and blood circulating to ward off the bitter cold. All my hopes were paralyzed. The situation was desperate to the last degree. I felt like a lost soul. Withal, I felt a sense of responsibility, even in my definite misery, for old Noah.

I said to him: "No use for you to make a sacrifice, if you can save yourself. I'll be shot as a spy. When night comes, you climb up to those soldiers, and tell them that the Allied soldiers forced you to act as my guide, and that you have knocked me out and escaped. I think they will believe you."

The loyal old man looked at me with a shocked expression; then he said: "Nobody shall ever say Noah Shultz deserted his man in danger on a mountain."

Darkness was coming on. We were hugging the walls of the cliff and fighting the cold.

I looked around mechanically at Noah. His face was blue with cold, wooden and emotionless. Grumbling something in German, he rose, swung his arms about as if to loosen the joints, picked up his ax and moved slowly toward the edge. He disappeared around the overhang without speaking. I concluded that he had hearkened to my suggestion, and was going up to surrender and save himself. . . .

My misery deepened as night wore on. My alternatives were, so far as I could see, to freeze and starve, or give up and be shot as a spy.

Suddenly I started at the familiar scraping of hobnailed boots on the rock close by. The excitement of the instant gave me abnormal strength. I drew my gun and waited. A shudder ran over my

stiff body as I heard a stern whisper: "Be still! Still! Sh-h, sh-h!"

At the sound of Noah's voice I dropped my gun and scrambled to my feet. I placed my shoulder against the cliff and caromed alongside it to the ledge as Noah appeared around the overhanging rock. He had coil after coil of rope around his waist and shoulders.

Overcome with the turn of events, I was speechless. Old Noah grunted and chuckled with satisfaction, but did not stop to explain anything. Speedily and feverishly we worked with numb hands preparing the ropes for descent. Ready, the ropes were securely fastened, and coils dropped over the precipitous wall into the blackness below.

Noah went first, as the descent on that side had never before, to his knowledge, been negotiated, and it was in the nature of an experiment. Then too, once down, he could steady the rope from below, and make my descent less risky. Noah swung over the ledge into the inky gulf below. I waited with bated breath while straining my ears for movements or sounds from the soldiers above. Then a tug at the rope signified Noah had found bottom. My turn had come.

Wrapping the rope around my waist I gripped it and slid over the edge. No time to think. Down—down I went to the abysmal blackness below, the rope swinging and bumping me against the rock-ribbed wall. Groping, twirling, I made a painful landing at the bottom.

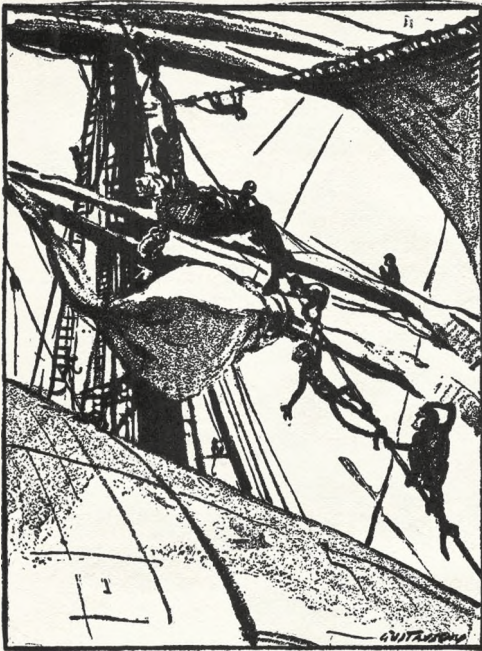
"We must hurry," whispered Noah, as he stripped off the ropes. "Follow me!"

NOAH said later that he acted on my suggestion, not to save himself, but me. He told the soldiers he had been forced at the point of a gun to act as my guide, but that he had knocked me unconscious and escaped. The soldiers swallowed his story without suspicion.

The blasting night winds drove the soldiers to shelter in the crevices below the summit. Under cover of darkness and the roaring winds, Noah stole their ropes and returned to save his man. . . .

Old Noah was a hero among the dough-boys. He was put on his *parole d'honneur*, and interned by the Allies for the duration of the war. This saved him from the wrath of the Germans. Everything was made easy for him by special orders.

Noah's holy creed was loyalty to the man he served. Beyond this, things did not matter to him.



# The Mate and the Monkeys

*Two hundred monkeys  
loose in the ship's rigging  
gave everybody a hilari-  
ous time.*

By

C. W. WALDEYER

our mouths agape. "Do something!" he roared. "Don't stand around like a bunch of apes—do something!"

The crew started milling about, accomplishing nothing. "Nitwits!" the mate yodeled. "Get those blank-dash monkeys down off that mast, before I log the lot of you!"

The crew, myself included, was still milling about. "How are we going to do it, sir?" one asked respectfully. It was a fair question, but apparently Erickson thought otherwise. "How?" he shrilled. "I'll show you how! Get some tarps, blankets, gunnysacks—lively now!"

We had the monkeys trapped on the mast, he pointed out. He apparently overlooked the fact that many of the creatures had arrived at the foremast via the jumper stay between the fore- and main-mast. It was also true, however, that the majority of them had come through the 'tween-deck. A few had had the audacity to come forward along the 'midship-deck. However they had got there, the fact remained that there they were, marooned, so to speak.

As the mate unfolded his plan, some of our awe and respect began to dwindle. His plan was this: he and the bosun would hold between them a piece of canvas, like a fireman's rescue squad, two other sailors being similarly engaged with a blanket, while two others each had charge of a gunnysack. The rest of the crew were to distribute themselves along the rigging and pick off the monks, dropping them either into the blanket or the canvas; whereupon they would be immediately popped into a gunnysack. When a man had a sack full of monkeys, he would lug it aft and empty them into the cage, returning hurriedly for more.

"ALL hands, all hands on deck! Muster on the foredeck."

Repressed hilarity was apparent in the demeanor of the quartermaster who thus rudely disturbed us, one sleepy Sunday afternoon in the forecabin.

It was the steamship *West Cajoot*, ten days out of Hongkong, bound for San Francisco with a deck-load of wild cargo. There were elephants, tigers, leopards, a male tapir and rare birds, thirty-foot pythons, hooded cobras, and members of both the cat and rodent families included. Last but not least were about two hundred monkeys, of every conceivable shape and size: Big baboons, long-armed spider monkeys, orang-utangs and right on down the monkey scale to the everyday organ-grinder variety.

"Get going, you guys!" added the quartermaster. "Up forward, quick—all the monkeys have escaped, and the mate is going crazy!"

As we ran out on deck, the sight that met our eyes pulled us up short; the two large cages containing the majority of the small monkeys, between thirty and forty in each cage, had been opened somehow, and there were monkeys all over the ship. Monkeys atop the wireless shack, on the gravity tank, on the life-boats and swinging hand-over-hand along the wireless aerial, monkeys climbing up the smokestack, peering into the funnel—to jump back chattering.

The mate was stamping up and down; suddenly he noticed us standing with

The starboard wing of the bridge and the lower bridge deck were crowded now with the captain and lesser officials. Many were the remarks relative to the individual merits of monkeys and sailors. The two Chink cooks were frantically trying to get bets down on anybody. The second assistant engineer, a nasty brute, voiced the thought that we would get confused up there and start throwing each other down. The captain and the chief engineer, having their dignity to maintain, merely grinned. A loud cheer went up as we ascended the rigging. A chorus of chattering from our quarry, and the big push was on.

I climbed up to the crow's-nest and got in. There is enough room to move around, and one doesn't have to bother about holding on. My idea was to lurk in the nest until an unsuspecting monk came near enough for me to clutch him and toss him to the waiting and expectant mate. But it didn't work.

Men were draped all over the mast and in the shrouds. So up to the cross-trees I went; thence I hoisted myself to the platform holding the masthead light.

Several dozen of our quarry had already started aft by way of the jumper stay, but plenty were still clustered around us. The back-stay—a big wire cable leading from the truck to the deck—was a solid line of monkeys. From where I stood it was an easy matter to reach the back-stay, which I did, and proceeded to shake it. My object, of course, was to dislodge as many monkeys as I could, whereupon the alert ground crew would soon have a couple of sacks full of them. But all I accomplished was to give our friends a good time. My colleagues 'in other parts of the fore rigging were as ineffectual as I in either capturing or dislodging the beasts. The Chinks were now giving odds on the monks. The second assistant suggested that we be lured into the cages, leaving the monkeys to run the ship—that no one would know the difference. We were too busy to make appropriate response.

**S**UDDENLY Erickson woke up. "Hey, you, come down the back-stay!" he bawled. His strategy was very apparent; the backstay was loaded with monkeys, and were I to slide down the stay, the monkeys, to avoid being crushed, would be forced down the stay into the welcoming arms of Erickson and his ground crew. So I swung over the stay in approved sailor fashion and

started down. The monks set up a terrific jabbering. "That's got 'em—keep coming!" screamed the mate. I kept coming.

So did the monks. As I went down, they came up—up over my shrinking body in great droves! I was covered with monkeys and confusion. I suddenly reached out with my right arm and grabbed one. I then attempted to throw him down, but he had other ideas. He got a strangle-hold on my arm with four feet and a tail, and all my efforts to shake him loose were unavailing. The harder I tried to shake him off, the tighter he hung on. My left arm was growing tired. I began to slip down. Most of the rigging had recently been white-leaded, and it was slippery.

**A**S I gained momentum, a great roar of laughter came up to me from appreciative spectators. A monkey going over me, stepped on my face; I yelled. He grabbed my hair, and his tail went around my neck. Hanging on by two legs and my left arm, a monkey draped around my neck, several more examining my feet, and still another hanging on my right arm, resisting valiantly all my efforts to dislodge it, I slid even faster. Then I hit the rail and fell to the deck. My two simian companions recovered just in time to elude the bosun and one of the sack attendants, and were on their way aloft again.

In frustration, I lay where I had fallen, and the other human actors in the drama, seeing the expression of hurt and chagrin on my face, gave way to mirth. They laughed until they were too weak to hang on, and one by one they slid or fell to the deck. The hilarity of the sailors, coupled with the outraged and indignant jabber of monkeys, created a scene which I am willing to bet, has never been and never will be duplicated. Erickson's brain-child was stillborn, but he could "take it." The sight of me sprawled on the deck, the jabber of the monks and the hilarity of the sailors got the best of his austerity, and he good-humoredly told us to beat it.

Sensing that the psychological moment had arrived, a Hindu came up and told the mate that catching monkeys was very simple: just leave the cages open, put plenty of food in them—and wait. This was done; and before dark all but fifteen or twenty of the monkeys were back in their cages. By the end of the second day all were recaptured.

# Armed Neutrality

*An old-time Westerner's  
strange encounter with  
horse-thieves.*

By

C. M. WELLSFORD



IT happened when I was a little past eighteen on the west bank of Columbia River in southern Washington—then a territory. I had contracted to pilot five hundred head of horses from the Horse Heaven country back to Nebraska. After a hard week's work rounding up, cutting and road branding the horses, and arranging to meet their herders next day at Wallula Junction, I started at sundown to bring my favorite saddler from a ranch fifty miles distant on the Yakima River. Riding over a strange country on a starless night, I lost my direction and did not reach where I had left the horse until about ten the next morning, only to find the ranch deserted and nothing to eat. Starting in the direction of the ferry crossing the Columbia at the mouth of Snake River, I arrived about sundown to find a notice, "Ferryboat out of order." I could see the workmen busy on the boat, the river being very wide at that point; and I tried to signal them to cross me in a skiff, but they would not come.

I concluded it was too far to try swimming on a range-raised horse, and decided to make a grubless camp despite my ravenous hunger. . . . Some time later I was awakened by the distant thud of hoofs pounding the hard-packed ground; presently a lone rider arrived and dismounted near my horse, which he inspected minutely before he noticed me. I saluted him, but he did not answer. I went past my horse to where he stopped, noticed he had four led horses, that he was an Indian or mixed breed, fantastically caparisoned and carried a superabundance of hardware for an Indian peaceably inclined. He scanned all directions as though expecting to meet some one. I tried to en-

gage him in conversation in English, and all the Indian dialects I "spoke at," including "Chinook," the traders' creation which most Indians of the north and west understand more or less, but all the answer I got was a sullen stare.

I felt sure the horses were stolen, for they showed good breeding and were unbranded; no Indian would own that many of that kind; also he must have known the ferry was broken down and expected help to swim them across beside a skiff; and he had been in hiding until dark, as his stock showed no travel signs although the day had been warm—and if I left there alive, his chances of escape were few, if my deductions were correct. I had only a .45 revolver and decided to stay very close to him while I did stay, as he seemed to put his whole dependence in his rifle, holding it one hand from the moment I tried to talk to him. With one hand he dragged his saddle and bed-roll to the river bank about forty paces from mine.

I dragged mine to within ten feet of it.

After staring at me, he backed away, dragging his bed and saddle with one hand, rifle in the other. I followed closely with mine for about thirty paces, when he stopped with a quizzical look. I dropped the end of my blanket, pointing to his rifle and my revolver and gave him to understand that we must stay near each other. He then sat down nursing his rifle across his lap; I imitated his example, my six-shooter in my hand.

Thus facing each other began our long conversationless vigil, each with much to think of and plenty of time to think it in, each watching the other's slightest movement. He was fidgety and I too nervous from loss of sleep, hunger and exhaustion to enjoy his company. I'd

have preferred caressing a Gila monster barehanded, to this!

I studied the situation from every angle and expect he did too. I had the advantage at the time, but if I shot him, I could hardly escape arrest. The workmen on the boat knew I had camped there, and even if I killed him, he would most likely wound me before succumbing. If he did not, I would be detained for murder, miss my chance to get back for probably a year, enjoying the meantime the luxuries of a third-rate territorial jail. I had tried stopping lead twice before, and steel once, and to call either an amusement is a wrong definition, absolutely.

Undoubtedly help to cross the horses would arrive sometime in the night, most probably in a boat; then there would be two or more to contend with, and that conjecture was not very cheering; but with my present advantage I could very safely postpone action.

Finally about one o'clock I noticed him slowly raising his carbine, so slowly as to be hardly perceptible. I shoved the revolver slightly farther toward him and pointed at his left breast. He immediately dropped the rifle and spoke very clearly, "Me no shooty, me no shooty"—proving that he wasn't deaf, and that he could talk.

Immediately he commenced conversing in a low-voiced unintelligible jargon with some one under the river-bank, grasped the rifle by the muzzle, backing to the inclined cut to the ferry landing, I following ten feet behind, and stopped at the mouth of the cut. He went down the cut to the water's edge, turned left around the acute angle of bank, conversing with parties not in sight, but I could hear their oars dipping in the water. I rushed down the inclined road and stopped where he had disappeared, with my revolver ready and covering the space his body must occupy on his return, between the water's edge and angle of bluff, holding my gun waist high.

I SAW the rifle-muzzle move past the bank's angle, and grabbed it, jerking him into sight. He seemed surprised that I had followed him, threw up his hands and stood still. I motioned to him to surrender his belts, which he loosened and dropped. I motioned him up the incline and followed, carrying his hardware. Arriving at our saddles, I had him turn his back to me, unloaded his carbine and examined his pistols; neither

was loaded, and neither carried shells fitting them. That was why he had chosen the rifle!

I waited for weeks (so it seemed to me), for daylight, which finally showed up. I dragged my blankets with his arms on them near my horse, extracted the rifle shells from his belt and gave them a scattering toss—but not far enough, I afterward learned, for when quickly speeding south and barely out of range, I heard a whistling ball closely followed by a report. The next, a spent ball, pounded my left boot-heel. I was too far out of range for the next three.

SHORTLY afterward I saw a rider a mile ahead angling from the north-west into the river road, going my direction. I hurried to overtake him.

Then I saw his horse stagger, and heard a report. I next saw him shooting toward the river, from beside his horse lying down. I hurried to him. He was wounded in the leg and the horse was dead. I helped him to a sitting posture and went to the river for water, saw a boat far out in the stream angling down for the other side, one man rowing and two lying down.

I returned, bathed his leg, bandaged it, loaded him on my horse and in a short time we met a deputy and two companions who inquired for the five horses I had camped with. I told them my story, and of the boat crossing the river with three men, two of whom were likely wounded by my companion. The man wearing the star said: "You should have shot him when you had the advantage." I said: "Yes, and you would have arrested me for murder."

"Sure," he replied, "but you would have come clear."

"I'm clear now with no law entanglement to contend with, which suits me better," I told him. . . .

In the afternoon the same three men overtook us, leading the same five horses with the Indian's arms and equipment strapped to the saddle, saying: "The thief got away." The smile was unanimous when I added: "And probably to stay away." We reached Wallula late at night, cared for the wounded man, I ended my forty-eight-hour fast, got a good rest and reached my horse-camp about four P. M., the next day, twenty-four hours behind time.

This experience, I may add, has furnished me with the basis for most of my nightmares for nearly fifty years.





# *A School Ma'am at Bay*

*Wherein a sorely tried lady uses both fists at once  
—with surprising results.*

By SARELLEN M. DE LANE

**T**HERE they sat, a battered untidy roomful of them, forty-five bright-eyed moppets of nine different nationalities, and they looked me over hopefully. I was their fourth teacher since the opening of school in September, and they were beginning to relish the idea of seeing us come—and go!

I had felt rather proud of myself for landing a job in a city school because I was only nineteen, the youngest graduate in that year's Normal crop. And I was eager to begin applying my shiny new theories. But the principal eyed me doubtfully.

"They're a little upset by so many changes," she whispered to me, "and they need a strong hand, but you mustn't lay a finger on them. That's the law in this State. Not a hair of their heads! Well, good luck, child, and if there's anything I can do—"

She shoved me gently forward and hurried out of the room.

It happened to be Valentine's Day and the enterprising little darlings had ravaged the supply cupboard during the five-minute delay before my arrival. A month's ration of red construction-paper had been snatched and haggled to destruction in no time at all.

"I know a good valentine that is very pretty and very easy to make," I began. "How many of you would like to start over and make one?"

Most of them yelled loudly that they would.

We picked up the biggest scraps of paper and started in. But within five minutes the lesson had run amuck.

They cut each other's hair gleefully. They grabbed handfuls of shirt and deftly cut great gaping holes in backs and sleeves. They clipped pictures out of their readers and they slashed their spellers into fringes.

I confiscated the weapons and made an effort to inculcate a little respect for property. But they had no taste for heart-to-heart talks and they did not even listen.

Some of the girls wet their water-color brushes in their mouths and absorbedly painted their fingernails red, decorated their wrists with painted bracelets and their bare legs with painted fancy garters. The boys drew skulls and crossed bones on their forearms and dashing mustachios on their upper lips. I was simply aghast at their behavior. And I wasn't to touch one of them!

The morning wore away with painful slowness.

After recess they all returned from the drinking fountains with mouths full of water. They had a happy ten minutes spitting on one another.

**M**ANY of the pupils had brought lunches that were ingeniously constructed of half-loaves of French bread hollowed out and filled, cone fashion, with boiled beans. These stood in a row on a shelf in the cloak-room. At noon it was discovered that some rascal had dosed each of the lunches with the slimy water from a long-neglected vase of flowers.

When I returned from my own luncheon, I found that George, the oldest and

largest boy and ring-leader of the bunch, had crawled by way of an adjoining tree on the playground through a transom into the room. He had admitted some of his pals through a door which he unlocked from the inside and they had cut the warp on all the looms I had brought for hand-weaving that afternoon. They had ripped open the valentine box, which they regarded as a sissy institution, and set fire to all the valentines in the metal wastebasket. They had forced the drawer of my desk, stolen a quarter turned in for a Junior Red Cross membership, and spent it for cigarettes, which they were now smoking in the alley. . . .

I silently counted to ten a couple of times to keep my temper.

THE afternoon drew to a close with the bedlam somewhat abated. They were tiring out. A stink-bomb or two provided some welcome diversion, and the airy fluff from pampas-grass seed-pods, something like milkweed down, was blown about the room in a sort of lung version of volley ball. Some of the foreign children who had gone home for lunch grew drowsy with the wine they had drunk and went to sleep at their desks, but their friends gleefully awakened them with stinging spit-balls on the sides of their heads or pins in their unsuspecting legs. Oh, we were a jolly crew!

I was sick with apprehension for the next day. There seemed to be no place to begin with these children. I looked at them bitterly and I heartily hated their little insides for the ride they had given me.

At about ten minutes before three I noticed George, the head devil, get up from his seat and lounge over toward the door to the playground. This was a gag for getting first position at bat in the indoor game, as the boys all ran for places and the first there got first ups. I had seen him pull the same stunt at the game recess earlier in the afternoon.

I walked back to where he was.

"Wait till the bell rings, George," I said. "Take your seat."

"Where'll I take it to?" he drawled impudently.

The children, alert at once, nudged one another and watched delightedly to see what was going to happen. There was a sudden tenseness in the air, and I knew this was the climax of the day for them, and the climax of something much more important for me.

I said once more: "Take your seat, George."

He eyed me for a long minute, a mean grin upon his face. It was up to me how much of a fool I wanted to make of myself before his admirers.

"You just *make* me," he taunted.

"Well, I'll try," I thought. "It's now or never!"

Both my fists flew up together into his face, which was level with my own. His jaw dropped open in astonishment. He rolled back on his heels, overbalanced by the blow, and crashed heavily through the French door opening on the playground. For an instant he lay still. Then he scrambled to his feet in a shower of splintered wood and glass, and giving me a startled look, he ran whimpering off across the yard.

There was perfect silence in the room. The children's eyes, enlarged, it seemed, to twice their ordinary size, were fastened upon me.

"After this," I said, making my voice steady by sheer force, "we will not race for places in the indoor game. We will choose up and change off every week. Tomorrow morning we will start over."

The dismissal bell rang just then, and with frightened faces they went quietly out and formed an awe-struck circle about the broken door. I went down the hall to the principal's office, told her what I had done, and then burst into tears. It looked as if mine was to be the briefest career on record. Four years of preparation and one day of action! I thought I was out like a light.

WELL, that was eleven years ago—and I still have the job, though never since have I "laid a finger on 'em or touched a hair o' their heads."

George came around to see me the other day. He's fighting at the Coliseum now in preliminary bouts. He brought that desperate day to mind with a curious question.

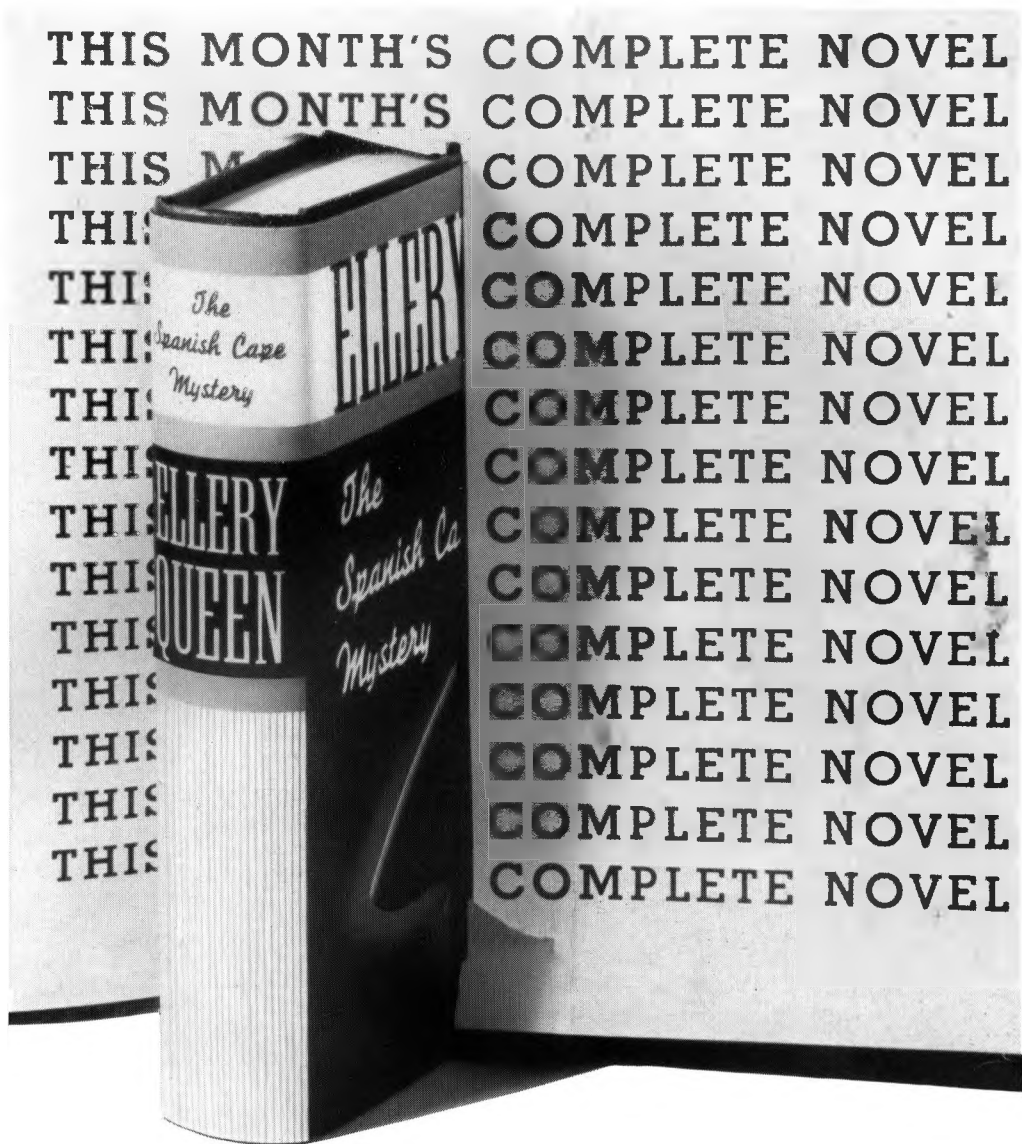
"Say, Miss DeLane, that day you gave me the double biff in the kisser, how was you holding your fists?"

I showed him.

"Just as I figured," he cried eagerly. "You don't never want to tuck your thumbs inside your fingers thataway. It's a wonder you didn't knock them both out of joint!"

Time had mellowed the incident to a mutual comic memory.

"That's a horse on you," I told him, "because that's just what happened!"



Ellery Queen, the masked author, whose books are eagerly read by thousands of loyal followers, contributes his newest mystery to April Redbook! "The Spanish Cape Mystery" is a full-length novel, complete in this issue and appears in Redbook prior to its forthcoming publication in book form at \$2.00.

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ARE IN TODAY'S**

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TIREDNESS QUICKLY...



GET A LIFT  
WITH A CAMEL!



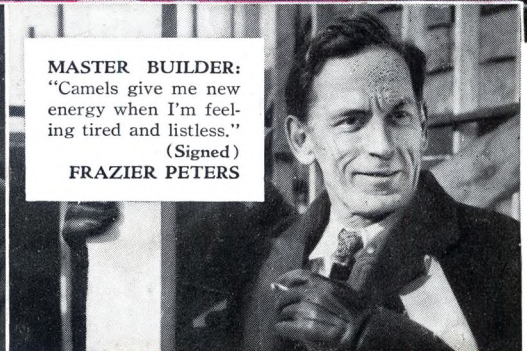
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**LISTEN IN**

Walter O'Keefe, Annette Hanshaw, Glen Gray's Casa Loma Orchestra over coast-to-coast WABC-Columbia Network.

**TUESDAY** { 10:00 p.m. E. S.T.  
9:00 p.m. C. S.T.  
8:00 p.m. M. S.T.  
7:00 p.m. P. S.T.

**THURSDAY** { 9:00 p.m. E. S.T.  
8:00 p.m. C. S.T.  
9:30 p.m. M. S.T.  
8:30 p.m. P. S.T.

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