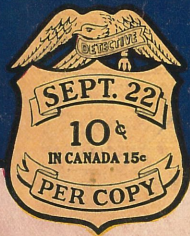


# DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY



With Thrilling True Stories  
Formerly FLYNN'S

## Blood Will Tell

A New CRAIG KENNEDY Story  
*by*  
Arthur B. Reeve

J. Jefferson Farjeon  
Charles Somerville  
Robert H. Rohde  
Mabel Abbott  
Bob Davis  
*and  
others*







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# DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY



"The Magazine With the Detective Shield On the Cover"

VOLUME XXXV

Saturday, September 22, 1928

NUMBER 6

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# DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY



VOLUME XXXV

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1928

NUMBER 6



She smiled, took it, but her smile changed to a look of pain. "Oh, my arm!"

## Blood Will Tell

*Craig Kennedy Gives a Baby Girl a Nosebleed to  
Get the Evidence to Solve a Millionaire Divorce Case*

By Arthur B. Reeve

"IT'S not the mystery of who is 'Buster' Seton's father I want solved—it's the mystery of what's got into Earle Seton himself—who's pulling the wires—and why?"

Dolly Seton's wistfully beautiful eyes were appealing while her serious, musical voice urged Craig Kennedy to recede from his usual stand to keep clear of divorce cases.

"This is not just a divorce case. Buster is my boy and Earle Seton is his father. But how am I going to prove it in this wisecracking age? Mr. Kennedy, I have no one else to go to in whom I can trust!"

She held out a small, white hand helplessly. "Think of it! To deny he is the father of Buster! Why, Earle has hired lawyers, the cleverest, the



crookedest—I am surrounded by enemies. They are like vultures over my Buster, ready to tear and pick at him—anything to hurt me! Sometimes I think they can all be bought—for a price!”

I could see Kennedy regarded Dolly Seton appraisingly. Often when a client was in a high emotional state he let her feelings run free just to see what would happen.

“I’m afraid to trust even my own servants. Oh, the hurt of it all, too! But the slight to me is nothing. What can they have done to Earle or said to him to poison his mind against me so? Sometimes I feel it is more than I can stand—but I’ll fight back, for Buster, until they drive me insane or kill me! . . . Even then I’ll come back and fight them—my memory will fight them!”

“Please, Mrs. Seton, don’t let your feelings run away with you yet. Maybe it’s the other way—maybe they haven’t put him up to anything—maybe he has put them up to it. Suspend judgment. Don’t get despondent. There is justice, even if it does not seem so at times. You need a clear head. He can’t take away the rights of your boy, his heir, as easy as that.”

“I don’t care for money! I don’t care for dower rights. It isn’t that that I’m thinking about. It’s Buster’s name and his mother’s honor!” Dolly Seton slumped forward in the big chair in Craig’s laboratory and the tears coursed down her pale cheeks.

Dolly Seton’s visit came at the height of the bitter and scandalous divorce case of Earle Seton, the real estate broker. His young wife had sued for a divorce, naming Nina Nix, of uncertain origin but well known in the Follies half a dozen seasons before and in Broadway night life ever since.

Nina had a little girl, I knew, nearly five years old, known since the beginning of the case as Betty “Seton.” There had been a “love nest,” all the things that go to make up a modern

scandal. Earle Seton had retaliated with a counter-suit, naming Teddy Tilford, clubman and sportsman. The case had dragged in little Roy Seton—Buster—just a bit over five. Earle had charged that Tilford was the father of Buster.

Earle Seton had a veritable battery of legal and detective talent. It must have cost him a fortune alone to retain for his leading attorney Lambert Sparks, of Sparks, Ritchie & Ames, who had been the attorneys for years for the Seton estate. Then, too, he had employed the detective, Harry Lewis, one of those who advertise: “Divorce Evidence Furnished.” Lewis had been busy making a case about Dolly, Tilford and Buster.

It was this sort of thing that had caused Kennedy to take the stand he had about divorce cases. He was not going to become a scientific wheel in a scandal mill, and I doubted whether Dolly Seton could make him change his resolve.

Dolly Seton had suddenly risen, a new resolve in her face, a new spirit of courage to win Kennedy’s aid. There was no doubt about her beauty. She was the younger of the Vandam girls who had been popular in the Junior League after their debut. She was small, blond, slender, and straight. She looked like a white lily, her soft, golden hair gleaming in the sunshine that straggled in through the laboratory window. But the strain and heartache had stolen her color. She was pale, and under her fair, white skin the blue veins were delicately traced.

“Mrs. Seton,” urged Kennedy, “tell me your story. Tell me about Teddy Tilford. There is nothing better on which to build a case than truth.”

“To tell my story is to tell you my humiliation.” She looked abstractedly out of the window, unseeing.

“It is the old story—of the neglected wife, ill and left alone. Hanging desperately to the little shreds of love left me, I have stayed on with Earle.



"I have tried to keep my eyes closed to what I saw and my ears to what everybody was talking about. But I'm not that kind. I'm afraid a good many of us are that way—just old-fashioned, after all, when we get into situations—sensitive, proud. I felt at first I couldn't leave him because of the memory of the love he offered me when we were sweethearts. Always I thought I might analyze him, find out what was wrong, win him back—until this last turn of things.

"Earle is older than I, considerably older. He liked the white lights, Broadway—and the girls, I fancy. I liked the lights, too, with Earle. But I find now how unfortunate I am—I am of the mother type. I love my home best. It seems to me sometimes that that's one of the things that just isn't done any more.

"Buster was born in June, five years ago. The year before, in the summer, we went up to Earle's place in the Adirondacks. Toward the fall I became desperately ill, too ill for social engagements of any kind—and I expected my baby. Earl couldn't stand the camp for an extended period, and just then I loved the quiet of it. He seemed to think it was best for me, too. So he left me to go to the city, look after his real estate business, and all that. I saw him only once during the winter—and he was bored to death. I was often ill in bed and had to be very quiet.

"Now that I look back on it, when he left me he seemed nervous and hasty. I begged him to come up the next week but he wouldn't promise. I wanted to go back with him. But he insisted I was better off there. I understand it now. He told Marie, my maid, to watch me carefully. She watched me carefully, all right."

"And you stayed up there in the mountains?"

"Yes, until just before the event. It was a long winter and I was frightfully nervous. But I really was better

off there than where I would have had to accept invitations and go out with my old set."

"A physician had advised me to walk every day. I did. One day I attempted too much, went too far on the trail and was exhausted. I sat down by a tree and that was the last I remembered until I felt a dog sniffing my face.

"Then I saw a kindly pair of brown eyes looking down at me. It was my neighbor whom I had never met, Teddy Tilford, you know. He had just bought the lodge next to us. He was up there hunting. Well, I was too ill to walk home. I fainted trying to do it. He carried me. He wouldn't leave until he heard from Marie that I was all right again.

"Then the next day he called. You must remember Teddy Tilford. He enlisted with the Anzacs before we got into the war, was wounded, and when he recovered we had gone in, so he transferred over to the A. E. F. Earle was doing some Red Cross work with supplies. I was a nurse. But Teddy was wounded again, and never got back into action before the Armistice. I was in a hospital just out of Paris. Things might have been different if he had been sent to my hospital."

She paused, looked out of the window again and back. "I asked him about the silver button he wore. My heart stirred with old stories, thrilled at the old battles. He showed me his papers and when he learned I had been over there his generosity was like his own big, boyish heart—overflowing. He sent me books, flowers, many things a kind neighbor might do for a lone, sick woman away from all her friends."

Dolly thought a moment, then added: "I had no thought of Teddy Tilford as other than a good friend and neighbor. No one else could honestly have thought so, either.

"But the servants have been bought by money and promises to swear to lies. They have even sworn they saw me with Teddy Tilford when we first



went up there in the summer, and all that sort of thing, but I never met him until November, the time I told you about.

"When Buster came in the spring, back in the city in the hospital, I already knew I was out of Earle's life. He had neglected me so terribly—and I had begun to hear stories and put two and two together. But I tried to be cheerful and was so proud of our baby. Earle even seemed interested in Buster, at first. But that was only acting.

"It wasn't long before he had to go on a trip to some mines in Mexico. I felt my mother cares too seriously either to leave or to attempt to take Buster. The trip would have been different if I had gone—or rather perhaps there wouldn't have been any trip. It's all part of my evidence."

"Did you see Mr. Tilford in the city?"

"Yes—twice before this disagreement became an open break. Once he called expecting to meet Earle, but Earle didn't show up that night, and the other time I ran across him by chance on Fifth Avenue near one of the sporting-goods shops. He sent me tickets to a big dinner the Adventurers were giving to some transatlantic flyers. I went with a friend, but didn't see him there. That was all until I couldn't stand people's gossip about Earle and this Nix woman."

"Then what?"

"Oh, even then months went by. I saw only too well that Earle's life and mine were miles apart. I loved him yet, but he had forgotten me. I tried to sink my feelings in caring for Buster. There's lots of criticism of girls to-day. But I don't think girls would be so bad if the men weren't worse."

Kennedy smiled indulgently and nodded. "That has always been my theory. If a man would give a woman even half a chance—half a chance—she'd make marriage work in the vast majority of cases. Women will be just as good as the men want them. . . .

Well, suppose you tell me about Nina Nix, not to change the subject too abruptly."

"Yes—Nina Nix," she repeated slowly, resuming where she had left off. "Then my pride came uppermost. I heard he had that love nest, as they call it in the papers, with this Nina Nix. I found out quietly a lot of facts. We had a scene when I faced him with them. But I was hoping at first that if he saw he was going to lose me it might bring him to his senses, make him exert himself to keep me. It failed.

"Then I threatened proceedings. I had to go through with it. The situation was intolerable. The newspapers have told you how he retaliated. He attempted to swear away my good name; one thing led him to another; even now he has sunk to the depth of refusing to acknowledge his own son! And he has done it all with such bitterness."

"What about Teddy Tilford?" I could not help interrupting Kennedy as I recalled the gossip of the *Star* office. "Why didn't he help your case?"

She flushed, shook her head, but her eyes did not lower from mine. "He is a good friend, a very good friend. Unfortunately his defense hurt me. It was too ardent. Once one of the newspaper men located him for an interview and badgered him into saying something like 'If Earle Seton would only drop dead, I would be happy if she would have me—that's how I believe in her!'

"Oh, gossip did the rest. Even his defense, his faith in me, hurt me with gossips. Now there is the truth you asked for," she cried, almost hysterically, to Craig. "If you will not help me—who can?"

"I think I told you at first I don't like to take divorce cases," Craig said slowly.

She looked startled.

"But," he went on, "I'll take this one—for the sake of that kid, Buster. We'll see what we can do to help Bus-



ter prove his right to the name he bears."

It was late in the afternoon when Dolly Seton left. I suggested that the quickest way to get at the case was to go down to the *Star* and find the facts from the files and from Connolly, who had been handling the assignment.

On the way down town Craig insisted on stopping off at the Adventurers and inquiring for Tilford.

"I can give you only a few minutes," declared Tilford, whom we unfortunately found in an alcove of the club going over some plans and blue prints. "And I wouldn't do that if I didn't know about you, Kennedy. I'm off newspaper men for life, I guess. I'm not to be quoted in the papers. You understand that?"

"But if you're working on the case for Dolly Vandam, I'll help you, as far as I can without prejudicing the case. It seems that anything I say is used against her. I hope no ill chance throws Earle Seton in my way. It will be unfortunate for him. It's all my own attorneys can do to keep my hands off him!"

Whatever may have happened twice to him in the war, Tilford was a wiry, athletic type. I felt that unless Seton's footwork was good it would be rather hard for him to escape a sound beating up.

"Why, Kennedy, this is the most outrageous case I have ever heard of," he began. "I'll make that badger pay through his nose before my attorneys get through with him. I don't mind getting excited about it with you because I know you are working for Dolly Vandam, but nowadays if you believe in anything or anybody people seem to think there is something wrong with you."

"Or that you have an ax to grind," I put in.

He looked at me as if estimating whether there was anything implied in my remark. "I suppose you mean you wonder if there is anything between us.

All the interviewers imply that. Well, the fact is that I felt mighty sorry for that little girl, all alone and in her condition, 'way up there in the North woods. Any man with a heart would have felt the same. I did what I could for her.

"But as for there being anything else to it—there couldn't be, and Seton knows it as well as I do. He's a renegade. He knows that even if she gets her divorce neither Dolly nor I could marry—unless some one should shoot him. And I can say neither of us is going to commit one mortal sin to get out of committing another. Do I make myself clear? He's just a skunk!"

"Quite clear. She's a fine girl. You can't say the same about the other one, though," I agreed.

"You certainly cannot—and yet—" He paused.

"Why—and yet?" queried Kennedy.

"I've been digging into that—for my own self-protection. Do you know that Nina Nix was a friend of Lambert Sparks, of Seton's attorneys, Sparks, Ritchie and Ames; that Sparks got acquainted with her when he was settling up that breach of promise suit years ago that she had against young Melvin Thomas the year he graduated from Harvard; and that it was by Sparks she was originally introduced to Seton?"

"I think you could begin to put some things together on that. She's a great little go-getter for business for attorneys when she gets against a sucker with money. I'm not making any charges, but I think you should know these facts."

Tilford was gathering up and rolling the plans and specifications on the table before him. Among other things I noticed a photograph of a houseboat, which was almost like a yacht in its lines. I could not help commenting on it.

"Ah, that? That's a photograph of a houseboat I just bought from an agent who came to me with it. Very



cheap. Wanderer is its name. You know I sold that lodge up in the mountains. There were too many unpleasant associations with it."

Kennedy was looking at it with interest. "So you are going to wander with a roof over your head? Good idea. Where is she now?"

"Off the foot of One Hundredth Street, in the river."

Kennedy laid down the photograph and nodded. He seemed to have gained his first impression of Tilford as he had desired, so we parted from him at the door of the club as he turned west and we continued our journey down to the *Star* office.

From the files and envelopes in the biographical department we found a great deal about Nina Nix ever since she had burst on the theatrical firmament in the Follies. We traced her through numerous celebrated scandals. There were all kinds of stories.

Connolly came in and was more than ready to talk about the case. But Kennedy seemed interested in Nina just now.

"I suppose you know she was a friend of that detective, Harry Lewis?" he asked.

"I understood she was a friend of Lambert Sparks."

Connolly nodded. "Yes; but Lewis introduced her to Sparks. I think he used to use her as a sort of stool pigeon in divorce cases. Then she reversed it so that she was using him. She used him in the Melvin Thomas case and the Thomas family settled with her for a hundred thousand.

"Another thing about this Seton case. You've heard of all kinds of 'love nests' in cases, apartments, bungalows, and all that sort of thing. Well, here it was a houseboat that Earle Seton named after her, the Nina. I got a picture of it, taken last summer."

He reached into his desk and drew forth a photograph which he was saving to be used the next time some new angle of the story broke.

Kennedy glanced at it, then quickly at me.

"Why," he exclaimed, "that's the same boat we saw, Walter—the Wanderer now!" He indicated the windows and decks, all the same as the other we had seen not an hour ago.

"Some one put one over on Tilford with the Nina repainted and renamed the Wanderer," I agreed.

"No doubt the work of Sparks and, perhaps, Lewis, to cover a client, just mix things up, weaken the evidence," considered Craig. "I think we ought to see Dolly Seton at once. She ought to know that."

It was evening by this time. Dolly Seton was not at her apartment we were told by her new maid. Kennedy showed his anxiety.

"Is it so important?" hastened the maid. Dolly must have spoken to her about us, for she seemed to know us and to be genuinely concerned.

"I think I can tell you where Mrs. Seton went. Marie, her other maid, was here just before dinner, very excited. I heard her tell Mrs. Seton how Mr. Seton had promised her so much money to tell lies about Mrs. Seton, that now he wouldn't give her anything like what he promised, now that she had sworn to the affidavits. She cried and went on as if she was crazy. She wanted revenge. Then she said she knew all about Mr. Seton and that Nina Nix."

"What did she tell Mrs. Seton?" asked Kennedy eagerly.

"Why, she asked her if she knew about the house boat, sir. Mrs. Seton did. 'Madame,' she said, 'that house boat has been all fitted up, oh, so beautifully, to take Nina Nix to Florida. It is leaving to-morrow by the inside route. She is on it now. Mr. Seton is spending the last night here on the boat with her before it starts. Then he is going to meet her later at Miami. She wanted me to go. I refused. They don't play fair with me. They don't keep their promises about money.



Don't you understand, madame? If you go with me, it's easy to get the goods on them, now, to-night!"

"And did she go?" There was anxiety in Craig's voice.

"Yes. She went. She tried to get you on the telephone, sir, but you were out."

Kennedy thanked the maid, turned quickly to the elevator, and at the street door signaled a cab.

"Now, why this story?" I asked as we hopped in.

"It's a plant."

"For us? That's what I was afraid of."

"No. For Dolly Seton. That Marie is a bad actor. I think I see in this the fine hand of that crook detective, Harry Lewis. It's so like his formula. We'd better hurry!"

We dashed across the city. It was dark, but we finally managed to find the landing float down at the foot of One Hundredth Street.

As we came down the steps from the dock I was wondering what we were going to do, how we were going to operate. It seemed as if the stage was all set for us. There was a little boat with a kicker and an old boatman waiting.

"The two ladies just left, sir," the boatman said in the dark. "But I thought you said there'd be three men, sir. Where's the others?"

I realized that we had just blundered on something without knowing what it was. Kennedy thought quickly. He was ready with an instant answer. "Only two of us. The other man couldn't come. Take us out."

The old boatman spun his engine as we climbed in. We turned our coat collars up to hide our faces as much as possible. A few moments later we were pulling alongside the Wanderer, once the Nina.

To my astonishment Tilford himself was leaning over the side. "Who is it?" he demanded as we climbed aboard.

I think he was about to fling us off when he caught a good glimpse of our faces. He was very quiet when he saw who it was.

"Mr. Kennedy!"

I turned. There was Dolly Seton. Not for an instant did Kennedy lose his self-command. Instead of evincing any surprise he seemed to accept the whole thing as quite what he anticipated. He looked about as if there was still something missing from the picture.

"I came here, Mr. Kennedy, on my own," Dolly Seton hastened to explain, speaking very slowly. "It was on a tip from Marie, here, about Nina Nix. It was just twilight when I got to the landing. I saw the boat, came out aboard it, suspected nothing in what Marie had told me. I thought it was all straight. But imagine my surprise when I got out here and found not Earle, but Teddy Tilford."

I tried in the dusk to study their faces. There was indignation on the part of Dolly. Marie was defiant. Tilford was nervous and incensed.

"It's a devilish frame-up by that hound, Seton!" he exclaimed as he strode across the salon of the Wanderer.

"Mrs. Seton," said Craig, "I'm sorry I didn't get your call. I would have advised you to wait, to let me get your evidence."

In the midst of her indignation I fancied Dolly Seton was fearful of the consequences of her impulsive detective work. Red spots glowed in her cheeks as she rebuked her former maid, who stood by a window in the salon drumming her fingers defiantly.

"You are one of those women with the heart of a snake! You'd betray an angel into hell! You may cause me some trouble—but I'm not through with you, Marie. You don't leave this boat until I let you leave!"

Marie was startled. She looked about as if she had expected help. Dolly Seton was a fighting woman now.



"I was a fool," continued Dolly. "I came here with Marie. When I saw the boat I suspected nothing like this. I got aboard. I thought I'd faint when I saw Mr. Tilford. I didn't know it was his boat now. He was as surprised as I was. We stared at each other until I heard Marie laugh. Then I heard your boat. Mr. Tilford was vexed. But I'm glad you're here."

I could hear the "put-put" of another boat now alongside.

"Ah!" exclaimed a voice, as Earle Seton came up over the side, followed by Lambert Sparks and Lewis. "What's said to be a love-nest for the gander is, in fact, a love-nest for the goose!"

At the first sound of some one coming up over the side, Kennedy had pulled me through a door out of vision.

"You lying cad!" Teddy Tilford moved quickly, and before Seton knew what he intended, Seton was sprawling across a chair from a quick straight-arm to the nose. "Men fight to protect women—but you—bah! You're a low breed!"

"Not so fast, Tilford." Lewis had stepped forward.

An instant and the divorce detective was reeling back against the window, his hand cut by broken glass as he sought to catch himself. Seton, bleeding profusely from the nose, stumbled to his feet, and before any one could stop him, had broken a tall glass vase over Tilford's head. Both Tilford and Seton were bleeding when Kennedy and I stepped from behind the door.

Tilford turned, all his fighting blood up. "Throw them overboard!" he muttered.

"Watch Sparks!" shouted Craig to me. "I'll take care of this scum of my profession!" He caught Lewis as he was about to strike again at Tilford from behind.

Marie had gone for Dolly in her hysteria, scratching and clawing.

It had looked easy to the raiders at first, three men against one. Now, however, it was three against three. That put a different complexion on it, and a rather bloody complexion, too. I don't think there was a person who had not one or more cuts or injuries before Kennedy succeeded in restoring quiet.

I wondered at the time at his solicitude about all the cuts and bruises of Seton and Lewis, Tilford, Sparks and Dolly Seton. I imagined he must have a purpose, especially as he seemed to be retaining carefully each bloody handkerchief or piece of cloth as finally he bound them all up with strips of linen from the house boat service.

Sparks made me maddest. He was the typical lawyer of the smart divorce courts. Even under these circumstances he could not restrain some contemptuous remarks.

"No wonder one in every seven marriages in these days ends in a divorce!"

I could not resist. "Only this is a case where the woman could not have done what is alleged. Look at this dirty work to-night!"

Sparks smiled ironically, shook his head. "You can reason it all out, Jameson, that a certain person could not have done a certain act—and then, by golly, you may find that that person did it. No, you need something better than old-fashioned deduction, if you're going to get anywhere nowadays! Judges and juries know pretty well moral conditions. Circumstances speak loudly."

I despised the man. I believed in Dolly and Tilford. And yet, after all, in these days might not Sparks easily persuade a jury? It seems that even a hint of an idea of self-control or generous feeling inspires in some not merely ridicule and contempt, but actually a fury.

"I intend to see Nina Nix and that little girl of hers, Betty," decided Craig early the next morning after we had slept off our melodramatic debauch.



We found Nina Nix established in an expensive apartment on Riverside Drive. It was quite in character. Everything breathed riches. However, we had no difficulty in gaining admittance, and fortunately found the lady at home.

Nina Nix was indeed beautiful, but there was no kindly soul shining from those snappy dark eyes. They were speculative, selfish, bold. She regarded us with interest, and I could tell she knew at once we were on the other side. But she was convinced she was a match for any man. She had always been.

Craig offered her his hand even before she extended her own. She smiled, took it, but her smile changed to a look of pain.

"Oh, my arm!"

"Miss Nix, I'm sorry. Forgive me. That wretched laundry of mine must have left a pin sticking in the cuff, loose. Just a moment. It must have scratched you. Oh, I'm so sorry." Kennedy pulled out his immaculate handkerchief and held it around her shapely arm until the slight bleeding was stopped. I fancied I saw a glint of satisfaction in his eyes.

"I'd change laundries if I were you—or be more careful myself." Nina was curt. Craig stuck the handkerchief back in his pocket. "Now, what brought you here? What do you want to ask?"

"Miss Nix," he began, "you've heard of the fight last night and the failure of the frame-up?"

A dangerous gleam in her eye showed that she had. "Well, what of that?"

She scornfully tossed her head and stretched her slender lissom figure more attractively on the big davenport. Clad in an orange wool dress, the beauty of her raven shaded hair and dark eyes was intensified. I fancied she was vaguely trying it out on Craig as she might on prosecutor, judge and jury.

"I thought you might like to take

a trip before the exposé that is coming. There will be one. It must come. Dolly Seton has a fine fighting chance now. But I always think of all the women in a case—and I came to you to try to spare you some of the publicity that is bound to come of it."

"You don't have to think of me. My friends will do that. I'll stay, thank you. Dolly Seton can't scare me—and Earle Seton will have to take care of his little daughter, too!"

At that moment a little girl romped into the room. Like most children she was attracted to Craig. She was a little dark-eyed sprite much like her mother.

She ran up to Craig and tried to bury her face in his arms. She did it beautifully twice. But the third time she fell and hit her nose hard. Maybe Craig did something or neglected to do something that caused it. None of us could see it, though. The next thing I knew he had another handkerchief out and at little Elizabeth's face. It was an old-fashioned bumped nose and a good specimen.

Nina Nix was restless now and a bit suspicious, although she had not the faintest idea of what. "It's a good thing we have gauze in the house, too, if you run out of handkerchiefs!"

Craig laughed pleasantly, turning it aside. "Glad I had them and could be of service."

Plainly now Nina wanted the interview ended, although it seemed to me that it had hardly begun. She was worried, as every one was when they were unable to figure out what Kennedy was doing.

Standing near the door she said beligerently: "I'm going to stay, Mr. Detective, and fight for Elizabeth. If Dolly Seton sent you, tell her that is my answer. Good morning!" She bowed us out.

"Well," observed Kennedy jubilantly, "I have samples of the blood of that little gold-digger and of the baby. Last night's fray was my oyster, too.



Now we must stop at that apartment of Dolly Seton. I'll come out into the open, then—just prick under the thumb nail of Buster, get a couple of drops, and I'm all set."

Through the forenoon Kennedy was deeply immersed in some work in his laboratory. It was not until after luncheon that he had completed some tests he had undertaken.

"Now, Walter," he directed, "get them all here at the laboratory for a conference at three."

"But will they come?" I objected.

"I think they'll all be here except possibly Nina Nix. And I don't care about her. With all her cleverness and in spite of what she thinks about herself she is only a pawn in the game. If any of them hesitate, just intimate that there may be some kind of compromise proposed. That will bring them."

Sure enough, that afternoon Nina would not come. But the others did. With some of them I think it was curiosity, perhaps fear of not being in possession of all the facts and being caught off guard.

"There's something I am going to tell you," began Kennedy when they had all arrived, "which may be brought up for the first time in a court."

He was speaking to all of us, although his eyes now seemed to single out Dolly Seton, who was sitting in the big laboratory chair with Buster, a lusty, big-eyed little fellow wonderingly clinging to her hand, beside her.

On the other side of the room was Earle Seton, flanked by Lambert Sparks and Harry Lewis. They scarcely even nodded to Dolly and totally ignored Teddy Tilford next to her. As to cordiality there might have been a wall of masonry between the two sides of the room.

"Although the inheritance of what are known as group-specific substances in human blood has been known for over twenty years, the application of that knowledge to medico-legal ques-

tions has never been made, as far as I know. Let us make it." He paused and cleared his throat. "It is what is known as the agglutination of red blood cells by contact with blood serum derived from another individual of the same species."

"Is this really scientific, Kennedy?" asked Sparks in his best cross-examiner manner.

"I am not in the habit of dealing with pseudo-science, Sparks," smiled Kennedy. "It is a definite law. In the behavior of their sera and their red blood cells, all human beings without regard to race, sex, or state of health fall into four groups."

"In the first group the red cells are not agglutinable by any other human serum, but the serum agglutinates the red cells of all persons not belonging to this first group. In the second group the red cells are agglutinated by the serums. I think I'll use the English plural rather than the Latin; it sounds less pedantic—by the serums of the first group and the third, while the serum agglutinates the cells of the third group only. The third is the obverse of the second. Its red cells are agglutinated by the serums of the first and second groups and its serum agglutinates only cells of the second group."

"It is due to two kinds of specific agglutinins of which one is present in the serum of Group II, the other in the serum of Group III and both in the serum of Group I. Cells of Group IV are agglutinated by the serum of all the other three groups, while the serum contains no agglutinin whatever. It never changes. It is permanent through life."

"In a baby, too?" put in Sparks, unrepRESSED as a cross-questioner.

"Yes, in a baby, too," answered Kennedy with polite good humor. He knew Sparks was baiting a hook and he intended to put a big live squid on the hook for Sparks. It was new to Sparks. He had been accustomed to leading questions. Kennedy was an



adept in what might be called leading answers.

"As a baby is developed in the embryo, the specific agglutinability of the red cells appears. The agglutinative power of the serum may be absent at birth, but it appears eventually after a few months, always."

"And are these in the blood of everybody?"

"Everybody. Over forty per cent of people are in Group I. This is never hybrid. Just under forty per cent are in Group II, which is hybrid only with regard to its dominant quality. The same is true as to Group III, which comprises from twelve to fifteen per cent of people. There are only two to five per cent in Group IV."

"And when people marry?"

"That's the interesting part, to us. You have hit it. Unions of men and women from each of these groups produce children definitely in groups that can be predicted. Mating of Groups I and I give only in Group I. Groups I and II and Groups II and II produce children only in I and II. Groups I and III and Groups III and III give children only in I and III."

Kennedy paused as he drew out what looked like a chart. "I have reduced the matter here to a definite table of instances where a child must be illegitimate, that is, not the child of a supposed father. This may seem to be rather negative. But it yields results that are positive enough in this case."

Before us he spread the chart:

Known Mother	Supposed Father	Child Cannot be:	
I	I	II	III
I	II		III
I	III	II	IV
II	I		III
II	II		III
III	I	II	IV
III	III	II	IV

We studied the chart especially Sparks, waiting for Craig to go on. Sparks would have liked to lay a

foundation for pulling it apart, but he did not have the remotest idea what to be destructive about. It was a question either of betraying some gross ignorance or of perhaps laying a destructive foundation for something he might later want to build up. So he did what was the most difficult thing in the world to him—kept silent, as he studied it. I wondered how long it would last.

It did not last long. "Holy smoke, Kennedy," he exclaimed with an easy flippancy. "Give me a copy of this thing. I might need it, myself, some time. You know, it's a wise father that knows his own child, these days!"

Kennedy ignored the flippancy. "Dolly Seton belongs to Group I," he resumed slowly as we all leaned forward. The application of it to the case in hand had been on the minds of all of us. "Teddy Tilford is also in Group I. For instance, as you will see, they could have a child only in Group I; never in II, III, or IV. Little Buster Seton is in Group II, as it happens! Therefore, Buster Seton could not by any possibility be the child of Dolly Seton and Teddy Tilford!"

Dolly started forward in the chair, eyes gleaming eagerly, intently as Kennedy proceeded with provoking slowness.

"Earle Seton is in Group II. Groups I and II produce only in I and II, never in III and IV. I believe that Buster Seton, in Group II, is really the child of Dolly and Earle Seton." Kennedy paused and added: "This fight has already cost you thousands of dollars, Seton, I am told. Who is getting it? Lewis? Sparks? Nina Nix? Some one will get the rest of your fortune, too! You should be elected president of the easy-mark millionaires!"

Earle Seton leaned forward, also studying the chart.

"Just a moment, sir! Nina Nix was in Group I, also," hammered Kennedy relentlessly. "Earle Seton was in Group II. There is some one else

in this case in Group III. Nina in Group I and Earle Seton in Group II could have a child only in Groups I and II. They could not have a child in III or IV. But Nina in Group I and this other man in Group III could have a child in Groups I or III—never in II or IV. Little Betty 'Seton,' so-called, is in Group III. She could not have been the daughter of Earle Seton. She is, in all probability, the daughter of this man, this man in Group III."

"Who?" demanded Earle Seton, flabbergasted, but angry.

"For example, Harry Lewis is in Group III," was the provokingly calm answer of Kennedy.

"Now, I am making no assertions; I am dealing only with possibilities and impossibilities. Was it not Harry Lewis who got Lambert Sparks to introduce his intimate friend, Nina Nix, to Mr. Earle Seton, the wealthy client of Sparks? The crooked divorce detective business is a good racket, Lewis,

if you know how to play it and make business for yourself."

Earle Seton had swung around watching Lewis. He seemed to realize what a sucker he had been.

"They were Lewis's lies—they were not mine!" he stammered weakly, turning in the direction of Dolly and Buster.

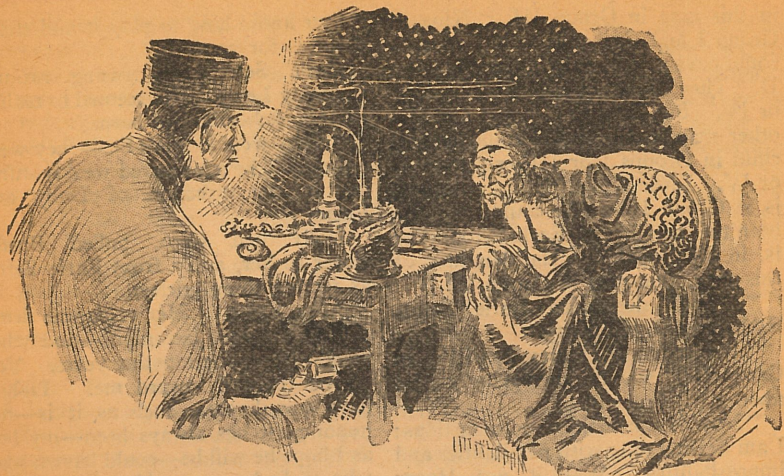
Dolly had risen, pulled Buster closer to her, away from Earle Seton as from a thing unclean.

"No, Earle." Her voice was firm. "I can't forget last night—and what went before, for months, years. You played the cad toward me. I shall have my divorce, such as it is—my honor as it has always been—my boy as I hope he will be—could have a man who truly loves me, if we thought it was right. No, Earle—go with your Nina—and her crew. You should have read Kipling more: 'Let him take her—and keep her; it's hell for them both!'"



Craig Kennedy will solve the murder mystery of a Broadway butterfly in an early issue of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY.





"Have I the honor of a visit from Captain Dubois?" the freak croaked

# Moy Poy

A True Story

*A Siamese Maniac More Dreadful Than the Super-Criminals of Fiction Terrorized Algiers Before He Was Slain by His Own Weapons*

By Captain R. Du Chaliou

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Captain Du Chaliou has for the past fourteen years been in various commands in the French army, most of his time, except the period of the World War, having been spent as commander of a troop of the *Chasseurs à Cheval d'Afrique*, the African cavalry. For many years he commanded a troop of Arabs fighting in the desert country beside the infantry of the Foreign Legion. He has also held various posts in the intelligence service.

A MYSTERIOUS murder stirred the attention of the civil and military authorities of Algiers, the latter part of July, 1913. On a night as stifling as Algerian nights are in midsummer two native patrolmen tramped slowly through the dust and the refuse in the winding alleyways of the town's Arabian section. The gendarmes were drowsy and tired, because they had been on patrol most of the night, and they shuffled carelessly between the whitewashed garden walls, in the deep shadows of dilapidated buildings which flanked the streets.

Suddenly their attention was aroused by a melancholy wail.

The prolonged howl of a dog, to an Arab, is an omen of certain death, and, for all their military training, the two policemen were Arabian to the core. Therefore they advanced warily, inspecting closely every yard of ground. At length they saw a white form. It lay in a corner where the shadow of trees, overhanging a low garden wall, blended with the deeper shadow of a near-by building.

They inspected the body, and discovered it to be that of a middle-aged



Arab of high caste. The two patrolmen turned the man over. Then they saw with horror the frozen expression which terror and pain had, in the last moment of life, stamped upon the dead man's features.

The police inspector of the Arrondissement, hastily summoned, found at once several strange and inconsistent factors in the circumstances of the murder. The footprints around the body were not tramped deeply or mixed as they would have been had there been a struggle, nor did the murdered man's body show marks of wounds or any crushing blow. The throat presented no traces of strangulation.

### The Intelligence Service

Subsequently the body was identified as that of Fathma Ali, a wealthy Arabian merchant; although the man had been notorious for his antagonism to the French government, his record revealed no enemies.

An autopsy brought out the fact that the victim had met death through acute poisoning of the blood; but analysis of the poison proved unavailing, for its properties had rapidly disintegrated.

Two minute rows of needlelike pricks, the rows an inch apart, were discovered on the back of the neck, extending upward into the lower scalp.

The local police were of the opinion the man had been killed in some other part of the town and carried to the alleyway in which he was found. Aside from the foregoing circumstances they were unable to find any clue. There was no evidence to support theories of robbery or revenge as motives; and, unable to fathom the mystery, the civilian police booked the case as a political murder, and referred it to the French Intelligence Service. Here the inquiry was earnestly resumed by Captain Dubois, one of the most skillful leaders of that famous department.

For some time Dubois had been watching with keen distrust the activi-

ties of those Arabians who made up in Algiers the political group to which Fathma Ali had belonged. Captain Dubois, a very shrewd man under an impassive soldierly appearance, was aware of the mistake of the civil police, who had tried to build up around the murder of Fathma one theory after another, and had finally failed for lack of clues. Instead of rushing to conclusions, he decided to single out those whose acquaintance with the murdered man had been most intimate, and wait developments.

Accordingly, the investigation narrowed to three individuals: Ramazan Bekr, a wealthy banker of shady connections; Menhed Rahli, a caravan trader; and Yusuf Aker, a gentleman of wits.

Dubois was pondering over these men's records a few days later, when one of his assistants rushed into his office.

"Ramazan Bekr has been found murdered in his own courtyard!" the assistant reported breathlessly.

"Under what circumstances?" Captain Dubois asked.

### Mysterious Marks

"Circumstances very similar to those of the murder of Fathma Ali," replied the assistant. "Same ghastly expression of terror and pain upon the face, same tiny marks on the back of the neck and scalp. The floor of the court is marble, so we could not see by the footprints if there was any struggle.

"And, strange to say, we are encountering the same situation we had to face in the murder of Fathma Ali. Outside of a few abrasions which may have been produced by a fall, the body does not show wound or trace of a desperate struggle. We cannot ascertain what really killed Bekr.

"Have you located Menhed Rahli?" Captain Dubois asked.

"As yet our operatives cannot find a trace of him," the assistant answered.



"Nor has his presence anywhere been reported by other bureaus of our Intelligence Service, or by the men surveying the caravan routes."

Dubois thought hard. With this second murder and the disappearance of Menhed Rahli, he was confronted by a far greater problem than he had anticipated. Whoever the murderers were, they were no ordinary criminals and had their own peculiar methods of doing away with their victims.

Dubois felt that he would have some real information, pointing most probably to the culprits, in the discovery of the instrument which left two rows of fine pinpricks upon the neck and the lower scalp of the murdered men. But, try as he would, he was unable to ascertain the nature or the meaning of those two rows of tiny wounds.

#### Dubois Acts

He had had three people under survey. Ramazan Bekr, the shady dealer whose activities had been so hard to trace, had taken all his secrets to his grave, and Menhed Rahli had disappeared. The one remaining was Yusuf Aker, who made a livelihood by his wits or his luck at cards.

Was Yusuf Aker, the gambler, guilty of those murders, or was he one of those marked for death?

Since men of Yusuf's character are bound to keep moving from one place to another, Dubois felt that it was imperative he get to him before he shifted to a destination hard to trace, or was killed by the same agency which had stricken Fathma and Ramazan Bekr. Therefore he ordered that Yusuf Aker be brought to his presence.

An hour later a very handsome though most indignant young man of some twenty-seven years was led into the office of the captain.

Dubois was a man of commanding bearing. Though inclined by nature toward a sort of brittle kindness, an ugly scar gives him an appearance of cruelty and ruthless will, and he is

shrewd enough to make excellent use of this trick of fate in his work with criminals. But Aker was not dismayed by the captain's frown.

"To what must I attribute this outrage?" he demanded as his angry eyes met those of Dubois. "Do you think me a common criminal that I should be dragged before you in this manner?"

In spite of his position, Dubois could not refrain from a mild feeling of pity for this young man. Yusuf Aker had been a very brave officer of the Tirailleurs d'Algiers before his dissipations had forced his superiors to demand his resignation from the service.

"Yusuf," Dubois said gravely, "you were once decorated for bravery. I would like to think that some of your former qualities as a soldier still remain with you. I know of your close association with Fathma Ali and Ramazan Bekr, and while I do not suspect you of their murder, I believe you can help me by giving valuable information concerning their enemies and the means by which they were killed."

"Monsieur le Capitaine," answered Yusuf, "I can tell under oath that I am in no way responsible for the death of either Ali or Bekr."

#### The Hidden Truth

"I wish," he added wistfully, "that I were still the honored soldier that I was once. But if my vices have brought me to my present condition, they have not brought me to murder."

Captain Dubois, watching the face of Yusuf Aker, sensed that he was telling the truth. But most certainly he had some knowledge of the two murders, and what he knew was perhaps very valuable.

"Now, Yusuf," he asked casually, "how did you happen to become acquainted with those two men, Ali and Bekr?"

"I make a living by playing cards, as you know," answered the Arab. "Fathma Ali and Ramazan Bekr played for their amusement. Both were



rich men, and they used to consider that a small loss at cards was more than compensated by the good time they had in gambling. They had no grudge against my playing and, with time, they had come to enjoy my acquaintance.

"I would enlighten you if I could, but my knowledge of Fathma and Ramazan Bekr was limited to gambling with them."

Captain Dubois perceived clearly that Yusuf was holding back the truth. Yusuf Aker's first rage had left him suddenly, and he seemed particularly indifferent to the powers of the police and the agents of the Service. It was not sheer bravado, Dubois judged; nor was it ignorance of the abilities of his staff to ferret out the truth; for Yusuf Aker's livelihood since leaving the Army depended upon his knowledge of police supervision.

### Yusuf Trembles

The most reasonable explanation for his attitude, the Captain thought, was that the young gambler was more afraid of some person or influence than of the consequences of French criminal prosecution. Well knowing the mentality of the Arab, Dubois understood that the only way to get the truth from Yusuf's lips was to win his confidence; but he could not achieve such a result without running some kind of a chance.

"Yusuf, you may go," he said almost kindly.

The Arab thanked, salaamed low and left the room. As soon as Aker had gone, Dubois directed his assistants:

"Have Yusuf followed incessantly, and use several men if needed. If the least thing turns up, let me know at once."

The next several days were spent by Dubois in attending to the routine matters of his office. But in the back of his mind was always the problem of a solution of the murders of Fathma Ali and Ramazan Bekr. The case had grown in the public mind of Algiers, and there was a feeling of general fear.

As long as the murderer was at large, people felt that a next victim was inevitable.

Then the body of Menhed Rahli was discovered in the outskirts of the town, stabbed to death. The murder of Menhed had peculiarities of its own which eliminated the theory that the murderer could have been Yusuf Aker; or, at least, that Yusuf Aker had played a lone hand in these crimes. The condition of Menhed Rahli's body disclosed that the caravan merchant had been killed not earlier than two days before, and it was discovered that Yusuf had not left the immediate surroundings of his house since he had been brought before Dubois.

The same afternoon that Rahli's body was found, Dubois received a report from the agents he had detailed to watch over Yusuf Aker. The young gambler, who had acted queerly in the last days, hearing of this latest murder, had gone almost completely insane from fear.

### A Beggar's Message

He moved about secretly, shying at the slightest noise, darting aside at the least footfall, and avoiding his own house. Stranger still, for a man of his occupation, he seemed to find relief only in the close presence of a member of the police, and had literally dogged the steps of several uniformed officers all afternoon.

Upon receiving this information, Captain Dubois, having failed at all points to secure information elsewhere, decided the moment had arrived to approach Yusuf Aker again. He rather expected that the former officer of the *Tirailleurs* would, in his present distress, be willing to confide in a fellow soldier and accept a proposition Dubois had in mind to make him.

One of the Arabian secret agents, disguised as a beggar, was sent to the front of Aker's house. When the gambler arrived, the beggar insistently followed him to the doorstep and was



finally admitted. Assuring himself that they were alone, he left off with his pleas for money and food.

"Yusuf Aker," he said quickly, "it is Captain Dobois who sends me to you. He knows you are in trouble and is ready to grant you protection and immunity if you will give him the information he needs."

Aker started nervously as the name of Dubois was mentioned. He paced the floor hurriedly, as though unable to control his movements. Finally he made a great effort to control himself and, standing trembling before the disguised agent, exclaimed in a thoroughly frightened voice:

### A Rustling Sound

"I must trust Captain Dubois and play his game! But, monsieur, I cannot go to the bureau of the Intelligence Service. I am closely watched, and such a move would be my death! My losses at gambling during the past few months have brought me to associations which I regret. I lied to the Captain about my winnings. If Captain Dubois will keep this promise you have made me, I will meet him anywhere it may suit him, so long as I can be unobserved."

When this answer was brought to Dubois, he decided to visit Aker in person at once at his home. There was, he felt, no time to lose, for Aker was not a man to be disturbed over trifling causes. If he feared death, it was only because death was near and in a form more terrible than that of the battlefields.

Since the Captain was a man of courage, he chose to enter the house alone, knowing that in so doing he would inspire Aker with greater confidence. Nevertheless, being by no means a fool, he ordered a cordon of disguised agents to be thrown around the building with instructions to force an entrance at the first sound of a struggle, should there be any.

As the first darkness of night was

settling over the town, Dubois approached Yusuf Aker's house. Everything seemed quite usual and still. He recognized the beggars and lingering Arabs about the premises as his own men. When he rang the bell, he was ushered inside by Aker himself, who invited him to be comfortable.

"I am glad you have come, Captain," Aker spoke with nervous quickness when they were seated. "I feel that the night is closing around me and every moment is precious!"

The room in which they sat was well furnished in a plain manner. The walls were paneled and, on the left, the wall was clear of obstructing furniture from ceiling to floor. As Aker spoke, Dubois thought he heard a soft, rustling sound near him.

"Aker," he asked casually, "are we quite alone in this house?"

"Yes, Monsieur Capitaine," Yusuf replied uneasily and, from his frightened expression, Dubois judged that, whether others were present or not, Aker was speaking the truth and did not know of any secret visitors.

### The Secret Passage

The soft, rustling sound persisted, and a doubt came to the quick mind of the Captain. He knew that Arabian houses sometimes held hidden passages. An uncomfortable sensation, as though he were being followed or watched, came over him. Lowering his voice to a whisper, he asked:

"When and how did you happen to rent this house, Aker?"

"I did not choose it myself," Aker replied, duplicating Dubois's low tone. "It was given to me by the man—whom you seek!"

The Captain's eyes narrowed, accentuating the harshness of the scar below his eye, and transforming his features into an appearance of intense cruelty.

"Speak quickly," he commanded. "Who is this man?"

Yusuf Aker's face went suddenly white, and his eyes, bulging from



their sockets, fixed themselves in the utmost terror upon the wall at the Captain's left. As Dubois glanced swiftly in that direction, the entire panel moved quietly to one side, leaving in its stead a black and sinister entrance. Throwing himself to the floor, he snatched his automatic and fired towards the dark hole where the panel had been, calling to Yusuf as he fired to follow his sudden maneuver.

### The Spider

A volley of rapid shots shattered the lights and ripped through the walls and furniture of the room. In the darkness, Dubois heard his companion fall moaning to the floor. Then a mass of human bodies leaped upon him, and he rolled about the black room with them, fighting desperately. He felt two strong hands grasp his throat, while his arms were pinioned at his sides.

His strength was leaving him when the door burst open and his agents rushed in. A quick struggle followed, and Dubois attackers were subdued and shackled. Under the bright gleam of flash lights, the captain, bruised and battered, saw three bodies lying upon the floor, one of whom he recognized as Yusuf Aker, already dead.

The four prisoners who remained were not Arabs. They appeared to be either Tonkinese or Malays. When the passageway through the panel was explored, it brought them to an alley near by, but they found no trace of other accomplices.

The prisoners refused to talk, and Dubois ordered them locked up. After thoroughly examining the house, the agents were able to offer nothing towards a solution of the case.

Reviewing these events the following morning and attempting to piece them together in a comprehensive pattern, Captain Dubois could see no way in which he had bettered the case. The three men who could have aided him in solving the murder of Fathma Ali were now dead, killed by the same hand, he

believed. He had been able to arrest four members of the band, but he doubted that he would be able to force any one of them to a truthful confession.

A week later, at the Cercle Militaire, Captain Dubois had the pleasure of meeting an old friend, Captain Rideau of the Infanterie de Marine, who had just been transferred back to Algeria from Indocine. Their discussion fell upon the latest complication of the murders which had preyed so deeply upon the mind of the captain. Rideau became deeply interested, and, at the description of the type of wounds found on the neck and scalp of the murdered Ali and Bekr, his eyes brightened.

It was a drowsy afternoon, and the very palms of the garden which surrounded the premises of the club seemed to smart under the fierce Algerian sun. A tiny spider slid lazily upon the marble of the window sill.

### Fiendish Murder

"My dear Dubois," said Rideau gravely, pointing to the tiny creature, "has it not occurred to you that the instrument of death may have been an insect?"

"I have found no reason for thinking that," answered Dubois. "At first I thought Ali and Bekr might have been bitten by a reptile, but the nature of the wound excludes such a supposition. The most poisonous of our Algerian insects, the scorpion, produces a different mark, and even a scorpion is not capable of killing a man so quickly, because the scorpion's venom spreads slowly."

"I, too, had this impression," Captain Rideau continued, "until you spoke of those Malays you captured. This has made me think of the Bornese giant centipede, which is extremely poisonous.

"When the Bornese wish to use this insect as a carrier of death, they throw this fearsome creature into some vir-



ulent liquid for a moment. Then the writhing insect is carried in a box to the place where the murder is to be staged, and there is thrown upon the man marked for death. In the spasms of its agony, the centipede tears and clings to the flesh of its victim, injecting the more poisonous serum which is also killing it."

Suddenly to Dubois's mind came the recollection of similar cases.

### The Marseilles Case

Three years before a gang of jewel thieves had operated successfully between Singapore and Ceylon. At first their operations were marked by lack of violent methods, but suddenly their robberies began to be marred by an increasing number of hideous murders. The English and the French Asiatic police had finally succeeded in capturing most of the gang.

The leader, police learned, was a deformed Siamese nobleman named Moy Poy. He avoided capture and disappeared without leaving any trace.

Two years later the police of Marseilles were hot on the trail of a counterfeiter of uncertain nationality who, after passing a great number of spurious bank notes in Algiers and Tunis, had apparently gone into hiding in Marseilles.

The police finally ferreted out his hiding place and were ready to capture him when his common law wife and two *nervi*—Marseilles apaches—employed as bodyguards were attacked and slain by a group of Asiatics. The counterfeiter escaped.

The Marseilles police, however, caught this group in the act of committing the murders, and captured these Asiatics after a desperate struggle. From one of these prisoners they learned that their leader was the same Moy Poy whose name had become notorious from Ceylon to Shanghai.

The police, knowing the counterfeiter was a distant member of Moy's

gang, did not arrest him at once, hoping that in seeking revenge the man would lead them to the place where Moy was hiding.

Two days later the agents of the police, who were constantly on guard around the counterfeiter's house, heard terrible screams from inside the building. They battered down an entrance and found the suspect rolling on the floor, tearing frantically at his neck, where appeared a double row of tiny wounds. The detectives saw a thin man jump out of a window as they rushed in, but although they fired at the runaway they were unable to catch him.

The counterfeiter died soon after of acute blood poisoning. A few other members of the gang were rounded up, but also in this instance Moy succeeded in escaping.

This case is recorded and filed in the archives of the Marseilles police.

### Moy Poy's Henchman

Dubois recalled these cases and recalled also the man, Moy Poy. He had formerly been a person of authority and great learning in Siam, until, mauled by a mad elephant, he was deformed for life. The pain he had suffered while slowly recuperating from his wounds, and his deformity, had preyed upon his mind. Insane, he had turned against society and had become a maniacal leader of bandits. Was this deranged genius operating now in Algiers and exacting his usual toll of murders and robberies?

Among the Malay prisoners captured at the house of Yusuf Aker was one who seemed weaker than the others. Dubois isolated this man for a few days and then had him brought into his presence. Beside Dubois sat Captain Rideau, who, to the surprise of the Malay, began to speak to him in his own language.

Confronted with a story of the penalties he would undergo, tremendously exaggerated, the Malay seemed to



weaken. Then abruptly Rideau challenged him with the information that Moy Poy considered these Malays responsible for the failure of his plans, and that, should the police release them, he would have them killed by his usual methods.

The Malay was aware that the only ones who knew of Moy's presence in Algiers were the four Arabs, who had been killed before they could speak, and the three other Malays, whom he knew as stout and utterly secretive fellows. Therefore the taunt worked.

His face contorted with an expression of intense rage, and finally he burst into a wild spasm of threats and curses.

### The Lair of the Fiend

"Moy Poy should not speak so much! I hate Mandarin Moy for the death of my sister. He poisoned her when he tired of her. I obeyed him because otherwise I, too, would be murdered. Now I am in your power he wishes my doom, but I will take my revenge first! You will find Moy Poy in the house of Ganeralifa, near the gardens of the eastern suburbs. You will recognize it because it stands alone and the only building near is a wrecked mill."

Called at once by telephone, the police inspector of the local Arrondissement hurried to the headquarters of the Intelligence Service, and there described in unmistakable terms to Dubois and a group of his operatives the location of the house in which Moy Poy was supposed to be hiding.

A short time later two cars of the Intelligence Service drove hurriedly toward the eastern suburb of the town. The Algerian countryside was beautiful, and the air clear and mellow. It seemed impossible that in so peaceful and lovely a surrounding there could be hiding an insane wizard whose playthings were the lives of unsuspecting people.

Upon reaching the immediate vicin-

ity of the house of Ganeralifa, the two automobiles, carrying Captain Dubois, Captain Rideau and a strong squad of agents drew up and stopped in a small thicket. From there they advanced on foot, surrounding the house.

Captain Dubois, looking over the situation, decided to enter through a window because he feared some manner of treachery by way of the door. They climbed cautiously to a rear balcony, and from there they crept quietly through several rooms without coming upon any one. Finally a subtle scent of incense came to their nostrils. They followed this. It led them down a narrow staircase into a basement. They opened a door and a strange sight met their eyes.

At one end of the room was a large statue of Buddah, before which burned several tall sticks of incense.

In the center of the room was a huge table, finely inlaid. Beside it, in a curved chair, sat a huddled figure. As the eyes of Captain Dubois became accustomed to the weird light, the vague lines of the figure materialized into a human gargoyle, a horribly deformed, ugly, dwarf-like man whose piercing eyes glared at him steadily.

### The Last Boast

"Have I the honor of a visit from Captain Dubois?" the freak croaked.

Dubois nodded in answer, and his hand clenched his automatic. The quick eyes of Moy caught that slight move, and a snarl showed his yellow teeth.

"Do not fear," he said. "The tiger has lost its claws. Moy Poy is already dying!"

He pointed toward a black iron box in a corner of the room, clenching his muscles in pain.

"You have killed or captured my band," he continued. "I was not through with you, but I tried to feed my centipedes and forgot to wear my thick gloves. One of them has bitten me in the hand, and I am already part-



ly paralyzed. I shall leave you soon now."

In a last effort to learn all details of the murders, Dubois made an effort to arouse the vanity of the dying Siamese.

"Moy Poy," he said, and he almost bowed as in admiration. "As a human being you have been a scourge to society, but, as a criminal, you are a veritable genius.

"But you are done. I would like to know how you have managed to hold us so long at bay. I am not unmindful that it was your hand, and not mine, which defeated you. I would like to know in what way those Arabs interfered in your plans, why you had them killed?"

Moy Poy's eyes lighted a moment in acknowledgment of the captain's praise, and his distorted face attempted what might have been a smile. He spoke slowly with difficulty.

"I know that you want information," said Moy, "and for this reason you try to flatter me. But you are a smart man, captain, and I will answer you because I like men of intelligence and skill.

"When I decided to operate in Algeria, there came to my notice a young man, Yusuf Aker, who was in need of funds which he had lost in dissipation.

"As I expected, he proved a tool in my hands. Through him I got control of a crowd of greedy Arabs, who apparently engaged in legitimate business. Privately, they were criminals, accepting stolen goods, and sometimes uniting in bands to blackmail or steal; but they soon proved too numerous and unwieldy. Lest they should turn against me, I began to do away with their leaders, who knew me personally."

"How did you manage to kill Fathma Ali and Ramazan Bekr?" Dubois asked.

"With my centipedes, writhing spasmodically after an immersion in cyanide of potassium, which poison, being similar to their own, does not kill them as quickly as it kills indiscreet Arabs. The Malays, whom you captured or killed in the house of Yusuf, were my carriers of death. They carried the huge insects in boxes, and using thick gloves, applied them to some bare part of the body of their victims, and the centipedes, clinging and tearing at the warm flesh, injected the poison.

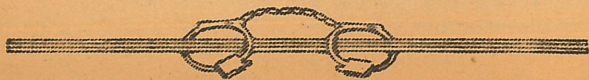
"Fathma Ali was killed in this house, and his body carried where you found it. Menhed Rahli, who tried to escape, was stabbed to death, since he was too far away for my centipedes. Ramazan Bekr was held in his own courtyard while the poisoned insect was applied to his flesh. And Yusuf Aker died because of your visit to him. You, Dubois, were fortunate to escape alive!"

Moy Poy slumped suddenly in his chair. A reddish foam appeared upon his lips.

Captain Dubois and Rideau glanced at each other and walked to the black iron box. Beneath a glass cover they saw several enormous centipedes, ten inches in length, creeping, interlacing with each other, while their numerous clawlike feet and their many joints made a queer rustling noise. A nauseating odor, like almonds mixed with decaying matter, arose from the box.

Dubois glanced back toward the stiffening figure of Moy Poy in his curved chair and said to Rideau:

"This case is closed. Let us go out and get some air."







"I'm doing the grilling. You answer my questions"

## Grilled

*The Chief Was Ready to Write "Suicide" Under the Death of Danny Black When the Truth Came Out in a Startling Manner*

By Thomas Ripley

CHIEF MACGRUDER jerked wide the door of his private office and halted abruptly upon the threshold, there to sweep the big room with beady eyes, one of which he squinted. A cigar, as black as his military mustache, protruded from his lips, and when he worked it over to the other side of his mouth he also shifted the squinting to the other eye. A peculiar habit of the chief's.

His gray, slouched hat, as inevitable as his dark cigar, was pulled down to cover a portion of his forehead; his coat was off, his vest unbuttoned, and his sleeves turned over at the cuffs. On his left suspender was the gold badge

which identified him as Chief of the Bureau of Investigation, City Department of Police.

He was the fellow who made headlines for the newspapers like "Murder Suspect Grilled!" And Chief MacGruder was set to make some new headlines.

The knotted muscles in his hairy forearms bounced impatiently as the fingers of his hands curled in and out of the palms like they were itching to snatch at one of the five suspects.

Chief MacGruder wanted the truth about the killing of Danny Black, and he was going to get it. Behind him hung Detective Swint, keenest investi-



gator in the department, who had been working on the case.

The chief hooked a thumb under his suspender and cocked his squinted eye toward a corner of the room where sat a trimly attired girl of twenty; she was not unattractive.

"Who's the broad?" he growled from the corner of his mouth.

"You mean the black haired girl, with her nose in the air?" Swint had the manners of a gentleman's valet, for he was the only detective on the force who could set claim to a college education.

"Yeah. She's sore, ain't she?"

Swint laughed shortly. Then: "She is the kid's sister."

"And which one's the kid?"

"He's over near the window to your left,—left, the little chap with the glossy hair, same shade as hers, and—"

"And who's that bird facing him, the one with the big, pink ears and straw hair?" The chief fixed his gaze upon the individual.

"Sort of a playmate to the kid and his sister; he's—"

"Oh, I getcha. Sweetheart stuff!" the chief snorted as he spat in the direction of the cuspidor, after which he turned his eyes to the other side of the room.

"Who's that blond baby over there showin' her knees?"

"She's not as bad as that. Just one of Danny Black's little chums, you know. We brought her along because —oh, just to hear what she has to say. But wait until you get her line—"

"Not a bad hunch," cut in the chief. "And who's that sad-eyed brother off to himself in the corner?"

"Haven't got him straight yet," Swint frowned.

"What's his racket? Looks like he might be a dip."

"No, he's not a crook. He was with the blonde when we took her in. Nothing on him, you know, and we wouldn't have brought him along at all, but he acted like there might be something on

his chest. He's related to the blonde in some way, because when she speaks he moves like a house dog."

"So that's your crowd, eh?" The chief turned back into the office and pulled the door shut. "All right—let's get going. How's it stack up, and what is the dope?"

The chief settled himself at his desk, took a fresh cigar from the box and lit up. Swint hung a leg over the corner of the table.

"There's nothing, chief," he began, "nothing we can put a finger on. Not a single clew; and we're as much in the dark as we were Sunday night, when they found Danny Black's dead body in his car out in front of the little black haired girl's house. We are shooting at random, and I figured we could give these five a close questioning. At first I had an idea that maybe the girl had something to do with it, but I don't know."

He shook his head doubtfully.

"And there's her brother and his buddy. They must know something, because Danny had just left the girl's company. Then I heard about this blonde, who was nuts about Danny Black, and I thought we'd find out what she knows. This sap was with her when we went to her apartment; maybe she's talked to him. We've got to give 'em all the once over. You can never tell what might break, and it's our only chance. Somebody's got to talk or we are hands down on this case. It'll go as—"

"Suicide," rapped out the chief briskly, and wheeled in his chair. No unsolved murders for his records. "Now, let's get going. What say we start on the sad-eyed fellow, the blonde's pup? Bring him in here. You pick on him awhile and I'll sit back."

"Good!" Swint slipped from the table and moved out of the office to cross the room, where he motioned to the slender man in dark blue. The individual seemed lost to his surroundings and when Swint called to him



sharply he started and sat up straight.

"Were you speaking to me?" he asked as he looked at Swint from wide eyes.

"He wasn't talkin' to your shadow!" put in the lady of blond hair. "Trot along and talk to the man; that is what he wants."

Swint favored her with an amused, indulging smile, which had the effect of encouraging her to voice her mind.

"You needn't be afraid of him ever runnin' away," she said with a wag of her head. "He's a prewar model. You have to crank him to start him. And he's so sorry for himself that he's already read his own funeral, and is dead and buried—mentally!"

She threw back her plumb shoulders and for a moment shook with shrill laughter. Catching her breath, she turned on the man and aimed at him over a finger:

"Run along, Oscar, and don't forget to spill the sad story of our little affair. The detectives will get a big kick out of it."

Oscar made a feeble effort toward a smile, and forced himself to trail Swint across the room into the chamber of wrecked nerves. Inside he stood, his eyes fastened upon the cleared top of the broad table, until the detective motioned him to an easy, leather-cushioned chair. He sank into it with a weary sigh and permitted his dreamy eyes to rove the room.

Upon discovering the scowling countenance of the chief in a far corner, he made a listless attempt to straighten a few stringy hairs which had tumbled over his forehead. He shook a little as the latter eyed him from one drawn lid—shook as if a chill had crept up and then down his spine. The chief had a way of boring with his eyes until it hurt.

"What's your name?" Swint demanded crisply.

Horton jumped a little and blinked at the detective.

"Ho-ho-Horton—Oscar Horton."

"And what's your business?"

"Why, I'm an accountant—that is, I keep books."

"I see." Swint slid to the edge of the table, and assumed an air of confidence. "Suppose you tell us something about yourself. It will make it easy for everybody, and I'm sure you want to be truthful."

"Yes, of course." He gulped with difficulty and said, after a studied pause: "There's not much to tell that would interest you gentlemen." He included the chief with a shift of his eyes. "I've had a lot of misfortune, especially during the last few months."

There was a catch in his voice, and Swint was reminded of the blonde's opinion. He agreed with her fully. The poor fellow offered a perfect picture of gloom.

"I lost all of my money some years ago," Horton continued; "but I could stand that, because I was speculating in the stock market, and one expects that sort of thing. I've been making a struggle to get a foothold and come back, but it's awfully hard."

"And now things are terrible, and I don't know but that I am ready to quit. I lost her a few months ago. She"—he hesitated uncertainly and jerked his head in the direction of the door—"she left me and has been trying to divorce me, and I've been doing everything in my power to make her see that I'm not a bad sort, that I'll make good some day. Of course, it's rather a long story—our domestic difficulties. Do you want to go into that?"

"No, no; you needn't explain all of that. Is there anything else about you besides all of this sob stuff?" Swint asked in a freezing voice.

"No, I suppose not."

"Did you know Danny Black?"

"No, I'd only heard of him."

"Oh, I see!" Swint lifted his lids. "You'd heard of him?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose you'd heard that he



was interested in your wife?" Swint studied the man keenly.

"Well, yes. Rumors had reached me."

"Did you ever talk this over with her?"

"I don't think Black's name was ever mentioned between us."

"Why?" Swint looked him in the eyes.

"I really have no good explanation, save that I did not care to mention his name, and she—" he stopped and looked away.

"Well?" Swint pressed.

"Oh, I don't know. She probably didn't care, that's all." He fixed tired eyes on the floor.

"You had no ill will against Black?" Swint asked slowly.

Horton looked up quickly. "I didn't know the man."

"You evaded the question!" Swint snapped. "You hated Danny Black, isn't that a fact?"

"What are you trying to do? Make me confess to a murder?" His dull eyes reflected a spark of resentment.

"You are jumping to a conclusion," Swint sneered. "However, I have no objection if you wish to make a confession. Now, suppose you answer the question. What was your state of mind toward Danny Black?"

A noise from the chief's corner announced that he was pulling himself from his squeaky chair. He came over to the table and fixed his scrutiny upon Horton.

"Answer that question!" he snarled, with one eye wide and the other half closed.

"Black was nothing to me." With unwavering eyes he returned the chief's gaze.

"That ain't the question!" blasted the chief.

"I've answered," he said positively. "Black was absolutely nothing to me. I didn't know him, never saw him and heard of him only in a vague sort of way. Is that satisfactory?"

He straightened up as he spoke, made a move to rise as if his part in the drama was at an end. The chief motioned him back with a quick flip of his hand, and in the same second lurched across the table to push a small-caliber, pearl-handle revolver under his nose.

"Did you ever see that before?" he demanded, one eye wide and steady, the other narrowed until it was almost closed.

"Why, I never owned a pistol in all of my life!" He seemed terrified.

"I didn't ask you whether you'd ever owned a pistol or not!" the chief stormed. "What I want to know is, did you ever see this one before?" He shook the weapon impatiently.

"No!" he answered flatly.

"Then, what makes you so shaky?"

"I—I—I'm not shaking, you—"

"Now, listen to me. Last Sunday night Danny Black left his apartment, went to his garage and took out a blue roadster. He drove from there to an Eighth Avenue address, left his car parked in front of the house and stayed two hours. When he came out he got into the machine, stepped on the starter, shifted to first gear, then to second and then—"

The chief paused as he bit hard on his cigar and shifted his eyes, making one wide and the other slitted. "Then what happened?" he hissed.

Oscar Horton lifted his eyes and met those of the chief. "How should I know?" he returned evenly.

"Somebody leaped on the runnin' board of that roadster and put a bullet in Danny Black's heart with this rod! Where were you when it happened?" The chief's rapid whisperings were like escaping steam.

"I was in my room."

"What time did you get home?" He lifted his voice.

"I never left. I was there all Sunday evening."

"And you didn't know a thing about this murder?"



"Not a thing." Horton nodded defiantly.

"Don't you read the papers?" the chief asked with mockery in his voice.

"Of course, but you didn't ask me to tell you what the papers said."

The chief drew himself up from the table and snorted disgustedly. "You're smart, ain't you? Too damn smart! You may look dumb, but you'll never make the insane asylum!"

He turned to Swint. "Swing onto this guy for awhile, I may want to talk to him again. Turn him out and let him get air—he needs coolin', and bring in that black-haired jane—what's her name?"

"Vivian Short," Swint turned, his hand on the door.

"Yeah, bring her in."

When Swint returned, the girl, walking with a smart, sure step, took her place in the office and faced the chief with a provoked countenance, lifted lashes that revealed defiant eyes.

"Of course, you knew Danny Black," Swint began gently when it finally appeared that she was at ease in the big chair.

"Yes, quite well," she answered icily.

"He had just left you a few minutes before he was murdered. Is that correct?"

Color mounted to her white throat, and for a moment she stared at the officer. Then, as if satisfied that his question contained no ill motive, she answered: "Yes, he had just left my house."

It was plain that she was making a great effort to be calm.

"Then suppose you tell the chief just what you know about this business." Swint took a turn around the room and came back to her before she was able to frame her story. "What happened?" he prompted in a soft voice.

"You see, I'm a stenographer in Mr. Black's office—I mean Danny Black's father's office—"

"Yes, we understand the connection," Swint put in by way of encouraging her. She flashed him the slightest smile.

"Well," she went on, "I've known Danny for a long, long time. We've been going together for years, I suppose. Danny had—well, we weren't exactly engaged, but—but—"

"It was understood between you two," Swint aided as he smiled, rocked back on his heels and looked at the ceiling.

"Yes!" she breathed with tremendous relief. "He has been coming to see me Sunday evenings for months and months. It was our standing date, you know. Well, Sunday night he stayed until about eleven o'clock and left. That was the last I ever saw of Danny—" she choked and bit at her lower lip.

After a second she managed to go on: "Next morning mother came running into my room with the newspaper telling how he had been murdered right there in front of our house. It simply wrecked my nerves and I couldn't go down to the office that day, nor the next—I haven't been back yet, and I don't know that I ever will go back." She sagged in the chair, relieved that she had told the story for the last time.

"And about the shot, you remember hearing the shot?" Swint asked.

She looked up, her eyes wide. "Oh, yes! The shots. Just as soon as I saw the headlines in the paper that morning I remembered about the two shots I heard soon after Danny had left the house. I—"

"Two shots!" the chief roared as he leaned across the table, his eyes working at their queer trick.

"Yes—two shots," she repeated, her voice faltering as she shrank under the searching eyes of the chief.

"Danny Black was killed with one shot!" The chief had dropped his voice to a hissing whisper. "How did you hear two shots?"

"I don't know—"



"Now, you didn't hear two shots at all, did you?"

"Why, I—I—I'm sure there were two shots," she answered slowly. "They were close together, not a second between them, and I thought at the time it was an automobile. You know how they pop sometimes, like a pistol?"

"So, that's the way you explain it?"

She answered with two distinct little nods of her well shaped head. The chief turned as if to leave her alone, but promptly wheeled back with the glistening pistol in his big palm.

"Did you ever see that before?" he rapped out, pushing the weapon close to her face.

"No!" she shuddered, and fell back into the chair.

"Did you know that Danny Black carried a pistol?" he shot at her from behind a screen of blue cigar smoke.

"No!" Tears were burning her eyes. "No, no, no!"

"Well, that pistol belonged to Danny Black and it was found in the seat by his dead body. And there wasn't but one shot fired into Danny's heart, and it was fired from this gun. Get that?"

"Yes—"

"Now, honestly, did you hear one, or two shots?"

"It c-c-certainly sounded like two shots, but maybe I was mistaken. I'm awfully sorry." She struggled to regain her composure and sat up in the chair.

"Did your mother hear any shooting?"

"I don't know. She didn't say anything about it."

"You and Danny ended up with a row Sunday night, didn't you?"

"We had a little spat," she admitted unwillingly.

"And it was all over some blond jane you'd heard about!" he announced triumphantly.

"No! No!" she blazed, her eyes flashing in anger.

"As a matter of fact you'd heard a

lot about the widow, hadn't you?"

"No! No!" she screamed. "That's not the truth!" She began to sob, giving the floor a thumping with her little heel.

"And another thing," continued the chief relentlessly, as he bent nearer her face. "There was all manner of confusion out there in front of your house not five minutes after that *one* shot had been fired. People came from everywhere, ambulances, police sirens going, and noise enough to wake the dead. The whole neighborhood was alive. Now, suppose you tell me how you failed to hear any of that, and how you failed to hear about Danny Black's murder until the next morning?" he leaned back sure of his shot.

"I went straight to bed and was asleep in no time. I tell you I didn't hear a thing, nothing but the shot, or shots, I don't care which!" she was sobbing without reserve. "Danny Black was the best friend I ever had! Now, please let me go home. I don't want to talk about this any longer!"

"Can you prove that you went straight to bed after Danny Black left you? Did your mother see you go to your room?"

"No! And it doesn't matter—" she stopped crying and turned inflamed eyes upon the chief. "You are trying to accuse me of shooting Danny! It's—it's—"

"Where was your brother all of this time?" the chief cut in.

"I don't know! I—I—I—" she choked again. "I've told you that I went to bed, and I don't know anything about brother! Please let me go home!"

"And you never saw this pistol?" barked the chief.

"No!" she shrieked, jumping to her feet.

"Let her out!" the chief waved to Swint. "She'll have to cool off some, too. And you, when you go out, sister, tell that fellow with the big, pink ears to come in here."



"I'll do nothing of the kind—tell him yourself!" she flared.

"Oh, very well." Then to Swint: "Bring him in—what's his name?"

"Jimmy Weller." Swint was at the door.

In a little while, Jimmy, with the straw-colored hair, which he continually pushed back from his forehead, was sprawled in the comfortable chair.

"Where were you on Sunday night?" the chief popped at him.

"Who? Me?"

The chief was examining the wrapper of his cigar. "Yes, you," he said after a moment.

"Oh, I see! You want to know where I was on Sunday night. You mean this last Sunday night?" He crossed and recrossed his legs, and twisted in the chair.

"Yes, Sunday night—last Sunday night—the night that Danny Black was murdered!" The chief lit his cigar and flung the match toward the cuspidor.

"Oh, I see!" he gave a short, nervous laugh. "Sure! Sunday night—oh, that's the night me and Frank went to a picture show! Funny I didn't think of it at first."

"Yes, it was funny," the chief agreed. "What time did you leave the picture show?"

"You mean what time we walked out of the theater?" The youth was picking at his thumb nails.

"Yes, if you want to put it that way."

"Let me see, now." He studied the ceiling as if recalling incidents, then: "About ten o'clock."

"What did you do then?"

"We went home."

"You went to your home and Frank went to his home?" the chief fixed his shifting eyes upon him.

"No, Frank went home with me."

"Oh, so Frank spent the night with you on this particular Sunday?"

"Sure!"

"Is Frank in the habit of spending the night with you?"

"Who, Frank?"

"Yes, Frank!" The chief wagged his head impatiently.

"No—I mean—I mean he's been home with me a time, or two."

"Why did he go home with you on Sunday night?"

"I—I—he—he—we—we—I don't remember," he faltered as he squirmed in his seat.

"Don't remember!" the chief thundered. "You'd better make up your mind to something. Now, why did Frank go home with you Sunday night?"

"Oh, you want to know why Frank spent the night with me?"

"Naw!" growled the chief, and shook the pearl-handle pistol under Jimmy's nose. "I want to know what you know about this gun!"

"Who? Me?"

"Say, you heard me!"

"Oh, sure!" he laughed a little.

"Why, I never owned a gun in my life, never even shot one. Shucks, you're barkin' up the wrong tree!" He fell back in the chair, a half smile curling his lips and an uneasy twitch in his eyes. He was exerting himself in an effort to outglare the chief's peculiar squinting.

"You answered a whole lot I didn't ask," the chief snapped, "but you didn't answer my question. I asked you what you knew about this gun. Now, how about answering it?"

"Didn't I answer that question?" He lifted himself eagerly to the edge of the chair. "Well, now, chief, I must have been thinking about something else. You know yourselves that I don't know a single thing about that gun, and that's surely the honest truth!"

"The hell you say!" the chief laughed mirthlessly. Then, lowering his voice to the hiss: "Now, listen to me, young fellow, suppose we start over and get this business straight. First, you tell me the truth about where you and Frank went Sunday night.



"There's something about your story that don't ring true!"

The boy's pink ears grew pale, his cheeks ashen. He opened his mouth to speak, but uttered no sound. He pushed his hair into place and shifted about in the chair.

"Come clean, let's have it!" the chief barked.

Jimmy jumped as if he had been struck. He stared blankly into the eyes of the official.

"If Frank did it he never told me a single thing about it. I swear he didn't. Now, I'm going to tell you the truth about Sunday night. Frank didn't go home with me like I said in the first place."

His eyes darted here and there as he spoke.

"Oh, so that's the way it was!" the chief rasped. "Now, what made you tell such a lie?"

"I don't know, unless I was trying to protect Frank. I thought maybe he had got into the trouble. He left me down town and had just about enough time to get home when the murder happened. Now, that's all I know, and it's the truth, so help me God!"

"And you knew Danny Black pretty well yourself?"

"Oh, sure! I'd met him around at Frank's house a number of times."

"Didn't like him much, did you?"

"I didn't have anything against him."

"No?" the chief lifted both eyes aside.

"Naw—he didn't cut no ice!"

"What do you mean by sayin' he didn't cut no ice?"

"Oh, with Vivian and me—"

"So you were sweet on the girl?"

"Well, I think a lot of Vivian," he replied with his eyes on the carpet.

"And Danny was cuttin' no ice, as you say," the chief added.

"Well, he mighter thought he was. Vivian had a lot of boy friends and she treated 'em all nice." Still Jimmy didn't look up from the floor.

"Now, look at me," commanded the chief, "and answer me straight! What reason would Frank have for killin' Danny Black?"

"I—I—swear I don't know."

"He didn't like Danny, did he?"

"He never said he didn't like him?"

"Did Frank talk to you about the murder?"

"Yes, we talked about it a little Monday morning."

"What was said?"

"Frank said it looked funny happenin' right there in front of his house. And I said I wondered who could have done it. And Frank said somebody must have had it in for both Vivian and Danny, lettin' it happen like it did. He said he wished whoever did it would've used some judgment and shot him any other place but in front of his house. That's about all there was."

"You can go for a while. Let him out, Swint." The chief lit another cigar at his desk and propped his feet up on the edge.

"We don't seem to be getting anywhere," he said to Swint after the youth had gone. "Maybe it's suicide after all."

"We can't put this one down as suicide, chief. Not, and get away with it," replied Swint quietly.

"Oh, yes we can!" the chief studied his cigar a moment. "His own gun, and there on the seat by his side. Plain as the nose on your face. Shot himself in the heart after the girl had turned him down. Maybe he was in trouble with her?" The chief eyed Swint evenly.

"But, chief, look at the facts," argued Swint. "Danny Black was punctured in the heart sure, but no man shooting himself in the heart could have enough life in his body to lay the gun down on the seat at his side. And another thing: Danny had started his car and had shifted into second. A man killing himself wouldn't go to that trouble."



"Also, remember this: When the police found him his right hand was on the handle of the gear shift, his left on the steering wheel; his right foot had the gas throttle pushed down, while the left was on the clutch. The ignition switch was on and the lights burning bright. The motor had been stalled.

"No, chief, Danny Black was murdered, murdered by somebody who know him well enough to get his pistol, and by somebody who wanted to make it appear as suicide." He paused to light a cigarette.

"Oh, I agree with you," put in the chief. "It's murder, but where are your clues? Where is your motive?" He dropped his feet to the floor. "And I'll be damned if I'm going to have any more of these unsolved murders hanging over my head!" He hit the desk a bang with his fist and stood up.

"You haven't a single thing to work on," he went on as he paced. "The sad-eyed fellow could have done it, but there's nothing on him. The girl could have done it, but there's nothing on her. This kid twisted himself up considerably, but he ain't the shootin' kind. Now, let's get on with this business! How about the brother and that blonde? Call in this Frank and we'll see if he's a killer."

The chief was impatient and chewed his cigar until it was stringy. Swint ceased to argue because he could see that his superior was getting into a nasty frame of mind.

Frank swung into the room with a confident swagger, a brisk step. He swept the room with short, nervous glances and took the seat intended for him. Instead of falling back into the softness of the chair, as Jimmy Weller had done, he held himself alert on the very edge and gave the detective his full attention.

"Frank," Swint began, "the chief wants to know what you were doing Sunday night between ten-thirty and eleven o'clock. Perhaps you can help us clear up certain unexplained inci-

dents in connection with the killing of Danny Black."

Swint made his suggestion in a tone of the utmost confidence and the youth yielded readily.

"Well, Jimmy Weller and me went to a picture theatre, and the show was over about ten o'clock." He bent forward, constantly flipping his right hand this way and that.

"I left Jimmy about ten-thirty and went home. I started to catch a trolley and remembered that I'd spent all of my coin going to the show, so I had to walk. I'd intended to borrow some from Jimmy but forgot it. It's a good, long walk from town to my house because it takes twenty minutes on the trolley, and I must have been an hour—"

He paused, his eyes screwed sidewise as he studied to be exact. "Yes, it must have been a full hour getting home. It's a long walk, you know. I—I" he stopped abruptly, his lips paling as it came over him that perhaps his explanation rang hollow.

"Well?" Swint prodded.

"That's the truth!" He wagged his head emphatically.

"So Jimmy was telling a lie when he said you went home with him?"

"Did Jimmy say that?" he gasped.

"That's what he said."

"I—I—don't know what made him say it," he replied, his eyes evading those of the officer.

"Did you see anybody in front of your house when you got home that night?"

"Yes, there were some men standing around, and I saw two policemen. I stood there a minute or so, and found out that somebody had been shot. And after that I went on in the house because I didn't want to get mixed up in anything like that, you know. I didn't know it was Danny Black murdered until the next morning when I saw it in the papers."

"Was your sister, or your mother awake when you went in the house?"



"Mother was awake and I went by her room to tell her why I was so late."

"Did you tell her about the trouble in front of the house?"

"No, I didn't mention it. Mother gets upset over things like that."

"And that's all you know about this business?"

"That's all I know, sure!"

Chief MacGruder's gaunt figure stretched across the table, and his menacing eyes took command of those of the boy.

"Did you ever see this before?" he demanded with the pistol in his hand.

Frank gave the weapon a thorough inspection, even took it in his own hands to study it. Then he looked up.

"Yes, I've seen this pistol."

"You've seen it, eh?" barked the chief. "So, you know something about this rod? Where'd you see it?"

"I think I saw it on Danny's dresser one day last summer."

"What were you doing in Danny Black's rooms?"

"He asked me to go with him."

"What for?"

"Nothing. We were just riding around in his car and he wanted to stop for something or another. I don't remember now what it was."

"And you knew a lot about Danny Black, didn't you?"

"No, not so much. He came to see my sister all the time, and I got to going around with him some myself."

"Danny Black was a pretty rich young man, wasn't he? Had cars, girls and everything?"

"Yes, he was a free spender, and had lots of friends."

"He was after your sister, wasn't he?" The chief lowered his voice to the hissing whisper.

"I don't know what you mean," Frank frowned.

"Danny Black was careless with girls, and your sister was just another one. That's what I mean."

"My sister can take care of herself," Frank retorted.

"Maybe not with Danny Black." The chief switched the squinting from his left to his right eye.

"Well, all I can say is that Danny Black was a perfect gentleman around my sister. Danny and I were good friends, and I was sorry about the murder."

"Funny thing, happening in front of your house?"

"It don't look good," Frank admitted unwillingly.

"Well, you're smart, ain't you?" the chief sneered.

"I'm not so dumb."

"Who makes the living at your house?"

"We manage to get along on what my father left when he died."

"What do you do?"

"I'm in school."

"All right, you can take a walk. Get out of here. I can find you whenever I want you. Beat it!"

He dismissed the youth with a thumb jerked in the direction of the door. And Frank wasted no time in making his departure. When he was gone the chief turned on Swint:

"It's suicide!" he hissed from the corner of his mouth. "I see nothing else. Look at the powder burns on his vest!"

He displayed the blood-stained garment. The detective answered with a stubborn shake of his head.

"No, chief, can't be suicide. We've got to get at the bottom of it, and I'm going through with the thing. I still believe there's a clew somewhere in this crowd. It simmers down to the black-haired girl, or the blond lady. One or the other must know something. Let's hear from the blonde." Swint lit a cigarette and puffed thoughtfully. "I think she knew Danny Black better than the other girl."

"Sure, might's well bring her in," the chief agreed, with a shrug of his thick shoulders. "You've got her down here."

He settled himself at his desk and



took another cigar. Presently the door was flung wide and Swint, with the woman, appeared. She sank into the deep chair with a heavy sigh.

"Gee, you've got a swell sweat box, chief! This chair's the stuff after trying to get easy for an hour in that rogue's gallery out there. What's on your mind?"

The chief waved the back of a hairy hand toward his assistant. "Talk to him," he muttered irritably. "I'm all in."

"Sure!" She turned full eyes upon the handsome, young detective. "Don't mind if I do."

Swint smiled and gave the chief a wink. He had a way with women.

"Of course you are the divorced wife of Oscar Horton. Are you still Mrs. Horton, or—"

"Yes, I'm still it's wife—the divorce operation ain't took yet, speaking in the language of the doctor, who happens to be a lawyer. It's coming by degrees, I'm told, and I've had the first shot. Do you mind if I smoke in here?"

Swint gave permission with a nod, and she fished through the disturbed contents of a hand bag to locate her cigarettes and matches.

"Gee, but I'm dying for a smoke!" she said as she found what she wanted. "There!" she breathed after she had lit up and drawn deeply. "Now, shoot the works!"

"Tell me, first, how it happened that your husband was with you when I came to your apartment?"

"The poor sap!" she sighed, her eyes pitying. "He just can't seem to get it through his thick head that we are through, and he keeps coming back. Our little domestic difficulty dates back—"

"Never mind going into the details of that," Swint interrupted. "Just tell me why it happened that he was there, that's all."

"I was getting around to that eventually, but why not now? You see, Oscar is a good boy, honest to a fault,

but he's got a weakness. And that weakness is the difference between our happiness together. He is so weak that he just can't make enough money for the two of us to live on, or, rather, the one of me. I have tried every possible method to spur, push, or prod him into bigger money, but he's like a used flivver; it ain't in him.

"And, besides all of that, he just don't team up with my style of living. Oscar's an old-fashioned, night-cap, foot warmer type. And me? I'm wise to the fact that the world's big and round, that life's short and I'm just a tiny speck on it.

"You see, I want to get up and go. I want to be there when the dance starts, or when the curtain rises. I've got to be in the swim! But Oscar? Him go? Ask me if an elephant can fly? Say, mister, that boy thinks the world's sorrows are resting on his shoulders. And he could gather more dust than a vaccum cleaner! Oh, say what was the question you asked?"

"That," said Swint with a shrug and a weary smile, "doesn't seem to be of any importance. However, since you must have it again, I will repeat: why did it happen that Horton was—"

"Oh! Sure, I get you. Well, as I was going on to say, Oscar would make a fine mate for the rich heiress who writes a check for her pin money in five figures—"

"Say!" snapped Swint coldly, "do I get my question answered, or not?"

"Oh, that was just his one thousandth visit waving the white flag of truce, begging an armistice and an end to hostilities!" she answered flatly.

"When was he there before?"

"That's easy! He was there the day before that and the one before that and the one before that—he comes as regular as the rent collector, and just as unwelcome."

"Was he with you last Sunday night?"

"Say, mister, you ain't tryin' to pin this deed onto that poor sap, are you?"



she asked with an earnest twist of her head.

"I'm just asking you if he was with you on Sunday night, that's all." Swint shut his cigarette case with a pop as he extracted a smoke.

"No, he didn't bother me Sunday night."

"And where were you on Sunday night?"

She flashed him a searching look, and after a moment lifted her shoulders proudly and tossed her head.

"I wasn't out shootin' Danny Black!"

"Oh!" Swint lifted his eyes. "Well, where were you?"

She examined her neatly manicured nails a moment. "Well, what time I wasn't pacing the floor with a sick headache, I was in bed trying to get some sleep." She looked up and gazed fixedly into the detective's eyes. "No, I can't prove it, and you'll have to take my word for it. Neither can you prove that I was anywhere else!"

Swint whistled softly. "You know your cards," he replied. "Now, about Danny Black. How long has he been on your waiting list of possible husbands?"

"How do you know he was a prospect? Score one for the prosecution?" she laughed lightly. "Danny's been looming pretty strong for eons, in the language of the cross-word puzzle. Sure, he was a few years younger than me, but what of that? Say, I was wild about that handsome! You just lay hands on the man that did for Danny Black and I'll help you put him under the rope!"

"I'm not the sob-sister type, you know, or I'd be blubberin' on your shoulder right now. But, honestly, mister, I loved that boy!" For just a second her lips trembled visibly and unchecked, and about her full, understanding eyes, there was a vacant look. She was silent for a minute.

"Yes," said Swint, "I understand Danny was a likable young fellow, free

with his money and mighty popular with women."

"Popular ain't the word, mister. He had so many girls he couldn't keep his dates straight. He was adorable!"

"Weren't you jealous of so many competitors?"

She laughed sharply.

"Say, I wouldn't want a man that any old hen could catch! Jealous? Listen, mister, some of his lady friends have called me names over the telephone that would shock your toughest jailbird! You'd be surprised."

"Did the little black-haired girl out there, Vivian Short, ever call you, or have any conversation with you about Danny?"

"That's a hard one. I'll have to go foot on it. If she did I wouldn't have known, because none of them ever left their calling cards. Maybe she did and maybe she didn't. But it didn't make any difference, because she wasn't even a boulevard stop signal to Danny Black. I knew Danny's favorites, and the ones to fear—she wasn't listed."

"But he was mighty regular in his attentions to her," insisted Swint.

"Sure! That was why they all loved Danny. He never let 'em down cold—just dangled 'em along, you know. Kiddin', you might say, keepin' 'em warm. But, listen, mister. Danny was just naturally the sort of a fellow to love everybody. The world was his, his little toy, and he wanted all of his friends to play with it too. Danny Black was heir to more than millions in money—he was the bequest of Lady Laughter. God knows that boy was a shaft of sunshine!"

Her eyes sparkled as she talked. "He had more of me in him than any man I ever knew—wanted to be in the swim of things. I didn't care a snap of my fingers for Danny's money. It was Danny that I loved, not Danny's check book!"

"I gather you'd have no reason for murdering Danny, then?" suggested Swint with meaning.



"I'd sooner take poison!" she flashed, her eyes blazing.

"Of course you would," said Swint as he turned away. The big figure of the chief had sprawled across the table.

"Did you ever see this before?" The chief uncurled his fingers from around the shiny little pistol. His cigar was screwed at an angle to be even with his left eye, and he squinted through the haze to study the face of the woman.

She was silent as she sat there with her eyes focused upon the cold steel, proof of murder. After a moment something stabbed her memory and an ungloved hand was pressed against her lips. There was horror in her stare.

"Did you ever see this before?" the chief repeated with a whiplike snap in his question.

"Was—was—that what they killed him with?" she asked incredulously, as she hunted the chief's face.

He nodded and switched his cigar to the other side of his mouth. The narrowed gazing followed to the same side of his face.

"They killed Danny Black with that pistol?" she repeated doubtfully.

"Yes, with this! What do you know about it?"

"It—it—looks like the one Danny gave me—the one Danny owned—"

"Now, listen, sister, I know that you know who had this gun just before they got Danny. Come clean!" the chief shot at her. "Or you'll spend the night in an iron cell. And you can't hand me a line of free chatter, because I won't listen. You know who shot Danny Black, because you know who got this gun away from you. And that sounds fishy anyhow. What were you doing with Danny Black's own gun?"

"Why—why—he gave it to me—no, I took it away from him."

"And you shot him there in his car!" thundered the chief.

"No!" she shrieked. "Listen to me! Yes, I took the gun away from Danny Black, but it was three months

ago. Now, ask me what I did with it—ask me anything you want to. No, I'll tell you before you start. Danny was carryin' the pistol around in his pocket, acting like a kid, and I didn't like it, not much! I was afraid something might happen and he would get killed. He was not bad, no fighter. He was just a kid, like you used to be.

"He had hero ideas, hero dreams, and he used to talk about what he would do if highwaymen tried to hold him up. He wanted to show he wasn't a coward. I think he actually prayed for an encounter with some real bad fellows. And I—I was afraid that something like that would happen, and that he would pull that thing out of his pocket and get killed. I just took it away from him!"

"And you shot him dead!" hissed the chief again.

"That's a lie—a damn lie! I didn't do it!"

"Then, how'd this gun get in the seat by his dead body?"

"I'm not so sure that's the same gun. Wait, I'll call my apartment and see whether the gun is in the place where I hid it. I am not sure—it looks like the same one—but it may not be—"

"Don't trouble yourself," cut in the chief from the corner of his mouth, "I know it's the same rod. Now, answer me! How'd it get into the seat by Danny Black's dead body?"

"I—I—don't know. I swear I put it in a drawer to my dresser, and that's the last—God!" She fell back in the chair, her eyes wide, terrified and her bosom heaving. "Could he, could he—Oscar! Maybe he took it!" she gasped.

"I was thinking the same thing, sister," the chief nodded meaningly. He lifted himself from the table and took a turn around the room. In a second he came back to push his face close to hers. "It's between you two," he hissed. "And I'm going to know!" He whirled to face Swint. "Put her off to herself, and bring in that sap husband!"



Swint followed his orders promptly, and the chief beat a path around the office while he was gone. He was framing in his mind a method of attack.

Would it be best to start a slow, deliberate picking process? Or would it be more effective to launch a rough, direct drive and hammer him until he was dazed into submission? He would see, yes, he would see. There was no groping now for a clew—he had one. It was either the blonde or her husband.

Had jealousy fired her into such a rage that she stole to the house on that Sunday night and waited in the dark for Danny Black? Did she leap to the running board of his moving car and fire the bullet into his heart?

Or, on the other hand, had hatred set its blaze in this meek, inoffensive weakling, Oscar Horton, and flamed him into a desperate killer? Yes, he could have been the one. Certain it was that Danny Black was threatening to thwart him in his efforts to regain the favor of his wife.

Motive? Ha, he had it either way! The evidence? Chief MacGruder contemplated the band on a fresh cigar he had just taken from his box. There was no evidence, and there could be no evidence. Horton could not testify against his wife, neither could she testify against him. That was the law of the State. There were no witnesses to the crime, no person to place either of the two in the vicinity.

But one thing was certain to the chief. Oscar Horton, or his wife must confess. He clamped his teeth into his cigar as the door opened and Swint escorted the suspect into the room.

The chief strode slowly over to where he stood, reached up with his clawlike fingers and gripped the man's coat lapels, and at the same moment thrust his chin within an inch of the other's.

"You know why we've got you?" he shot his charge at the man with chilling finality, shaking him a little with each word.

"Yes, of course, I understand," replied Horton without flinching. "You are making an effort to charge me with the murder of Danny Black." He spoke as calmly as if he were answering a simple question relating to accounting.

The chief snarled menacingly. "Ha! So you understand! Well, damn you, I'm glad it's plain. It relieves me of the trouble of making it clearer. Now, suppose you take that load off your chest and give us the whole story from start to finish." He pushed the man into the depths of the chair and hung over him.

"Why," Horton sighed after he had rearranged his coat, "I've already told you all that I know. What more can I tell?"

"What more?" roared the chief. "Say, what about this gun?" He thrust the weapon into Horton's face. "You took it from your wife's house!"

Horton did not move his eyes from those of the chief. "Did she tell you that?" he wanted to know.

"Listen!" thundered the chief as he snatched at the man's collar. "I'm doin' the grillin'! You answer my question."

"All right, if you'll turn me free." Horton squirmed from the grasp. "Now what did you want to know?"

"Why did you take this gun from your wife's house?"

"Why, I never saw the pistol before. She's mistaken if she said I took it—there must have been some one else. You see, I didn't know she had the weapon." He widened his droopy eyes.

"You had a reason for killin' Danny Black," went on the chief. "He was stealin' your wife, and you hated him like poison! You had it all doped out so's to shoot him down and make it look like suicide. Pretty clever, I'll say! And you'd have got away with it, but for one thing—" He paused, weighing his words and searching the eyes of the man. "Yes, you'd have made a clean get-away, but for one



thing," he repeated slowly. "And you overlooked your finger-prints. You should have worn gloves, like a professional killer!"

Horton opened his mouth to speak, but shut it without saying a word.

"Come on, now, you know we've got you! Let's have your side of it."

"But, but, I've already told you everything. You certainly don't want to hear me confess to something that I didn't do?" He gazed earnestly into the squinting eyes of the chief.

"Suit yourself about the confession. We've got the evidence—finger-prints. Here"—he turned to Swint—"bring in the woman. We'll find out about this gun right now!"

It was but a moment for the detective to step into an adjoining room and get the woman. She turned burning eyes upon her husband, accusing and appraising eyes she fixed upon him as he sat there in the chair. He drew himself forward and made an appealing gesture as if to ward off her unspoken charge.

"So, you've got him cornered?" she flashed her eyes from her husband to the chief.

The chief shrugged. "He denies he took the pistol, in fact, he denies everything. Now, it's up to you—it's between you two.

"You," he said, standing in front of her with a finger poised, "you admit you had the gun, and it's up to you to show us how it got away from you. It's certain that Danny Black was killed with this rod!" He shook the pistol between the woman and man, and their eyes met. He was pitiful the way he pleaded. She was defiant.

"Say," she half whispered, "it's a tough break for you, ain't it? Nothing to hold but your conscience. Still pitying yourself, I suppose. Can I prove you took the gun out of that dresser drawer? No, not much! And you leave it for me to explain such a trifling matter. Can you beat it?"

She turned her face to the chief and

explored the latter's half-closed eyes. "Look at his pan, chief, I ask you, just look at his mug! All draped for the funeral march. You'd think he was on his way to the rope to-night."

She whirled again upon her husband, a dozen fires dancing in her eyes. "Say, where's your manhood? Where's all this love stuff you've been pullin' around me? What's the grand idea of handin' me this hot one to hold? I don't get your size. Not much, I don't! Listen, for two-bits I'd swear to a lie, I'd swear that I saw you take the pistol. But—no, I can't do that. I'd burn in my own fire—"

"Let me talk, please!" Horton cut her off as he arose from the chair and leaned heavily against the table. He studied the woman's face for a full moment before he spoke.

"Talk is your worst enemy—you've always talked too much. There's no use for you to fear the chief will hold you for this crime. He knows well enough that you didn't shoot Danny Black—he knows that you couldn't have shot him, that you wouldn't have done it. And I know, too, that you didn't shoot him. You loved him more than your own life.

"Probably you thought I was blind, maybe I have been blind—to my own faults. But that's neither here nor there. The chief wants to know who shot Danny Black, and I know the man who did it. I happen to know that the man slipped into your apartment and stole the pearl-handled pistol.

"It was so easy and it would be so plain that Danny had committed suicide. It was all well planned. He waited on the street, in the dark Sunday night until Danny came out of the house where he had been visiting the young lady. And when he got into his car this man stepped on the running board, placed the pistol against Danny's heart and pulled the trigger. It was so quick—all in a flash.

"But the men didn't forget his purpose to make it suicide, so he dropped



the gun in the seat next to the body, and slipped off into the shadows. It was done by this man because he feared for the happiness of a woman, because he could see far into the future where he beheld one, two, three—many wrecked lives. It was better, he thought, that one should pay than many.

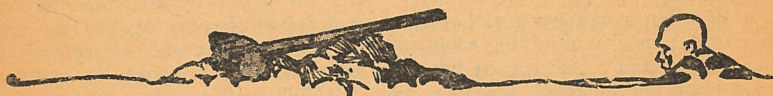
"Love? It is a strange thing. Man loves for one, or for another—either himself, or some one else. In this case the man was not thinking of himself—" He paused in the calm recital and for a

**THE END**

moment studied the trembling lips of the woman whose eyes were down.

"Sure, it would look bad for you—they might even go so far as to hang the crime on you, and the man hadn't thought of that when he committed it. That is why I am going to expose him.

"He could still defeat the law because there's no evidence against him—nothing, not the slightest trace. Not even finger-prints"—he turned to face the chief—"no, not even finger-prints—I wore silk gloves."



## We Pin a Medal On—

Miss Dawn Ervin, 12, of Houlton, Me.

**D**AWN saved a grown woman from drowning when Mrs. Ervin, Dawn's mother, who had gone first to the rescue, was about to give up exhausted.

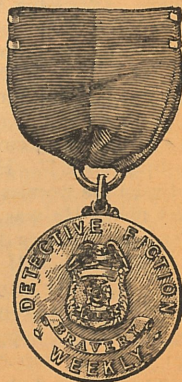
Mrs. B. H. Brown was in swimming with Mrs. Ervin in front of the Ervin cottage. Mrs. Brown, only a fair swimmer, got too far beyond her depth, became panic-stricken, and started frantically to thrash the water with her arms.

She went down once before Mrs. Ervin reached her side, and, securing a hold beneath her friend's arms, supported her. But Mrs. Ervin was too exhausted to swim to shore with her burden. She shouted to Dawn for help.

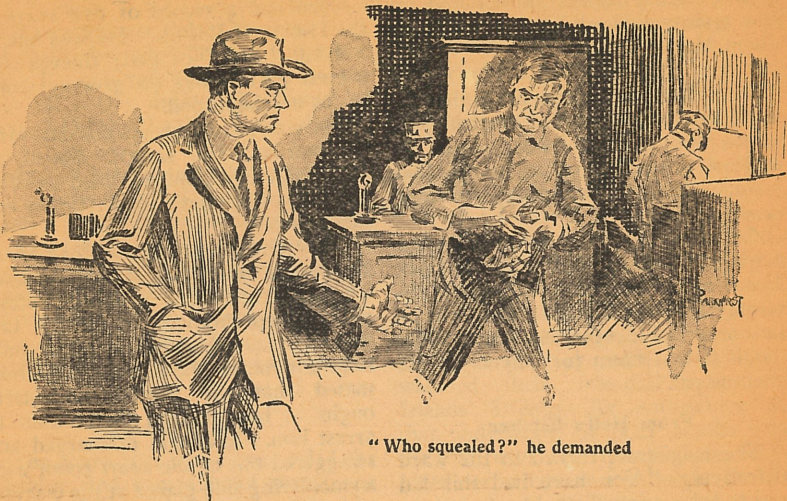
The twelve-year-old miss, upstairs in the Ervin cottage, heard her mother's cry and ran down to the small swimming dock in front of the house. By this time Mrs. Brown had gone down twice, and Mrs. Ervin was fighting desperately to keep herself and her friend above water.

Dawn took in the situation at once, plunged into the water, and swam to the drowning woman. Using Red Cross methods to good advantage, she was able to get Mrs. Brown ashore.

Dawn, a capable little swimmer, also saved a youngster the week before. She supported the drowning child until a swimming instructor reached her.







"Who squealed?" he demanded

# A Box at a Show

A True Story

*Jim Vallely Engineers One of the Strangest Situations in Crime's History When He Tricks Eyewitnesses into Re-enacting the Murder*

By Mabel Abbott

"**B**EING a detective," said James F. Vallely, as he leaned on his hoe above his radishes in his back yard in the Bronx and relit his cigar, "is the only business I know of that can make a man wish there were twenty-four hours in the day. When I was on a good case I hated to quit long enough to sleep."

Vallely's name was familiar to all New Yorkers who read the newspapers a generation ago. He was one of the famous staff of detective sergeants organized by Inspector Byrnes—New York's "fly cops," who were sent out on the hardest and most dangerous jobs and the baffling mysteries.

Some of the most celebrated criminals in America were trailed to defeat by the thin, wiry young detective with the sharp blue eyes, as well as many obscure crooks whose capture was an equal test of wits and courage, but brought him less public glory.

To-day, gray-haired but still sharp-eyed, he is in charge of the protection of a great New York bank. In the evenings he putters quietly with tomatoes and roses and lettuce.

"Big cases or little cases, they were all interesting," he said. "Sometimes the little ones were more interesting than the big ones. Take the case of Mud Foley, for instance."



Jim Valley leaned himself and his hoe against the back fence and told me about Mud Foley.

Mud had been brought in by the ward detectives from the toughest part of the West Side. Seventeen years old and not bad looking as tough kids went, he turned a face of injured innocence to the judge.

"S' help me, yer honor," he declared, "it wasn't me knifed de Bum. I was at de ball in de Germania Assembly Rooms Christmas Eve, over on de corner of Sevent' Av'noo. What would I knife him for, anyway? He was me pal."

#### From Hell's Kitchen

The magistrate turned to the ward detectives. "You have had this lad remanded repeatedly in the last three weeks, to give you opportunity to get evidence," he said. "Have you any?"

The detectives looked unhappy. They repeated the known facts. At midnight on Christmas Eve, 1886, a patrolman had found the dead body of Dennis Carney, better known as "Denny de Bum," lying face up in the gutter opposite No. 542 West Twenty-Seventh Street, stabbed through the heart. Beside him was an empty tin that had contained canned peaches. In his pocket was a whisky bottle, empty.

Denny the Bum was known to the police. Not twenty-two, a resident of Hell's Kitchen, he had spent considerable time in the Catholic Protectors, graduated to the Reformatory at Elmira, and done three terms on Blackwell's Island for larceny. Tough, and even charity had to admit that the world was no worse off without him. But murder was murder, and it was up to the police to find the murderer.

The ward detectives had learned that the Bum had last been seen in the company of a still younger denizen of the same neighborhood, whose name was John F. Foley but who was known only as "Mud."

Mud had a record of two years in the House of Refuge. He was one of a small "mob" of petty thieves who preyed particularly on grocery stores in the neighborhood.

He was picked up on the day after the murder. He stoutly denied all knowledge of it, but was held to allow precinct authorities to seek further evidence.

They now admitted they had none. Frowning, the magistrate declared himself satisfied that no boy of Foley's age and appearance, despite the fact that he was admittedly tough, could have committed the murder. He intimated that the precinct detectives ought to have known better than to arrest him. Mud was discharged and swaggered out of the court room with a smoldering side-glance at the disgusted police.

An unsolved murder mystery was one thing Inspector Byrnes strongly disliked. New York in the 80's was really tough. Those were the days of the great gangs—the days when Five Points, Mulberry Bend, the Bowery dives, and Hell's Kitchen were in their glory. With the too rapid growth of the city, the criminal element had for a time almost taken control, and the police had their hands full.

#### Valley the Fox

Inspector Byrnes's fame was based on a remarkable record in outgeneraling crooks. No murderer, large or small, must be allowed to get away with his crime. To the public, surfeited with the savage feuds of gang leaders, and sensational revelations of political connections, a mere killing among grocery store thieves was of little interest. But to Byrnes it was a murder to be run down as relentlessly as if Denny the Bum had been an alderman.

Shortly before Mud Foley's last arraignment, Byrnes sent for two of his best men, Detective Sergeants James F. Valley and Thomas Murray.



"It looks to me as if they've got a poor case against Foley," he remarked. "I think the judge 'll have to let him go. I want you two to get on the job. If Foley didn't kill Denny the Bum, find out who did. And whoever it was, get him."

That is how it happened that when Mud Foley strutted out of the court room a young man was lounging in the doorway of a building he passed on the way out. There was nothing to make this young man conspicuous among the usual crowd of idlers around a courthouse door, unless one took note of a pair of sharp blue eyes and a lean wiriness like that of a fox.

### A Grim Search

The sharp blue eyes commanded the corridor, and saw a hand thrust out to Mud Foley as he passed. The boy shook the hand and said in a low voice, which nevertheless reached the ears as sharp as the eyes:

"S all right, Johnny, dey discharged me. Now listen—dere mustn't be no squealin', see? Tell Coiley if dey ever picks me up again he's got to swear Denny has a brick in his hand an' I cuts him in self-defense. See?"

A few minutes later the young loungee in the doorway was in the central office, reporting to the Inspector.

"Mud Foley did it," he said. "And Johnny Murphy knows all about it, and so does Curley Martin. They're in that mob; I know them. But Mud knows he may be picked up again, and if he is they've got that self-defense story ready and I've got nothing to prove it isn't true."

"All right, Valley," said the inspector briefly. "Stay with it till you get it."

The task of a detective, contrary to the usual notion, is not always, or even generally, that of threading a maze of tangled clues to find an unknown murderer. More often he knows perfectly well who the murderer is and where

to put his hand on him, but has to wait and work to find evidence that will convict him.

But it is a battle of wits, skill and courage between hunter and hunted, just the same—a game of chess which may last until all but the players have forgotten about it, and in which death is always one of the possible moves.

With Murray's help, Valley shadowed Foley, Murphy and Curley Martin for days and weeks at a time. Murphy and Martin, youngsters too, were also thieves. The detectives knew where the three went, what they did, and whom they met. And they watched their friends, and their friends' friends, for somewhere in that underworld of petty crooks was the man who was through hate, fear, greed, or whatever key might fit his nature, would ultimately serve their purpose. They searched for him grimly, patiently, persistently, while the days became weeks and the weeks months.

It was Valley who found him. In telling me the story, he called him Barnes, because that is a long way from being his real name and he may still be living.

### Blind Joe

Ben Barnes was one of the sources from which, ordinarily, Valley could get without much difficulty information concerning the doings of West Side crooks. He was one of the borderland characters who hover just between honesty and dishonesty. Valley knew things about Barnes. Also, he had done him favors—given him money when he was broke, got him an honest job when he was in the mood to go straight.

Barnes was generally willing to be useful.

But this time he volunteered nothing, and when the detective asked questions, he bumped up against some sort of barrier—something withheld—some puzzling unwillingness.

Not until Valley cornered him and made it clear that his demand could



not be evaded, did he speak.

"Well, Jim," he said at last, "I'll tell you. I wasn't there when the Bum was finished, but I know somebody who was. It's my brother. It's Joe."

"Blind Joe?" exclaimed Valley, in surprise.

He knew Blind Joe Barnes well, as he knew his brother and nearly everybody else in the Twentieth Precinct, which had been his before the Inspector had called him in and put him on his personal staff.

Blind Joe was a sort of unofficial member of the grocery thieves' mob. Like his brother, he was a little above them in intelligence. He was short and plump, with a round face that would have been good-looking but for the sightless eyes.

### Joe Trembles

Ben and another brother contributed to his support, so that he did not beg. He lived in two tenement rooms on Twenty-Seventh Street. He could play the accordion and sing, which made him an addition to the social activities of the mob. They often took him with them on expeditions involving no difficulty, one of them leading him carefully and seeing to it that he ran no risk. It was almost in front of his tenement that the body of Denny the Bum had been found.

Valley's first thought was that a blind man could be of little use in a hunt for evidence; but it was followed instantly by another idea, vague as yet, but interesting.

"Joe'll just say he couldn't know anything about it, because he couldn't see," objected the detective, pretending dissatisfaction with the suggestion.

"He was there, I'm telling you," insisted Ben. "He knows all about it. You can get it out of him."

"I'll have a talk with him," agreed Valley, unenthusiastically.

The talk took place that evening, in Joe's rooms.

The tenement had four rooms on a

floor, two rooms to a family, with a common sink in the hallway. Joe was on the second floor. The stairway was crusted with ancient dirt, and the sour reek of sunless and airless dwellings smote the visitor in the face at the door.

Joe's manner, divided between surprise, welcome and uneasiness, turned to dismay as Valley talked.

"I know you were with the mob when the Bum was killed. Never mind how I know. I know everybody that was there.

"Now, they're all going to be picked up pretty soon. Some of them are likely to say 'most anything. Suppose they say it was you that killed him. Can you prove it wasn't?"

"My God!" cried Joe, his round face quivering, "it wasn't me, it was Mud Foley!"

"The Bum was found right in front of your door," Valley pointed out. "They've pretty near got the goods on you, right there. I don't believe it was you, but can you prove it was Mud?"

Joe's whole fat frame seemed about to melt with terror. He knew too well how a mob can fall to pieces when trapped. They were his friends, yes. But any one of them would buy his own safety at the expense of any other.

### "Growler" Parties

"My God!" he protested again, feebly. "How could I prove anything? Jim, I don't want to get mixed up in this. I didn't have a thing to do with it. I just happened to be along. Can't you keep me out of it?"

"Will you help me get the goods on Mud Foley?" countered the detective.

"How could I help you? Sure, I'll do anything I can."

Valley outlined a plan. When he left, Blind Joe had agreed to it.

"But you know what'll happen to me if they suspect, Jim," he warned anxiously.

Blind Joe had always been socially inclined. Now he developed a still



stronger yearning for society. He was constantly inviting his friends up to his rooms, and sending out for lavish "growlers" of beer to bait them into accepting.

Joe's front room was living room, kitchen and dining room combined. Behind it was a bedroom whose only light and air came from a small, square window opening into the front room, and veiled by a filthy curtain.

Again and again the word went out: "Blind Joe says to come up to-night. He's sendin' for de suds."

### An Urgent Invitation

Sometimes one came and sometimes another came, and drank and went away again. And when the visitor was gone Joe would feel his way to the bedroom door, open it and speak apologetically into the darkness.

"He's gone, Jim. I thought sure they'd all come this time."

And Detective Valley would emerge from the stifling bedroom, inflate his lungs and say relentlessly:

"Try again, Joe. Tell 'em it's important this time. Here's some more money for beer. Get a lot of it."

Then Mud Foley was arrested with two other youths and charged with stealing an overcoat. The other two were convicted and sent to the penitentiary. Foley, about whose part in the theft there seemed to be some doubt, was held in \$500 bail for good behavior for six months. Unable to produce bail, he was sent to Hart's Island.

"Never mind," said Valley when Blind Joe ventured to suggest that the mob was not all available now. "Mud'll be where I can get him when I'm ready for him. If he was out, he might skip, if he got wind I was after him. Get Curley Martin and Murphy, and get them together."

Finally a night came when Murphy and Martin climbed the dirty stairs together. The invitation had been urgent, and they were curious. But Joe produced the beer and parried their ques-

tions for a while, playing snatches of street ditties and urging them to drink.

They joked him about drinking less than they did, and about looking solemn.

"Youse is gettin' t'in, Joe," asserted Murphy. "W'at's eatin' youse?"

Joe laid the accordion aside, with his vague, cautious motions. "Say, boys," he said, with a face whose worry was too genuine to be doubted, "the dicks are still looking for the fellow that killed Denny the Bum."

Silence filled the little room for a moment. Then Murphy retorted sharply:

"Don't I know dat? Dey been makin' as much noise as a horse on cobblestones. I heard it from a dozen. But w'at of it? Dat's w'at I'm askin' youse—w'at of it?"

"Have some more beer, Johnny," urged Joe. "Is the can empty? I'll send the janitor's kid for another."

"Naw; plenty left," said Murphy, taking another swig and passing it to Curley. "W'at of it?" he repeated, less truculently.

### A Peep Hole

"They know who was in the mob," Joe explained. "They must know that by this time. Somebody's liable to be arrested any day."

"Well, youse know de woid Mud sent to Coiley—to say Denny went for him wit' a brick an' he had to knife him in self-defense."

"But they might charge somebody else with it this time," Blind Joe pointed out. "Suppose they said it was you, Murphy?"

"Den we all say it wasn't," snapped Murphy. "We all know it wasn't me."

"Don't forget I couldn't see who it was," persisted Joe. "It could have been anybody for all I could know."

For an electric instant of shock, Murphy and Curley stared tensely at the blind youth. But Joe's harassed face seemed innocent of anything but his own worries.



"If they'd ask me a lot of questions, I could get all tangled up," he went on plaintively. "They could prove most anything by me.

"Here, you fellows, show me just how it was."

The beer was getting results; but even if Murphy and Curley had not been seeing things through a slight haze, there was small chance that they would have noticed a tiny hole in a fold of the curtain close to the glass of the bedroom window.

### The Murder Drama

Vally, in his stifling cell, had been waiting in grim discomfort. At last he had the men he wanted together, and if Blind Joe succeeded in his part, this ought to be the last evening he would have to spend there.

The front room was lit by a kerosene lamp on the table and another on the wall. Enough light seeped through the curtain to enable Vally to see his own surroundings. He had pushed the bed under the window, and standing on it, peered through his peephole.

His gun reposed conveniently in its pocket, and in addition, he had a little revolver which could lie concealed in his palm, fire two shots without being visible, and then serve as "knuckles" in a fight—a desperate little weapon taken from a killer. But he did not expect trouble. His life was in his hands all the time, as a matter of course, in his business; but at the present moment he was more afraid of crawling occupants of the bedroom than of the hard-faced youths who were recalling murder on the other side of the partition.

Blind Joe was passing the growler again, turning his face eagerly toward first one voice and then the other.

"Act it out for me," he was demanding. "That's the only way I can get it. I know Mud and the Bum nipped the peaches from Stevens's grocery, over on Tenth. Then the Bum went round to McCabe's, up the street here, and got him to open the can.

"Then we all come down the street, and when we got out in front here, the Bum holds out the can to you, Johnny—"

"Hey!" cried Murphy. "Youse got dat wrong already. See, it was like dis. De Bum is standin' here, an' I'm way over here, an—"

"What good does it do me when you say 'here'?" expostulated Joe. "How do I know where 'here' is? You stand like the Bum stood, and Curley, you stand like Mud stood, and hold still till I can feel you."

Self-conscious and half reluctant, they took the positions.

"Well," began Murphy again, "de Bum's standin' wit' de can in dis hand, see? Yep. Now he holds de can over to Mud, on dis side—here."

The blind boy was pawing their shoulders, running his fingers down their arms, measuring the distance between them with groping hands. Forgetting their awkwardness, they threw themselves absorbedly into the drama they were enacting.

"Where was you and where was Curley?" asked Joe.

### A Deadly Scuffle

"Me? I was right where you are now, only foider away. An' you an' Coiley was on de udder side, I guess. I didn't notice.

"Mud he takes two peaches, see? An' de Bum he says, 'W'at youse doin', takin' two, youse—' An' Mud he says, 'None o' yer biz, youse—' Dey was bot' stewed.

"So de Bum he drops de can—no, youse ain't clost enough, Coiley; dey was right side by side, like dis. An' dey mixes it. It was de Bum hits Mud foist, ain't dat right?"

"Yep. He hits him foist, all right. But he wasn't doin' no harm."

"He was bigger'n Mud—"

"But he wasn't doin' him no harm. He wouldn't more'n blacked a peeper."

"It was jus' a fight between frien's," Murphy agreed. "An' I was a frien'



to bot' of 'em. Dat's w'y I back off—like dis. I wasn't takin' nobody's part.

"Den Mud he has de knife out—like dis—"

"Wait a minute," complained the blind man. "I didn't have time to feel your arm. Show me again how he done it."

"He gets it out of his right inside coat pocket, like dis, an' he sticks de Bum in de left breast—no, a little lower—dere. An' de Bum he lets go of Mud an' grabs his breast an' he hollers, 'Mud, youse done for me!'

### Murphy's Alibi

"An' Mud says, 'Youse oughta be dead, ya son of a—' an' de Bum goes down fer the count.

"Mud looks kinda surprised. He looks at him a minute an' leans over him an' says, 'Are youse hoit, Denny?' An' Denny says, kinda gaspin', 'You oughtn'ta knifed me dere, Mud. You'd oughta cut me in de face.' An' he croaks, an' we all legs it different ways."

Valley, on the bed, was breathing hard, partly from the necessity of standing so still and partly in genuine excitement. Seasoned as he was, there was something shocking in the spectacle of these boys, hardly men yet, acting out the murder of a friend without a sign of regret, or any emotion save anxiety for their own skins.

His pulse was leaping with exultation, too, as he told himself that perhaps never before in the history of detective work had the eye-witnesses to a murder literally reproduced it in every detail before the eyes of the detective they were planning to foil.

"Talk about your interesting jobs!" he thought. "This is just like a box at a show!"

The actors dropped their rôles, drank some more beer, and settled to discussion of the story to be told in case of arrests. It was far in the night when they stumbled down the stairs and Valley climbed stiffly down from the

bed as the blind man fumbled for the door knob.

"Did you get what you want, Jim?" he asked. He was trembling.

"Yes," said Valley. "That's all I need."

"And I won't get mixed up in the thing at all?"

"Your name won't be mentioned," Valley assured him.

The next steps followed swiftly.

The first one was the arrest of Murphy. He told the pre-arranged story glibly.

"It was Mud Foley done it, but it was self-defense. Denny had a brick, an' Mud got him just in time."

"Listen, Johnny," said Valley slowly, "and I'll tell you how it was.

"Denny and Mud stole the peaches from Stevens's grocery. Denny took the can to McCabe's and got it opened. Then you all walked down the street. Denny took a peach out of the can and started to pass it around. Foley was beside him—like this." The detective placed himself in position beside Murphy, who was staring.

"Mud took two peaches. Denny said, 'What you doing with two peaches, you—' and Foley said, 'None of your business, you—'"

"Aw, what youse makin' up?" gasped Murphy, trying to regain his self-possession.

"They clinched. Denny struck first, but it was no more than a fist fight between friends; he wasn't doing Mud any harm. Mud pulled a knife from his right inside coat pocket, like this—"

"Damn you!" cried Murphy hoarsely, "how do you know?"

—"and struck Denny in the left breast. As Denny fell he said, 'You've done for me.' Mud bent over him and asked if he was hurt and Denny said, 'You oughtn't to have hit me there; you ought to have cut me in the face.'"

Murphy was white and shaking. "Mud must 'a' squawked," he muttered. "Did he?"



"What do you think?" retorted Val-  
lely.

"Hell! If Mud's squawked, what's  
de use me holdin' out? Youse got it  
straight."

"All right," said Valley. "Now  
come along and tell it to the inspector."

Murphy did so.

Curley Martin was gathered in next.  
He too wilted when confronted with  
the details.

Then Valley was ready for Mud  
Foley. The inspector had laid the situ-  
ation before a magistrate and secured  
a discharge for Foley. Armed with  
this Valley went up the river to Hart's  
Island.

Mud was eighteen years old, but he  
looked very boyish in his gray shirt as  
he dug with a gang at a pauper's grave  
in Potter's Field. He was sent for by  
the warden. His eyes dilated as they  
rested on Valley, but he said nothing.

"I'm taking you back to New York,  
Mud," said the detective, "for the  
murder of Denny the Bum. Anything  
you say will be used against you. You  
don't have to talk if you don't want to.

"Now I'll tell you what we know."

Foley listened, thunderstruck, as  
Valley described the scene again.

"Who squealed?" he demanded.

"Who do you suppose?" asked Val-  
lely coolly.

"If it was Moiphy," the boy began  
furiously—then stopped.

Valley felt sorry for him. After all  
he was only a kid, even if he was a  
murderer.

Presently the boy sighed. "Youse  
got it right, however youse got it," he  
said. "We was bot' stewed or it  
wouldn't 'a' happened.

"I'm kinda glad it's all off my  
mind."

At the trial he pleaded guilty to man-  
slaughter. In consideration of his  
youth the judge gave him the light sen-  
tence of six years and four months in  
Sing Sing.

Blind Joe's name was never men-  
tioned in connection with the case. He  
is long since dead. And the mob never  
knew that the show they staged in his  
tenement room that night had a spec-  
tator in a private box.



## Prisoners Behave Better Now

**P**RISON inmates are not as hard-boiled as they used to be. Roy Riggs, superintendent of the twine rolling department in the North Dakota State Penitentiary, has watched them come and go for more than twenty years, and he says the prisoners there aren't as bad as the average fellow sent up two decades ago.

Riggs has one explanation. He declares the age of prisoners to-day is on the average below what it used to be. Most of the men being sent to prison to-day are in their twenties and even younger.

Describing convicts of the day when they were very, very tough, Riggs said:

"They were so hard to handle we had to chain some to posts, like animals. That was usually sufficient, but once in awhile we had to take one to the whip-post."





"Here's a chance to prove yourself,"  
Lanier declared to the jockey

## It's All Fixed!

*The Dark Career of Larry, the Jockey, in "That Crookedest Game in the World"—Horse Racing*

By Harold de Polo

### WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

**W**HEN Larry deserted his drunkard father for the call of the "big top," he was still a mere slip of a lad. But the lure of the circus could not hold him, and he abandoned it.

For Larry was a born jockey. Endowed with a small body and an instinctive love for horseflesh, he was soon wearing his colors in his first race. And he won it courageously, after being thrown from his mount four times before the start.

Soon, however, through grim necessity, Larry succumbed to the trickeries of this "crookedest of games"—he learned that he must heed the orders of his boss, or give up his career.

Yet, in spite of the crookedness which victimized his great talents, success and fame loomed ahead.

Then, like a falling star, the young jockey was swept into oblivion. The owner of Larry's stable found it expedient to double cross the brilliant rider to save his own skin—and Larry was barred from the track in disgrace.

It is Larry who is telling his story.

### CHAPTER VI

#### A New Game

**G**EE, that line about troubles not never coming singly by themselves is about right, all right.

Oh, well, maybe it wasn't trouble, ex-

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actly, but a blame big disappointment, I'll say. Yeah, when I left the track and blew down to the dump of a hotel we was stopping at, there was the letter I'd wrote to my old friend, Jim Mercer.

It had been following me all along the route and had been opened by the Dead Letter Office. It said that no such person as him—as Jim Mercer, I mean—had been found at that address I'd sent it to. Gee, that didn't knock me for a gool, like we say now.

To tell the truth, coming home from the track to the hotel I'd been thinking of going back and seeing Jim and giving up this lousy race game. If I was wanted by the cops for beating or killing Tough Nolan I'd take my medicine, but I thought that Jim would of helped me sure one way or another.

Boy, but I was blue. Aw, more than blue. I just didn't know where I stood or what to do. Gosh, I remember climbing up those three flights of stairs to my dinky little room, with my legs feeling so heavy like I guess some of these horses that ain't mud-larks feel when you ask 'em to travel a deep track in the rain.

And, talk about my heart— Say, it sure was low. Yep, I remember going up and sitting down on my bed, and then laying out on it face down, and crying like a regular kid.

Well, I was a kid, anyways, wasn't I? Sure I cried; sure I ain't ashamed to admit it. Listen, I notice that the older I get and the wiser I get—I mean the *really* wiser—the less I mind admitting things that no hard-boiled guy is supposed to admit.

I don't know how long I lied there, kind of wondering in a dull sort of a way what was I going to do. I know I lied there so long I couldn't cry no more.

No tears wouldn't come, that's why. I ain't saying this now for no excuse for bawling; I'm saying it to show I had a right to cry. Remember, I loved horses; I just wanted to *ride*; just wanted to ride honest and *win*.

And here it was all took away from me just almost when I'd got started, you might say. Gosh, I was blue and sick and feeling all alone in the world—when I hear that quiet kind of rapping on the door.

"Who is it?" I yell, getting up to my feet quick. "Is that you, Hal Tracy, you damn dog? Who is it?"

"It's me, kid. It's Art—Art Simms!"

Funny, huh? I'm telling you now on the gospel truth I could *feel* it was a friend. You know, I mean that he *come* as a friend.

"Come in—Art," I says, all excited, pulling the door open with a bang myself.

I can see Art Simms now. His face was sad like with sympathy, and bitter like for the double crossing I'd been give. So did his voice sound like them two things:

"Well, she wasn't no bat'ry horse, Larry, was she? How's the head—in the back where you landed?"

"Yeah, sure. Yeah, my head's all right—just a bump on it," I says. "But listen, Art. Whaddayamean Play Girl wasn't no battery horse?"

Oh, boy! Do I learn something about battery horses then? Oh, no—oh, no. I couldn't do no more than tell you enough to fill a book about 'em. I don't mean no thin book, neither. But here's the low-down kind of short like, so's you'll get me right in this Play Girl racket when I say I had a license to call Hal Tracy a murderer.

Horses are like people. Wait a minute, that's a bum remark. Horses are like every other living thing, or, I should say, every living thing is like every other living thing, human people or not.

I mean, see, when it comes to how in certain cases and conditions they react. I guess that's the word, all right. Well, anyways, here's the dope:

Some horses is battery horses and some ain't. You guys got that—or



you ladies and gents that reads this, I should ought to say. All right, then.

The way they find out is that they take a horse on a clear track, like early in the morning when they're out for exercise, and jab the juice to 'em. And listen. They have 'em in the middle of that old roadway and they ain't clipping off no mile under one-forty, neither. You fall more soft when you're just galloping. Well, what I mean is this:

Some horses will leap right straight out ahead and run like they never could before, whilst others will just go plain nuts like poor Play Girl had. Some of 'em like it at different stages of the races; some of 'em like just so much of it and no more; some of 'em like it on certain days and times and tracks. Sure a horse knows tracks.

Why, I seen some of 'em that would run like a Man o' War at Jefferson Park, say, and would look like cheap platers at Saratoga. Here's the point, though. A horse has got to be educated up to the battery.

Just to give you a better idea, I wonder if you remember when you was a kid and they had those hand battery things you held in each hand and you tried to see how many volts you could go and stand? Well, supposing they'd turned on the full power right at the start. Say, you'd of gone up through the ceiling, dragging the whole works right after you.

That's what happened to Play Girl, Art Simms told me. She'd never had no juice. Tracy was on the rocks for money, it turns out, from bucking the roulette wheel. Sure, he was so crazy to win that he takes a chance without knowing whether or not if Play Girl was a battery baby or not.

Aw, what's the use of saying more now? Am I right or am I not in telling you he was, down in his heart, as good as a murderer?

Gee, I guess I've handed out enough of this sad and mopey stuff for *one* race, hey? Well, don't get sore.

You'd of been sore like I was, probably, when you'd got learned that a dirty crook had just took your life in your hands as calm as could be. Oh, well, enough said.

"Goin' to keep on tryin' to ride, kid?" Art asks me after he'd done answering my questions about this battery business.

I guess I didn't take more than a second or two to tell him. I can remember now, just as clear as anything, getting up from the bed and making a stand and a talk like a regular book hero:

"You're damn *right* I'm gonna ride, Art! No bum like Hal Tracy is gonna stop me, neither!"

"Uh-huh, I figgered you was the kind that would," says Simms, with sort of a sigh. "Yeah, I knowed it, all right, just like I know it ain't no use tellin' you it's the dirtiest, crookedest, stinkin'est game in the world! Anyways, what's your next move, kid?"

When I look back on it, he kind of said that last with a smile. Say, I guess he should of smiled, too. What was my next move is correct.

There I was, indefinitely suspended, and not having no pull nor nothing, and not even having no pal in the game to wise me what I could do. Oh, no, I didn't do no more yapping like a book hero; I just kind of looked flustered and cheap like I felt and come out with it:

"Gee, Art, I—I dunno!"

Art rolled himself a butt—and gee, he could roll 'em quick and neat—and lights it. All the time he's looking at me, and all the time his eyes is getting more narrower like as if they was studying me right through into my brain.

"Larry," he says, "I like you. I did from the start. I—aw, hell, I was a kid once myself, dyin' to get into the game, dreamin' o' ridin' an' winnin' fair an' square an'—but let that slide.

"Here's the idea: I'm willin' to give



you a hand. Don't get it in your nut I mean this unselfish an' for charity. I don't—not by a damn sight. I an' you can team up, I think. I— You ain't got much money, Larry, have you?"

I guess I felt flustered and cheap some more, and looked it, when he'd broke off sudden and snapped that one at me.

"Naw, I ain't got no more'n about thirty bucks," I had to go and admit. Make believe I didn't feel blue some more when I told him. Here's where that helping hand stuff fades away, I says to myself. And gee, make believe I wasn't surprised too when he waves his hand and lets out a puff of smoke and nods his head:

"Yeah, I thought so. I just asked to know where we stood with our roll together. That's all right, don't worry. If you ain't got it, it just means I'll be drunk less times. Here—here's five hundred.

"Sew it to your underclothes—buy a money belt an' nail it around your belly—but don't give it back to me while I'm drinkin'. Don't give it to me no matter *what* I say; don't give it to me if I say I'll *murder* you if you don't; don't give it to me so long as I'm drinkin', even if I'm *dyin'*, see? Got that?"

All the time he's talking he's pulling out a roll—boy, it was a big one—and peeling off a bunch of bills and handing them to me.

All the time, too, I see where he's getting nervous like, and his voice is quicker, and he's sort of licking at his lips that's getting dry. Funny how I noticed that. Gee, they was dry. Crackly, like as if they'd been chapped all of a sudden, you might say.

"Sure, yeah—sure, yeah, I understand, Art," I say to him, although I don't see no more than you can see daylight between two horses coming down the stretch neck to neck.

"Good—fine," Simms goes on. "I've got to go on a drunk, see? Stick with me. After it's over I'll stick with

you. Say, but I want a shot of good red whisky. Don't use it, do you? Good. Keep away from it—keep away from the lousy stuff for life.

"I gotta have a bat once every so often—I *gotta*. Didn't think I was due—felt all right this mornin'—then that lousy dog of a Tracy slips that one over on you an' it makes me think how rotten—"

He was talking quick, jerky, and he breaks off and gets up and sticks his hands in his pockets and begins walking up and down the room as fast as anything.

"Well, you got me, anyways. I'm gonna get drunk—good an' proper drunk. After that I an' you'll beat it over into the next State. I got a swell game I ain't pulled in eight or nine years. Easy ridin', easy money, plenty of it. Explain it down at the bar. Come on—I want a drink real bad. Only thing I ask, see, is—"

He stops a second again, and this time I *know* he's looking right into my brain.

"Only thing I ask, Larry, is a square deal with *me*—no double crossin'! To hell with this ridin' for glory! You do what I say; you ride like I say. We'll on'y be cheatin' crooks that's out to cheat us, like you'd ought to know from what you seen already. Well, how about it—with me?"

Gee, but I was up a tree. Well, I don't mean up a tree, maybe, I mean I was more dazed like. Here I'd been suspended when it wasn't my fault; here I was with thirty bucks to my name way out West, and maybe wanted for murder or something serious back in New York, like I thought; and here was Art Simms offering to stake me and give me a chance to ride some more almost right away, even if he did hint it was kind of crooked work. Well, figure it out for yourself.

I certainly had begin to see how a guy *had* to be crooked if he wanted to ride, and I told myself I'd like to be on the know the next time I put a leg



over any doped or battery horses, if that was what Art meant.

Besides, my letter to Jim Mercer had come back, and I thinks what's the use of trying to stay straight anyway, like he'd always told me I should ought to?

"Art," I says, sticking out my hand, "I'll stay with you till hell freezes over!"

## CHAPTER VII

### The Grudge Race

I GUESS a lot of you people remember that saying "until hell freezes over" meant you'd go the limit for a guy. I meant it, too, all right, all right. And listen. Make believe I didn't have to. Oh, well, that's sort of a joke, that is. What I mean is this. Boy—oh, boy—but Art Simms sure was some souse to play nursemaid to.

Gee, but it changed him, drinking did. He wasn't what you'd call no conceited guy, when he was natural, but he sure become one when he was canned.

He'd get lapping 'em up at a bar and without no one having said no word he'd bang his fist down and yell out how he was the greatest jock in the world—yessir, him, Art Simms, was the greatest jock in the world. What's more, he'd say, he was willing to battle any son of a blankety-blank that didn't go and agree with him.

Of course, him being liked the way he was, he didn't get into no mix-ups where he was knowed, but when he pulled that line in a strange bar he—well, as this ain't so important, I'll just say that I and him had to go to the mat with guys a few times during that souse.

I was sure glad when it was over, which was in about ten days. Just like he warns me, he wants that five hundred seeds I was keeping for him. I held out, though, all right. Yep, he pulled all the regular stuff, don't worry.

He hadn't meant what he'd said; he had to have it or he'd get the D. T.'s; he'd never have nothing more to do with me unless I come across; he—what's the use? You can imagine, I guess. Anyway, I was firm in holding out, and when he come to his senses after two days in bed without a drink the first thing he says is:

"By jimminy, Larry, you're a friend! I guess I'm pretty nasty and tough to take when I'm gettin' over these bats an' tryin' to get money to go on with. Yeah, Larry, you're a friend—thanks!"

Well, we had to get down to business right off, he says, and he goes on to partly wise me about our racket. It has in it the kind of riding that I suppose mighty few regular, licensed, A-one jocks get—the quarter mile stuff.

They do it most out through the West, and they was certainly nuts about it during my time at it, twenty years or so ago. I guess they still cotton to it, from what I hear, although maybe it don't run as strong as it used to.

You see, they just trained and developed horses to go that two furlong distance, some of 'em just ordinary range horses and others of 'em half thoroughbreds and a few of 'em real thoroughbreds.

Anyway, I'm here to tell you that they sure did turn out some fast babies, and no mistake. A lot of 'em was owned by cattlemen, and gamblers, and some by Indians. Crooked? Say, some things I seen out in them wild and woolly places—

Well, this is our racket like it's planned by Art, see. He'd got wind there was to be some sort of a three-day celebration over in the next State at a place I'll say was called Gunther's Valley. It was forty miles off of a railroad.

It was a cattle center and also it wasn't far from an Indian reservation, where the red braves was beginning to



get fat from oil that had been discovered. The gamblers was flocking there, Art says, and it was up to us to get in line.

Art goes ahead of me by a day, taking four hundred and fifty with him and leaving me fifty so's we could carry out our lay. Funny, huh, how I never mistrusted him? Yeah, you'd of thought that after all the double crossing I'd been gave I'd of been leery.

Still, I always found that when you *do* meet a real friend you can tell it and feel it from the drop of the hat. Let's see. I've been able to feel that way three or four times in my life. I'm satisfied.

I follow Art the next night, taking the train and then getting more jounced and shook up on that forty-mile stage coach drive than any mean-tempered track outlaw horse ever made me feel.

Absolutely, I always pass by ever since them romantic and picturesque parts in stories and books that tells about the dear old stage coach. Gee, I was so juggled up I sure didn't feel like the job that was ahead of me.

It had to be done right off, though, like we'd planned. The start of this here sort of fair and three-day celebration was due to begin in two days.

Anyways, I walk into the bar of the only hotel in town—it was called one of them fancy Western story names, I remember, The Two-Gun Drink Emporium—and I make myself look all excited and nervous and like I was out for blood.

"Is there a guy called Art Simms around here? Has anybody seen a dirty mutt called Art Simms?" I yell out right from the middle of the floor.

Gee, I got to laugh when I think that over. Honest, it gives me one of the best laughs I ever had.

Boy, but there was me weighing all of a hundred and eight, walking right in where Art was knowed and liked and looking and talking like I was out to murder him. Say, I guess if he hadn't of been there and I'd of tried

to pull it I'd of been lynched or shot up.

Don't worry, I'd saw that he was there before I spoke, though, the way we'd fixed it up. Oh, yeah, he was there, all right, leaning against the far end of the bar and drinking celery tonic—like I'd *also* saw what was he drinking before I opened my trap.

He sure acts his part good, I'll say. He steps out like—yep, like a real book villain. So help me, he *looked* like he was guilty and just trying to pull a bluff on his double crossed victim.

"Sure I'm here—sure Art Simms is here," he yaps. "Who wants Art Simms, an' why?"

"I want you—me! Me, Larry Meehan! You dirty crook, I want you for fram'in' me up back there when Play Girl just bolted, like a lotta horses will. You throwed in that battery, damn you—or you had some one else do it. You was jealous 'cause I could ride better. Yeah, that was all, you was jealous 'cause I could ride better and—"

"'Cause *you* could ride better?" butts in Art, like he ain't denying his framing me, but like I touched him to the heart by saying I was a better rider. "Say, you poor slob of a exercise boy, where do you—"

I guess there ain't no use in taking up a bunch of time with them details of that argument we stage, is there? It ends this way. He keeps swearing he didn't double cross me, but acted like he had done it, and I keep yelping about how he'd just pulled it because I was a better rider than him.

You know how other guys gets mixed up in arguments, especially in barrooms where drinking is going on and especially where horses is in the story. Art has a lot of friends, and I seem to be making one or two, like it seems the under dog always does with certain kinds of drunks.

To tell it short, some sport gambler with a lot of diamonds offers to let Art ride his horse the next day in a match race against me and any plug I can get a leg up on. He's willing



to bet a thousand bucks, he says, that Art and his horse can lick me and any other horse.

Well and good. All I need is a backer, a guy with a horse and a bank roll. And listen, I get one. Yeah, I get a guy with the kush and the cayuse. He's a Indian, but he don't look like a Indian. I mean I should ought to say he don't look like them romantic and picturesque story book Indians any more 'n that damn stagecoach *felt* like the kind you read about.

He didn't have no flossy, trick moniker, neither, like Sitting Bull nor Rain-in-the-Face. Nope. They call him Looie Hatch. He's a short and dumpy fat guy with narrow eyes that the skin's folded up all around from his always smiling, it seems. That's what I noticed most, his eyes. They used to narrow down so small in his fat face you couldn't see what they looked like or what he was thinking, sometimes.

No, sir, *he* never got a job posing for no camera for no Indian picture post cards. Say, neither would his clothes of fit a noble redskin warrior. He has on a pair of faded overalls tucked into ratty cowhide boots, and damned if he ain't wearing a greasy old frock coat to top it off.

Another thing. He don't grunt "ugh" or say "me bettum—me Injun bettum white man son of Great White Father," and so on and so on. Honest. He just steps up with that smile of his and speaks to this gambler sport that's backing Art:

"This Larry Meehan kid looks good to me, Pete. I'm calling that bet. He can ride my little mare, Sioux Nell. I always did think she could beat that colt you got with a good rider on 'er, and I'm saying again I like this kid's looks. My thousand's up, Pete!"

It was, too. Yessir, this baby digs a roll out of his pocket and peels off a bunch of bills and tosses 'em on the bar. Right away, too, a couple of his friends start to kid him, 'cause he seems to be a popular guy, all right.

Was he crazy, they want to know, backing Sioux Nell when this Pete bird's colt has beat her a few times and when he don't even know if I can ride or not. Gee, I think, there *was* one time when I couldn't ride, like when Hal Tracy picked me up. Yeah, I still get a laugh out of that.

This Pete Sammis, like he was called, sure don't waste no precious seconds. The minute he hears the Indian's friends begin to kid him he comes a rushing:

"Here, that's a bet, Looie—that's a bet, remember. Here's my money. That's called, Looie!"

The money's covered, all right, and whilst the barkeep sticks it in the safe this Indian turns to me for the first time:

"You'll ride my mare for me, won't you, bub?" he says. "There's a fourth of that bet for you if you win—a fourth of what I win. Two hundred and—"

"I don't give a damn *what* there's in it for me," I yell out. "I just want to beat that dirty crook of a Art Simms an' show him I'm a better—"

Aw, what's the use? If I do say it myself, I was as good a actor as Art was. Gee, but we give each other hell, all right. Boy, but we have that Two-Gun Drink Emporium all excited up, to beat the band. Why, I'll bet I see eleven or twelve thousand hard American iron men laid out in bets during the ten minutes or so that Art and me was arguing around. Yessir, cash money.

The Indian has a couple of guys stringing along with him, see, especially after some bird says he seen the race where Play Girl threw me and he always did have a hunch something was crooked about it. Oh, yeah, Art has all his little details, like they call 'em, doped out right, all right, all right.

All them little details doped out? Sure. Say, he was a slick worker, Art Simms was. I'll tell the world we was *both* slick, if I says it myself, when it come to that race. Gee, but it looked



good. Honest, it looked—hell, it looked *honest*!

I've rode in some important races, I've been at most of the big tracks, I've saw some whopping crowds that broke records—but I'm saying right now that I never see no more interested or keyed up customers than I see that day out at Gunther's Valley.

Cattlemen and prospectors. Cowboys and Indians. Gamblers and dames from the dance halls. Women and families and kids and everything. Boy, how serious and how right to heart they did take them quarter sprints!

That was the trouble. That's the trouble now, when I look back on them things. It's awful terrible the way you play with people's *hearts* in this lousy, dirty, rotten, crooked racing game!

I suppose I ought to quit beefing, heh? Yeah. All right. Sure I will—but I can't help it. I'll give it to you cold, and quick.

We have a straightaway quarter-mile course—I mean without no turns nor nothing—and when I face the barrier against this Pete's Ace horse, like he was called, them six or seven thousand people watching make more noise with their silence than any thunder I ever heard in my life. I guess you get what I mean.

Gee, I bet that starter took damn near half a hour before he let us go. Poor sucker. He was sure on the up-and-up, that bird was. Boy, but I'll say he got us away right. I nor Art didn't have no advantage of even a lip.

Oh, we run it like we'd planned. We go neck and neck for the first fifty yards. Then Pete's Ace gets a half a length lead, and we run that way for another couple of hundred feet. I begin to come on with Sioux Nell, at that.

When I'm looking Art's mount in the eye again he goes to the whip, like he's getting scared. That ends it—and it makes it look like I'm a better jock, too. Art's horse seems to lose his even

stride, and I creep up in front. Art makes another bid, and he's right up with me once more.

I go to the whip, this time—but I go to the whip right—not pulling at the reins and shifting my weight the way Art had. Anyway, to give it to you cold and quick, like I said, I breeze over the finish line half a length to the good with a dog that had ought to of finished two to three lengths behind!

Aw, well, why not, I suppose, like I say when I try to salve myself? The way Art puts it was this:

"Cheer up, Larry. You win, anyways, don't you? Sure, you rode the winner. Besides, Looie's a square guy, an' he's slippin' us a thousan' on top o' the four hundred I give him to bet on you.

"Hell, ain't the cruel white man gone an' despoiled the red man from his heritage, the way some o' them writers say? Sure we have, so why not give 'em *some* o' the breaks? Pete Sammis? Say, I pa'tic'a'ly picked on him when I make the deal with Looie. Cheer up. Pete 'ud of sold out himself if he'd thought they was more coin in it, so why not take him?"

Aw—aw— *Why* not? That's all I can say!

## CHAPTER VIII

### A Freak Double-Cross

**Y**OU guys—or you ladies and gents, I guess—will believe me. You've all saw *something* of this world, and you'll know I'm shooting out the gospel truth when I say that we was actually able to work this racket once more right the next day. Honest.

One crowd thinks I'm the better rider and the other is sure that Art is. He'd just had one of his off days, that's all. Sure. They ain't thinking of the horses, no more; it's just a grudge fight between two jocks. That helps it, that grudge line we nurse along. Yep. Art and me and the Indian bring home the bacon again. Can you beat it?



Well, I ain't going to pester you a lot with this part of my life, much longer. Only it's an important part, that's why I speak of it maybe kind of long. I been reading some, lately—sure, jocks read just the same like prize fighters do—and I guess them years is what the writing boys call the formative years, huh? Please excuse my little joke. We all got to have 'em.

Them formative years with Art, if I guess I'm right in what you call 'em, was just close to two. We stuck to the quarter-mile racket, and, oh, boy, what we didn't pull! Sometimes we was enemies—you know, supposed to be, I mean—and sometimes we was friends. Whatever we was, we sure did play it proper. So help me, I don't think no two guys ever got away with larceny as good and safe as we did.

Experience is right. Gee, but I sure got learned something about riding. Wow, what didn't I ride? Good horses and bad ones and cripples and everything. Say, and the tack we used—the saddles and stuff, I mean. Mexican saddles, Western saddles, cavalry saddles, English saddles, regular racing saddles, just a blanket with a cinch around it, sometimes, like when I was riding against Indians and it looked better to ride the way they done. Listen, I'd of been some dub if I *hadn't* of got learned to ride good.

Yeah. Looking back on it, I guess it done me good. Aw, or done me hard, whichever way you want to look at it. I don't mean in my riding, see; I mean in the way it learned me to be a fox and to trust no man nor no woman when it come to the racing game. Aw, well, not to trust no more than one or two, maybe, like Art and Tex. Tex Lanier, I mean. I'll come to him soon.

Sure. They was good years, them two with Art, when you take it all in all. We made pretty nice money—and we spent pretty nice money. You know how it is with jack that comes easy, especially gambling jack. As for me, I still kept on the wagon.

I guess taking care of Art when he went on, his bats kind of made me do that—that and thinking of the old man. I'd mix with the boys and buy, all right, but I wouldn't take no hard stuff. I don't mean we blowed all our coin on likker.

We spent some of it in taking vacations every once in a while and going off into the hills and mountains for fishing or hunting. Boy, but they had some great trout in that country in them days, before automobiles become so thick and cheap. Yeah, I look back on that part of it pretty happy.

How did I feel about all this crooked stuff and double-crossing stuff I was doing? Aw, like I said before, why not? We was crooking crooks, we was double-crossing double-crossers.

I know. That's supposed to be a weak way of getting out of it, but what else *could* I do? Honest, every time I *tried* to be straight no guys would have nothing to do with me. Yeah, I tried it a few times too, I'm promising.

Of course, back in the back of my head, all the while, I had the idea that maybe some day I'd work my way up and land in the big Eastern tracks—around New York City, I mean. *There* was where they played it straight, you couldn't get it out of my nut. Can you beat it? Boy, if ever I seen dirty work, it was that day at—

There I go getting ahead, don't I? Oh, no, not so quick as that, not by a damn sight. It wasn't no quick jump, getting that contract with one of the biggest horsemen in the country. Poor Art Simms. He give me the chance, in a way, you might say. I mean, see, that if he'd lived we most likely would of kept on batting around together down in the sticks. Poor Art.

It was this way it happened. He'd been on a terrible souse and I'd finally lugged him off to the hills. We stayed there about five weeks, fishing, and I'm saying we was some broke. Finally we decide we got to get to work again.



The trouble is, we ain't got nothing but just under twenty dollars between us.

The railroad fare to the next place where they have any quarter-mile meets is more than that, and Art nor me don't know no friends right in this section. Art remembers all of a sudden, then, that there's a thirty-day meet over at—well, I won't say where. Anyways, we can get there on the coin we got.

He figures that with him riding we can scrape up a roll, and he says that with him most probably having friends at the track he can get one or two owners to back up my petition for reinstatement. I was still in the black books, of course, for that Play Girl battery thing. So along we go.

He has enough friends there, all right, and he gets three mounts the first day—all mounts where he's told to ride to win. Gee, and how that baby could ride when he had to! Yeah, a great jock, Art Simms.

He brings home two winners, and he cops the show money with his other horse. Boy, it was pretty riding. I can look back and see it yet. Riding for the old eats and sleeps and spending money for us both Art was that day. Poor Art. Good old Art.

Gee, I'm a gloomy guy some times, especially when my head gets to aching from where I took that bump on the bean when Play Girl went over the rail. No, sir—yessir—I can't help thinking that if Art hadn't of rode so good that day he—well, he might be alive now.

He rode so good, see, that he's swamped with offers from every owner on the track asking him to ride for them. Well, he's a cagy guy, and he don't commit himself, like they say—tie himself up.

We got enough money to get by on, and seeing that he has my petition for reinstatement backed by them three owners he rode for, he says it won't be more'n a few days before I get my license again. Sure. Things looks bright.

Well, like all them thirty-day meets, this one has a few special important races. Bigger purses, see, usually named after some local bird that's up in politics or business or something. One of 'em is only two days off, and the owner of the horse that 'll be the favorite asks Art to ride for him.

He's a local gink, and he's crazy to cop this race that I think the Chamber of Commerce throws in a cup for. His chances is already odds-on, but he wants to cinch it for sure, and he thinks he'll do it for certain if he has the best jock on the track up. And Art was the best jock there, don't forget. This guy actually offers Art five hundred seeds if he wins.

Art accepts the offer. Gee, if that was only all he'd of gone and accepted! Maybe he'd be alive to-day. Maybe I'd—aw, what's the use, like I've yapped a lot of times before?

It seems there's a big gambling ring working out here, and the dope on the inside is that the mayor of the town is in it. He's running it—he's the big brains—as a matter of fact. That come pretty straight, too, and I guess it's true.

Anyways, this gambling ring comes to Art and offers him a thousand—two thousand, then three—if he'll toss the race and let a certain horse they got win. They don't even tell him the name of it. They say never mind which it is. They got everything else in the race fixed but Art.

Let me explain for a minute why they won't tell him. They're scared he might make a bet at the track in the pari-mutuel machines, or else let his info out to a friend who'll make a bet. The reason they don't want that is this. Maybe some of you people don't get wise to this pari-mutuel system, like it's called.

Well and good, here it is give to you without no fuss nor feathers. Tickets is for sale on each horse, either to win or to place or to show—meaning one, two, or three, naturally. They cost two



dollars per. Just to make it easy, let's say that there's fifty win tickets sold on all the horses in the race. I don't mean fifty on each horse, I mean fifty on all of 'em. All right.

The club takes out a certain percentage for expenses, say between five and ten per cent, depending on how they run it. Say it's ten per cent.

Well, ten per cent from fifty tickets, which would be a hundred dollars, would mean ten dollars. To keep on making it simple, there's ninety dollars left, ain't there, to divide between people holding tickets on the horse that wins. Get me?

Sure you do. Well, supposing a horse wins that's got ten tickets, let's say, bought on him. That means that the ninety bucks is split ten ways, don't it? Nine dollars for each, see. Three-and-a-half-to-one odds, taking your own two dollars you'd put up. All merry.

Supposing a horse wins that's got only *one* ticket sold on him. Boy, you grab the whole ninety bucks that's left, or you win eighty-eight, to be exact, at *forty-four-to-one odds*! I guess you can see now why gamblers and owners and jocks don't want no betting done much in the pari-mutuel machines at the track.

They like as little bet as they can help, and they lay their coin with bookmakers outside, although these guys don't most generally pay more'n twenty, eight, and four. That means, see, that their limit on win bets, no matter how high the track odds is, is twenty to one to win, eight to one for place, and four to one for show. That is all clear, ain't it?

Now that you got that, I'll get back to this race. Well, Art agrees to go in with this crew. Why not? The guy he's to ride for, he knows, has already bought off the one horse he's afraid of, so that makes *him* a crook from the start.

Always double-cross a crook if it 'll pay you, one of Art's mottoes was,

especially if he ain't wised you to his game. This bird hadn't wised Art, I might tell you. Aw, I'm not trying to make excuses; I'm just trying to give you the low-down on all the angles of this race game.

When it comes to telling you how jocks dope things out in their minds I guess I got a damn good license to speak, too. Anyways, Art tumbles and strings along with the mayor's gambling bunch. They got thousands and thousands up, he tells me, bet all over the country. They even wired agents in New York, he says. It's to be a regular killing for fair.

I ain't riding in that race, 'cause my reinstatement papers or word by telegraph ain't come yet. I'm watching it close, though, all right, all right.

Gee, I tell myself when I see 'em line up at the post, it 'll *take* a good rider like Art to make that old snake he's on lose. Boy, but he looked fit—yes-sir, as fit as human hands can make him, like the writing expert birds say in the newspapers. Art could of made him lose and made it look real, though, if it hadn't of been—well, let me tell you how it was.

It's a mile race. Half mile track. Twice around, that means, remember. When they passed the judges' stand the first time, with Art in second place, I see the dog that was supposed to win. An outsider that was running fourth.

I could tell it, honest, by the confident way the jock was handling him, like as if he knowed that even if he had a bum nag he didn't have to worry. I could see that the leading horse, too, was the one that had been bought out by the owner of Art's mount.

Sure, him and Art was supposed to be starting to make their spurt, and they'd both make it look that their horses had got so tired out that they couldn't withstand the run of this outsider. Oh, I don't mean it was plain to none of the crowd, see, but to a jock knowing his stuff I could tell every move that went on.



Well, Art and the leader make that spurt. They sure do go to it, neck and neck, and the way they begin to make their horses drop back by rotten and heavy riding was sure done artistically.

Just when this begins to happen, too, that fourth horse—that rank outsider—starts to make *his* spurt. Baby, but don't he come strong. But boy—oh, boy—but don't something *else* come strong!

Yeah, Art's horse.

Honest, my heart near stopped and my lamps near popped out. That other horse, running head to head with Art's, dropped back like he was all in all of a sudden—but Art's leaps right out ahead like he was shot from a gun. Like—hell, like he could naturally go when he was naturally *let* go. My soul, is the first thing I can think of, is old Art drunk or something?

Then I see it!

The rein had broke right down at the bit. Poor Art. What could he do? People were cheering like mad, yelling like mad. Here was a horse was going to win with a rein that was broke, here was a jock that could bring him in without no hand control over him.

I guess he *could* bring him in without no hand control over him. Honest, that dog just *flew*. He was sure as fit as human hands could make him, like I'd said before. Why, Tod Sloan or Earl Sande or Lavergne Fator couldn't of stopped that horse in their best days. He just—he just *run*!

Yep. He win.

I—aw, I ain't ashamed to admit the truth, the older and *really* wiser I get, like I said. I always choke up when I think of this. Yeah, I guess I've rubbed my eyes, too.

Art got on one of his cynicky and sarcastic-like streaks after that race, and I knowed he sure was all primed up to go on a drunk.

"Can you beat it?" he laughs, in that short and bitter way. "They never *would* let aguy be honest—now I'm

damned if they'll let him be *dishonest*!" Gee, that laugh he give wasn't nice to hear.

Well, we start out for the sportiest bar in town all right, like I'd expected. Art was sure treated great when he steps in, for that win had sure been a popular one, don't forget. Everyone wants to buy him drinks—wine.

"Naw," he says, peeling off a century of that five hundred the owner has slipped him, "let's drink some honest money. Lemme know when that's gone, George!" And he gave that bitter laugh again.

He spent another hundred in that bar. Wine all around. Maybe I should of suspected something. I don't know if I *should* ought to of, though.

Looking back on it, it looked funny that none of that gambling crew showed up. What's that line? They sure was noticeable by their not being there. I'll say they was.

The stuff hit Art pretty heavy that night. I mean he got drunk quick, but he kept right on going on. We drifted from one bar to another, me drinking my celery tonic when I had to drink and passing by as many rounds as I could.

I guess it was along about two in the morning when we leave a place called Tommy Regan's. I had it in my mind to take Art home, although he was still saying he wants to find another place that's open to wind up in.

Well, there wasn't hardly no taxis in them days out in that country, and hacks was just about as scarce at that hour of the morning. I get a grip on Art's arm and sort of steadied him up against my shoulder.

I tell him we're making for another joint, and he seems satisfied to come along with me. Gee, poor Art! Aw, it come quick anyways, thanks for that, I always says when I think back.

Boy, I'll say it come quick. As we start to cross a street a guy crashes out from behind the corner building. Wow, but he come in a hurry—quicker'n any



fast breaking horse I ever left the barrier with.

Before I have time to start to think what it's about I see his right hand stick out at us and begin to spit red. Bang—bang, bang, bang—bang! Just like that. Yeah, five times. First one—then three—then that last one!

Art stumbles at the first and I lose my hold on his arm. Then he pitches clean forward on his face, pawing at the sidewalk, like, when them three shots come together. Right with the last crack the gunman starts speaking fast—as fast as his shots. Crisp like. You know—short, hard-sounding.

"Good *you* wasn't in on that deal, kid. Wise all them other dirty little crooks o' jocks that that's what comes to a double-crosser. Tell 'em they can't pull that stuff with our outfit, see? An' keep your trap shut to anyone else about what I'm sayin'. It won't do you no good to yap, anyways, but—"

I guess my brain woke up then—or else it went crazy, seeing that what could I, of thought I could of done against a gat? Anyways, I let out the old "Help, murder!" that seems to come so natural to a guy, and make a jump for this murderer that's killed my pal!

Wham! Zowie!

Yeah, he must of had a streak of charity, or maybe lost his nerve, partly. He don't use the gat on me. That is, he don't pull the trigger. Instead he socks me right on top of the bean with it, and I go out like a light with some words with "damn little fool" in 'em buzzing in my ears.

I wake up—about half a hour later, it turns out—back in Tommy Regan's place. I'm sort of flopped on a chair and leaning over on a table in the back room.

I feel whisky in my throat—gee, burning it up, to tell the truth—and it's trickling down my chin and on into my neck. They'd poured it into me to bring me to, I guess.

"Take it easy; take it easy, kid, it's all right!"

Regan says this, soothing like. A good square guy, Regan. He's standing near to me with a bowl that smells mediciney, where he's been fixing up my head and putting a piece of plaster on it.

I see a couple of cops there too. Oh, there was quite a crowd. Funny, though, now I look back on it, how kind of one face stuck out—how Tex Lanier's face sort of faded all the rest.

"Damn 'em," I remember saying, sort of with a cry and a gulp like, "they killed Art! They killed my pal Art! The—"

It was then that I see Tex Lanier, and something I see in his face made me shut my trap like a clam. I saw a warning, you might call it, in the way he had his eyes on me.

His lips was kind of not red enough, too. You know, pulled in. Like—well, like as if he was under tension, the way a guy, for instance, is when he's at the post before a big race. A slip might mean a lot.

"Yes, poor Art Simms. Too bad. He was a pal of mine, too. Some hold-up man who makes a practice of hanging around the track must have seen him paid off that five hundred he got for riding the winner. Rotten shame I didn't get into town earlier in the evening. I wouldn't have allowed him to carry that cash about with him.

"Quite a few bad characters about this trip, I hear. That was it, of course—a desperate holdup man. Not a penny on poor Art when Regan and I rushed out after hearing the shots. First to reach you. Lucky you weren't drilled yourself, son."

Maybe I sound dumb sometimes, I admit, but I ain't really so *terrible* thick. Oh, not always, at least. I guess I told you, anyways, that I'd got the habit of knowing when to keep my mouth shut.

When I hear Lanier say all that stuff, I says to myself, Larry, I says, here's



where you go easy. This guy ain't talking to hear himself talk. So all I says was "yeah—yeah, that's so," and kind of groan and feel my head.

The cops began yapping at me, then. They asked me them fool regulation questions, like you might say. How did it happen? When did it happen? Did I see the guy that done it? How was he dressed? Did I go and notice did he have any—any distinguishing feature? Did I—aw, you know the line.

I just kept answering "yeah" and "no" and groaning and feeling my head for an excuse not to say no more. I had my eye on Tex Lanier all the time. His lips wasn't drawn tight without no blood in them no more, and his eyes wasn't so under a strain like they'd been.

Gee, he was a thoroughbred. I mean I got that right off the bat. He stood out from all them guys in that back room of Regan's. I ain't trying to hand myself nothing, see. Honest, though, I could always pick the real ones in men and horses. You can't beat blood lines; you can't hide 'em.

I sure didn't think he had nothing to do with the racing game, that night. He was dressed different, for one thing. You didn't notice his clothes; you noticed him and you noticed that they seemed to belong to him, if you noticed them at all.

He was sure built good, too—slim and like a young colt that's took care of proper. Aw, a thoroughbred, a regular aristocrat. What else can a guy say?

Speaking of saying. Gee, he could say the right thing, at the right time. Them cops keeping talking at me really did make me groan and my head ache, finally.

So I asked for a drink. Funny how I did that. I could feel it in my throat yet, and kind of making my body go tingling. I thought another one would steady me more.

"Yes, give the kid another drink,"

he busted in. "He needs it. Let's all have a drink, on me. You officers have finished, I presume. No claws to be had from the youngster, apparently—just an ordinary holdup. I'll take care of the boy, at present!"

Well, we all did have that drink, on him. We had a lot more, I'm telling you. I got soused for the first time in my life, I know—and I know that when I told Lanier about it being the first time the next morning he said if he'd knowed it he wouldn't of let it happen.

The cops and Regan and everyone else was glad to let it go like it had, and we all had a good time. I don't remember so much, at that, but I remember when my new boss took me to the hotel and put me in a bed in the same room with him he says to me:

"Larry, I'm glad to see you know enough to keep your mouth closed when you get the hint. It doesn't pay to talk about your suspicions in some cases, especially where you can't do any good one way or another. You'd only bring harm to yourself, and poor Art is dead and out of it anyway.

"That's not being callous, son—not being selfish or cold-blooded, you know. It's just facing facts. For the present, at least, let it go. Art was killed by a holdup man. That's your story."

My head done some clearing, although I sure did begin to feel awful sleepy. He was right, all right. What good *would* it of done to tell the true story? Hell, there I was in a strange town, and I'd of been bucking a big political and gambling ring. Why, most probably I'd of been bumped off, if I'd of opened my trap too much. So I just nods and says:

"Yessir, I see!" And whilst I'm speaking of it, too, I want to say I always called him "sir" or "Mr. Lanier," even if I say Tex or just plain Lanier in this here story of my life. I—well, you *had* to call him that way, respectful like, if you see what I mean.

"Too bad I didn't get here for the



opening. Hang it, I might have averted the thing. Yes, I would have warned Art to watch out. *Damn* this business of being broke!"

He was saying that kind of to himself, in sort of that sad and bitter tone poor Art used to use sometimes. Although I heard him, I guess the words didn't mean so much to me. Gee, I was sleepy. That word "broke" registered, though.

"I got a few bucks, Mr. Lanier," I tell him, just about able to keep my eyes open. "Art slipped me fifty, an' I tucked it away in—"

"Thanks, son. No, I mean it was damned unfortunate my being broke a few days ago. I didn't even have the freight to move my string here.

"I ran into an old friend and borrowed a stake last night, though, and I hit the faro layout for thirty-two hundred. Go to sleep, Larry. I've got five horses I want exercised in the morning—or along about noon, rather. Tuck in, son, and don't worry!"

Say, I was snoring almost before he finished.

## CHAPTER IX

### Revenge

YEP, that was the way I teamed up with Tex Lanier, the whitest and yet the foxiest guy I ever met in the race game—or in *any* game, as far as that goes.

Wait a minute. That must sound funny, I suppose. I mean, you ask me how can a guy be so damn white and still *be* in this horse business? I guess you got a license to put that one up to me, too, after I've wised you about all the dirty, lousy, crooked stuff that's in it. All right, here's what I mean:

Mr. Lanier never double crossed any one that was *in* on a deal with him!

Maybe that don't sound much, huh? Think it over, though. Of how many guys can you say that in how many different businesses, no matter whether if they're honest businesses or not?

Right. Go ahead and search up a bird with three fingers missing and ask him to count for you!

Yeah, he was a square shooter, Tex Lanier was. If that *was* his name, I might mention. I don't know, to tell you God's honest truth.

Like I said, he was a thoroughbred, a aristocrat, if ever they was one. There was talk around the tracks that he was the son of some awful rich and high-up man back in the East, and that he was one of them family black sheep.

He certainly talked different and acted different than all the rest of the owners. Don't get it in your head I mean he was stuck-up, by that. He could mix better with more different kinds of people than any other guy I ever knowed.

Funny, though. Most every one always had that kind of a respect for him, deep down; that kind of inside respect I had that made me say "sir" or "Mr. Lanier" always.

If he *was* a black sheep of some swell family, I guess it was because of gambling, all right, all right. Gamble? Oh, boy—oh, doctor, baby, doll! Say, he sure was one fiend.

It wasn't the money, neither, it was the kick—the old thrill, like they put it. I swear the only reason he worked to run up a bank roll at the track was so he could go and play it somewheres else.

Poker, roulette, faro. Roulette mostly. Like most people that got a bug on certain kinds of gambling, too, he lost at his favorite one. Ain't that the truth? Ain't that the way fate, like you might say, takes a crack at slapping you in the jaw? Think that one over, too.

Yep, he sure liked the old red and black wheel. I've read about Monte Carlo and them places, and maybe some of it is true, but I got a good idea that take it year in and year out Tex Lanier would of made most plunkers look like pikers.



Most every gambling house there was would raise the limit for him, cause they probably figured they'd get it back in the end. Boy, but he was a sucker for that wheel.

I've seen him take a whole roll he run up at some meet and drop her on one turn of the ivory ball; I've see him take a regular young fortune he'd pulled in at poker, for he sure could play the game, and let it ride on one spin.

Yeah, it's funny. If he'd stuck to racing or poker gambling he'd of had—hell, he'd honestly of had millions.

Not that it give him any bother not to have millions. All he wanted money was to gamble with, to play roulette or faro. When it come to roulette he reminded me of that old story.

A fellow walks into a gambling joint in a mining town, one night, and sees a friend bucking the faro layout. He watches him keep on losing, and he's kind of dazed to see him do it, for this guy that's bucking it is knowed as the best faro dealer himself in the West.

Finally this bird can't hold in no longer, and he goes up and nudges his friend that's bucking the layout: "Say," he says, "are you that drunk? Ain't you wise to that dealer bein' crooked?" "Well," comes back the best faro dealer in the West, kind of with a impatient sigh, "there ain't another layout in town, is there?"

Yeah, that's about how bad Tex Lanier is when it comes to roulette.

Am I yapping too much about this other kind of gambling? Am I getting sort of off the track? No, I don't think I am. This whole thing is the low-down on the racing game, ain't it?

All right, I'm showing you all about the different angles on the different guys that's in it. Take her easy. I'm coming to the track end, in a minute; I'm coming to where I'll try to show you where I guess I'm right in handing it out that this Tex Lanier was one of the foxiest lads in the game.

I ought to know, if I sound conceited or not by saying so. I spent close to six years with Tex Lanier, and I guess I know my own onions, like we say.

Well, Mr. Lanier was right by saying it 'ud be about noon before we got over to the track. When I got there and seen his string I sure felt pretty happy, 'cause I'm telling you them animals was certainly in great condish.

He has a trainer and a hostler looking after them, and when he introduces me to Gus Lomberg, the trainer, and Frank Banton, the hostler, he tells them to saddle up a three year old filly he has by the name of Fancy Nancy, and then he says to me:

"Gallop her around the track once. Then push her for three-eighths and breeze her for two more. Bring her back then. Don't push her the limit—just nearly!"

That means, if you don't get it, that I'm to take her out and let her lope, sort of, once around that half mile track. Then I'm to let her out nearly as hard as she can go for three furlongs, pulling her in some from then on and letting her go two more at not such a fast clip. After that I'm to turn her around and come home.

I done it just like he told me. Boy, and didn't I work hard to make good! I didn't know what this job would mean, cause he hadn't said a word to me yet; but I sure wanted it, whatever it was. I sure was happy when I dismounted and come over to him, too.

"You ride well, Larry—damned well," he says to me, serious like. "I never followed the practice of carting a jock around with me, but I like your style. Yes, I like your style. You have a natural seat, and an instinctive feel for pace, I believe. Yes, you'll do well, some day, if the breaks—"

He breaks off himself, at that, for he'd got to sort of talking more to himself, like he had there last night. Anyways, to make a long story short,



I exercise his four other horses, and what I done with 'em, and the way I carried out his orders seems to satisfy him. Leastways, he says to me:

"I think you'll do, son. Contracts don't amuse me. Stick around and you'll get a passably square deal. I believe you'll give me one. We don't race until day after to-morrow. I'm pointing Fancy Nancy for the three-year-old filly stakes."

"An' if I know anything about the bunch o' dogs they got here we sure will cop the first time out, sir!"

Can you beat it? That's how innocent I still am; that's how—how enthusiastic, I guess you call it, I still am. Here this guy strikes me as being so square and different that I forget that, that—aw, hell, that horse racing is horse racing.

"No, son, we don't cop the first time out," says he. "I'm pointing her for the three-year-old filly stake to be run on the last day of the meet, I should have said."

"I want her to run a bang-up third the day after to-morrow, making it look as if she's coming along nicely. After that—three or four days later, we'll say, you can win with her. Then she goes to pieces, apparently, and finishes in the ruck every time. You see, it isn't only to get a price on her I do this—it's that I simply *have* to get her weight down."

"She's game and willing, and all that, but she just can't carry it. Understand? If you do—as I'm sure you do, rather—I know I don't have to tell you never to discuss our stable affairs with any one!"

"I getcha, Mr. Lanier!"

Maybe a lot of you people don't get *me*, though. About that there weight business, I mean. Well, it's this way: You see, horses are judged by the weight they can carry, and the weight they carry is handed out according to how they run.

For instance. At this track, like, all the fillies in this first race I'm to go in

is supposed to carry a hundred and fifteen pounds. The one that wins will be given another five pounds, meaning that in the race after that she'll be asked to shoulder a hundred and twenty pounds—and so on for every race she wins.

Well, say one of 'em had win three straight races before the closing day stake affair for the big purse. She'd carry a hundred and thirty, wouldn't she? On the other hand, for every race she runs in and *don't* win, she gets three pounds taken off. That being so, Fancy Nancy, by finishing third in her first race, goes down to carrying a hundred and twelve in her second. Winning that one, she carries a hundred and seventeen in her third.

All right. If she loses three or four more straight, say, she'll be able to enter the big race with either a hundred and eight or a hundred and five, instead of with the hundred and thirty she'd of had to pack if she'd *won* all the time.

You get me now, I guess. Understand, I'm just giving those there figures rough, so you can dope it out quick and easy. Different tracks and different ages in horses, and different handicappers do things different, but any one ought to see what I mean.

And how would I manage, you're asking me, if me, weighing a hundred and eight, has to ride her when she only is supposed to carry a hundred and five? Of course, you can put as much extra weight on as you want—sometimes owners do, if they can't get a light jock—but nobody does if they can help it.

Well, in my case, at that time, all I had to do was to eat light for a day and then take a strong physic. Yeah, that's all I had to do *then*. Boy—oh, boy—the terrible times I been through in my life trying to keep my weight down. Gee, the terrible things *all* jocks go through. Weight—weight! My, how us jocks get to hate that word, like I'll tell you more about later.



There ain't much use in telling you about that next race on Fancy Nancy—or about that whole meet. Everything panned out like we had it doped. We quit there sitting pretty—that is, we would of quit there sitting pretty if Tex hadn't of gone cuckoo at the roulette wheel.

Yeah, I remember I had to lend him a couple of hundred I'd saved so's we could make the next jump—a two day and two night one. But that ain't neither here nor there. We was together close to six years, like I said, and sometimes we had it and sometimes we didn't. Well, we had a good time, anyways.

Oh, yeah, the old wine and women and song line, I admit I fell into. Sure, I was drinking plenty, sometimes. I don't know. Thinking of Art's being murdered, and that lousy Play Girl deal I got, sometimes made me go to it once I got the taste. I don't mean, see, that I ever got so bad that I threw Tex Lanier down when he needed me.

What's that? Yeah, I know. You can't go drooling on and about yourself and your feelings too much. Sure, I read some myself. You got to give the girls and boys some action.

All right, but I'm trying to give you all the angles on this race game. This is a race story, ain't it? The real McCooey, so help me on the gospel. Fine, here's a real one, here's a real laugh, here's a real little Jack-the-Giant-Killer and Cinderella rolled into one. Get this, it's good. Oh, boy, how good it is! I can chuckle right to this day.

Don't think I'd forgot Hal Tracy. Listen, I couldn't of if I'd of wanted to. That battery deal on Play Girl had sure gone the rounds, and make believe I wasn't kidded plenty on account of it.

Mr. Lanier knowed about it, but he kept telling me to wait, some day maybe we'd get the chance to slip one across on that murderer. We used to meet him here and there at the different tracks, but we didn't ever get friendly.

You know, we just passed by sort of distant and formal, like you might put it. And then finally that chance come.

It was when I'd been riding for Tex Lanier for a little over two years. We was at—well, we was at a seacoast city, which I ain't going and naming, that has two tracks, for instance. They have some pretty classy racing. Oh, it's no jerk or tank town, I mean.

Tracy was there, of course. He has a distance gelding with him—a big sorrel boy—that can clean anything else up that's on the track. We know this, Mr. Lanier and me, and when we see this horse lose his first two starts we wonder when they're going to try and put the coup over.

That's what they call a clean-up—a coup. I mean that's what the newspapers call it, and I guess you people most probably read the newspapers. All right, we got to wondering about that coup, then.

We wondered about it particular, see, because we knowed that this sorrel was a regular horse that cost real money, sound and fine and only a four-year-old. Tracy hadn't had the jack to buy him, for things had been breaking bad for him lately. Oh, some gambling crowd was behind it, all right, all right.

Well, we doped it out, at last. Or else we thought we doped it out. That's all you can ever be sure of in this racing game. There ain't *nothing* sure, like you'd ought to know by now.

We doped it out, anyways, that Tracy was pointing this sorrel gelding for a distance affair that was about ten days off—one of them mile and three-sixteenths things. Yeah, that was where he was aiming Hercules. That was his name, I ought to of said—Hercules.

Yeah, he was aiming him for that. One of them cheap and not so important races. That don't call so much attention to it that you're aiming for a big clean-up, see?

"Larry," Mr. Lanier says to me,



when we'd decided that was what Tracy was aiming for, "although we haven't got one in the stable that can beat Hercules at that distance route, how about our Sagebush Boy?"

"Him—*him*? Gee, Mr. Lanier!"

I guess you'd of said it as excited as I did, too. You see, this Sagebush Boy horse is one *we* have up *our* sleeve. We hadn't made no definite plans yet about him, holding him like for a ace-in-the-hole, you might put it.

It's this way: Sagebush Boy wasn't his rightful name. Never mind what it was, there was some of the best blood lines behind it. We called him Sagebush Boy, though. He was a six-year-old, and he sure had beat most of the good ones around the metropolitan tracks—them tracks around New York—when he'd been a three-year-old.

Well, like it often happens, either from overwork or bum training or who knows what, he'd broke down. He'd broke down bad.

He'd broke down so bad that from being a horse worth up in the five figures he'd sold for a lousy few hundred. Anyway, Tex had picked him up nearly three years before, and he'd put him out to pasture with a pal he had that had a big ranch.

For two years he'd just let him do nothing, and then one of the sons of this pal of his had started to gallop him. Boy, he was as good as he ever was—*better* 'n he ever was. I know, see, 'cause only a few months before we'd stopped off for a visit at the ranch and I'd gave him a ride myself.

Like I said, we hadn't made no plans, but Tex was holding him in for something pretty big when the time come. Well, when he offers to uncover him just to help me get even with Hal Tracy, it—aw, didn't I say he was a white man?

"Yes," he answers me, getting that thoughtful and far-away look in his gray eyes, "Sagebush Boy can turn the trick!"

"But gee, Mr. Lanier, you was savin' him for—"

"Stop it, son. You're my friend and Tracy's a mucker. What more can one ask? Trouble is," he put in with a frown, "how are we going to swing it? Time's short, and we certainly can't send him in under our own colors or Tracy will smell a rat. Hmmm. Let's see."

Oh, we saw, all right. Not taking no credit to myself, get me, but I was the one to first think how the first part of it could be done.

"What about lettin' Crazy Grandpa run him?" I let loose suddenly with a happy yelp. It hit me just like that, that idea did, quick and all at once.

"Perfect—dammit, perfect!"

Mr. Lanier looked happy himself, and I see that wise smile that means he's thinking deep come on his lips. Yessir, when he smiles like that look out.

Let me explain about Crazy Grandpa. He was a queer old cuss, a Middle West corn farmer that had made a good pile and retired. He was bugs about horses, although I hope to tell you that when it come to knowing the race game he sure was weak in the old belfry.

Boy, but he was a simp. He has two dogs that he travels around from track to track with. One of 'em should rightful of been pulling a milk wagon, that is if the customers wasn't so particular if they had their cream for their breakfast coffee or not. The other one, maybe, might of been a nice and gentle plow horse if a farmer had owned him where you didn't have to do your planting too early in the spring.

Honest, them ain't just wisecracks, them remarks. He'd never won a race in the two years he'd been trying, Crazy Grandpa hadn't. Poor old sucker. Some bird had stuck him with them two misfits. Oh, well, it didn't cost him much and he could afford it and he had a good time, so what's the diff?

What was important to us, see, is



that he likes Lanier and that I'd rode for him a few times when my boss didn't have no horses entered or there wasn't any other mounts to be had.

I'd rode for him just for the fun of it, too, only taking a five-dollar fee from him about twice, I think. He appreciated it, poor old gink, with every one else out to soak him for what they could.

Well, he *proved* that he did, what's more important. He agrees to help us even before we explain everything to him. This is the way we dope it out.

We'll telephone long distance from some private wire, that night, to have this pal of Tex's ship Sagebush Boy to Crazy Grandpa. Crazy Grandpa, see, will go around spouting how he's bought a swell horse, at last, that's going to clean everything up.

Naturally he'll be laughed at—and he'll be laughed at some more when Sagebush Boy shows up in two or three days. He won't look like a race horse, you understand. His coat will be all long and thick and dull, seeing he's been out on the range, and Tex is going to mention to his friend not to have him clipped or carried up or anything, before he ships him. Oh, yeah, he'll *look* like some snake Crazy Grandpa *would* of bought, all right, all right.

We doped it right, too. Gee, but Sagebush Boy looked like something fit for a milk wagon or plow when he come. Make believe the boys didn't start kidding him—Grandpa, I mean. He says is that so, is it?

Well, he goes on to say, the jock that rides him is going to be a mighty proud boy, 'cause this Sagebush animal is going to break track records, by gum. Huh, hadn't the man who'd sold it to him—a man who knowed horses, too—told him so?

Figure if that gets another laugh or not. Yep, Grandpa sure did play his part good, all right, all right. He pretends to get mad, and he says that if one of the jocks don't speak up quick he'll send away and get a boy and let

him grab all the glory of breaking a track record.

That's where I come in. I wink at the boys, see, and then I say to Grandpa:

"Maybe I'll ride him and grab the glory for us!"

"Will ye—will ye? By cracky, that's a dicker, that be. Take it t'-morrow, now, let's say, in—"

"I ain't made no arrangements for t'-morrow for the fourth," I butt in, with another wink at the boys. "That's a mile an' a eighth. It'll only cost you a five spot, Grandpa, to find if he can go the distance. What say?"

"I say here's that five right now, young feller. Ye're *hired*!"

I call that artistic, I do. Yeah, it was Tex Lanier's work, all right, that fixed up talk in advance.

Say, do I have to tell you what happens the next day, with all the low-down you already got on this racing game? Oh, all right, just to make it clear. I make him behave dumb at the post, naturally, and I get him away bad.

I let him run, though, for three quarters—for six furlongs, that is. It almost looks, see, like as if with proper training he *might* become a fair plater. Then, all of a sudden, I make him slow down and act like he's all in. Like he's just a sprint horse, see, and can't go the distance. I finish last with him.

To make a long story short, I tell some of the jocks, confidential like, that it's a crime the way some crooks stung Crazy Grandpa. Why, that Sagebush Boy, I tell 'em, ain't got speed enough even to be harnessed to no hearse.

To keep on making it short, and not to go into no details about all the acting and talk I and Crazy Grandpa done after that, I'll tell you I rode him again, three days later. Boy, this time I make him look even *worse*.

And listen, make believe it don't hurt. Baby—oh, baby—but didn't that Sagebush bird have speed! Wow, he had everything else.



He had speed, and he could sprint or he could go the distance, and he was a dream at the post, and he got every little move of your knee or the rein or a body shift that you give him.

Honest, he was a stake horse right then and there. Say, he'd of even still give some of the good ones at the big tracks a run for their money. Well, they'd of knowed they'd been in a *race*, anyways.

But what's the use, I'm saying again? Let her ride.

Mr. Lanier, now that he's got his brain working on this business, sure does it proper. He makes it seem like we're pointing one of our stable for this same mile and three-sixteenths that Tracy is aiming for. Aiming for? Hell, him and his gang I guess figure it out that they got it in the bag already.

Like I said, though, Tex has every one thinking we're taking a crack at it—and then two days before the race he pulls the line that our entry has ripped a tendon in his left hindfoot. Gee, he does it good, too. Boy, he seems mad, and he even tells Tracy that if it hadn't of been for this accident to our horse we'd of gave him a battle.

We have to do this—have to eliminate our entry, I mean—so I'll be able to accept another mount when the time comes. Aw, it's coming soon. Wait a minute—cheer up. Maybe I seem long in getting to this, but all this hooley and stage acting and funny business sure is damn necessary sometimes in this race racket.

Well, the day of the race comes. A few of us guys that watches everything pretty blame close know that Hal Tracy and his bunch has went down hook, line and sinker on Hercules.

It's to be the biggest killing the outfit ever made, and I hear that they was close to a quarter of a million bet all over the country.

Sure, that often happens, I'm telling you, in a race where the purse for the

winner ain't more 'n a thousand and where the winning horse himself wouldn't bring even five hundred on a sale. Kind of funny, ain't it? It hands *me* a laugh once in awhile, I know.

Half a hour before the race our big test come. Boy, but wasn't I nervous! Baby, but didn't it mean a lot to me?

Crazy Granpa rushes up to me all excited, see, and asks if I'm riding anything. I tell him hell, no, sort of with disgust-like, 'cause hadn't he heard our dog had ripped a tendon?

He grabs me on the shoulders at that and, trembling with real tears in his eyes, he asks me won't I ride Sagebush Boy for him. He sure acts more like he deserves the name of Crazy than ever.

He says he's been reading up in the almanac and he finds that under this particular moon, and so on and so on, he discovers that Sagebush just *can't* lose to-day. So won't I ride him—won't I *please* ride him? If I will, he'll enter him as a added starter right away, like they call it when you put in a horse at the last minute.

After fooling around a minute or two, I say yes. I try to make it look like I'm just humoring a old nut. *That* part goes over, anyways, it seems.

But Tex and me is still on them pins and needles all right, all right, to see if it 'll go over on Hal Tracy. If he suspects something phony, understand, he can withdraw Hercules and all the bets they've laid will be off.

He don't. He don't withdraw him, I mean. Oh, baby—oh, boy—but wasn't I happy when I seen he'd fell. We all parade out of the paddock and onto the track, and remember that if once a horse gets on the track he can't be withdrawn. No, sir.

I mean, see, that even if he was kicked out for bad behavior at the post, or for any other what they call infractions of the rules, he's called a starter and all bets that have been made go on him. Oh, baby—oh, boy!

Huh? Say, I guess you people have



got enough info on this racing game not to want no long description of that race, eh? Being a added starter, I'm handed the outside position—the one farthest away from the rail.

In a short race this ain't supposed to be so good, but in a distance affair it don't matter quite as much.

With a good behaved and fast breaking horse like Sagebush Boy is, see, it don't happen to matter a damn. Why, when they spring the tape, I'm out in front like a clay pigeon leaving a spring trap. *Wow!*

Make it short and snappy is right, if you say so. Listen, I was never headed. I just hand-rode that baby home as easy as—hell, as easy as Grant took Richmond, like we used to say when I was a kid. Honest, I'm wising you that that Hercules dog never even got within six or eight or even *ten* lengths of me!

Yeah, that's the way I got even with Hal Tracy. That's the way I cooked up that dirty, thieving, double crossing murderer. Sure, that's the way that Tex Lanier and me and Crazy Grandpa done it. I *rode* the horse that done the trick, though—yeah, I rode the horse whose win ruins Hal Tracy.

How's that? Say, ruins him is right. What did you think we was, Mr. Lanier and me, a couple of amateur simps at this lousy race him? I got a idea I've said that Tex was the slickest boy in the business.

Oh, no, we wasn't going to let Hal Tracy off so easy. Nope. Not that crook of a killer that had murdered Play Girl and wouldn't of gave a damn if he'd of murdered me at the same time.

Well, to make a long story short, once more, it's this way: The minute it's plain to every one on the track that I'm going to cop with Sagebush Boy, Tex starts some of them rumors going around that's always going around in the race game that Tracy has engineered this whole deal.

Him and Crazy Grandpa and Mr. Lanier and me, see, has had it all doped out for weeks. Oh, it's easy to start them things, and it's easy to have 'em believed especially when Tex and old Crazy would just smile and look wise.

Yeah, it's *awful* easy to have 'em believed, too, when a guy is knowed for a double crosser like Hal Tracy was knowed to be. The point is, Tracy's outfit that's backed him happen to believe it!

No, this particular gambling ring didn't send him over the river, the way that other one had done to poor Art Simms. Nope, I ain't got murder on my soul, although I swear I wouldn't of minded if I had of if the man had been Hal Tracy.

Maybe I might of had murder on my soul if that gambling crowd had been gave the chance. They wasn't gave it. Hal Tracy blowed without no bag nor no baggage, like they say, even before I'd got through being weighed in. He'd saw how things lay, I guess, and he was wise enough to know in his heart that his straight and true story would never go down.

Oh, yeah, Hal Tracy was ruined all right, all right. He'd lost his nerve so much that he never even dared to try a comeback. Not on no track I ever heard of, leastwise.

But here's what gets me. Here's what makes me so happy about the whole thing:

I done it by *riding honest!* Yep, I just rode to win without nothing being fixed!

## CHAPTER X

### An Honest Horse

**L**OOKING back on it, that getting even with Hal Tracy seemed to do me a whole lot of good. I mean it seemed to take a weight off of my mind, sort of, 'cause I sure used to get mad and blue thinking about him. I can tell you it sure did give me a lot of fun and happiness in another way.



Now that he'd uncovered Sagebush Boy, Mr. Lanier, of course, let him stay out in the open. He run him on the up-and-up, too. Gee, how little that's done. Yep, I sure did have a great time that winter. Boy—oh, boy—but if I'm saying it myself that shouldn't ought to, I certainly did some swell riding.

Aw, too much of this modesty bunk is hooey, ain't it? Well, I'm saying it is, anyways, for this here story is the real goods like I feel in my own heart.

All right. I'm telling you, then, that I was getting to be a better and a better jock all the time. Not taking no credit to myself, see, but I had plenty of offers of contracts.

We got to riding at the bigger tracks, although I never hit the New York ones with Mr. Lanier, and I guess I was rated as good a boy as any of them other jocks. No, I wasn't.

To tell you the truth, I had the highest percentage of wins my last two years with Tex than any other boy that rode at the same tracks as we did. Yes-sir, during my last two seasons with Tex I'm proud to say I was rated the best jock at any of the tracks we give a tumble to.

Sure I thought a lot of Tex Lanier; sure I thought, and still think, he's the whitest guy I ever met up with; but deep down in my heart I ain't denying I had still higher ambish. Can you blame me? Oh, no, I certainly guess *not*. Yeah, I had the ambish that all other jocks has got, and don't let none of 'em tell you different.

I had the ambish to want to ride in one of the big classics of the racing world, like they're called. The Kentucky Derby, or the Preakness, or the Futurity, or the Belmont, or—oh, well, in any one of them couple of dozen or so of them big races.

And while I'm on the subject, too, let me tell you I had the ambish to ride a *winner*. Yeah, that's the way we *all* feel—all us boys feel at heart—if they'd only let us. Damn this lousy

game. Damn them crooks! Damn—

What's the use?

Well, getting on with my story, see, here's the way I happened to get a contract with one of the big bugs of Eastern racing.

We was at a track I ain't naming, 'cause I ain't naming nothing right in this stuff. Yeah, all personal names and places is fictitious, like they say.

Anyways, we was at this track I speak of. It wasn't no slouch track—no jerk or tank town one. It—well, it was in a State that ain't exactly little known, see, for breeding thoroughbreds. That's as far as I'll go in saying.

I always rode for Mr. Lanier, of course, if he wanted me to. If he didn't have any horse entered in any race, I was open to take any offer that I wished.

In this case, anyways, I'd agreed to ride a mare called Masquerade in a six-furlong handicap that was going to bring out some of the best there was. I was riding for a owner called Morton—Ernest Morton.

I wasn't thick with him, see, or neither was him and Tex thick. He was just one of the owners of the better class we'd met here and there, and when he'd found Tex hadn't nothing entered in this race he'd asked for my services. Oh, he'd done it a couple of weeks ahead of the race, even.

As far as we knowed of him, I'll say, he was a pretty square shooter. He wants this six-furlong dash for mares real bad, and especially with me riding it sure looks like he's going to get it, the dope is. You know, barring what we call racing accidents.

One of the greatest judges of horses in the world, anyways, says there's just one hundred and eight ways to lose a race. He says that in a newspaper interview he gives, and I'm mentioning it here to let you think it over. Getting on with my story, though, it looks so much like he's going to grab this race that Masquerade will probably be a odds-on choice.



I mean by that, see, that instead of her being a favorite at eight-to-five like, she'll probably be the favorite at three or maybe four-to-five. He wasn't doing not much betting, though, so the price didn't matter to him so much.

He didn't have the money to do no heavy betting, the inside dope around the track is. He needs the purse so bad that that's why he gets me to ride for him, to make it as sure as he can, me being the best jock at the track. Yeah, it sure looks like a cinch.

And then along comes my old man—yeah, my father—the night before the race!

Well, you could of knocked me over with that feather they talk about when I seen him. I was standing at the bar of a sporty gin mill, just taking a few shots with a couple of other jocks.

Yeah, just a few, I honestly mean, 'cause I never did souse it up when I knowed I was going to ride the next day. Anyways, there I was about to hoist my rye when I see the old man come through the swinging doors.

And he sees me at the same time!

The funny thing is—I remember it struck me right off—that he don't look surprised. He sort of nudges like the guy that's with him, and he kind of tips me the word not to recognize him and that he'll see me later. You know how a guy can do it with a wink, say, or a certain kind of nod or look.

To make a long story short again, I finish up with the boys I'm with as quick as I'm able. Gee, I'm nervous. What does it mean, the old man acting so mysterious?

Who's that guy with him that keeps squinting at me like he's studying me all the time? Has it got anything to do with Tough Nolan, that I still used to think about every once in a while? Yeah, had I killed him or hurt him so bad that the cops had been on my track ever since? Gee, was that guy with the old man a dick? Aw, *you* know how a guy gets to thinking!

Anyways, the old man has made me

see by looks and gestures and things that I'm to follow him when I do go out. So I follow him, all right, when I break away from the boys and he leaves himself when he sees I'm ready to. I follow him to one of them cheap hotels.

One of them kind we used to have a lot of, for men only—like the signs said—that was over a saloon and that most always had a entrance where the family entrance to the back room was.

Up in his room to where I go with him we sit down, him and that other guy on the bed and me on a chair. Gee, it was a funny meeting; gee, but there was something creepy about it.

Here we are, him, my old man and me, his son, and we ain't see one another in—yep, in about ten years. He ain't said a word to me yet. He just sits and looks at me. And me, I guess something told me it wasn't up to me to do no talking until he did first. So I kept my trap shut.

"Heard from your friend Jim Mercer, lately?" he finally says to me like he's a judge and I'm up in the witness box.

"No, I ain't," I says. "Why?"

"Didn't he tell you about that Tough Nolan kid?"

"He ain't told me nothing. I ain't heard from him nor seen him since I beat it!"

Well, I don't know. The words just come out of me, that's all. He was my old man, remember, and the serious way he acted made it look like he come to tell me about trouble. Especially having that other guy that looked like a dick with him, too, made me think something has happened for sure.

"Yeah," says the old man. "We knowed that; we just wanted to see if you'd tell the truth. Wise doin' it, kid—just like you was wise to change your name. You'd 'a' been traced long ago if—"

"Gee, what the trouble, pa?"

Yeah, he sure had me crazy with worry, all right. Boy, I see them bars



and that chair staring me in the face. I guess I showed it, too, the way I cried out scared like.

"Trouble is they're stirrin' up that old trouble 'bout you havin' killed that Nolan kid. New police commissioner. Great friend o' Nolan's—he's a captain now, Nolan is—and he says he's gonna have his boy's murderer found if it takes—"

"Tough's murderer! Then I killed him? . . . Then I'm a murderer like them dogs that had Art shot! Then I'm a murderer just like that Hal Tracy was! Then—"

Aw, I guess I went up in the air pretty much, at that. I—gee, there is something pretty rotten about that name murderer, when you think it can be honest rights be tacked onto you yourself. I—well, I guess — just lost my nerve, that's all.

I know I sat there glum and blue and with my head on my arm where I'd flung it over the back of the chair. Gee, my head ached, in back there where I'd been bumped when Play Girl crashed through the rail with me.

It does that sometimes; it aches there. Sure, even yet. It ached so bad that night, I remember, that I didn't hear half what the old man was saying to me. He kept on talking, talking, talking. Slow like, and low, and serious.

I got the main dope on it, all right. He was in trouble himself; he had been, he says, ever since he lost his job on account of me having killed Tough Nolan. Old man Nolan, though—Captain Nolan, now—could square him up with these people the old man had stole money off of if he could deliver *me* to him.

It was something like that. I don't know who my old man had crooked, or I don't remember how much he'd stole, but that was the lay. Come across with me and he'd be all jake again. Anyway, Cap Nolan had gave him this harness bull that was with him, to travel around with, to search me up.

Yeah, I got that, all right. Boy, but

I know I wished the chair I was setting in was the electric one right then and there. I just wanted to get everything finished.

Then I hear the old man talking some more. He makes me perk up. He don't want to send me up the river—nor neither does Dave, the dick that's with him. Yeah, I hear better, after that.

They think it was all did when I was just a kid, and that no murder hadn't been really in my heart. There was the old man's side to be thinking of, though, he says. Sure, if *he* didn't go and hand me over he'd go up the river. Not to no chair, he admits, but to a nice stretch behind the bars. Didn't I see that clear?

Yeah, I see, all right, I says, my heart sinking again and my head hurting bad.

But wait, says the old man. Maybe there's hope. Maybe if I'll be just a sensible guy there's hope.

What's the use?

Sure it had something to do with the racing racket. You're damn right it had something to do with another dirty, lousy, stinking deal. To make another of them long stories short, all I had to do the next day was to lose the Masquerade.

Like I knowed, the old man goes on, it was just a two-horse race between me and a mare called Queen o' Sheba. The other four dogs in it would be running for exercise, you might say. Well, with me losing with Masquerade this Queen o' Sheba was sure to cop. If she did, the old man would make enough jack to square himself back in New York.

You see, both him and this Dave guy had already had a tip on this Sheba mare, they said, and had went and plunged. Their money was already down. Yeah, all I had to do was lose.

Hell, Dave was a good harness bull, the old man said, and he'd be willing to say I couldn't be found. They'd never try to look for me again, neither, and with me older the way I was and



looking different and not using my right name there would never be no more danger. Well?

Well, listen. What would *you* of done? Correct as hell. I done it, all right; I said I'd pull Masquerade. Aw, why not. Morton wasn't no particular friend of mine, even if he was a sort of a good guy and a square shooter.

No, it wasn't like they was asking me to double-cross Tex Lanier. Say, I'd of gone through ten electrocutions before I'd of gone back on *him*. Oh, I guess you'd have done the same, all right. I—well, I'm telling you it ain't so sweet to think of walking through that little green door at Sing Sing you read about. Sure, I guess you'd of said you'd pull Masquerade, too.

I ain't going to hand you no reform stuff, no sob stuff, no how much my conscience hurt me and all the rest of it. It did, though. I swear it. I tell you there's nothing never been so cruel to me as pulling a horse, especially a horse you *know* can win.

Oh, it wasn't only that alone, maybe. I—well, it's pretty tough to think you are a murderer, and that your old man and a dick is out there watching for you to lose so's they won't turn you over to the law. I'll say it's tough.

Yep, that's why I broke one of my rules the next morning. I took a couple of drinks before breakfast.

What? Well, I guess most of you gents—oh, and maybe a couple of ladies, too—know what *that* means. I mean you know what it means when you're in that mind condition, like they say, that I was.

Sure, by the time the race come around I was cock-eyed. Boy, but I was soused, from taking a little nip and a little nip and another little nip. Honest, I hardly don't remember getting out to the track.

One thing, though, like any of you people that's ever done any tanking up will know. It hits you different at different times. I may of been awful canned up—I mean I *was* awful

canned up—but not no one person in a thousand could of told it. I was carrying it, see?

Gee, I remember that everything was a blur like, but I remember that I was holding myself straight and behaving right. I mean that old habit I mostly always stuck to of keeping my mouth shut come to my rescue then. Nope, I'll bet that Tex Lanier was the only guy that knowed I was loaded up to beat the band.

"Sure you can carry it, Larry?" is all he says.

"I got to carry it, boss!"

I remember telling him that. Gee, but don't I want to tell him all the whole story. I hadn't let out a peep to him, though. No—oh, no—not because I was afraid he wouldn't stand by me. So help me. 'Cause he wasn't running in such good luck then.

He'd bucked the wheel again and dropped his roll, so why trouble your boss that's your pal when he most likely couldn't do you any good anyways, like I'd figured?

Oh, well, let's get to the race, huh? Fine, it's just what I say myself.

I had a liking for that Masquerade mare. I mean it. She was what we call a honest horse. That is, see, she didn't have no queer kinks nor streaks. She always run.

She didn't like some tracks and not like other tracks; she didn't like certain boys on her back and not like other ones; she didn't feel like working on one day and not feel like working on some other day.

She was always out there and willing and trying and *running*, like I said. It is hard to pull a horse like that! I mean it's hard on your mind, on your conscience.

Well, I started the dirty work, right from the break, doping I might as well get it over with at the start and put it in the bag for sure. I yanked her way over to the outside, having the end position anyways, to where the going was toughest.



She'd have more distance to cover that way, get me. Gosh, I made it look like she'd bolted with me, poor girl. Say, ain't this a lousy, rotten—

But there I go. There I go going nuts again, after all these damn years at the game. Wait a minute, though. Wait a minute. I told you I was drunk, I told you I was cock-eyed, didn't I? Well, booze re—yeah, reacts, that's the word—reacts funny sometimes.

That mare was honest, wasn't she, I said? Boy, but she was honest that day. On the gospel, she knowed I was drunk, or something funny was the matter with me.

She acted like she couldn't tell why I'd pulled that boner of sawing her over to the outside, but she acted like it wasn't my fault for some reason, and she just had to run harder on account of it. I mean that—gee, how I mean it!

Horses have got brains and heart, and this mare was sure one swell example. Say, she was running like as if I wasn't on her back, like as if she just *had* to win even sort of in spite of me. Boy, she burned that track.

Oh, I'm telling it cool now, after all these years. I'm telling you again, too, that booze reacts funny sometimes. I had that race lost right then and there, no matter how she run, if I wanted to. I could of lost by a head or half a length, and made it look all good and square.

I don't know what it was, something got into me. Something seemed to hit me right between the eyes, something seemed to suddenly make me sober—or else drunker, just like you want to think.

Anyways, with a couple of furlongs more to go, and me still about five or six lengths behind that Queen o' Sheba that's leading, I decide to *ride*.

Honest, I didn't give a damn for no old man nor no harness bull called Dave nor no electric chair nor no nothing. I just says to myself, I says, boy—Larry Meehan—let 'em strap you

down and shoot forty million volts through you, but give this game mare you got a leg over a deal.

And I did!

I ain't prouder of no race I ever rode than that one. And I mean I rode it. I mean it took some damn swell work. I hunched up and made myself as light as a feather, and I fell in with her stride like we was glued together.

She lengthens it, too—lengthens her stride, see. It means she's still got the stuff to come on with, 'cause when they shorten it they're tiring. And she comes on, too—oh, boy—but don't she come on.

Say, I never even went to the whip, I just yelled at her and yelled at her like I was crazy. And I *was* crazy—crazy to win. We do win, too. I pass under that wire with her lip just sticking out ahead of that Queen o' Sheba mare's.

It's kind of cloudy, everything is, for a minute or so after that. I remember bringing her up, and turning around and going to salute the judges. Then I see the old man's face, and that dick's face, like I'd thought him—leaning over the rail.

Gee, they was white, them faces. They—boy, I feel creepy now. They sure had murder in 'em. Yeah, that right then is what made me go nuts.

"Damn you, pa—and damn you, you Dave guy—you can take me back now, all right, all right!" I yelled at 'em, wild like. "Yeah, you can send me to the chair or put me behind the bars or anything else you want. Yeah, you can do that, all right, all right.

"But say, pa—you Dave crook—you couldn't an' you *can't* make me not this time go back on one o' the most honest mares I ever knowed! Naw, I may be a murd'rer—or been one when I was a kid—but you couldn't—"

Well, they tell me I went on raving some more. I don't remember much details about what I did go on and say. Gee, my head was aching, in back



there, and I kind of remember that I was trembling so much that I'd of fell from that saddle if Tex and Gus Lomberg hadn't helped me to the ground.

There's some excitement around there then, all right, all right. Everybody has rushed up around us by now, and I see the old man and this Dave bird trying to edge away.

"There they are," I yelp. "There's my old man and that detective that was sent down to get me. Bring 'em here, bring 'em to me. Let 'em take me back—let 'em send me to the chair—but they couldn't make me pull that honest—"

"Easy, kid—easy, Larry!"

Tex is speaking, with his fingers digging into my arm. My bean clears a little, at this, especially as I seen one of the judges bringing my old man and that Dave gink over across the track.

Listen, my brain clears some more—you know how booze reacts, like I said—when I hear what the old man and his side-kick has to say.

Aw, what's the use?

I hadn't killed that Tough Nolan kid any more'n *you* had. The old man knowed I'd run away because I thought I'd murdered him or hurt him real serious; he doped it, too, that I hadn't heard from Jim Mercer.

Jim had inherited a rich apple farm upstate about a year after I blowed, and the old man was sure he hadn't heard from me up to then. That was why he asked me if I'd heard from Jim.

Well, when I told him I hadn't, he figured he had me, and he pulled that murderer stuff on me. Him and this Dave rat was just a couple of cheap gamblers that had come down to this track where I was, and the old man had recognized me the day before.

Him and his side-kick had doped it out that with Masquerade out of it, Queen o' Sheba was sure to cop, and seeing that she'd pay three or four to one if she did, they'd cooked up that story to frighten me with into pulling

my mare. Yeah, that's the story they told to the judges and the track detective, and that's the last I ever seen of the old man.

Well, maybe I did. I mean my eyes kind of watered up with happiness a few minutes later. Oh, the judges quieted things down pretty soon, and I was weighed in and all the rest of it.

And when I walk over to the stables with Mr. Lanier there's another man waiting. Yeah, he *looks* like he's waiting for me. He's different, too. I mean he's different just like Mr. Lanier is. He's another thoroughbred.

"This is Mr. Servain, Larry."

Say, I knowed where I'd see him, then. I'd see his pictures in the papers. One of them society men that has a big racing stable.

I sort of bowed to him. You know.

"Larry," he says, "I like your riding. I'm offering you ten thousand a year for your exclusive services—exclusive, understand?"

Say, make believe *this* don't hit me between the eyes. Here I am, just after thinking I'm going to the chair for being a murderer, being went and offered a job riding for one of the swell muck-a-mucks with a Eastern stable.

I ain't a rat, though. No, I mean it; I mean it honest, not like one of them story book guys.

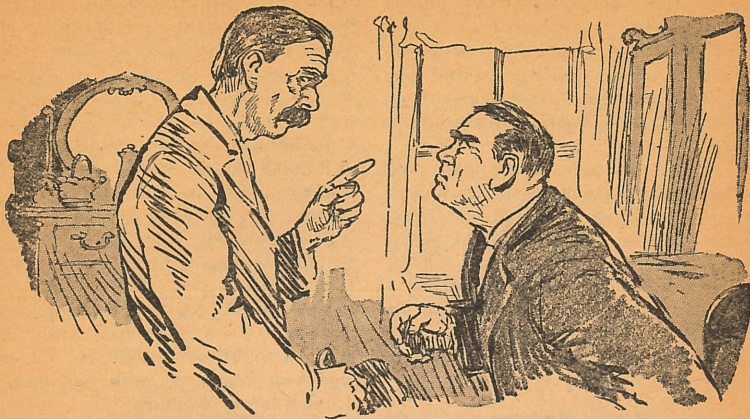
"Gee, I couldn't leave Mr. Lanier, Mr. Servain. I'm sorry, sir, but I couldn't just leave him, that's—"

"Yes you could, and yes you're going to, son! Told you he was loyal, Rupe! Larry, I've always claimed you would make one of the best jocks in the country, and here's your chance to prove that I'm right. Why, dammit, I won't let you ride for me any more!"

There ain't no use for my going into no details, is there? I signed on the old dotted line, all right, in ten or fifteen minutes more. Tex Lanier meant it, too. He *wouldn't* of let me ride for him no more.

TO BE CONCLUDED





"So you own everything in this house?" cried Brennan, eyes glaring

# The Grisly Intruder

A True Story

*In a Moment of Frenzy Over Her Infant Son's Poverty-Stricken Future  
Mary Farmer Turned Murderess in a Bizarre and Grotesque Crime*

By Charles Somerville

**W**HEN Charles Evans Hughes was Governor of New York, in 1909, he was called upon to face the same harrowing problem which a few years before had confronted his predecessor, Roosevelt, and which recently distressed the mind of Governor Smith in the case of the execution of Ruth Snyder at Sing Sing.

As for Roosevelt, the problem did not so greatly distress him. He was outspokenly of the opinion that, woman or no woman, Mrs. Martha Place, who had butchered her husband and step-daughter with an ax, richly deserved the punishment of death in the chair, and denounced all pleas put forward

for mercy because of her sex as born of "mawkish sentimentality."

A note of commiseration sounded in Governor Smith's refusal to interfere in the case of Ruth Snyder.

Governor Hughes, in dismissing the eleventh-hour plea on behalf of Mrs. Mary Farmer, of Brownsville, New York, was strictly impersonal. He rigidly announced that no reason existed warranting an arbitrary act of clemency on the part of the Governor against the verdict of the jury and the ruling of the courts.

So Mrs. Farmer, with a picture of her baby son shoved into the pocket of her skirt, trudged sturdily to the death chair in Auburn Prison.



Her steps as she went were plainly audible to the ears of her innocent husband, himself in a death cell as a convicted accomplice in her crime and having, at that time, sparse hope of escaping the same short, agonizing death march.

That baby of hers whose picture she carried in her pocket to the death chair was the babbling, burbling, wide-eyed, innocent cause of Mary Farmer's savage offense.

It was in order to build a fortune to his advantage as he grew up that she planned to possess herself of another woman's house and its furnishings by killing her.

### Mary's Marriage

Her scheme was hopelessly stupid, a mad plan inevitably doomed to exposure and defeat. But the brazenry with which she took the preliminary measures of forgery and fraud, the ferocity of the execution of the major feature which call for murder, the continued brazenry of her actions after the crime, the strange, grimly dramatic scenes and situations to which all this gave rise, lifted her crime far above the commonplace.

The story of Mary Farmer is bizarre, horribly grotesque.

She was in her early thirties when her life took its sudden, revolting turn. Up to that time her existence had been utterly dull, humdrum.

A farm girl, she had been delighted to escape the hard toil of it by marrying Jim Farmer, painter and carpenter. Jim really wasn't much at either trick, but managed to make a fair living for her and himself for all that. His parents and a brother and sister were more prosperous, and their aid could be looked for when slack times came in Jim's trades, as they frequently did.

The Farmers were married some years before the arrival of a son, who was named Peter. He easily and at once assumed first importance in Mary Farmer's mind. He broke the mon-

otony of her life with flashes of delight. She doted on him day and night. She tolerated Jim and adored Peter.

She was not an ill-looking woman. Her brown hair was soft, her forehead well formed, her snub nose not too snub, her complexion smooth and clear.

But her brown eyes were somewhat overlarge and protruding and had an habitual nervousness, a constant darting and shifting of glance that suggested the eyes of an untamed animal. Her mouth was soft and droopy. Her figure was markedly disproportionate. She had a narrow chest and slight arms, a slight body, while her hips and legs were heavy, properly belonging to a much larger woman.

It was difficult to imagine her displaying the man's strength she did when she bludgeoned to death her neighbor, Mrs. Sarah Brennan, smashing the woman's skull, smashing her jawbone, knocking out all of her teeth, breaking her neck, and afterwards hauling the body about, lifting it, doubling it, head between knees, jamming it down until the lid of an old trunk could be clasped and locked upon it!

### A New Neighbor

Mrs. Sarah Brennan and her husband, Patrick, a couple in their late fifties, lived in Brownsville, a hamlet about five miles outside Watertown, New York, where Patrick was employed at good wages in one of the big paper mills.

Until she was forty or more years old Mrs. Brennan had been on the payroll of the Watertown paper mills herself, for the marriage had been childless and she had no reason to hold to the house.

Patrick, however, would allow none of her earnings to go to the support of their home, and as Mrs. Brennan was a thrifty woman, she soon had sufficient money to purchase a two-storied frame house in Brownsville, with an extensive garden patch and an orchard as attractive complements.



In her name also had been purchased all the furnishings for the new house. These furnishings were not luxurious, but they were substantial, and enviable of possession for any woman of the community.

For some years Mrs. Brennan had given up working at the mills, and doubtless she was lonesome by day, with her husband always away at Wattertown, excepting on Sundays and holidays. So she welcomed the coming as near neighbors of Mary Farmer, her baby and her husband.

### Peter's Future

Mrs. Farmer assiduously courted the intimacy which blossomed between them. Comparatively Mrs. Brennan was wealthy. The woman in humbler circumstances became the recipient of many favors from her. The retired mill worker was neither purse-proud nor miserly. There were later many to testify of countless kindly acts on her part toward the ever struggling, half-poverty stricken Farmers.

Many a time, when work was slack with Jim Farmer, had Mrs. Brennan or Patrick Brennan, equally kindly, offered small loans to tide their younger neighbors over rough places.

These loans were accepted, but, it should also be noted, always repaid. Both Jim and his wife were scrupulous in such matters, it is to be said of them. Their credit was good.

It was a little house the Farmers occupied, within a few steps of the larger, more ornamental home of the Brennans. Only a mean bit of garden patch had the Farmers. And no orchard to turn springtime into a magic of beauty and fragrance at their windows.

Nor were there in the Farmer house such fine, big, roomy, heavily cushioned chairs, deep carpets, nice pictures, hot water heating arrangement, fine, big kitchen and range as in the Brennan house. Or a gramophone.

Mrs. Farmer was more often in Mrs. Brennan's home than Mrs. Brennan in

hers, and its superiority of size and comforts was nearly constantly before her eyes therefor. But on her dying day the woman was to assert that the canker of envy did not begin ferociously eating into her heart on her own account. It was derived from thoughts of her little Peter's future.

If she only owned that fine house and all its fixings, what a start she would be able to give tiny Peter when he grew older, when school days came along, when the time came for him to set up in business or become, perhaps, a lawyer or a doctor.

The furnishings would have been largely worn out by that time, but the house and the property would have certainly increased in value. The orchard might be cleared and other houses erected on it and rented.

Whatever the visions of the future aggrandizement of Peter, this half-illiterate woman of farm and village life, was not one to take the affair out in dreams.

### The First Move

Bred on a farm, she knew something of property deeds, mortgages, bills of sale for personal effects and the like. Her father and neighbors had talked of such things many times on the back porch. So she had something approaching a definite knowledge of how one went about such processes.

On a day in October, 1907, during a period when Jim was out of work, she told him to wash up, clean up, shave and dress himself in his Sunday best. They were going in to Watertown. When he asked what for, she told him it was on very important business for Mrs. Brennan.

She had, she said, to do some legal business for Mrs. Brennan. He needn't ask what it was, because he wouldn't understand if she told him. It was something about Mrs. Brennan's property, and when he asked why, if it was something he couldn't understand or know about, she wanted him to go



along with her, she said it was because it would be necessary for him to sign some papers as a witness.

He needn't be afraid. It was all right. All he had to do was to take the papers and sign his name where the man would point out.

"I'll explain the whole thing to you as we go along," she said. "But anyway, it's a favor for Mrs. Brennan, and you can't come to any harm signing the papers."

"Oh, all right," said Jim, "if it's a favor to Mrs. Brennan."

### The Deed Transferred

Then, with surpassing effrontery, considering the scheme she was putting forward, she took her baby over to her neighbor's house and asked if she would care for little Peter while she went to Watertown, where she and her husband must go on business that day. Mrs. Brennan smilingly consented. She was very fond of little Peter.

With Jim at her heels, Mrs. Farmer made straight, when they arrived in Watertown, for the office of a certain lawyer and notary public whose address she had jotted on a piece of paper. She left Jim slouched on an outer bench while she talked to the attorney in his private office.

"I am Mrs. Sarah Brennan, of Brownsville," she told him, "and I wish you to draw up a transfer of the deed of my house there to James Farmer. He is also of Brownsville, a neighbor.

"I am selling it to him for twenty-one hundred dollars cash. He is sitting outside there. He has already paid me the money, so all we need is for you to draw up the paper and we will sign it, because you are a notary public, ain't you?"

"Yes, Mrs. Brennan," said the lawyer.

"And then draw up a bill of sale for the furnishings—three hundred dollars. He's already paid me that, too."

"Very well, ma'am. Have you brought a copy of the deed with you?"

"No—I couldn't find the pesky thing. But it's on file at the courthouse, isn't it?"

"At the county clerk's—yes, ma'am, of course, it will be. I can draw up the transfer and insert a description of the property later, and you and Mr. Farmer can sign right now if it's all the same to him."

"I'll ask him."

She didn't, of course. She just stuck her head outside the door and nodded to Jim to come on in.

"Sign what he sticks in front of you," was what she told him.

Jim did—laboriously, tugging with the other hand on the end of the huge mustache that was his pride, and reading nothing of what he signed. She followed, registering coarse forgeries of the signature of Sarah Brennan.

"All right, folks. I'll have the papers duly filed before the day is out," said the lawyer, and Mrs. Farmer paid him a two-dollar fee and took Jim away with her.

### A Lucky Chance

She got home well before Peter's bedtime, and she and Mrs. Brennan had a cup of tea together before she took her little Peter home to his crib.

There followed, in due course of time, publication in the newspapers, as ordered by the laws of the sale of the Brennan house to James Farmer. It was one of hundreds of sales or exchanges so listed, printed in tiny type, and of possible interest to none but realtors, and of no interest to them when their eyes came upon it, for they had had no hand in the "sale."

Certainly neither Mrs. Brennan nor her husband, Patrick, saw or heard anything of it. And the relations of the neighbors went on as smoothly as ever. Mrs. Brennan, as she dandled Peter, never dreamed that this same little fellow was going to cost her her life!



Luck had been with Mrs. Farmer in going to the lawyer she did. There were several of the profession in Watertown to whom Mrs. Brennan was known. She admitted afterwards she had not previously learned that this particular lawyer did not know the woman she was impersonating. She had simply taken a crazy chance. And it had favored her.

Murder, said Mrs. Farmer, a few days before she was strapped in the chair, had not been in her thoughts when she maneuvered to put her husband, Jim, on record as the owner and purchaser of the Brennan house, grounds, and furnishings.

### Waiting Death

She speculated hopefully on Mrs. Brennan's advanced years. And there had been several marked signs of failing health. She had considered that Brennan himself was older and couldn't live long, either. Besides, he had his own savings, and could get along very well in his old age without his wife's property.

She would probably leave it to him, or if he died first, a lot of distant relatives whom Mrs. Farmer said she knew Mrs. Brennan didn't care a whit about would come in for the money.

She figured that when Mrs. Brennan died, no one, aware as all the neighbors were of the friendship of Mrs. Brennan for the Farmers, and especially little Peter, would think it strange that the Farmers had acquired the property even though the price recorded was so very cheap.

She could swear that she and Jim had saved up that much money, and who could deny it or disprove it? She was sure she had signed Mrs. Brennan's name exactly as Mrs. Brennan wrote it herself.

But then Mrs. Brennan acted very disappointingly by completely recovering from her illness. It had really been nothing serious. Smilingly Mrs. Brennan told Mrs. Farmer that the doctor

had said that. It was evidently true.

Color came back into Mrs. Brennan's cheeks. Brightness returned to her kindly blue eyes. She was very busy about the house again. Was even to be seen outside on cold winter days attending to the padding and bedding protection given the fruit trees and the garden beds.

With Mrs. Farmer growing daily more eager to step into that house next door as its mistress! Dreaming of the great event by night, mulling tirelessly over the project by day. Biting her nails sometimes, sometimes pulling her hair in vexation at the sight of the pink of new healthiness on the countenance of Sarah Brennan!

October, November, December, and then the New Year. January, February, March. Mrs. Brennan more lively, cheerful, appearing daily to be in better and better health.

### Into the Net

About two o'clock on the afternoon of March 28, 1908, Mrs. Sarah Brennan came out of her house with a shawl over her gray head and a jar of preserves in her hand, and knocked on the door of the Farmer home. She didn't wait for the knock to be answered, but turned the knob of the door herself and familiarly entered.

Patrick Brennan returned home from Watertown as dusk closed to night. To his astonishment not a light shone from any window of the house. He was annoyed more than alarmed, figuring his wife had disposed herself for an afternoon nap which had stretched into a long slumber. His dinner wouldn't be ready for him.

He let himself into the house and called to her. He got no answer. He hurried upstairs to her bedroom. She was not there. Nor anywhere else in the house. Perhaps their neighbors, the Farmers, were in trouble—the baby sick—and his wife was over there helping Mrs. Farmer. Although it was



strange she had not kept an eye on the time.

He started down the steps and toward the Farmer house. But he saw the stalwart, lumbering figure of Jim Farmer approaching. So he halted.

"Come on into the house here," said Farmer. "I've got something to say to you."

"Is it about my wife?"

"Yes."

"What's happened to her?"

"She's gone away."

"Gone away? Where's she gone?"

"She told my wife she was going to visit relatives in Watertown."

### Brennan Is Shocked

Brennan knew Mrs. Brennan had cousins living in the larger place. But he observed:

"That's funny—for her to go away and say nothing to me."

"From what my wife says, she ain't intendin' to come back."

"What?" demanded the confused Brennan. "Not coming back?"

"That's how Mary understands it."

"But she never—"

"Come on into the house anyway. There's something else I've got to tell you."

It was Farmer led the way.

The premises were familiar to him. He passed through the kitchen and into the parlor, and it was he who switched on the light.

"Sit down," he said to Brennan, motioning to a chair, and Brennan, wondering at his manner, but too startled generally to think clearly, obeyed him. Farmer stood over him.

"From what my wife says, your wife told her before she went away, you don't know, I guess, that I own this house, now, and everything in it."

"You own this house and everything in it?" demanded Brennan, arising, eyes glaring.

"Everything but your things—clothes and the like of that."

"Jim Farmer, have you gone crazy? What the hell are you talking about?"

"No, I ain't gone crazy, and I know what I'm talking about."

"You get out of here," said Brennan, facing the larger and younger man spunkily. "Get the hell out of here, you big damn fool."

"I ain't neither a damn fool," retorted Farmer. "I'm the owner of this house and the furniture. Paid for it last October. All you got to do is to go down to the County Clerk's office and you'll find the law papers on file about it—the bill of sale and transfer of the deed—everything regular."

Farmer was looking the other in the eye. If the man was crazy, Pat Brennan thought it best to appear to believe him. But if it was the truth—

"You mean to say you bought this house and the furniture last October—months ago—and my wife never says a word to me about it?"

### A Bitter Sorrow

"Looks like from what she told my wife, she wanted it kept quiet from you. But she agreed to get out at the end of this month before our next rent came due and give us possession. And she's gone, like I said, to live in Watertown. All you got to do is to go down and look at the papers on file there."

If this were true, it meant that the woman with whom he had lived for more than a quarter of a century in love, peace and contentedness had suddenly wearied of him or conceived some false sense of mistreatment or injury.

Women at her period of life, Brennan knew, were sometimes afflicted with temporary and even permanent aberrations. And that for years and years she had suffered sorrow over the childlessness of their marriage.

The sight of Mrs. Farmer with her baby, her daily contact with them, may have accentuated her grief in this regard to the point of insanity and



sent her wandering aimlessly. It was possible.

Yet, as he thought of his wife's serene disposition, the solace she drew from her religious faith, Brennan couldn't believe it.

"So I can stay here for to-night?" he asked bitterly of Farmer. "That's nice of you."

"No hard feelings," said Farmer. "But my wife has waited a long time after our buying the place. She'll want to move in to-morrow. Like I said, Brennan, all you got to do is to go down to the County Clerk's office and see for yourself that everything about me owning the place is all right. Good night."

### The Town Buzzes

He left Brennan abruptly and so dumfounded over the situation the man made no move to investigate the matter that night. Nor did he sleep any, but paced the familiar rooms till daylight.

He set out then to Watertown and the home of the only relatives his wife had there.

There the first part of Jim Farmer's report was proved to be a lie. His wife was not with her relatives. Nor had she been there the day before. They had not seen her, they said, for months.

A lawyer named Carlisle, of Watertown, had always done whatever legal business the Brennans had need for in the past, and this lawyer he sought. As soon as the County Clerk's office opened Carlisle and Brennan were at the files.

"Here are the papers sure enough," said the lawyer. "It looks as if your wife has sold the place over your head, Pat."

"Let's look at those papers," demanded Brennan.

He adjusted his glasses and stared. Then he lifted his head with a snap.

"If that's my wife's signature, then I'm going blind! Sarah never signed that! The 'S' and the 'B' are like

she makes, but the rest of it ain't her writing at all! It's a damn forgery! Both the signatures are damn forgeries!"

Carlisle scanned the name of the notary.

"It's been put through by a reputable lawyer," said Brennan's attorney. "Suppose we step around and see him."

Of course, when they did the truth stuck out, for the lawyer's description of the woman who had represented herself as Sarah Brennan was totally unlike the missing woman, and Pat Brennan wasn't slow to see the light.

"Why, the looks of the woman you are telling about," he cried, "is Jim Farmer's wife! Sure as hell—Jim Farmer's wife!"

"Let's have a talk with the sheriff and go out and interview her and her husband," advised Brennan's lawyer.

The while out in little Brownsville there had been much excitement at the news that Sarah Brennan had sold her home, in which she once took such pride, and apparently abandoned her husband.

### The Heavy Trunk

Quite a crowd collected to watch the Farmers move in. Mrs. Farmer smilingly admitted their right of curiosity as she and her husband trudged back and forth moving over into the Brennan place their own possessions in furniture.

Coming into finer things yet, Mrs. Farmer didn't mean to abandon a stick of her old belongings. In the neighborly manner of such small places, several men and boys and a few of the women became volunteer aids. Thus relieved Mrs. Farmer stood at the portal of the Brennan home directing the placement of articles as they were brought in.

This she would send to the rear bedroom, that to the front, this to the kitchen, that to the cellar.

Then Jim Farmer and an equally



stalwart neighbor came along bearing between them a big, old-fashioned trunk.

"Lord, what's in it?" a spectator cried laughingly. "Gold?"

For Farmer and his aid, strong as they were, were staggering and sweating as they carried the trunk along.

"Gold? More like lead, I'd say," spoke up another onlooker.

"Just a lot of junk," laughed Mrs. Farmer from the threshold toward the knot of neighbors. "Mostly old papers and books is what makes it so heavy. Rest a minute with it, Jim, and then take it up into the garret. That's where it's got to go."

### Suspicious Neighbors

In a little while Farmer and the other man took the trunk up again and toiled and grunted to the top of the house with it.

The trunk was about the last of the things left to be removed from the Farmer house, and Mrs. Farmer, Peter in her arms, smilingly thanked the neighbors who had helped her and said:

"Well, I'll have to go in and set things more to rights. We'll be giving a house-warming soon."

Just about this time Brennan, with his lawyer and Sheriff Ezra Bellinger, arrived at Brownsville. But they did not go directly to the Farmers. Instead they called on those of the neighbors whom Brennan knew for friends and started an inquiry which disclosed that none had seen Mrs. Brennan leaving Brownsville the previous day.

Trolley crews were interviewed. Most of these men knew Mrs. Brennan and were certain she had not been a passenger the day before. At the same time the fact was established that Mrs. Brennan was seen entering Mrs. Farmer's house.

Neighbors opposite had observed this. Two women had seen her go in. And, significantly, for both had sat in their windows sewing while daylight lasted, *had not seen her come out!*

"If my wife went away," Brennan told the sheriff, "went away to stay away like this Farmer woman says, then she went with only the clothes she had on her back. All her other clothes were hanging in the closet last night. I looked and I saw them.

"Of course, if she went off her head she might have gone away like that. But now, after what we found out to-day, I know she never went away at all. They've done for her. That's what has happened."

Listening, the dozen or more men who were his neighbors agreed that the affair had become sinister.

Headed by the sheriff, they went, under cover of darkness, to the vacated Farmer house, covered the windows with black cloths, specially those overlooking the Brennan house, and supplementing lamplight with flash lights, made a careful investigation.

The first important discovery was the recent scouring of the floor of the living room and of the framework, particularly of one window. There were patches on window frame and floor that appeared to have been scraped as well as scoured.

### The Sheriff Calls

Out of a refuse heap in the rear was brought a rag stiff with coagulated blood and a threadbare suit, probably belonging to Jim Farmer, examination of which showed many stains and several huge blotches of blood.

Then one of the men who had watched the Farmers move in thought of something and was about to put it into words, but shot a glance at Patrick Brennan and gulped back what he had intended to say.

However, he motioned Sheriff Ezra Bellinger aside.

"A trunk they took in to-day. It was so heavy that it was all Jim Farmer and another fellow could do to carry it! I'll bet—"

The sheriff nodded.

"It's about time we paid the Far-



mers a visit," he said. "Some of you men follow and stick on the front porch and some of you go to the back, and Brennan, Carlisle and myself will go inside. Any of you men got pistols?"

Two had. One of them was assigned to the rear door, the other to the front.

Bellinger led the ousted Brennan and Carlisle to the front door and rang the bell. Jim Farmer opened it.

"I'm Sheriff Bellinger, and this is Mr. Carlisle, lawyer for Mr. Brennan here. We want to talk things over."

"All right," said Farmer. "Better come in where my wife is. She knows a darn sight more about the business than I do."

#### Mrs. Farmer Knits

"Shouldn't wonder but she does," said Bellinger, and the three men followed Farmer into the sitting room, which was so familiar to Brennan save for the woman who sat in his wife's rocker in the lampglow. She was rapidly working knitting needles on small socks for Peter, who was, Brennan saw, in a crib in a shadowy corner.

Mrs. Farmer's needles went on clicking accurately and without pause when the sheriff announced his intention of searching the house.

"What do you expect to find?" she asked. "Do you think Mrs. Brennan is hiding away here from her husband? She wouldn't scarcely do that, would she? She's gone," she said, nodding at Brennan. "She said she couldn't stand the dull life she was leading and she didn't want to hurt your feelings by telling you so. She couldn't stand living with you no longer."

"You forged my wife's name to those papers in Watertown!"

"It wasn't no forgery. If I did," said Mrs. Farmer, needles clicking as accurately as ever, "it was because she told me to—wanted me to do the business for her, because she didn't want to be seen in Watertown just

then. And she didn't want me to go to her regular lawyer because she didn't want you to know anything about it."

"I'm going to search," said the sheriff. "If you are hiding anything, it would be better for you to come right out with it."

Mrs. Farmer paused to readjust the thread of yarn and began rapidly stitching again.

"I don't know what on earth you expect to find, but you better not do anything unlawful coming in and searching a person's house without no grounds for doing it—no warrant or nothing like that."

"I'm going to search just the same."

He and Carlisle consulted and agreed that the likeliest place to hunt for the trunk would be the cellar. Brennan stood facing the Farmers and let them go.

Brennan kept staring at Jim Farmer, who returned his stare from time to time, and then would switch his eyes to cast a puzzled glance at his wife. She rocked a little more rapidly in her chair, but continued plying her needles busily.

#### In the Garret

The sheriff and Carlisle came up from the cellar and mounted to the upper stories. The tread of their feet could be heard in the bedrooms above. Brennan took a chair and stared alternately at Farmer and his wife. Then the steps of the sheriff and Carlisle could be heard creaking faintly as they ascended the attic stairs.

The clock on the mantel ticked off a minute. This was the only sound save the clicking of Mrs. Farmer's knitting needles.

From above came the sound of a blow and something crashed. Mrs. Farmer leaped to her feet.

"This is going too far!" she cried. "They haven't no right to come in here and make a wreck of the place!"

She flung the baby socks and needles on the table and raced upstairs to the



garret. Farmer got up and followed. Brennan went after them.

The sheriff was wielding the blunt end of an ax found in the garret in an effort to smash open the big, old-fashioned trunk.

"Stop!" cried Mrs. Farmer. "That ain't right! That's my private property! What do you think is in there? When you've smashed it open, you'll find nothing but a lot of old junk! But, just the same, you haven't no right to come in here smashing things!"

### A Cool Murderess

Bellinger ignored her.

This time he used the blade of the ax and clove away half the lid of the trunk. Then he pried the remainder off.

A mass of blood-soaked newspapers and wrapping paper was in sight. He ripped it away—ripped it off the huddled body of Mrs. Sarah Brennan, her red-stained gray-haired head sunk deeply between her knees. Bellinger's next act of lifting the dead woman's head sent Brennan moaning from the room.

Jim Farmer blurted "My God!" The sickened sheriff and lawyer turned to look at Mrs. Farmer. Her face was white. But she did not seem to be horrified to see what the others saw, which was that the dead woman's features were practically unrecognizable from the cruel butchery.

Bellinger's pistol came out.

"Up with your hands, and downstairs, you two!" he told them.

Big Farmer obeyed on weak and trembling legs. Mrs. Farmer followed with a steady step, a queer smile coming to her lips in this moment of frightful exposure. Like the smile of a child caught in a naughty trick.

Six hours only had Mary Farmer been in spurious possession of the home she had murdered to obtain. Out of it she was led to the waiting motor car of the sheriff, with the menacing

jeers in her ears of those erstwhile neighbors to whom she had so gayly that day promised a "house-warming."

Their cries awakened the slumbering Peter in her arms, and he wailed. His sobs stilled the crowd. They saw the pity of it in so far as little Peter was concerned, and the sheriff's car departed in a hush.

Big Jim Farmer was in handcuffs. Patrick Brennan rode beside him. He was bound for a hotel in Watertown. There could be no possible sleep that night for him in the house that had been his home, although in an hour or two a coroner would have issued a permit to an undertaker to remove the trunk and its horrible contents.

At the county jail, they slapped Jim Farmer in a cell and gave their entire attention to questioning Mary Farmer, who, convinced that the jig was up, dangled and cooed at little Peter while she laid the guilt of the murder upon his father.

### Jim's Denial

"Jim did it," said she. "We were tired of being poor. Jim schemed about our first getting her property. First we thought we'd wait till she died natural. But that seemed a long way off after awhile. So when she came in to visit yesterday something happened in the street and she bent looking out of the window and Jim saw it was a good time and he took up the ax and smashed her head in. And I didn't know what to do.

"Yes, them's the clothes he was wearing when he hit her," she added when the threadbare garments found in the refuse heap were spread before her eyes.

On this they brought Jim in. When they told him what she had said, he gazed at the woman as if he was looking on a creature he had never seen in his life before. His eyes were full of horror as he shouted at her that she lied and knew she lied.

"I swear to God I wasn't home all



day!" he told the sheriff and the others. "I was at my sister's in Watertown. I can prove it. She will tell you I was—my sister will."

"Hell, Jim Farmer," said the sheriff, "that was a man's job. What's the use of lyin' to us? It was a man hacked that woman. Good God, every blow was a crushing one."

"I didn't do it, I tell you! I didn't!"

"You were in on the scheme to cheat the Brennans out of their home—you went with her that day. You signed the forgeries."

### A Last Appeal

"I thought it was all right. She told me it was all right. She told me Mrs. Brennan wanted to fix things that way for some reason of her own—getting away from Brennan and going off to live by herself. She told me—her there—that she was only doing what Mrs. Brennan wanted done."

"How about you going there last night and telling Brennan to get out of his home? After you knew his wife was dead?"

"I didn't know she was dead. I didn't know anything about that. She—over there—she told me Mrs. Brennan had gone away and wanted us to take possession and live in the house. And after awhile when Brennan would go to Watertown and get used to being without her, she'd come back, but we would always have a home with her. So she said I was doing what Mrs. Brennan wanted done when I went over and told Brennan to get out."

"Rats!" said the sheriff. "That won't wash!"

"It's the truth," said Jim Farmer stoutly but hopelessly, because his wife was looking at him over the sleeping Peter and energetically nodding her head in the negative.

Yet it was the truth.

A jury who tried Jim Farmer separately for the murder convicted him, refusing to believe his sister when she

swore he was at her home all of that day, the day of the murder.

Although by the time of Jim's trial, Mary Farmer had confessed that it was she who had wielded the ax and was already sentenced to die, Jim joined her in the death house at Auburn.

His wife's appeal was denied, his own was pending. Small chance of his getting another opportunity to fight for his life. He was as good as gone. That was the outlook.

Mrs. Farmer was then trying to tell the world that really Jim Farmer had nothing to do with the crime—the murder or the fraud.

In this last, she asserted he had acted solely as a dupe. And that before he got home that day or evening she had cleaned up all the evidences of her crime and had crushed the body of Mrs. Brennan into the trunk and clamped the clasps and snapped the lock and had shoved the big, old trunk into the out-house where it was usually kept.

Jim had known nothing about it.

"Got to go herself, thinks she'll save him," was the popular verdict regarding these assertions.

### Confession

But on the eve of her execution, with her dying breath as it were, in her last confession to the priest of her faith, which she implored him to make public for the good of her soul, Mary Farmer solemnly reasserted the innocence of big, slow-minded, good-natured Jim Farmer.

The scheme had been all her own. She had been full of dreams of acquiring a fortune for little Peter.

Her kindly neighbor had entered the house with a gift of preserves. They had sat chatting in the sitting room, whose windows overlooked the street. Near by a wood stove was burning, and beside it was a stack of fuel and against the wall was the ax.

Something happened in the street—a child had screamed in play and Mrs.



Brennan went to the window to see what the disturbance was.

Peter was fast asleep in his crib, and Mrs. Farmer had been looking at him often and thinking of him, of what a wretched time he would have if he had to drag along in poverty. She thought she had successfully put herself in the way of the ownership of the Brennan property—put Jim in the way of it, which was the same thing.

But suppose they died before Mrs. Brennan? Then it would be found out that the papers on file were false. There would be nothing for Peter.

All this had flashed through her mind as she saw Mrs. Brennan bend to peer through the window, saw her in that posture with her back turned.

And a gleam of light had fallen on the blade of the ax that stood against the wall.

She said it was in a kind of fury that she leaped in that instant to her feet, seized the ax from the wall and, before Mrs. Brennan could turn to ascertain the cause of the noise behind her, she dealt the gray-haired woman a blow that clove her skull in twain. She struck five times more before she stopped.

She felt a trifle faint for a second or two.

"But I knew I had to hide the body and clean things up," she added, "And I thought of the big, old trunk in the woodshed. I dragged that in. Then I took off my clothes, because no blood had got on them. Nor was there any on my hands. I put on Jim's old clothes to do the job in.

"I had a hard time doubling the body and punching it down to make it fit into the trunk. But I managed it, and managed to push and drag the trunk back into the storeroom. Then I scraped and scoured the stains off the woodwork. There was an awful lot of blood spilled.

"I worked till I was ready to drop. But when Jim got home about dusk everything looked about as usual, and I had his supper all ready for him. Then I told him Mrs. Brennan had gone away and we were to take possession of the house, and he was to tell Mr. Brennan so as soon as he got home from Watertown.

"Jim had no part in any of it—the scheming or the murder—and it would be a terrible wrong if he was punished for what I did myself alone. I am making this statement knowing that I must die to-morrow, and must not die with a lie on my soul."

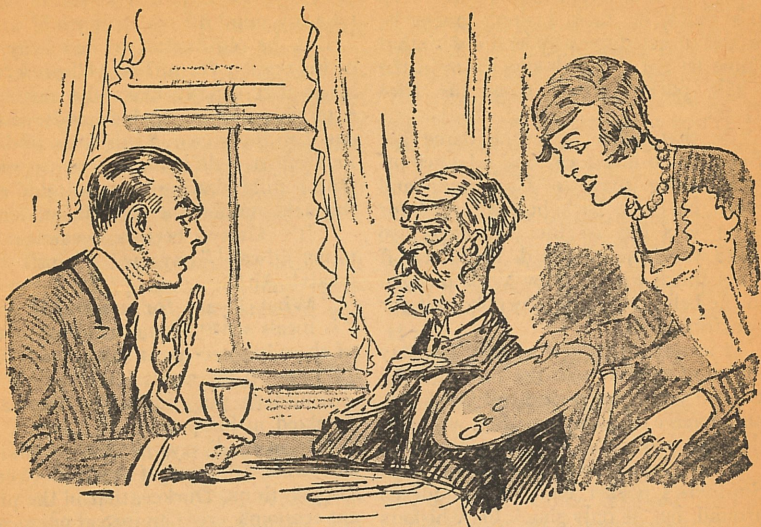
When, following this last earthly statement of Mrs. Farmer, two persons came forward to say they had seen Jim Farmer near his sister's home in Watertown on the day of the murder, the district attorney himself stepped forward with the necessary legal action to give Jim Farmer back his life and freedom.

Jim and little Peter, whose picture his mother carried with her to the death chair, found a home with Jim's more prosperous brother. And if Mary Farmer can look down on it, she will not be worried about Peter, who is now a sturdy boy, well cared for in an excellent household.



Charles Somerville's true story of "Memory Joe" Pucciano, crack New York City detective, "the man who never forgets," will appear next week in DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY.





He gave the waitress the whole change out of a twenty-dollar bill

# Money You Get That Way

*Black Oil Spouted As the Mighty Boom Struck Hornet—  
Drenching the Tricky Mr. Smithers With a Golden Flow*

By Robert H. Rohde

**M**E and Saxophone Smithers—  
What? Well, if you've got  
to be so fussy about grammar,  
all right!—I and Saxophone Smithers,  
then, went down to Texas that trip for  
the purpose of engaging in the oil busi-  
ness in any of its branches.

What had lured us was a line we had  
on an electrical contractor by the name  
of Chaffinch, that was touted to us back  
in old New York for a hot-spark sport  
with a fat roll and a home-wired sys-  
tem for beating the races.

Our original aim was to educate Mr.  
Chaffinch in our own methods of wire-

less wire-tapping; but the gay electri-  
cian blew a fuse on us just short of the  
mop-up and fled out of the picture,  
leaving me and—beg pardon!—I and  
Smithers so flat in the town of Hous-  
ton that we was next door to *on* it.

Leastways, I hold it against Chaf-  
finch that we got hobbled in Houston.

If he had only stood through and  
took his trimming like a man, instead  
of running out, Saxophone Smithers  
wouldn't never of been low in his mind;  
if Smithers hadn't got low, he wouldn't  
never of tried to prime himself back  
to normal with the milk of the wild



ibex, and if it hadn't been for the drop too much he took I don't guess he would of acted the way he did with that dame he got the high-sign from in the waffle parlor across from the Rice Hotel.

Be that as it may, the dame got Smithers to hire a car and take her off sight-seeing over to Galveston, and when he come back he had went for what was left of the war chest; so there wasn't nothing to do but shoot off a hot-touch wire to New York and pull in the belts and settle down to wait for reënforcements.

It was about ten o'clock of a Tuesday morning that we sent the S. O. S. All we had was a coffee-and-roll breakfast, and twelve o'clock that day was just the time when the whistles blew.

I had heard some change rattle in Smithers's pocket while we wandered around, but he only shook his whiskers when I tried to steer him into a lunch wagon.

"I have no doubt, Edward," says he, "that the food served in this quaint refectory is wholesome enough. But," he says, looking down at his cutaway and striped pants and spats, "I fear that, attired as I am, I should be unduly conspicuous in such surroundings. If that does not sufficiently explain my haste to pass on, let me remind you that telegrams are uncertain—and that tomorrow is another day."

On our front and our baggage we still was good at the Rice for a couple more days, and so after we had walked and starved for most of the afternoon, we went up to the room and sat and starved for a change off.

At six o'clock Smithers dragged the saxophone out of the case and begun tuning up.

"It seems, Durkee," says he, "that the hour of the dinner concert has arrived. At least, we can enjoy *that*."

"When you say 'we'," says I, "you're taking in a lot of territory, ain't you? But go ahead and bleat on the damn thing if you feel like you've

got to. I don't know but what it might take my mind off my stomach."

But the old buccaneer was 'way off of his regular form. The well-preserved lungs that usually make the sax such a terrible weapon in his hands wasn't equal to the occasion this time, and his first effort didn't amount to no more than a mild blatting. In the middle of the next number he left off sudden.

"It's always been a weakness of mine, Edward," says he. "Music with meals! Ah!"

"What I care for mostly," I says, "is meals with my music. And if one of them has ever got to be cut out, why I'll cling to the meals."

Smithers put down the sax and chinkled in his pocket.

"I possess," says he, with a kind of sick smile, "the sum of eighty-five cents. Do you think, Durkee, that in the present economic crisis an inroad upon capital would be warranted?"

I gave him a salute from the sofa where I laid.

"Smithers," I says, "there is times when I could almost kiss you. Mine'll be a ham-and-egg on the fattest roll in the lunch car."

"At another time," says he, "I would perhaps shudder at the suggestion. But, do you know, Edward, it intrigues me now? Ham and eggs in the form of a sandwich, what? By Jove, I believe I'll try one myself!

"Suppose you go over to that interesting place we passed this afternoon, and bring two such sandwiches back here. And—ah—it might be a rather good idea if you bought a newspaper to throw over them as you cross the lobby.

"I mean, Durkee, it's just as well that the management has no reason to suspect we're cramped for funds."

A little nourishment was all that Smithers needed to put him back in his customary seat on top of the world. After he had wolfed the sandwich I brought him he went through his regular restaurant routine of combing the



crumbs out of his whiskers and settled back in an easy chair with the evening paper I had used for camouflage.

"I feel," says he, "like a giant refreshed. The future looks far brighter. To-morrow the thousand that I wired Joe Barry for will certainly arrive, and after it comes we shall tarry in Houston only long enough to encompass the most lavish breakfast which our maitre d'hotel can devise.

"Then, Edward, the first train out is ours—and I promise you most faithfully that the dining car steward will come to know us well!"

"For me," I says, "this burg can't fade behind the observation platform too quick. I'm through with the whole of Texas."

Smithers shot me a queer look over the top of the newspaper.

"Ha!" says he. "Well, perhaps so and perhaps not. No, no, Durkee; you musn't speak so hastily. Just wait a moment, please. Let me digest this."

It wasn't the demolished ham-and he was talking about, but something in the paper. After a minute or so he passed it over to me with his finger pointing to a headline that read:

#### **WILDCAT WELL A GUSHER; OIL BOOM ON AT HORNET**

There was only a short article under the heading, telling how an outfit operating on piker money had been drilling for oil outside this Hornet place and had finally brung in a real, genuine well that looked for maybe as much as ten thousand barrels a day.

"Lucky stiff," says I, when I was done reading. "But what's *that* got to do with us clearing out from under the Lone Star?"

Smithers's whiskers was fairly trembling with some emotion that the item had stirred up in him.

"Edward!" he cries, reproving. "Can you still talk of leaving Texas? Is your blood so lacking in the good red corpuscles that you'd calmly turn your back on an opportunity like this?"

"What's the opportunity?" says I. "The paper says they was thirty-eight hundred feet down when they struck the oil. That's a long ways, Smithers, for a couple of under-nourished men to dig with shovels. Or maybe you've got the price of a lease and a drilling outfit in your change pocket?"

"Tut!" says Smithers. "I'm not thinking of the oil that's gushing up at Hornet, but of the money pouring in. Why, within forty-eight hours, Durkee, there'll be more loose money afloat in that little town than there is here in Houston."

"For Hornet's sake," says I, "I hope so."

Smithers passed up the crack.

"Loose money!" says he. "Big money! Quick money! Easy money! Money standing out on street corners and begging, 'Come, take me!' Money—but you've never been present during an oil excitement, Durkee?"

"Only," I says, "the time when the post office inspectors backed up the wagon in front of a big wall-paper house called the X-Ray Petroleum & Refining Corporation where I was employed."

Smithers shook his head kind of sorrowful.

"That's something entirely different," he says. "I was in Burkburnett myself at the height of the boom. In Ranger, too. An oil boom's like a gold rush, Edward—only more so.

"People come whooping in from everywhere, pikers and millionaires rubbing elbows. Everybody's got a roll, and the rolls have no homes. The big oil companies join the parade, ready to spend millions on leases that look good to them."

"Yeah?" says I. "All I ever see an oil company spend anything on was stationery."

"Your experience, Durkee," says Smithers, "is unhappily limited. I ask you to take my word for it there are quite a number of oil companies in this country which actually deal in oil.



"Have you never paused to wonder, Edward, where all the gasoline comes from that runs the motor cars? Do you imagine it grows wild around the pumps?"

"Well," I says, stumped for a minute, "of course, there's Rockefeller."

"And you may wager your fedora," says Smithers, "that Rockefeller money will be in Hornet as soon as we are. Now, that would be something to shoot at, what?"

"If that's what you call easy money," says I, "I'd go another round with the Chaffinch bird for my part of it. And what do you mean, Smithers, about us going to Hornet?"

"How do we get there, and what do we do afterward? I'll peel a sucker any day, because if I don't it's only a case of leaving him for somebody else. But you might as well understand here and now that when it comes to picking pockets—"

Smithers got red over the whisker line.

"First and last, Edward," says he, "I am an educator. There is always something constructive in my operations. If occasionally the second party in a transaction is left sadder for his acquaintance with me, he is at least wiser.

"Please do not forget yourself again. We journey to Hornet immediately Mr. Barry makes it possible—and I promise you that we shall need to pick no pockets in order to line our own."

## II

IT wasn't any later than the next morning that dear old Joseph, up in New York, did make it possible—just. He hadn't been able to lay his fingers on the grand we had asked him to contribute to the cause, but he shot along a couple of hundred and hooked a message onto the transfer wire that said:

Call money weak to panicky at this telegraphing. But stand by and I will

forward balance in a few days. Fraternal greetings.

"I hope," I says to Smithers, after we had went over to the telegraph office and got the money, "that sleep has cooled your head. Here's enough of a stake, anyhow, to get us back to Times Square. But as for it being enough to play table stakes against John D.—of course, that's out."

The old pirate only grinned.

"Two hundred dollars," says he, "will cover the incidentals, such as railroad fare and hotel expenses. It would be foolish to take more to Hornet, even if it were available. Other people are bringing it for us.

"All that is necessary is that we seek the right spot, and plant ourselves upon it at the psychological moment. I will remind you again, Edward: I know oil booms!"

There was a train starting off Hornet way at half past one that afternoon. I and Smithers—*Thank you!*—went on it after tipping ourself out of the Rice, and ahead of us went an insane telegram reading:

Manager, Buckhorn Hotel,  
Hornet, Texas.

Please reserve best available accommodations for myself and secretary.

J. B. SMITHERS.

Remembering what the prices was during the Florida lot boom, I put up a kick against the wire, but Smithers passed it over the veto.

"In our campaign as already mapped out in my mind," he says, "everything depends on the first impression. If we show a sign of weakness, we are lost."

And when we finally bounced into Hornet, after five or six hours in a day-coach that operated on the same general principles as the electric hobby-horse in Kid Kelly's Gym up in New York, he broke my heart by tipping our taxi driver a five-dollar bill for



what wasn't no more than a four-bit haul from the station to the hotel.

Hornet was one of them straggly one-street burgs that is strewed all through Texas and Oklahoma and like centers of culture. Mostly all you see when you pass through them is a sleepy pony warped into a hitching-post and a fat man working a palm leaf fan on the hotel porch, but there sure was plenty of life here.

The street was crowded so there wasn't as much room to move as Fifth Avenue and Forty-Two Street gives you at the rush hour, and when we got to the Buckhorn Hotel it was all I could do to squeeze through to the desk after Smithers with the bags.

When I come up the clerk was looking him over like somebody that has just said, "Excuse it!" and lifted a chicken leg in his fingers.

"You wired?" says he. "Yes, sir, Mr. Smithers. I've held a nice room for you on the same floor with the bath, and—lemme see—yes; the west half of the pool table is open for your secretary. Of course, our rates are up a little owing to conditions. The accommodations will be thirty dollars a day."

Smithers kicked back his heel and caught me in the shin when I give a groan.

"Did I ask the price?" says he. "Well, if it's the best you have, I suppose I'll have to put up with it."

I had an idea that maybe it was a little pleasantry about the pool table, but no such luck. It was my downy couch that night; and at that, it was near 2 A.M. before I could get to it.

A crowd of muddy-booted gents had took possession while I was holding a council of war with Smithers, and they didn't put up their cues until after the last drop of a gallon of corn lickier they had corraled was consumed.

When they had at last weaved on their way, blankets was brung for my sleeping partner and me; but after I turned in I kept dreaming I was the

money-ball in a big Chicago rotation game, and waking up with my ear in the corner pocket.

### III

SMITHERS come down in the morning looking fresh as a daisy.

"You don't look as if you had rested well, Durkee," says he, "and your clothes are a mess. Must I be eternally preaching to you the wisdom of keeping decent hours and putting up a presentable appearance? I wish you'd stay clear of me until you've dug up a tailor and got yourself pressed."

He slipped me a ten-spot, and I had breakfast alone out of it; and awhile later, while I was sitting in a tailor shop in a pair of borrowed pants, I see him rolling along the street in a nobby-looking automobile, smoking a big perfecto and keeping his eyes straight ahead, kind of disdainful like.

If I hadn't knew him, I would of said that there went a plute that wasn't even on nodding terms with thin times, and I discovered later it wasn't only to me that he looked the heavy-dough part.

Around in the lobby of the Buckhorn House, after the tailor and a subsequent barber was done with me, I heard a couple of wide-hatted citizens talking about him.

"Who," says one of them, "is that little man with the wedding suit and the oversize whiskers that whirled in last night? He looks mysterious to me—and promising."

"His name," says the other mad hatter, showing how the talk must have been floating around, "is J. B. Smithers. He's a big shot from Houston. He come up to Hornet thinking he could buy out the whole hotel, just on account of being a millionaire. Fetched along a secretary and everything."

"It'd probably pay to keep an eye on him, Tom. Wherever he lays down his marker ought to be a good safe bet to play. They don't get that way, these Smitherses, from being foolish."



It was afternoon before Smithers come back in his fancy chariot. He approved the changes which the iron and the razor had made, and even went so far as to let me have lunch at the same table with him.

I told him that people was talking about him, and he begun to purr deep down in his whiskers.

"That's fine, Edward," says he. "The whole game was to get 'em started. Now that it's done, human nature will do the rest."

"Yes," I says. "And everybody you deal with will double the price on you. What good it does to have people think you're a millionaire, even when you *are* one, I can't see."

"It's a matter," says Smithers, "of confidence. I have simply laid a foundation, Edward, for operations to come."

"Now I shall proceed to put my ear to the ground, and look for that lucky spot which I believe I have mentioned. But the day is young, and there's no particular rush about it. Will you have your pie à la mode, or straight?"

I could see that a lot of people in the hotel dining room was rubbering at us; and it was kind of unfortunate, because Smithers didn't see nothing to do but play up to his gallery.

When the check come around he give the waitress the whole change out of a twenty-dollar note as airy as though the old goat that had been limping around Houston with eighty-five cents in his kick was a total stranger to him.

After the splash he barked something to me about hurrying off them wires to Harry Sinclair and Erny Marland, and done a brand new disappearing act.

When I see him next, it was after dark, and I had heard a lot more rumors about him while loitering around the lobby. The propaganda he had handed out in the dining room was working like yeast. His cutaway and spats and rich air had 'em all stopped; although I couldn't help thinking that

when it come down to any matter of hard cash they wouldn't go for quite so much.

But, anyhow, for now it was Smithers this, and Smithers that, and I even run across one sharp-eyed bird that was right affectionate in talking about him, and called him "good old J. B.," and claimed to of had some big business deal on with him in Houston awhile back.

But I noticed the gent faded when Smithers crowded into the lobby and grabbed me off to "come up and take a few letters."

Upstairs, I see there was a glitter in Smithers's eyes.

"I have found the spot, Edward," says he, after carefully closing the door behind us.

"Uh-huh," says I, being considerably depressed on account of what was happening to the wee bank roll. "Where?"

"In the telegraph office," says Smithers. "I have been there most of the afternoon. After first presenting the operator with a liquid token of my esteem—gad, would you believe that local Scotch is steady at forty-five dollars the bottle?—I succeeded in making friends with him. And as a result, victory perches already upon our standard."

I guess I must of turned pale when he admitted letting go of forty-five bucks on the refreshment account. I begun to do a piece of mental arithmetic. Forty-five bucks and thirty was seventy-five, and twenty was ninety-five, and ten to me was a hundred and five—and on top of that there was whatever his auto ride had cost.

"Never mind where victory perches," says I. "I know where the bats is perching. I don't O. K. no further expense, Smithers, unless it's a fee for a doctor to go over your head. One more day like this, and we're worse off in Hornet than we was in Houston."

"There won't be any more heavy



days," says Smithers. "I'm going to catch the nine ten out of Hornet and transfer my headquarters back to the Rice."

"Yeah?" I says. "And how about me?"

"You will remain here," says Smithers, "as the field representative of the J. B. Smithers Interests. I have already dropped hints to that effect where it appeared to me they would do the most good."

"Ain't you Santy Claus himself?" says I. "Well, it's no go, Smithers. If you go back to Houston, I'm right along with you. I haven't got the kind of back that a pool table fits."

"Nonsense," snorts Smithers. "You can't tell me that even pool tables don't soften up in a hot climate like this. And besides, it's only for one more night. To-morrow should be the day of the killing."

"Then why don't *you* stay over for it?" I asks.

"Impossible," says Smithers. "I've got to be in Houston, or the whole majestic plan falls down. Everything hinges on the Houston end."

"If I were to remain here, I should be forced to do something downright illegal to carry it off. And you know how I feel about the law, Edward."

And then he set back and begun tapping on his teeth with a pencil to what I judged was the tune of "Johnny Comes Marching Home."

"I shall proceed to demonstrate to you, Durkee," he says after awhile, "that my liberality in the matter of the telegraph operator was no more than seeming. In some circumstances, forty-five dollars may appear a considerable amount of money. But all things are relative, my boy."

"Thanks to my Scotch and the terms of intimacy which it engendered, I have had wind of a proposition in which the Octopus Petroleum people are vastly interested at the moment. *There!*"

"How does that help us," says I,

"unless we've got something to sell 'em?"

Smithers's foliage ruffled up around a grin.

"My plan contemplates," says he, "that we *will* have something to sell them. The lease is now the property of a low sharp-shooting person named Hilson Updegraff—a Chicagoan, I believe. The idea is merely to enter into the deal as a sort of middle man; to buy the lease from Updegraff, and—"

"Buy it with what?" says I.

"Front," says Smithers. "Front, and an acquaintance with the Octopus Petroleum's desires, and the ways of high finance."

"With J. B. Smithers at the home office in Houston, everything will be done by wire. Updegraff will take a rather good profit, we'll take a better one, the Octopus will get something it wants, and everybody will be happy."

"It sounds good the way you put it," says I, "but just the same it looks like there's a lot of room for a slip. And the wire business, I don't understand. Also, what makes you think this Updegraff lad can be played for a sap?"

Smithers waved his hand.

"Several tuts!" says he. "If there is any sap in the transaction, he has already suffered and is out of the ensemble. Updegraff acquired the lease only yesterday, as I understand. It controls the drilling rights to a farm not very far from the new gusher."

"I further understand that, although Updegraff paid only a small amount to the farmer-owner on the signing of the contract, an Octopus geologist now on the ground has strongly advised his company to take over the lease."

"That suggestion went by wire this morning. Allowing for the unwinding of a roll or two of red tape at the other end, the Octopus representatives in Houston and here in Hornet should have received authorization by to-morrow to gobble the Updegraff lease."



"All right," says I. "But do you s'pose Updegraff is asleep at the switch while all this is going on?"

Smithers folded his arms across his watch chain.

"Updegraff," says he, "hasn't ever thought it worth while to get acquainted at the telegraph office. He doesn't know a thing except that he holds the lease and hopes to turn it over at some sort of decent profit.

"Why, Edward, we could buy it from him at this moment if it weren't for the trifling suggestion of illegality that, allowing the very obscure possibility of an upset, might prove embarrassing!"

He lighted his cigar and cocked his feet up on the table.

"So," he goes on, when he's good and comfortable, "here's the program. I leave Hornet on the nine ten to-night. On arriving in Houston, I return to the Rice Hotel, where we are both well and thus far favorably known. All through to-morrow I shall hold myself available there.

"In the morning you will begin the operation at this end. You will look up Hilson Updegraff, who is stopping in this hotel and will probably not be hard to locate.

"Approaching the subject as artfully as may be, sound him out on this lease that the Octopus Petroleum Company wants—technically, it is Section Fourteen, Block Nine. See what he asks for it, and offer him, roughly, about half the price he names. Work from there until you both have agreed on a figure—one not much in excess of twenty thousand dollars, I should say."

I looked hard at Smithers, but there wasn't anything but business in his eyes.

"Twenty thousand!" says I. "And what do I tell him when we hit it off together on a price? 'April fool'?"

"Not a bit of it," says Smithers. "This is a fair and square, open and aboveboard commercial transaction. You don't suppose Updegraff will ex-

pect you to have any such sum in your pocket, do you?"

"He might want a check."

"From *you?*" jeers Smithers. "Don't forget your place, Durkee. You are merely my secretary, acting as my representative in this field. What you do is to call me by telephone at the Rice. After our conversation you will inform Updegraff that I have expressed absolute confidence in your judgment."

"Pretty," says I. "And then what?"

"Updegraff," says Smithers, "will naturally wish some confirmation of a documentary nature. You will immediately move to obtain it for him."

"I can hear the gong on the patrol wagon already," says I. "But I ain't a-going to take any ride in it. No, sir!"

"Don't," Smithers says, "be a complete idiot. If you follow my instructions to the letter, all will be well. Your method of confirming the deal will be to send me a telegram, to which I will reply at once. Simply say: 'Have I your authority to draw on you for twenty thousand dollars?' and sign your own name. Not necessarily twenty thousand, you understand, but whatever the amount agreed upon may be.

"Then when my answer comes, make out the draft for Updegraff, take a transfer of the lease from him and send it to me at the Rice Hotel under special delivery. You get me?"

"I do," says I. "But what about the draft when it gets to Houston, and what about the Octopus people?"

Smithers handed me the cold eye.

"Those are details, Edward," says he, "to which I shall give my personal attention. They come under the head of the higher finance, and require intelligent manipulation.

"Now, if you'll kindly note down Updegraff's name and the description of the lease, we're ready for action. What's the time, you say? Quarter to



nine? Well, my boy, I hope you won't mind giving me a hand with my bag as far as the railroad station."

## IV

I MUST admit that I didn't have a lot of confidence in Smithers's scheme, but after one more night on the pool table the prospect of going to jail didn't weigh so heavy.

Smithers had split the roll with me, which gave me close to forty dollars, and I celebrated with a breakfast that started off with strawberries and cream at a dollar a throw, and ended up with the same.

Afterward I worked my way through the crowd in the lobby and got the hotel clerk to point out Hilson Updegraff to me—and who did he turn out to be but the sharp-eyed windbag that I had heard talking about "good old J. B. Smithers!"

First off, when I had got chinning with him, I threw a call onto his bluff.

"Somebody," I says, "was telling me that you and my boss are old pals. J. B. Smithers, I mean. I'm his secretary."

Updegraff looked kind of harassed.

"Now," says he, "it's funny, isn't it, how people will get things twisted? Of course, anybody who's been as deep in the oil business as I have been knows J. B. Smithers by reputation. Maybe I said that I'd come pretty close to doing business with him once or twice, but—"

"Maybe," says I, "you will yet." And then I followed up with a couple of lines out of the lecture Smithers had gave me on the way to the train the night before.

"The boss," I says, "has looked over the Hornet field and thinks it may amount to something one of these days. If you run across any leases that seem likely, you might let him know. There'd be something in it for you, of course."

"I'll keep it in mind," says Updegraff. "As a matter of fact, I've pick-

ed up a few leases on my own account that J. B. might want to consider. Where is he?"

"Absent," says I. "He had a hurry call back to Houston last night. You know how it is with a man like J. B. Smithers, that has so many irons in the fire."

The sharpshooter looked kind of sad at that.

"I know," he says. "But won't he be back?"

"Not for a week, anyhow," says I. "However, in the meantime, I'm representing him in Hornet. If you've got any proposition I like, I'd be glad to pass it along."

"Well," says Updegraff, scratching his chin, "there's a good prospect in Section Eleven that I might let go of."

"Nothing doing," says I. "I can tell you right now that Mr. Smithers wouldn't put a dime in Section Eleven."

"Section Twenty-six?" asks Updegraff.

"Nix," says I. "Even worse."

"How about Fourteen?"

"Might be," I says. "What block?"

"I've got a lease in Block Nine, that section."

"Not so bad, maybe," says I. "I don't guess Mr. Smithers would bust out into a sweat over it; but he might think about it, at that."

Updegraff got cagy.

"I should guess he would," says he. "That's right in the line of production. There's forty acres in the lease, and I'd certainly be a sucker to take less than a thousand an acre. Nope, Mr. Durkee. That'd have to be the least price."

I took a look out the window.

"What brand do you smoke, Updegraff?" I asks him. "I'd like to get some myself. If you had of said a hundred an acre I might pass the offer on to Houston."

"A hundred an acre!" gasps the sharpshooter, looking like he can't believe his ears. "Why, it'd be robbery!"

I give a shrug.



"All right," I says. "We'll just forget it. Any time you think that J. B. Smithers gives anything away without meaning to, guess again."

With that I took a walk away from him, but it wasn't ten minutes before he was buzzing around again.

"Speaking seriously, Durkee," he says, "I might take six hundred an acre on a quick deal. That's absolute rock bottom, though, and a special proposition for Mr. Smithers alone."

I figured it out quick. Six hundred times forty was twenty-four thousand dollars.

"Go stand under the fan some more," I says. "You're coming in the right direction, but you haven't come anywheres near far enough. If I was to put any such price up to J. B., he'd as likely as not tie a can to me."

Updegraff stood by me, pulling at his ear.

"Of course," he says, "it's worth something to do business with a reliable party like J. B. Smithers. Half the people here, a man don't know who or what they are. How about five hundred an acre?"

"I'm still hard of hearing," says I. "But if you said three I might take a chance."

"Four and a half?" says Updegraff.

"Maybe three and a half," says I.

The sharp-shooter was beginning to flutter.

"You're a hard man, Durkee," he says. "Four!"

"I'll show you I ain't hard," says I. "At four hundred I might see what J. B. has to say. Sixteen thousand for the forty acres, ain't it? Wait a few minutes. I'll phone the boss right now for you!"

Inside five minutes' time I had the operator at the Rice and she was ringing Smithers.

"Sixteen grand?" says he. "I expected you'd be able to shade it finer, Edward, but if you're convinced that's the best figure go ahead. You remember exactly how I want the wire worded?"

"I've got it wrote down on paper so as to be sure," I says, and then I hung up, and poured myself out of the booth and went damply over to where the sharp-shooter was waiting.

"You're a lucky man, Updegraff," I says. "J. B. confirms the deal. I won't say he was wild about it, but he told me to use my judgment—and be ready to take the consequences."

The Chicago bird bit his lip and sort of hesitated.

"I don't know," he says, "that I'm so anxious to go through at the four-hundred figure. You better make it six."

"All right," says I. "We'll call it off. I won't say *I'm* anxious, either, for the responsibility being left up to me. So long, old timer."

I started out, and Updegraff came chasing after me, like I figured he would after his hold-up play went flooey.

"Wait a minute, Mr. Durkee!" he calls. "You shouldn't be sore because a man tries to do as well as he can for himself. I'll give you the point. Four hundred an acre it is. Now, how is payment going to be made?"

"In the usual manner," says I. "I'll give you a Houston draft on J. B. Smithers. I hope that's good enough?"

"Sure, it is," says the sharpshooter.

"But I want to be certain it's going through before I tie myself up."

"Why not?" I says. "If you come over to the telegraph office with me, and hang around, we'll attend to that right now."

So over the street we went, and I sent off to Smithers the identical telegram he had dictated:

J. B. Smithers,  
Rice Hotel,  
Houston, Texas.

Have I your authority to draw on you for sixteen thousand dollars?

Edward Durkee.

I noticed that the operator recognized



the name. He grinned and sort of smacked his lips.

"Nice man, Mr. Smithers," says he. "I'll slip this dispatch ahead of the traffic, seeing it's for him."

I guess that he did, and also sped up the telegraph people at the Houston end. Anyhow, it was about half an hour before we had an answer.

Reading it, I couldn't help but to give up my admiration once more to Saxophone Smithers. Down there in Houston, with only thirty dollars or so in his pocket, he had okayed my request in a way that no law in the world could reach out and grab him for.

This was the reply he sent back:

Edward Durkee,  
Buckhorn Hotel,  
Hornet, Texas.

You may draw on me to my last dollar.

J. B. Smithers.

I passed the telegram on over to Mr. Hilson Updegraff.

"Could you ask anything more?" says I.

"No," he says. "But go ahead, make out your draft, Mr. Durkee!"

Well, closing up that end of the deal, I gave Updegraff the draft and he turned it into the bank for collection, and I took the lease and had it recorded over to Smithers. Then I was able to get it on the noon train for Houston.

Updegraff was feeling so good over the deal that he blew me off to the swellest lunch that the Buckhorn dining room could put up.

"Now that it's a deal, Durkee," he says, "I don't mind telling you that I didn't do so bad on that lease. It was a sleeper.

"The man that owns the farm had kept out of sight of a hundred lease-hounds that went out looking for him and gave up when they found there was nobody in the house. Because why?"

"Well?" says I.

"Because," says the sharp-shooter,

"they didn't have the same horse-sense as Hilson Updegraff. I kept asking around for what had happened to Jerry Turnlow. That farm of his looked like oil land to me. I asked and asked until I found out. Turnlow had got off the reservation in a town in the next county called Hershey.

"He's a gambling fool, they say, and the sheriff picked him up in a cock-fight raid. Because he wasn't able to pay a fine, he was jugged for sixty days."

"And when I went over to Hershey day before yesterday, and offered him three hundred berries for a lease on his forty acres, he grabbed the money."

I had broke out in a sweat.

"Updegraff," says I, "it looks to me like you ain't no better than a common swindler. You buy something for three hundred bucks and soak a poor old man like J. B. Smithers sixteen thousand for it! I ought to turn you over to a cop for that, on the square."

"Oh, hush!" says the sharpshooter. "Business is business, ain't it? Have another drink and drown your sorrow!"

## V

**A** NICE chiseling it had turned out to be, but there wasn't nothing to do but swallow it. When Smithers called me up by long distance that night you can bet I didn't say anything about Updegraff's profit.

"The lease arrived this evening," Smithers says, "and in the morning I'll try to close a quick dicker with the Octopus heads here in Houston.

"If everything goes well I'll make a deposit to cover your draft—and you can look for me on the night train with a wad. Maybe there'll be some more stinging we can do around Hornet."

That was the last I heard of him for twenty-four hours. Then he dropped off the Houston train, looking like he had begun celebrating some time since and wasn't quite through yet.



"Dear old Ed Durkee," he spouts, waving a bottle in the cab, "the killing has been had. Octopus took over that lease this morning for thirty-six thousand dollars, and paid cash on the nail.

"Twenty thousand is the roll now! Whoopee! We're launched in the oil game, my lad. The *real* oil game! Clear the road ahead, John D., for here comes Smithers Petroleum a-rolling!"

I knew it was a dangerous state he was in, and when we got to the hotel I tried to tame him down by offering to listen while he rendered a few numbers on the sax. But he wouldn't do that, and he wouldn't give up any part of the roll.

"Leave it to me, Edward!" he says. "I'm going to show this town the color of real money. Then we'll settle down to business-to-morrow."

Up to midnight I kept pretty close track of him, but nature had to take its course, and I finally left him in a wild-west speakeasy a couple of doors from the hotel. I felt it was safe enough, because he had had a sane minute and shoved nineteen of his twenty bills in the Buckhorn safe.

Dog tired as I was, though, it wasn't more than an hour after I had laid down in Smithers's room when I was woke up and kept awake.

Down the hall somewheres a crap game had started up, and the coaxing of the dice and the quarreling sounded like a mob scene in a show. Once I thought I heard Smithers wailing, but I guessed it was a mistake.

After maybe a couple of hours I begun getting catnaps, and it was one of these that Smithers snapped me out of.

He come in and turned on the light, and I was surprised the way he had sobered up. Whiskers and spats and all, he was looking like a fresh-spanked little boy.

"Edward," says he, "please believe that I did it for the best."

"Did what?" says I.

"Speculated," says Smithers. "I

didn't expect I'd lose more than the money in my pocket, but—"

"What?" says I. "You don't mean to say you got tangled in that crap game I been hearing?"

Smithers set down on the edge of the bed.

"I fear I did, Edward," says he. "And badly. I—I was forced to go to the safe several times."

"What was the damage?" I asks.

"A complete wreck," says Smithers. "The project was ill-advised, I confess. But the game would not have reached such unreasonable limits if a countryman with a mere couple of hundred dollars hadn't insisted on crowding in.

"Up to then I had been successful in holding my own. But the rustic, alas, was too much for me. In the end, as the saying goes among the vulgar, he sent me to the cleaners. I bow my head in shame before you, Edward. But the fact remains—we are broke again!"

And then suddenly he straightened up his huddled old carcass.

"No!" says he. "Not broke! As I left Houston I was notified that the other eight hundred had come through from Joe Barry and was waiting at the money transfer office. I'll have it sent on here first thing in the morning. Then I shall have another try with the ivories against this phenomenal Jerry—Jerry—"

A wild idea had came to me. Hadn't I heard a crack somewheres about "poetic justice"?

"Jerry Turnlow, was it?" says I. "Tell me quick!"

"Why, Durkee," says Smithers, startled, "you don't know him?"

"No," I says, "but I've heard of him. And if he's the one that copped the roll, I guess we might as well let him keep it. You and me are going to grab Barry's eight hundred and shoot for New York, Smithers. And on the way I'm set to tell you a true story about a bunch of stray money that found its way home!"



# International Crooks I Have Known

A True Story

No. 7—OLD MAC



"You thieving hounds! This is the third trick you've put over on me."

*Mac Made His Millions From the Trusting Lambs Before Fate Decided to Ditch This Cantankerous Old Confidence Man*

By Captain Charles H. Moss

**T**HIS week, I am going to write of the most unpleasant, cantankerous, quarrelsome old man I ever met, Charles MacNally, or Mansfield, as he called himself before he brought off one of the greatest racing coups in English criminal records.

"Mac" was born in Australia, but he spent so much of his time in other lands—and sometimes in the jails of other lands—that one country was pretty much as good as another to him.

Mac had "acquaintances," but no "friends." He repelled those who would penetrate beneath his tough hide.

In this respect, of course, Mac was a living exception to a universal rule.

Your confidence man is affable before all things. His charming manners and general *bonhomie* make him friends—and victims.

Not so with old Mac. He would walk the promenade decks of great liners with slow rheumatically steps, a perpetual frown was on his hard aquiline features. Every now and then he would emit horrid little grunts and groans as though he were in mortal pain. As a matter of fact, he did suffer to some extent with gout and rheumatism in his later years.

He was always dressed in good style and perhaps his very taciturnity and belligerent unpleasantness attracted attention, but whatever of that, despite



his abominable personality, old Mac was most successful in his nefarious profession, as I think you will agree when I tell you that in one year he made for himself and his associates no less than eight hundred thousand dollars.

### Select Company

I had known him for some years, without ever being actually engaged against him, when a well-known firm of solicitors asked me to call on them, and informed me that they had a client sent on by their Melbourne agents, who had obviously got into very bad hands. His name was Todd. He had lost amounts at bridge totaling thirty-five thousand dollars. He had had his suspicions aroused at Hurst Park. He had been in the ring there with his acquaintances when a stranger sidled up to him and whispered:

"Be careful of the man you are with—he's no good." The man had then disappeared, but Mr. Todd wanted to know the truth. Could I do anything to help him?

The names of the men concerned were quite unfamiliar to me, but I set out to investigate and soon I found that a certain Mr. Charles Mansfield was no other than old Mac, that a certain Mr. Amersham was Jim Brennan, who has come into a previous article, and was a notorious trickster and card-sharper. A Mr. Gilbert Marsh, another associate, used his right name, because at that time he was funded to the extent of some one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, ran four race horses, and enjoyed an advantage in the confusion that arose between his own name and that of Mr. Richard Marsh, who at that time was the trainer to the King.

There was an additional trouble: Mr. Todd had introduced a very rich friend of his to the gang, and certain betting transactions had taken place. Soon I was in possession of the complete story.

Old Mac, traveling from Australia on a P. & O. boat, had picked up Mr. Todd. The latter had felt very sorry for the cantankerous old curmudgeon whom nobody loved, and had gone out of his way to befriend him. In time, old Mac had been touched by this kindness. After he had sufficiently thawed, he told Todd in his domineering, belligerent manner that he was a very rich man. He made his money in all sorts of ways, sometimes in stocks and bonds, and sometimes by bringing off great coups on the turf.

All of which was literally true—but not in the sense Todd expected—and he was to discover this.

Naturally, Mr. Todd was impressed, the more so because Mac as a rule was so taciturn. They arrived in London and Mac introduced his associates. There were the suave Jack Dudley, who was introduced under another name; Jim Brennan, who appeared as Mr. Amersham, and Mr. Gilbert Marsh, who had a known name, looked prosperous and had an engaging manner. Mr. Todd considered himself fortunate in penetrating a so very select coterie. As a matter of fact, he had!

### A Check Stopped

Following games of cards and several visits to race courses, MacNally had so won his confidence that Todd introduced his millionaire friend—Mr. Calder. At this time, I came on the scene.

I discovered that my client owed ten thousand dollars for losses at poker on the previous evening. I advised him strongly to stop the check—an open one which he had given to old Mac—and in my presence he telephoned to the bank and arranged matters. We intended to follow the message with a personal visit, but hardly had the receiver been replaced than the door opened—and in burst old Mac.

He never said "Good morning" or used any form of greeting. In his ungainly manner, he stumped in the hotel



sitting room, frowning and glowering. He saw me and paused for a moment, but the next second came on unabashed.

"Huh! Hu-u-h!" he groaned. "Wha's th' meaning o' this?" he asked. Old Mac had a habit of clipping his words.

"Eh?"—as no one answered—"Wha's th' meaning of it, eh?"

"Good morning, Mr. Mansfield," said Todd, "Permit me to introduce Captain Moss."

"I know him," retorted old Mac. "Never mind him. What's this about stopping your check?"

"Well—" began Todd and hesitated. "As a matter of fact—I—well—"

### While Mac Raved

"Why have you stopped it?" old Mac interrupted furiously, stamping his foot and bringing a heavy ebony and ivory stick down on the table with such force as to break a cigar box.

"Because he accepted my advice." I spoke for the first time and Mac turned on me.

"You—you watcher at flappers' bedrooms! You divorce monger!" he roared. "What the hell have you to do with it? We are discussing a debt of honor—something you don't understand."

He stood there shaking on his feet—his great body swaying, his eyes flashing and his mouth working with passion. Every now and then he would emit a short little groan.

The discussion lasted for over half an hour. Several times, I noticed Mac look at his watch. It was most unpleasant. Whether Todd or I spoke, Mac interrupted with his ravings and groanings. To finish it, I said:

"Well, Mac, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go 'round to Scotland Yard and table the facts and see what they say. If they say 'pay' then Mr. Todd will pay. Is that good enough?"

"Certainly," Mac accepted instantly, "I have no reason to fear Scotland Yard. Come on. Come on, Todd,"

—he turned to Todd—"I'll make your name mud in Australia for this."

So he raved on and I gathered up hat and stick and with Todd we walked along to the hotel lift, Mac still groaning and grumbling and moaning and raving in turn.

"Look here," said Todd when we were in the taxi, "I'm damned if I'm going to Scotland Yard. I'm not going to be shown up in this manner. Listen to me, Mansfield. I've stopped the check, but if you can give me substantial references from, say, two first-class clubs to discount what Moss says about you, I'll pay."

"Come on to the Yard!" was Mac's answer, and went on raving again. But Todd would not go through with it. He stopped the taxi and signed to me to follow him. We left Mac grinning and went straight to the bank. Mr. Todd began explaining to the cashier who he was and why he had ordered the check to be stopped.

"But we paid the check upon your second instructions," said the cashier.

### Leading the Lamb

Both Mr. Todd and I were thunder-struck. Explanations followed in which it was shown that some one purporting to be my client had telephoned the bank in profuse apology saying that it was not the check in question but the next number in rotation which was wrong as he was afraid it had been issued twice. Would they please pay the first if presented—and the bank had done so!

While old Mac had been raving in the sitting room, an accomplice had been performing the work!

I begged my client at least to acquaint his friend, Calder, with the true character of old Mac and his friends, but he refused, saying that nothing had been proved, and that he could not go and tell his friend he had introduced him to rogues. He left the country and left Calder to look after himself.

Old Mac took Calder to Paris—out



of my way, I really believe, since he appreciated that I could not permit him to practice on an ignorant man when a word in season would have prevented fraud.

In Paris Mac arranged for Calder to make a great bet on the coming Derby. Mac brought all sorts of extraordinary people to see him: alleged trainers, jockeys, touts and others—all to testify to the claims of a certain horse. The horse was a rank outsider—one that Mac knew well had little chance of winning—but it was boosted sky high—and Calder fell for it.

### Thirty-three to One

A bet of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars on it was arranged between the two of them. Both drew checks for one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Mack's check was handed over and torn up—Calder's was presented and met.

Until the Derby was run old Mac made full use of his opportunity and he actually had three hundred thousand dollars out of the millionaire over losing bets he made at Auteuil. Calder was naturally upset by his losses, but Mac cheered him up; the Derby would win him a fortune!

Derby Day arrived and old Mac and Calder watched the tapes in their Paris hotel, old Mac chuckling to himself at making a small fortune so easily. Silence settled as the time was marked at which the race was due to start. Then, a chuckle and a cough from the machine, and there was the result.

The horse had won at thirty-three to one!

Had it not been for the fact that Calder was nearly mad with excitement and joy and that Mac had cultivated grumpiness until it had become second nature, the millionaire must have suspected that all was not as it should have been. Mac was horrified. Calder feted half Paris to celebrate the victory in which he had won over three million dollars. But had he?

One of the gang promptly disappeared. Calder was in despair. Frantically he wired Marsh, who was supposed to have executed the commission, and Marsh retaliated with a feeble tale that at the last moment he had changed the bet.

Calder was now the business man and was furious. The loss, had the horse lost, would have been no more than a disappointment, but to have had the win dangled before him and to have stood everybody drinks on the strength of it, and then to have to confess that he had been swindled was too big a humiliation for him to stand without taking action. He came back to London, gave information, and prosecuted.

The case will probably be remembered in detail. I need say nothing about it. Old Mac went down for five years, accompanied by Marsh, Dudley, Brennan and two other accomplices.

It was 1925 when Mac came out and he was a broken man. He went to Australia, but did little good. His temper and unpleasantness remained, but he had lost his genius for making money. He was ready to retire from swindling activity.

### Cheating Cheaters

Before he did so he had a last affair.

At Leamington Spa he met a man called Pennefather, who was on the point of going to America. Mac's instinct told him that Pennefather was rich and that he might make a victim. Mac decided also to go to America and he took with him an accomplice named Crockford. On the way Pennefather, in the course of conversation, mentioned that he had lost one hundred thousand dollars through racing, and that he was sure he had been swindled. Mac listened with only a few grunts, and then, turning his hard, determined face squarely to his companion, he said resolutely:

"Yes—you have been swindled—so have I. I was brought to the verge of ruin by bookmakers. They ruin all they



can. The only way in which I saved myself was by swindling them. When you're touching pitch, you have to become dirty!"

Pennefather was impressed and agreed with old Mac's ethics. He wished he had a chance to do the same thing, for he could do with his money back.

Nothing could be simpler, explained Mac. Only brains were needed. He went into details.

It appeared that in New York there was a great firm of bookmakers who had swindled him badly, and he was even now going to get his own back. If Pennefather would rely on him, he would see him right, and all the details could be left to him.

Arrived in New York, Mac set about pulling strings.

### The Faked Cable Trick

His ingenious scheme involved the treachery of an official of the Western Union Cable Company, whom Mac had bribed heavily merely to hold telegrams until the winners came in, when the proper name could be inserted and the wire dispatched with an incorrect time stamp on it.

On a day Mac and Pennefather went round to the Western Union offices. In one of the passages they ran into a man who came out of an office in his shirt-sleeves and with a pen behind his ear. He said a few words rapidly to Mac and dashed off again.

"That's our man," said Mac to Pennefather.

It all seemed obvious, and later that afternoon Pennefather had the satisfaction of knowing that he had won twenty-five thousand dollars. Mac and he went around to collect their money, for each had bet the same amount. Here, however, there was a little hitch. The bookmaker was quite satisfied, but these were big bets. How did he know that had they lost they could have paid?

Old Mac considered a moment and then declared that the bookmaker was

reasonable in wishing to be satisfied that they were honorable men, and that he was dealing with substantial sportsmen. He suggested that they should both bring round twenty-five thousand dollars in cash to prove that they could have paid.

Pennefather agreed to this formality. They went out and returned shortly, each bringing their money, which they placed on the bookmaker's desk for him to count.

Instantly four men rushed into the room and arrested them.

"You thieving hounds!" declared the bookmaker. "This is the third time this Western Union faked cable trick has been put over on me. I'll send you both to Sing Sing!"

Pennefather was frightened to death. Exposure was the last thing he wished. He pleaded to be forgiven, and after a good deal of bad language the bookmaker agreed to be merciful. He made no charge, and Pennefather left the twenty-five thousand behind him in return for the mercy.

He never saw old Mac again. Had he done so he might have recognized some of the notes in the confidence man's possession!

Mac returned to England in due course and sank lower and lower, developing mental as well as increased rheumatic trouble.

Finally, in Charing Cross Hospital, in a mental ward, only a few weeks ago an old man with a singularly hard face kept up his ravings for three solid hours. It was a strange mixture of religious and blasphemous expressions, horrible to hear. As the sun set his voice sank to a moan.

"The lights are sinking!" he croaked. "All is dark, dark—oh, God! I'm sinking. Help! Help!"

Whether there was anyone there to help can never be told in this world. There was no one on this side of the veil.

Old Mac, unscrupulous, cunning and cantankerous, had passed on!





# Between Calais and Dover

*Why Were There So Many Mysterious Brown Bags Aboard? Bags Detective X. Crook Said Held Something a Hundred Times Sweeter Than Sugar*

By J. Jefferson Farjeon

"**H**ERE he comes," whispered Sergeant Belloc—in plain clothes. "The stout feller, in tweeds."

Detective Crook made no outward sign that he had heard his companion. His eyes were fixed dreamily and abstractedly on the gangway of the Maid of Kent, on the deck of which he and the sergeant were standing.

His mind might have been very far away—in the boulevards of Paris, the mountains of Mentone, or the tense quietness of the Casino at Monte Carlo. But, actually, it was in none of these places; it was concentrated on the gangway at which he stared so dreamily, and along which walked the stout feller in tweeds.

Behind the man in tweeds came a blue-smocked porter, with a trunk and two bags strapped across his shoulder. The trunk was a large cabin trunk. One of the bags was black, the other brown.

"Wonder what's in 'em," murmured the sergeant's voice in Crook's ear.

"You ought to know," replied Crook.

"Yes—that's right. Saccharin! What I ought to have said was—I wonder how much!"

"What's the duty on saccharin?" asked Crook.

"Three and nine per ounce," said Belloc. "That's sixty shillings per pound. Get across this little strip of water with, say, ten pounds of the



stuff, and hoodwink the customs officials at Dover, and you've pocketed thirty pounds."

"Of course," remarked the detective, watching the progress of the man in tweeds and the French porter out of the corner of his eye, "it may not be saccharin this time."

"Well, it isn't always," admitted the sergeant. "It may be watches—you have to pay a third of the value on them—or tobacco, or anything else, for that matter. But it's saccharin this time all right, because this trip I'm leaving nothing to chance. I've been on the feller's heels for a week, and know what he's been up to."

"Smart work," commended Crook.

"Not so bad. But I wasn't going to trust to my own unaided smartness on the *last* lap, sir, and that's why I asked you to meet me here, and to travel the last lap back with me."

He stared at the disappearing couple—the stout man and the French porter—as they went down to a lower deck, and turned casually, to follow them. "Better be moving, hadn't we?"

Crook nodded.

"Might as well see where the luggage is stowed."

"That's right. But all we can do, even then, is to look at it. Tantalizing, isn't it? The law doesn't prevent a man from bringing saccharin into England—it only goes for him if he evades paying the duty. So far, if the trunk and both bags are bulging with saccharin, the rascal's done nothing wrong."

On the point of descending to the lower deck, Crook paused.

"No—I think we'd better part, you and I," he said. "You follow them, and I'll return and open a conversation with you later. I suppose you've no idea how our friend is going to try and work the trick?"

"No, none," answered the sergeant, frowning. "That's the devil of him. He's a genius, and never does the same trick twice. Seems to enjoy the game

for its own sake, if you know what I mean. Sometimes he makes a perfectly innocent trip, I believe, just to get us tangled. Oh, he keeps his wits about him all right."

"Then we must keep ours about us," responded Crook, smiling. "Au revoir. See you later."

He turned away, leaving the sergeant to descend alone, and strolled aimlessly around the boat.

There were prospects of a choppy voyage, and the passengers were bustling to their cabins and chairs, the more nervous of them wearing big, deceptive smiles to conceal their inward agitation.

One young man, however, made no attempt to conceal his tremors. He was staring seaward as Crook approached him.

"Going to have a pleasant time, aren't we?" he remarked.

"A bit lively," agreed Crook. "But it's soon over."

"Yes, and when it's over, I'll stay in England for the rest of my life," retorted the young man. "The last trip was bad enough, but this is going to be worse." He pointed towards the horizon. "Wait till we get out there," he muttered. "That's when she begins to roll!" He fumbled at a pocket. "Have a cigarette?"

But his case was not in his pocket. In his agitation, he had put it in his bag. He opened the bag, drew out the case, and the top half of his purple-striped pyjamas, apologized for the latter, and offered the former. Crook accepted, exchanged a few more words with him, and passed on.

## II

FOR ten minutes he wandered about, exchanging words with other passengers, and watching the business of departure. The water around them became white. Calais began to swing round and away. The blue porters on the wharf, their work done, grew smaller and smaller.



Then, as they left the security of the harbor, and struck the free channel, Crook came upon the stout man in the tweed suit.

The stout man in the tweed suit was informing a steward very definitely that he did *not* want to put his bag down, and that he was quite able to carry it for himself. It was the black bag he was carrying. The steward faded away.

The stout man glanced round quickly, and Crook noticed a momentary tenseness in his eyes. Then the expression relaxed, the stout man began to whistle softly, and sauntered off. Another thing Crook noticed was that he was gripping his black bag rather firmly, and that it appeared somewhat heavy.

The detective restrained his impatience for another five minutes, then strolled down to the lower deck. Soon he came upon Sergeant Belloc, gripping a rail as the boat rolled to one side.

The detective lost his own footing, and abruptly gripped another rail. Crook was an experienced traveler, but he thought that if he lost his footing at that moment, it would provide a good excuse for reopening a desirable acquaintanceship.

"Bit rocky, isn't she?" he observed casually, to the sergeant.

The sergeant played up to his part.

"You're right—she is," he grumbled. "I don't mind telling you I'll be glad when she gets in."

"I won't be sorry," smiled the detective. He glanced toward a pile of luggage. "Shouldn't be surprised to find those trunks sliding about in another minute."

"Nor'd I," grunted Belloc. "That trunk there with the brown bag on top of it—they look just ready to jump!"

Thus, chuckling at his great subtlety, did Belloc draw Crook's attention to the luggage of the stout gentleman in the tweed suit.

To people who passed them, they

were two strangers who had never met before, and who were passing the time with desultory conversation. They chatted of former voyages—creating them for the occasion—exchanged tips on seasickness, and views on the Channel Tunnel.

But presently, when they found themselves alone, they discarded their conversational camouflage, and Belloc murmured to the detective:

"Hadn't one of us better go up and shadow our friend?"

"I think we're more useful down here," answered Crook.

"Why? The *stuff's* not down here?"

"Why not?"

"Because our friend marched off with the black bag, and wouldn't trust it out of his sight."

"I know—I saw him on the upper deck," nodded Crook. "He certainly hung on to that black bag. All the same, I don't think we'd find anything in the black bag if we got a peep into it."

"Bet we would!" retorted the sergeant laconically.

"You'd lose your money. His affection for his black bag is probably a blind—to detract attention from the rest of his luggage. He knows he's being watched, you can be sure of that."

The sergeant frowned.

"If that's so, p'raps we'd better not hang around here," he muttered.

"But we may get a chance to peep into the *brown* bag," observed Crook, eyeing that object of interest speculatively. "I confess to you, Belloc, I'm more interested in the brown bag than the black one. The black one is the red herring, intended to draw us away from—"

He stopped abruptly. Some one was swaying toward them along the passage.

"No, the big boats may not roll so much," said Belloc loudly, "but the throbbing of the engines is worse. On the Mauretania, you get it all the time."

"I'd rather have that than *this*," an-



swered Crook in the same strain. "Lord—that was a nasty one!"

The newcomer evidently thought it was a nasty one, too. He lurched forward, lost his balance, and sprawled over the pile of luggage.

It was an interesting performance, and doubly so to the detective, who recognized the newcomer as the young man to whom he had spoken earlier on deck. The young man dropped his bag as he fell, and it was several seconds before he picked himself up. Then he turned to his observers with a green smile.

"I do love ships," he grinned mirthlessly.

"She's certainly rolling," answered the sergeant.

"No, is she?" exclaimed the young man. "Fancy your noticing it!" Then he recognized Crook. "Hello—how are you standing it?" he asked. "And some people cross the blessed channel for *fun*!"

"No accounting for taste," answered the detective. "I'll be glad myself to find solid ground beneath my feet, when we reach it."

"If we reach it," corrected the young man. "Well, I think I'll go out on deck again. Thought I'd feel better down here, but it's too stuffy—On deck, yes—and near a steward."

He turned, and lurched up the stairs again. The sergeant smiled.

### III

**H**E lost *his* bag all right in that little tumble," he remarked.

"He did lose it," agreed Crook. "He forgot to pick it up again."

"What do you mean?" demanded the sergeant. "He picked it up. There it is—in his hand."

He pointed to the disappearing figure, but Crook shook his head.

"No, he didn't pick up *his* bag—there it is, on our fat friend's steamer trunk. Didn't you notice? He picked up our fat friend's bag. Quite a remarkable similarity, isn't there?"

The sergeant stared. He could not see any difference.

"Well, if *that's* his bag," he remarked skeptically, "it is a remarkable similarity!"

"Probably an intentional similarity," said Crook. "Well, you can stay down here, if you like, but I'm going to watch that young fellow. I'm not interested in our fat friend, or his luggage, any longer."

So saying, he disappeared, leaving the sergeant blinking.

"Go on," said Belloc to himself. "He's on a wrong track altogether. I wonder—?"

He glanced rapidly about him. No one was near. And, after all, unless the man he was after came along himself, who would know that the brown bag lying so temptingly before him was not his own property, if he were discovered opening it?

He slipped forward quickly. To his surprise, the brown bag was unlocked. He felt through its contents rapidly. The only remarkable thing he found in it was a pair of purple-striped pyjamas.

"There!" he muttered, closing the bag again. "I said it was the black bag we wanted. I'm going out to chase our fat friend, whatever Crook may do!"

Crook's interest in the young man was not entirely new, and it did not date from the little accident he had just witnessed.

It dated from the first moment he had met him, when he had noticed the resemblance between his brown bag and the brown bag of the man they were after. Both brown bags, moreover, bore the same initials—J. D. D.—and this coincidence Crook found rather hard to swallow.

"Assuming," reflected Crook, as he began to search the upper deck for his quarry, "that J. D. D., our fat friend in tweeds, is the clever smuggler he is supposed to be, he would hardly do so obvious a thing as to hang on to the



bag we want with such suspicious anxiety.

"Of course, he might guess that we would know this, and might be trying to juggle with our psychology—but I doubt it. The coincidence of the two similar bags is a far more interesting subject to work on. J. D. D. brings his goods along in his brown bag. He arranges with a confederate to be on the boat with a similar bag.

"Then, when the exchange is effected, J. D. D.'s luggage is innocent, and the confederate's not. But the confederate, being unsuspected, has a better chance of getting off with the stuff." He paused in his reflections, and frowned.

"Yes, but how is the confederate going to work it? Well—I've got to find out that—And there he is, leaning most perilously over the side of the boat. I think I'll go and lean with him."

Another idea came into the detective's mind. Possibly this was a double blind, a case of *two* red herrings across the path. The stuff might be in neither bag, but in the cabin trunk. He dismissed that idea, however, when he realized that the customs officials at Dover would go through the steamer trunk very thoroughly—indeed, they had orders to—and that J. D. D. would have no opportunity of getting rid of a trunk, as he might of a bag.

He drew up to the young man. The young man's eyes were staring, and he was gripping his interesting brown bag tightly.

"How are you feeling?" asked Crook.

"Eh?" jerked the young man. The detective had come upon him quietly and suddenly. For the moment, he seemed flustered. But it might have been the rolling of the boat.

"Find it better out here?" proceeded Crook.

"When you're here, you think it would be better below," replied the young man, miserably enough, though

he had regained something of his composure, "and when you're below you think it'll be better out here. It's all damnable, either way."

"You must be a particularly bad sailor," observed Crook. "For my part, I'm rather enjoying it."

"Are you!" grunted the young man, and showed no inclination to continue the conversation.

But Crook ran on. He did not intend to leave his quarry, now he had found him.

"Well, it's not as rough as it was," he said, staring over the side. "The wind's dropped a bit, and we're more than half way over."

The coast of France was hidden behind a mist, but the coast of England now showed clearly. Every minute, the white cliffs of Dover grew bigger. "And, look," continued Crook, "the sun's out in England. Don't the cliffs look white? We'll have the sun here in a moment."

The sun burst over the deck as he spoke. The weather was certainly brightening. The young man's humor, however, was not. He turned toward his companion, and spoke almost pleadingly.

"Three cheers, hooray, and all that," he said, "but it's no good trying to make me joyful. Can't you see, I'm not in a social mood? I'm going to be ill in a minute—I think you'd better go and find some one more companionable to talk to."

"Nonsense," retorted Crook ruthlessly. "If you're going to be ill, you may like somebody by—"

"Confound it, I don't *want* anybody by!" exclaimed the young man rudely. "I want to be alone!"

Detective Crook was sure the young man wanted to be alone, but he did not intend that he should be alone. He posed as the Good Samaritan who offers his services even to those who declare they do not need them.

"Don't worry," he observed smoothly. "I won't talk."



With an angry exclamation, the young man moved away. Crook blatantly moved after him.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded the young man.

"What's the matter with *you*?" responded Crook amiably. "You look pea-green. Why don't you go inside and lie down?"

"If I did, dash me, I believe you'd go inside and lie down with me!" growled the young man. "Well, the deck's common property, I suppose—if you want to stay here, I can't prevent you!"

"It's true, you can't," murmured Crook.

For ten minutes neither spoke a word. Side by side they leaned over the rail and watched the cliffs of Dover increase in size. The weather improved. Behind them passengers began to bustle again, in pleasurable anticipation of the landing and the safe conclusion of their little adventure.

Not far away a motor boat chugged cheekily toward the Maid of Kent, making her look a ship of mighty size by comparison. Crook was staring at it when a sudden commotion behind him made him turn.

"What the devil are you following me about for?" cried a voice. "Are you my shadow or what?"

It was the stout man in tweeds and he was addressing Sergeant Belloc. The sergeant colored slightly, but held his ground.

"I'm not following you," he retorted. "What makes you think I am?"

But before the angry man in tweeds could reply another incident claimed attention. The young man gave a cry and Crook swung back again.

"My bag!" shouted the young man. "I've—I've dropped it over!"

A sailor standing by grinned callously.

"No gettin' that back, sir," he remarked, showing his teeth. "That's a meal for the fishes!"

"Stop the boat! Throw out a line or something!" spluttered the young man, losing his head and behaving ridiculously.

"Don't be absurd," said Crook, frowning. "You know perfectly well they can't stop the boat! How did you come to do that?"

The detective felt annoyed at himself. He had been caught by an old trick, and had had his attention diverted from the young man at the very moment it was necessary to watch him.

He hardly listened to the young man's story of how the boat had pitched, and of how he had slipped, and of how, in trying to regain himself, he had lost hold of the bag.

"Ello!" exclaimed the sailor. "Well, I'm blowed!"

The motor boat had slipped in close, and a man had bent forward and had hooked up the bag. It was a neat piece of work and some of the passengers applauded. But Crook's frown deepened.

"That bag of yours dropped a long way out, didn't it?" he exclaimed to the young man. "And it's odd it didn't sink sooner, too. And wasn't that a rope or something I saw attached to it?"

#### IV

**B**EFORE the young man could reply the stout gentleman in tweeds thrust himself forward. He spoke calmly and was no longer angry. In fact, he appeared to be rather enjoying the situation.

"This really is most extraordinary," he said. "Most extraordinary. My young friend here seems to be suffering from the same sort of plague as myself! Some one is hanging on to him, too." He stared at Crook and then turned to stare at Belloc. The passengers divided their attention between the scene on board and the scene below on the water. "Who *are* you two, if one may ask?" concluded the stout gentleman.



"I am Detective Crook," replied Crook, now as calm as his interrogator, "and my friend is Sergeant Belloc, of Scotland Yard. If that conveys anything to you, you're welcome to it."

Then he turned to look down at the motor boat. The man who had rescued the bag was making signs to the excited young man.

"Right!" bawled the young man, interpreting the signs with rather remarkable rapidity. "I'll meet you on the beach when we get in!"

"And I think, sergeant," added Crook to Belloc, "*we'll* be present at that meeting too! It may prove interesting."

The sergeant nodded. He was quite ready to get a little of his own back.

Matters having reached a head, neither Crook nor Belloc made any attempt to conceal their official capacity. Quietly and unostentatiously, to the considerable interest of the passengers, they shadowed their respective men till the boat made harbor.

Then, at the quayside, a constable was requisitioned to accompany the stout gentleman through the customs, while Crook and Belloc accompanied the young man to the spot for which the little motor boat was making.

"You don't mind us, do you?" asked Crook politely.

"Why should I?" snapped the young man. "You'll be looking like a couple of fools in a few minutes. No—I don't mind."

Sergeant Belloc glanced at Crook. There was a vague uneasiness in the glance, but Crook replied with a smile. He did not intend that either he or the sergeant should be made to look like a fool.

The motor boat took some little while to make the shore, and it was some time before the anticipated meeting was effected. The young man sprang forward and the owner of the boat advanced to meet him.

"Here is your bag, sir!" he cried cheerily. "Lucky I happened to be by."

"Jolly decent of you—much obliged!" exclaimed the young man.

"Yes, it was a good thing. But—would you mind handing that bag to my friend here—not to me?"

The owner of the motor boat looked puzzled, while the uneasiness of the sergeant's face increased.

"Don't understand you, sir," said the owner of the motor boat. "You dropped it in, didn't you?"

"Yes. But—kindly oblige me. My friend seems to have an idea that I dropped the bag in on purpose, and that he will find the reason for my odd action inside." He turned to the detective.

"Detective Crook," he went on, "if that's the right name, will you officiate?"

"Certainly," nodded Crook, and took the bag in his hands.

He opened it and examined the contents, now sadly saddened. He looked and felt, methodically, in every corner of the bag.

"Find anything?" asked the young man sarcastically.

"Yes—a pair of purple-striped pyjamas," answered the detective, and the sergeant's face fell to zero.

"Exactly—a pair of purple-striped pyjamas," agreed the young man, triumph in his voice. "The same pair that you saw when I gave you a cigarette at the beginning of the trip."

"I recall seeing the purple-striped pyjamas which you intended me, or some one, to see," answered Crook quietly, "but I am afraid I cannot agree that these are the same pyjamas."

"Not the same pyjamas?" cried the young man indignantly.

"No—not the same ones. And I base my assumption on two good reasons." He glanced round and beckoned to the constable who had accompanied the stout man through the customs, and who, in obedience to instructions, had now joined the group. "Constable, was any saccharin found in J. D. D.'s luggage?"



"None, sir," reported the constable.

"But did you find, by any chance," went on the detective, "a pair of purple-striped pyjamas—like these?"

The constable stared at the garment held up to him, blinked, and then grinned, while Belloc gave a little exclamation. Light was beginning to dawn. Yes—he had seen purple-striped pyjamas in J. D. D.'s bag!

"That's right, sir," the constable answered. "We found their twin brothers."

"Now, that's very interesting," said Crook. "Very interesting, indeed. Because if it is possible to have two pairs of exactly similar pyjamas, it is equally possible to have three exactly similar brown bags with the initials J. D. D. on them."

"Three bags?" burst out the young man. "What's all this mean? There were only two! That is—"

"No, there were three," responded Crook, and a note of sternness now en-

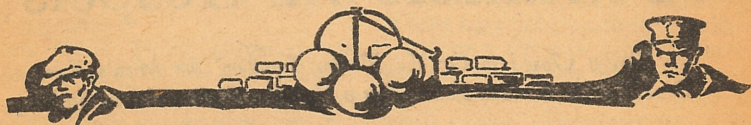
tered his voice. "Two packed identically, and the third—well, possibly containing saccharin, with a cork attachment in case it should fall overboard."

He turned to the owner of the motor boat.

"I think, sir, we shall have to search your boat for the third bag, if you don't mind? Haven't you—by sheer mistake, of course—returned the wrong one?"

They found the third bag, sodden, stowed under a seat—the bag of saccharin that J. D. D. had brought on board with him, that the young man had exchanged on the lower deck for bag No. 2, and that the owner of the motor boat had exchanged in his boat for bag No. 3.

And, in due course, they also found J. D. D., who admitted handsomely that he knew when he was beaten, and that he would have to try something different next time—when he and his friends came out of prison.



## Midget Arrested as Bandit

**A** MIDGET thirty-eight inches tall was recently arrested charged with assault and battery.

The midget gave his name as Max Sussar, twenty. He was arrested in Coney Island, New York, two hours after Ali Afgudineali, a Hindu night watchman on the boardwalk reported that he had been beaten and robbed by three men. One, he said, was a midget.

They took Max to jail in the patrol wagon. Detective Reilly lifted him out of the machine, tucked him under his arm, and took him in to the captain, who was inspecting his morning line-up.

"Assault and battery, captain," said the detective, setting Max down.

"Where? Who?" the captain inquired.

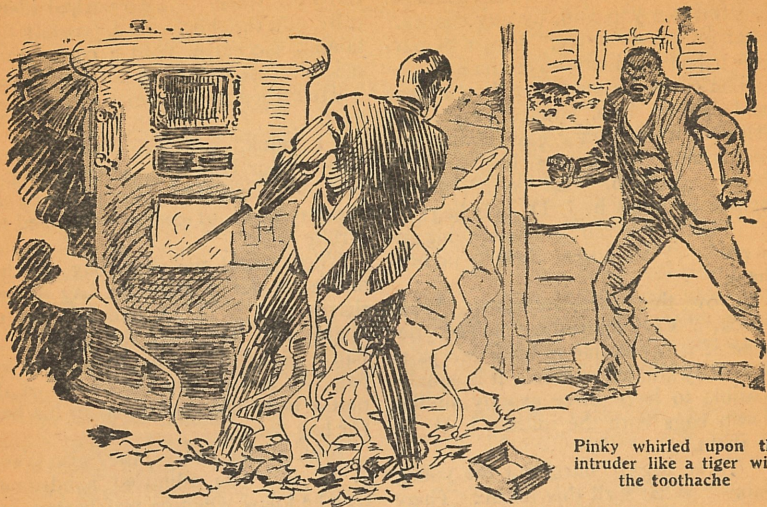
Max had disappeared. Detectives searched every corner of the room. It looked as if the little fellow had given them the slip until some one thought to peek under a chair.

There sat Max, grinning.

"I didn't blackjack that guy," the midget said later to the captain; "I'd need a stepladder."

The police discovered it was all a mistake. Max was released.





Pinky whirled upon the intruder like a tiger with the toothache

# A Gamble in Gospels

*As Pinky Closed in On the Fleeing Fugitive, the Man's Eyes Blazed With Sudden Fear—For a Priceless Relic Was at Stake*

By Allen Saunders

PINKY BOYLE craned his thick neck and stared with startled eyes at the high French windows.

"Open!" he whispered to himself. Name of a cross-eyed canary, had he arrived too late? Were two weeks of painstaking preparation to go blooey just because some other can-opener had spotted the same box, learned of its rich filling and beaten him to the goods?

Pinky reached into his coat pocket and shifted the weight of his "tooth-puller," a sturdy, triangle-shaped little instrument which would extract the combination of the safe behind those sandstone walls as easily and as quietly as a farm wife would pull up a radish.

As he peered through the darkness at the narrow slot between the half-closed panels, Pinky heard a quick succession of approaching footsteps. He darted off the flagstone terrace and dropped behind the thickest clump of boxwood trees, a darker blot in the soft shadow.

Hardly had he gathered his knees under him in readiness for a spring when the windows swung open with a complaining squeak.

"Blunderin' amatoor!" Pinky commented scornfully.

Further professional criticism was snuffed out by the appearance of the intruder. Pinky had a glimpse of a tall figure with highly polished shoes



which flickered in the moonlight as they hurried across the terrace.

At the foot of the short flight of steps the man bent low, clutched something to his breast and broke into a swift run toward the grove which masked the mansion from the eyes of persons on the highway, a quarter of a mile away.

Pinky made a quick decision. In fact, by the time his mind was completely made up he found himself nearing the wood, a scant dozen paces behind the fleeing runner.

At the edge of the dark shadow thrown by the trees the man heard Pinky's thudding sneakers and turned to glance over his shoulder. The face was swathed in a silk muffler, but the eyes blazed with sudden fear.

In that split second of pause Pinky leaped. His stubby, but steel-tendoned hands clamped on the fugitive's shoulders and his knee drove like a battering ram into the small of the man's back. The runner fell to the grass with a grunt.

But, while Pinky possessed unlimited nerve, he had no knowledge of the fine points of wrestling. And when the tangle of threshing arms and legs resolved itself he found, much to his surprise and discomfiture, that he was underneath, arms pinioned, legs helpless.

"Well, this ain't cricket," wheezed Pinky, "but I hate to roon me Sunday coat." And he sank his teeth into the nearest wrist of his opponent.

With a haste that was entirely natural, the man on his chest released an arm.

That was all Pinky needed. He jerked the iron combination-puller from his pocket and thrust viciously with it at the other's jaw. The blow landed, and the man who had been so tactless as to interrupt Pinky's professional duties slumped to the ground moaning.

Out in the moonlight lay the package he had been hugging so affectionately.

It was a flat fiber case, slightly larger than a cigar box. Pinky stuffed it under his coat, gave a parting glance at the inert form of his erstwhile opponent and trotted out to the road.

Not until he reached Mother Branigan's modest boarding and rooming house did Pinky seek an opportunity to examine his booty. Safe in his tiny room, however, with shades closely drawn and the light of a hissing gas jet flickering over the drab walls, he pulled off his coat and shirt and turned to the prize.

It was but the work of a moment to undo the tie-strings and slip the inner section of the box from its cover. On the soiled coverlet of his bed Pinky dumped the contents.

They were not pleasing, to eyes expecting the twinkle of jewels or the satisfying yellow and green of bank notes. On the frowsy quilt lay a Bible. Of all things to steal—a Bible!

Nor was it an art object which might at least have been worth the trouble of a trip to a fence or a pawnshop. It was old, so old that its much-mended pages were falling away from the cheap covers. The paper was yellow and brittle. The type, Pinky decided, was the worst that had ever seen a press.

However, a lot of old bunnies had the habit of hiding money and valuable papers in the binding and between the leaves of books. Perhaps the haul was not so bootless after all.

With shaking fingers Pinky leafed clumsily through the volume, page by page. He even ran a knife blade between the layers of the cover. But he found not even so much as a postage stamp or a cigar store coupon.

"Wotta mess!" growled Pinky, flinging the book into the farthest corner of his quarters and slumping on the bed. "Tumblin' a ghee fer a book I could get in any hotel room! If I don't watch meself, first thing I know, I'll be jugged fer stealin' garden seed!



Oh, well, to-morrow's another day."

And, rolling himself in a swirl of frayed bedclothing, Pinky was soon rattling the window panes with the philosophical snore of a fighter whose head is battered but unbowed.

## II

**W**HEN the sun of high noon filtered through the numerous cracks in the shades Pinky struggled to a sitting position and dug fists into his eyes.

Then he clattered down the uncarpeted stairway and sought the kitchen, where he found the home edition of the *Daily News*, in its accustomed place on the cabinet, pages hopelessly mixed, as Mother Brannigan usually left it.

Having salvaged the first page, Pinky scanned it for references to his night's exploit. Probably would he all dressed up under a box head by some would-be journalistic wit, he thought, painfully recalling his disgusting efforts, all to obtain a second-hand book.

But what were these heavy black headlines that screamed at him from a prominent position?

### NOTED BIBLIOPHILE IS PROWLER VICTIM

"Humph!" grunted Pinky. "Why ring in the old gaffer's religion?"

Then his eyes dropped to the second bank of the headline, and as he read and comprehended the meaning of the dancing letters before him Pinky's jaw dropped like the lid of a suitcase. What was this?

**Aaron Van Osdol, Wealthy Book Collector,  
Robbed of Priceless Tyndale Bible  
VALUED AT MORE THAN \$30,000**

"Gibberin' Gideons!" yelled Pinky, whose experience with book collectors had been limited to the politely insistent men who called on his sister for installations on a set of "Great Women of History." "Wotta break!"

Avidly now he read the details of the story. The loss had been discovered by Mr. Van Osdol's secretary, Eric Sorn, he learned. The book was the gem of the old collector's possessions, far outranking in intrinsic value his famous examples of the work of early Florentine goldsmiths — which, incidentally, had been the chief attraction of the job as far as Pinky was concerned.

And then, at the end of the story, as if added at the last moment before the paper went to press, was a sentence which glowed with warm interest for the man in the kitchen chair.

"Mr. Van Osdol told Police Chief Freed Tuesday he would pay an unconditional reward of three thousand dollars for the return of the volume, with no questions asked."

Pinky wasted no time in rereading. Three steps at a time he flew to his room. There he found Mother Brannigan pawing the covers of his bed into a semblance of order and strewing ashes from her clay pipe over the already littered room.

The housebreaker crowded past her to the corner where he had hurled the Bible eight hours before. He stared aghast at the dust-filmed, painted floor. The book was gone!

To the amazement of the old landlady, he flew into a mild panic, moving furniture, stripping rag rugs from the floor, upsetting the rickety stand-table in his desperate search.

"What in the name o' sin?" demanded Mother Brannigan.

"That book! That old Bible!" shouted Pinky, pausing in his devastating quest and spreading his short arms helplessly.

"Where in the—"

"Keep yer shirt on, sonny," the old landlady interrupted placidly. "I give the thing to Pete to burn along with the rest of the papers. I been at him for a week to touch a match to that lousy junk in the furnace. But you know how he is, always moonin'



around, singin' his heathen songs and makin' a monkey—"

She was talking to four walls. Pinky was already on the first floor, yanking at the knob of the cellar door.

Pete, black factotem of the Brannigan establishment, was not in the basement. But from the rusted wreck of a furnace there came ominous, crackling sounds. Pinky wrenched open the firebox door and felt dismay tearing at his vitals, for the interior of the furnace was a cheery mass of flame.

A long, hooked poker leaned against the coal bin. His perpetually blushing cheeks streaked with cold perspiration, Pinky seized the rod and began feverish efforts to rake out the contents of the firebox.

For what seemed hours longer than the ten minutes actually consumed he toiled. The floor around him was littered with smoking debris—charred berry boxes, an old black stocking, a sack of potato peelings, a heap of partially consumed newspapers—but not even a page of the precious book did he find. He poked in the thick bed of ashes that remained in the furnace, but uncovered nothing.

"Thirty grand gone up in smoke! Holy smoke!" Pinky leaned on the poker and stared with dead eyes into the sooty interior of the furnace.

An angry exclamation broke into his bitter reverie.

"How come y' all mess up my cellar? Mis' Brannigan tol' me to burn up dat stuff an'—"

Pinky whirled like a tiger with the toothache. He threw himself upon the negro with a howl of rage.

"You jug-headed scavenger!" he bellowed, shaking the surprised Pete like an empty suit. "You've burned up a sweet little fortune in that damned can. Why in—"

"Lissen—I says lissen, white folks. Ef I burnt money up in that fire I *needs* to be kicked, an' ef I burned anything that was worth money I *needs* to

have my haid examined. Don' tell me y' all can get real money out of them old greasy boxes and sacks."

Pinky stopped shaking the helpless negro long enough to put a question.

"But the old Bible, did you see it?"

"Laws, yes, Mr. Pink, 'deed I did see it. An' I said to myse'f, 'Won't no good come o' eradicatin' the Holy Writ. Bad luck sure gonna squat around dis house effen I burnt that Good Book.'"

"Well, why in the name of Simon Legree did you do it?"

"Ain't I tryin' to tell y' all I didn't do it!"

Pinky's heart jumped in his throat. He seized the negro's frayed coat lapels again and demanded:

"Tell me right now, in little short words, where in the hell you put that book!"

Pete, thoroughly frightened, pulled himself out of the grasp of the burglar and led the way into a basement room that once had served for the storage of canned fruit.

Here, surrounded by broken furniture, he had lived years of endless monotony, punctuated only by Sunday night trips to a down town street corner where he preached to grinning pedestrians from a gutter pulpit.

Pinky swept with a glass the sordid hold.

The Bible was not in sight.

"Well, trot it out, Uncle Tom," he snapped. "Trot it out!"

Pete shuffled across his little retreat to a faded brown Prince Albert coat, carefully draped over a barrel-stave hanger. He dug into a capacious pocket, and Pinky sighed audibly as he saw him draw out the age-embrowned volume and extend it with a reverent gesture.

Weak with relief, Pinky softened. "Buy y'self a nice new prayer primer," he suggested, fumbling a dollar bill from his fob pocket. And he swelled with self-satisfaction as he mounted the steps, the loud and fervent thanks



of the negro janitor-preacher ringing in his ears.

## III

BACK in his room, with the precious book as a desk, Pinky Boyle scowled and worried a pencil, sweating with the effort of composing a note to old Van Osdol.

The floor was littered with cigarette butts and unsuccessful starts, but Pinky glowed with pride at the final product. It was cleverly anonymous, he decided, and made consummation of the exchange of banknotes for Bible easy and safe.

He had written:

DEAR SIR: I found your Bibel out on the ground where somebody dropped it. If you bring the 3 grand in small bills to the north east corner of the Great Lakes warehouse at Spring street and grand avenue tonight (Wensday) at 11 P.M. you can have it. Don't try any funny business as I'd hate to see you get hurt.

A BIBLIOFINDER.

The letter finished and sealed in a reasonably clean envelope, the writer pocketed it and strolled down Huron Street past the central station of the telegraph company. A messenger boy who was wheeling his bicycle into a parking rack agreed to carry the letter, for a consideration.

"I'm just off duty," he explained. "I'll take it on my way home."

"You'll take it right now," corrected Pinky, "and I'll follow ya to see that it gets there without being side-tracked at the ball park."

And follow he did, to the corner of the Van Osdol estate, a mighty long and tiresome walk. He sauntered past the entrance gates in time to see the boy ringing the bell at the front door of the old connoisseur's mansion, and paused long enough to catch a distant view of the delivery of the letter into the hands of a tall servant.

Satisfied that his plans had gone through so far without a hitch, Pinky

took a street car home and went to bed, where he dreamed he had found the key to the government mint, wrapped up in a Sunday school leaflet.

It was dark in the stuffy little room when Pinky awoke. He leaped from his bed, found a match and looked at his watch. Ten fifteen!

With a mental vow to purchase an alarm clock with a part of the three thousand dollars he expected to bring back within an hour or so, Pinky threw on what garments he had taken off, took the Tyndale Bible from its place of concealment in his pillowcase, and hurriedly left the house.

Too risky, hiring a taxicab so near the "scatter," he decided, and quickened his pace. The Great Lakes warehouse was diagonally across the city, however, and as soon as he left his own quarter of town he hailed a cruising cab and gave the driver the name of a street intersection six squares from his actual destination.

Arriving there he paid off the driver and dismissed the cab with a reference to "a date here with a swell broad."

As he drew near the designated corner of the warehouse he strained his eyes for the sight of an old man with a satchel or bundle.

When he reached the corner of the towering, ugly building and found the spot deserted his heart turned a hand-spring. When he looked at his watch and saw it was five minutes past eleven o'clock his disappointment soured to despair.

For ten minutes he stood there, tapping the pavement with restless feet and lighting one cigarette on the stub of another. Then his brow cleared as he saw a taxicab turn the corner and slow up at the curb. A tall, stooped figure got out and the cab drove away.

Pinky noted with mild curiosity that, despite the fact that the night was warm, even uncomfortably so, the man wore a long, dark topcoat. He observed also that the newcomer crossed



carefully to the shadow of the warehouse before approaching him. But Pinky was accustomed to people who acted "screwy," as he termed it, in his presence.

He addressed the man abruptly and without ceremony.

"Where's the oday?"

Evidently understanding the underworld term for money the man drew a thick bundle from beneath his coat. As he did so Pinky noticed that he was painfully careful not to disturb the high coat-collar which masked his features.

"Open the bundle," ordered Pinky.

The man unwrapped the package and displayed a half dozen packets of bank notes. He flipped the ends of the bundles to show that they were all currency.

Still Pinky made no move to turn over the Bible.

"The stuff might be queer," he said cautiously. "Lemme see one of 'em."

Examination of the proffered bill, however, proved satisfactory, and the exchange of the old book for the bundles of money was made without further parley.

As Pinky started stuffing the bills into his pockets, watching the retreating form of the man with the book, he felt suddenly the prod of something rodlike and menacing, something very meaningful.

He had felt that particular thrust too often not to recognize it. He raised his hands and whirled to face two husky individuals who smiled mockingly as they took from his hands the remaining bills and, at the direction of the now returned payer of the "reward," sought in his pockets the crisp packages.

The stoop had disappeared from the tall man's posture, but he was careful to remain in the shadow. Pinky spat scornfully at him.

"Ya dirty two-timer," he growled. "You jus' wait— I'll learn ya to rat on me!"

The man in the topcoat said nothing, contenting himself with careful supervision of the recovery of the bank notes.

"We're short a packet," one of the go-high artists confessed anxiously.

Without replying, the tall man stepped to Pinky's side and thrust his slender hands beneath the furious burglar's coat and vest.

In doing so he moved out of the shadow and, due to his slightly strained position, the high coat-collar drew away from his face.

Pinky gasped. Across the lower portion of the cheek nearest him was a livid, V-shaped bruise. It was the mark left by Pinky's desperately driven come-on when he had knocked the man out on the Van Osdol lawn the night before.

#### IV

FOR many minutes after the three men had backed away behind leveled automatics and entered their taxicab Pinky stood on the corner and pondered bitterly.

There was something about this whole affair that should click and didn't. That tall, stooped figure and that face with the V-shaped bruise on it seemed, somehow, more familiar than one fleeting and excited glimpse should warrant.

At length he gave the whole problem up as insoluble and started dragging himself disgustedly toward a more populous section of town. After a half hour's walk he crossed a line of car tracks and boarded the first rattling conveyance that came by.

While the car lurched its way toward the down town arc of the belt line Pinky sat hunched in his seat and did some highly intensive mental drill. He reviewed and considered from all angles the incidents that had happened in the past twenty-two hours.

Suddenly he had a cyclonic impulse. He jabbed at the signal button and leaped from the car before the door



had slid completely open. At the next corner he took a cross-town suburban line past Edgewater drive.

He got off the car a hundred yards or so from the stone gate-posts and stood in the middle of the roadway, staring irresolutely at the lights in the windows of the keeper's lodge. As he paused there a careening taxicab whirled around the corner and forced Pinky to leap for his life.

The car did not strike him. But he caught a glimpse of the occupants and an idea did. Everything, in the briefest flash, was clear to him.

The cab paused at the gatekeeper's lodge, passed the scrutiny, evidently, of the guardian, and shot on up the drive to the stone dwelling of the old millionaire.

Pinky waited until it had dropped its passenger and returned. As it went through the gate Pinky darted through on the opposite side and trotted up the driveway.

For four lagging minutes after he rang the doorbell there was no response. Then the door opened gently and a tall, immaculate figure stood silhouetted in the block of light. Like a wolfhound, Pinky cleared the threshold in one leap and his driving body carried the other man to the floor with a breath-taking impact.

The struggle was brief and bitter. At the end of twenty minutes of brutal scuffling Pinky sat atop his opponent's chest, the light of triumph on his features. Lack of breath prevented any interchange of pleasantries and the two combatants glared at each other in silence.

"What seems to be the difficulty, gentlemen?"

The inquiry was in a tone of cool unconcern. Pinky jerked his head to face the speaker, a slender, white-haired old man in dinner clothes who twirled a pince-nez on a ribbon as he stood gazing down at the men on the floor of the hall.

From newspaper photos Pinky rec-

ognized Aaron Van Osdol. Before he could frame a reply to the old man's question the man beneath him found voice to splutter:

"Call the police! This rascal has—"

"Never mind, Mr. Sorn," came the response in suave tones. "I have had officers in the house since early this evening, awaiting just such an emergency. And now, my unexpected visitor, what have you to say in explanation for this surprising method of entering my home?"

"Aplenty," replied Pinky grimly. "This is the ringer that lifted yer old Bible and done me out of a reward after I took it away from him. There's the mark on his face that I gave him last night when I caught him sneakin' off yer premises."

"Why, you foul, lying thief!" cried Sorn. "Tell the truth. Tell Mr. Van Osdol that you—"

Pinky's fingers stopped the instructions with an effective grip on the speaker's throat.

Sorn struggled and yawned in terror.

"Here, here!" insisted Van Osdol. "Come into the library and have seats. Let's discuss this more or less like gentlemen." And he lifted Pinky gently by the arm and stood aside while the sweating, puffing men filed into the adjoining room.

Before they could seat themselves, however, the doorbell jangled noisily. Van Osdol nodded to his secretary, who was adjusting his disordered clothing.

"Answer it, please."

Sorn left the room and Pinky stood awkwardly seeking to dispose of his beefy hands. The old collector seated himself and was on the point of inviting Pinky to do likewise when the sound of voices, raised high in anger, echoed in the hall outside.

They caught words, vehement but cautious, in the refined accents of Van Osdol's secretary.

"Shut up—yelling like an imbecile—want to ruin us both?"



The reply, in the querulous tone of an irate old man, cut in shrilly.

"But it's a fake, I tell you, a cheap counterfeit! I want my five thousand dollars back!"

"For God's sake, come outside," the listeners heard Sorn pleading. The click of the door latch stirred Van Osdol into action and he stepped briskly out into the hall, followed by the bewildered Pinky.

Sorn was in the act of pushing his visitor through the open door. The caller, a shabbily dressed old man with weazened features and sharp falcon's eyes, paled when he saw Van Osdol.

"You hardly expected me to be receiving guests at this hour, perhaps," the old collector said mildly. "I have visited your shop occasionally, Mr. Fleet, and occasionally bought some little novelty. It's interesting to learn that you have been reciprocating."

Sorn gestured toward the door and made as if to hustle his visitor outside.

"Don't hasten away, gentlemen," Van Osdol interrupted. "There are some public servants outside who will escort you to the nearest police station when you are ready to go."

Then, disregarding their discomfiture, he went on evenly:

"It's a shame you went to such a lot of bother about the Bible. As you have shrewdly surmised, Fleet, it was only a cheap facsimile of the sort displayed in small museums. I placed

it in my safe several days ago when I began to grow suspicious of Sorn's interest in the value of the original."

Still holding the center of the scene, the urbane old man turned to Pinky.

"Your assistance and interest in this affair have been most laudable," he said smilingly. "Let us return to the library and have a bit of refreshment. Perhaps you'd like to see the real Tynedale Bible? It's a handsome bit of antique craftsmanship."

Pinky nodded dazedly and preceded the old man through the high arched door.

Van Osdol rubbed his hands with anticipation as he minced across to a high wall safe beside the fireplace. He spun the knob carefully, smiling to himself.

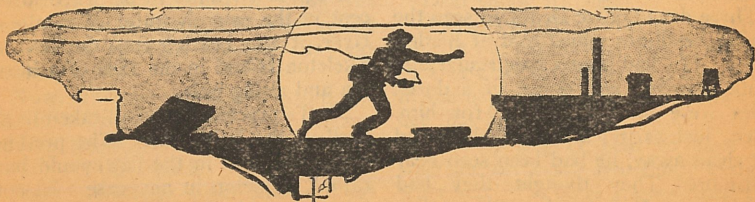
Pinky looked on, also smiling.

The old collector hesitated as the door swung open.

"I'll have my man bring us a sip and a bite," he suggested. "You must curb your impatience to see the book for another moment." He stepped to a silken tassel a few feet away and jerked it.

As his host paused and cocked his head, listening for the echo of the bell Pinky busied himself with an effort of concentration.

"Left two, right three, left eleven, right to stop and open," he muttered swiftly. "Now I wonder if I can remember that when I get out o' here!"



A prison escape and a soft-boiled yegg bring a swift surprise in "Double Cross," by Don Thompson, author of "Blackhand," in next week's issue.



# The Killer of Skeleton Isle

*The Slayer's Ruse Fooled Man-Sense,  
But Mobjack the Dog Had a Nose  
that Knew Some things They Didn't*

By Nelson Robins

**S**KELETON ISLAND looked forbiddingly dark before him as Beverley Deal, pushing his straining and bounding Sea Gull into a wicked sea on the Chesapeake, rounded Lone Point. On other nights he had looked at the island with a friendly feeling that it was one more landmark on the long way home. To-night there was a difference. Somewhere inside the sinister shadow of the island, ringed with foam as the gale-driven waves broke on its beach, Johnny Slade crouched—Slade, dangerous as a rattlesnake, ready to kill rather than be taken back to the electric chair.

Three days before Deal had seen the flaring headlines which told of Slade's crime. His had been a spectacular and brutal murder, and police of a dozen cities were on the lookout for him. Then, just as it was conceded he had got clean away, he had been seen near Baltimore. They thought they had him cornered, but when the police closed in he had slipped away, and the theft of a speedboat from a private float below the Patapsco Yacht Club



**A feeling that something was wrong oppressed him. He called again**

explained how he had escaped.

Late that afternoon Deal, taking two particularly ugly poachers he had captured on private oyster beds across the bay where secure cells awaited them, had seen just such a speed boat. Though too fragile to be practical except in the smooth water of a lake or river, it was beating into the cove of Skeleton Island in the face of a heavy sea and rising gale.

Deal's practiced eye had taken in the peril of the light craft. The presence of such a boat in the bay would have raised suspicion in any case. In conjunction with the escape of Johnny Slade and the coming gale it was almost imperative that he inquire as to the nature of its business.



Through his binoculars he saw a figure in the cockpit bailing frantically to keep the water below the danger point. At first it looked as if the speed boat would continue down the bay, but after almost passing the entrance to the cove the man aboard swung around, and, still bailing, passed into the shelter of the narrow spit which formed the northern bar of the little harbor.

Deal's first impulse was to follow the craft into the cove and find out its business. If the man aboard was Johnny Slade, he would take him also to the secure cells ashore.

But the two poachers were on his hands. He could not leave them on the boat; they knew too much about boats and the bay. They would have the Sea Gull outside before he had gone a hundred yards, leaving him afoot on the island. Certainly he could not take them with him to capture Slade, if, as he was sure, it was Slade in that boat.

It was apparent, too, that the gale would continue for hours, and the man aboard the speed boat would not soon forget the frantic bailing by which he had kept his craft afloat. He knew by this time that his boat could not cope with the heavy seas of the bay. He would stick to solid ground until the wind died down, Deal was sure of that.

It would take only an hour or two to deliver his prisoners. Then he could report the presence of the man, who might be Slade, and it was the sheriff's job to get him. Deal, naturally, would lead them to where the boat landed, and would stick around until the thing was over, but he would not be responsible after Coakley took charge. It was Coakley's job.

Now, with the sheriff and two deputies in a launch behind him, he was leading the way to the only sheltered harbor on the island.

Some distance from shore Deal throttled down his engine to let the larger launch come up with him. Mobjack, his big Chesapeake Bay retriever—his constant companion, whom he

jokingly called the "crew" of the Sea Gull—got up from his bed of tarpaulin in the spray-drenched cockpit, looked over the tumbling water and whined.

Deal, with eyes on the boat behind, took one hand from the kicking wheel and laid it on Mobjack's head. The dog whined no more but stood silently watching the nearing lights.

The larger boat ran alongside the Sea Gull in the smooth water behind the narrow split which formed the northern shore of the cove.

"I thought it'd be best," Deal shouted against the wind, "to land here and beat down the island. If it was Slade he's probably here still. I don't think he'll want to tackle the bay again in that little boat until it's pretty calm. He came mighty near not making land when he did."

Sheriff Coakley waved a hand toward shore in reply and the boats nosed into the sandy beach.

As Deal, followed by Mobjack, jumped ashore the sheriff, tall, gangling and adequate, with a shotgun in his hand and a heavy automatic in the holster on his hip, strode over.

"I can't ask you to do any more for us, Deal," he said. "You Pearl Patrol men have enough to do as it is, what with oyster pirates running wild and poachers and hunters stealing out on you all the time. Your duties are with the lawbreakers on the bay, not with fugitives like Slade. I thank you for what you've already done, but I can't ask you to do any more."

Deal shook his head.

"That's all right, sheriff. Maybe it isn't in the regulations, but I've orders to look after any violations of the law in the bay, and I guess this comes under that head."

"I'd be mighty glad to have you with me on a job like this," Coakley answered. "You're a good man in a jam. But I want to make it clear that I'm not demanding it. It's really nobody's job but mine."

"That'll be all right," Deal an-



swered. "I've come this far and I guess I might just as well stick. But you're wrong about its being your job—a man's job."

Coakley looked at him curiously.

"Not a man's job?" he asked. "Why in hell ain't it a man's job, with that gunman in there with a pistol ready to cut loose at the first thing that moves? Why, he wouldn't hesitate to kill all of us if he got the chance. You bet he's armed, and he knows if he's taken back he'll go to the electric chair. Not a man's job? You're crazy. It's a hell of a big man's job!"

Deal grinned.

"You don't get me, sheriff. It isn't a man's job because we've something better than a man to do it."

He pointed to Mobjack.

A wide grin overspread Coakley's thin face.

"Gosh!" he ejaculated. "And I never thought of him. For a fact, I was so busy hating to go into that brush after Slade that I couldn't think of anything else. Why, he'll tree him like a coon."

"I expect he will." Deal was grave now. "But I don't want Mobjack hurt." His hand dropped down to the great head of the dog. "I wouldn't have him hurt for twenty men like Slade. We've got to keep right behind him and not give Slade the chance to kill him."

The sheriff's face hardened.

"I'll be as close behind him as these old legs will take me," he promised. "And they ain't so dog-goned old at that." "All right," Deal replied. "There'll be at least two of us right behind him. I can hold him close."

"And remember this," Coakley was speaking to his deputies, too. "This man's a killer. He knows if he goes back he'll get the chair. So don't give him a chance. They're orders if I'm in charge here."

He looked at Deal.

"You're in charge, sheriff. I'm a buck private when you're along."

Deal looked down the island and across the cove to where the two protecting spits forming the harbor made it narrowest at the entrance. The darkness was so black that he saw nothing, but so familiar was he with the terrain that he could see it all in his mind's eye: the two horns of brush-covered land which protected the little bay from the rough seas outside, the sandy beach, somewhere along which the speed boat was beached, the long, narrow, wooded island, covered with low blackberry bushes and brambles out of which rose great pine trees.

The land, except for the strip of beach, was covered with a tangle of brush in which fallen trees threw up great barriers of roots and dead branches. A man might hide a long time in that tangle before another man found him. But a dog was different.

"Any particular plan?" he asked Coakley.

"Nope, just to go in and get him. What do you think of it?"

"May be more to it than that," said Deal, still thinking of the danger in the job for Mobjack. "If it wasn't for the tide I'd say wait until morning. But tide'll be low long before daylight and then he can wade over to the mainland. I don't know whether he knows he can do it or not, but he can, and he might know. Water's not more than four feet deep at the most."

"Once across he can go where he pleases. There's the highway with automobiles and trucks passing all the time and there's the railroad a little further on where he could catch a freight car. He'd be awfully hard to catch once he got across."

The sheriff nodded.

"We can't take a chance with a fella like that," he agreed.

"You're taking a chance any way you go about it," Deal answered. "If Slade gets a shot at you he'll pot you sure. One more murder won't make any difference to him. He's already qualified for the chair."



"He'll not get me if I see him first," Coakley said. "I'm not going to ask him to give up but once and then I'm going to yell it. Then, if he doesn't give up, I shoot at anything that looks like a murderer."

"You've got to have something to shoot at first," Deal answered. "And he can see as well as you can. He knows we're here now and if he weren't a fugitive he'd probably have come around already, or at least have given a call. He's probably hiding in a big stump hole right now, ready to shoot as soon as he knows where we are."

"Well, there's the dog," Coakley pointed to Mobjack.

"Yep, Mobjack'll find him all right, but it's going to be something of a job at that. Let's get at it, though."

"O. K. with me."

The sheriff turned to his deputies who, a little nervous, were standing close together at the prow of the launch.

"Begg, you stay here with the boats, and if Slade comes around grab him or kill him. I don't care which. If you hear any kind of noise turn the searchlight on it—but don't turn it on us. We'll go down the beach and let Mobjack pick up the trail. Johnson'll come with Deal and myself."

Johnson, carrying, as Coakley did, a shot gun and a heavy pistol in a holster on his hip, came over. His nervousness vanished at the prospect of action and there was no hesitation in his response to the sheriff's order. Begg climbed into the launch and stood near the searchlight, holding his shotgun in readiness for instant action.

"All ready?" Coakley asked.

Deal nodded.

"All right," he answered. "Hie on, Mobjack."

The dog gave a quick bark.

"Find him, boy. Find him," Deal urged. "Follow as close as you can," he called to the others. "We'll never know when he'll pick up the trail. Steady, Mobjack. Come back—"

He was interrupted by the roar of a powerful, high speed engine on the far side of the cove. Deal could see the flame from the exhaust and recognized the many-cylindere engine in the boat he had seen come into Skeleton Island that afternoon. The flame, which was all that could be seen of the boat, was tearing like a meteor toward open water.

"Good God!" Coakley cried in amazement. "He's going to run for it in that shell. Get back to the launch."

Deal was already climbing aboard the Sea Gull. He had shoved off as he came aboard and when he landed in the cockpit immediately jerked the engine over, throwing the wheel hard over as soon as the engine started.

"I've got the faster boat," he called to Coakley, "and I'll go ahead and catch him if I can. You follow on as fast as you can."

"Hey—wait a moment," Coakley called back. "You've left your dog."

Deal hesitated. He could hear Mobjack barking some distance away. To stop for him would give the speed boat too long a lead.

"I'll come back for him," he called. "He'll wait."

When the Sea Gull had swung around and was headed for the bay Deal opened the throttle wide and set sail in pursuit of the flaming exhaust which glowed like a firefly, already some distance out. He was sure the speed boat, although it might turn out tremendous speed in smooth water, could not outfoot the Sea Gull in the rough seas of the open bay. The flame of the exhaust was a quarter of a mile away by now, but he could see, as it slewed back and forth and up and down, that it was making heavy weather of it.

The little shell was not built for such water and his experience told him that if she ever got in the trough of the waves, as they were now running, the first sea that struck her broadside



would fill her full of water. And it would take a clever helmsman to keep her on her course.

Then the flame disappeared. Deal switched on his searchlight. The engine might have stalled or Slade might have turned around, giving up the wild project when he learned how perilous it was. The beam of light showed nothing but tumbling water, rolling white caps and flying spray.

He kept the Sea Gull going ahead until he came to the spot where, he estimated, the speed boat exhaust had ceased. The launch with its searchlight came up alongside, as near as was safe.

Deal's searchlight, swinging back and forth over the surging water, revealed a black square object. He held the light.

"There's a cushion," he called to Coakley.

The sheriff's light swung around and revealed a white ring.

"Life preserver here," he answered. "And a floor grating," as that came into view.

Both searchlights then swept the water in the hope of seeing a black blot on the water which would be Slade, swimming for his life, but no such object was revealed.

"Looks like he went right down," the sheriff called. "Probably couldn't swim. Took a damned long chance in that cockle shell. I didn't think she'd be able to live in this sea, running at full speed."

Deal nodded as Coakley's searchlight swept over the Sea Gull. Probably lots better to die this way than to go to the electric chair. Drowning wasn't a bad death, after all, if a fellow had to die. Better have it over with than to go through a long trial and then suffer months in the death house.

He veered his boat over to where the launch was rolling in the seaway.

"Looks like that's about all there is to it," he called to the sheriff. "Went right down with the boat probably.

Body won't come up for weeks."

Coakley agreed.

"Man'd have to be a channel swimmer to live long in that sea," he answered. "Don't seem to have put up much of a fight. If he'd caught that cushion or life preserver we'd have picked him up, but that wouldn't have helped him much. Saves the State money, anyhow. No use hanging around in this wind. Let's go."

"All right," Deal replied. "Got to go back and get Mobjack."

"Want us to wait for you?" the sheriff queried.

"Nope—I'll be along in a little while. Won't take me a minute to pick him up. I'll catch you before you get to Lone Point, if I'm lucky."

Coakley waved a hand in farewell and turned the nose of the launch toward the northwest, where the Lone Point Beacon blinked a friendly eye of light for those homeward bound. Deal swung the Sea Gull off at an angle to the course of the launch, toward where Skeleton Island lay, dark and forbidding still.

The stern light of the launch was still in sight when the Sea Gull, her cockpit half flooded, nosed into the smooth water of the cove. Far up the beach he could hear Mobjack barking, and the sound of it brought him up tense.

It was not Mobjack's usual welcoming bark with which he greeted his master, but a sharp raucous, angry succession of yelps.

Deal eased the boat close into shore and followed the line of beach. His flash light showed the strip of sand and the underbrush beyond, but nothing living. The dog's bark sounded no nearer, but kept well up the beach, beyond the power of the light. He called:

"Mobjack! Here, Mobjack."

Still the barking continued. Why didn't the dog come. He could swim out to the launch in a minute, and Deal could be on his way. Surely Mobjack



wouldn't stop to tree a coon or a 'possum when his master called.

Suddenly the barking stopped. Mobjack must be coming now. Presently he would trot into the searchlight's glare and shamefacedly, but with wagging tail, would look at the boat for a moment and then swim out.

Deal waited for a minute, plenty of time for the dog to get there, but no dog appeared. He was puzzled. An uncomfortable feeling that something was wrong oppressed him. He called again. The strip of sandy beach slipped slowly past as the Sea Gull, throttled down low, rode up the cove.

Then the light showed something which made Deal catch his breath. He cut off the engine and swung the boat ashore with a jerk of the wheel. Before she grounded he leaped from the bow into a foot of water, in desperate eagerness to get his dog.

Mobjack, with legs outflung, as they had been when he sprang, and fangs bared, lay like the statue of some fighting animal. His is not the breed to die without a battle, and he was in the midst of fighting when he was struck down.

The searchlight showed a large lump, cut to the bone, on one side of the great forehead. It had been a powerful blow with a deadly weapon which had brought him down.

Deal's hand went to the great head and his fingers touched the wound, then went down the mighty shoulders and over the roughcoated side. There was no movement that he could discern. He was so shocked by the thing, so occupied with the idea that Mobjack would travel with him no more, that his "crew" was gone, there was no room for other thought.

Suddenly, as if brought up on the gale which swept the island, a fury of rage possessed him.

Who had done this? There was nothing on the island which could kill Mobjack. He couldn't have run into anything to inflict such a wound. There

wasn't a rock on the island, and, even if it were possible that he could have run into a tree, it would have inflicted no such wound. Who had done it?

Close upon the heels of the question came an answer. And in almost instantaneous confirmation of that answer's accuracy, a pistol cracked behind him and a bullet, whistling by his ear, plumped into the sand in front of him.

Instinctively, Deal leaped and crashed into the underbrush along the shoreward edge of the beach. As he leaped the pistol cracked again.

He floundered deeper into the underbrush, desperately trying to get away from that pistol until he could plan action.

Instinctively he had reached for his automatic when he first leaped and swore to himself when he remembered having unbuckled his belt and laid it in his bunk as he returned to Skeleton Island.

Behind him at first he heard a crash of undergrowth, but that ceased after a little. He stopped beside a big pine tree to catch his breath—and think it over.

It was all as plain as day now, plainer. Why Mobjack had failed to follow him into the Sea Gull. How Mobjack had been struck down. Where those shots came from.

Mobjack had spoiled a ruse by which Slade had almost become a free man. The dog had known that Slade was still on the island, after the speedboat left. He had waited for the Sea Gull's return before giving tongue. And then Slade, with a lucky blow, had stopped him in midair as he leaped.

Instead of leaving the island in the speedboat, Slade had lashed the wheel so that she would hold her course, started the engine full speed, pointed it for the open bay and let it go on its way to destruction. He figured that those who hunted him on the island might believe he was aboard the speedboat. It was a long chance, but it might work, and Slade took the long



chance. He hoped the boat would founder and the report would go back that he had drowned. If the pursuers believed he was aboard they wouldn't come back to the island. And it worked.

If Mobjack hadn't spoiled it, the ruse would have worked beyond Slade's highest hopes. He had fooled the men, but he couldn't fool the dog. Mobjack had caught the taint of him in the dark and had stayed on the island. When he saw the Sea Gull returning, he had given tongue to let his master know he had his quarry cornered.

Deal realized what that meant. Instead of being a free man, with nobody looking for him, Slade knew that one man held his secret. His freedom could only be bought at the price of that man's life. That was why he had shot at Deal as he knelt over Mobjack. That was why he was pursuing him now.

With Deal dead, his secret would remain secret until Deal's body was found. If they didn't find Deal's body, if they thought Deal drowned, so much the better. But Deal must die. All that was as clear to Deal as it could possibly be to the ferret-eyed man who sought him in the dark.

As he strained his eyes to catch his stalker's shadow against the gleam of water, it seemed to Deal that the night was even blacker than it had been when he came into the cove. Dense clouds banked up in the southeastern sky now blotted out the dim light that had shown him the way to shelter. A mutter of thunder came rumbling over the water. Before long there would be rain and more wind.

He stood like a statue in the tangled underbrush, peering and listening; but no sound except the wind in the trees above him, the beating of the waves on the beach and another mutter of thunder came to him. After a little a big drop of rain splashed in his face.

Then a jagged streak of lightning flamed across the sky, lighting up the night like day. In that instant there

was etched on his brain the picture of the tossing trees, the brambles and briars, far out the tossing waves—and there, crouched at the edge of the underbrush, the killer.

Hair matted above a chalk white face gave him a bestial look. The murderer's head jerked, and Deal knew that he was as plain to Slade as Slade was to him. He saw him start forward and the hand with the pistol snap upward, just before the light died.

The gun cracked again, but not before Deal had flung himself deeper into the underbrush and gone crashing away from that pistol. He would troll Slade along behind him, not get too far ahead, but just enough to keep him hopeful of another shot. The murderer, he was sure, wanted to keep near the Sea Gull and guard against Deal's return. But if he could lead him deeper into the underbrush until he was well away from the boat, it would be possible to edge him around and regain his boat and his arms.

The brambles and blackberry bushes clutched at his hands and face and clothing. Doggedly he fought through them, paying no attention to the myriad little scratches they made. He had gone perhaps a hundred yards, listening for the faint crashings behind him which told of Slade's progress, when one foot went deep into a stump hole, throwing him to the ground with his whole weight swung on a twisted ankle.

The sheer agony in his ankle sickened Deal. He forgot the man behind him, stretching flat on his back on the ground and massaging the injured ankle with both hands. A gust of rain swept over him, chilling and reviving.

Another flash of lightning lit up the sky, but he saw nothing except the tossing trees and the lowering clouds above him. At least Slade wasn't in sight; and if he was near and hidden, he was lying low. There was no sound of movement—no sound at all but that of the waves beating on the beach.



They told him where the Sea Gull lay.

Slowly and with infinite pain he started to crawl on hands and knees on a line parallel to the beach, toward a spot well above the Sea Gull. Even with the killer on guard he might do it. The Sea Gull was thirty feet long and his shotgun lay along a rack under the thwarts amidships. If he could get to the water he might swim out and back to the Sea Gull. Once alongside he could get the gun without climbing into the boat. Then he'd settle for Mobjack.

He crawled slowly and cautiously through briers and tangling, hindering running cedar, making no more noise than an Indian. The rain was pouring now, soaking him to the skin and his hands sank in a slimy mixture of leaves and mud.

During a lull in the storm he heard some distance behind him Slade floundering through the briers and, in spite of the agony of his ankle, grinned at the thought that he was still stalking him. The hunter turned hunted with the hope of turning the tables again before long. The sounds showed he was still between Deal and the Sea Gull, guarding against any dash for the boat, but far enough behind to make it possible for Deal to make his move for the water.

The crashing in the underbrush ceased after a moment and Deal stood still, waiting for it to begin again so that he might judge exactly where his pursuer was. He pulled himself up-right beside a sapling to listen better, but he could hear nothing for awhile except the same waves and wind in the trees.

Then, as if he were making a dash toward a known objective, the underbrush began to crackle and break where Slade trampled through. The noise continued for a space and then there was a crash and a sharp cry. Deal grinned again. Slade was city bred, probably, and would have some difficulty getting through the briers in the day-

time. At night he was probably being pretty badly cut up. Not very good for the temper when the man you want to kill can't be found.

As if Slade had heard his mental comment Deal heard a furious, whining voice come from where Slade had fallen.

"Damn your soul, I'll get you yet," it said. "Why'n't you come out and fight like a man instead of hiding in this damn cemetery. Come out and fight! Come out and fight!"

The voice rose almost to a shriek of rage before it ended. Deal chuckled to himself, but made no sound. Let him get as wild as possible. He would be easier to deceive. At the thought of Mobjack rage again possessed him. If he could only get his hands on that brute in fair fight. He would take the opportunity gladly.

Another stream of lightning blazed across the sky and Deal, supported by the sapling saw the murderer again, not fifty feet away this time, white-faced and snarling, with pistol leveled. He saw the flash and felt the sapling vibrate in his hand.

He threw himself on the ground and the pistol cracked. Again he began to crawl, at right angles to his former line of retreat—toward the shore.

The underbrush crashed and crackled behind him, but he moved without sound. He heard Slade flounder to the spot where he had stood. Slade stopped and again the furious voice, frantic with rage now:

"You needn't run, damn you. I'll get you. I'll shoot hell out of you and leave you for the buzzards. I'll show 'em where you are."

Deal grinned again. The voice showed that he was between Slade and the water. He crawled carefully, cautiously, slowly, a few more feet and he would be on the beach. He pictured himself swimming up to the Sea Gull and reaching over for the shotgun. He could almost feel its checkered grip in his hand.



Then his knee rested upon a dead branch which gave way with a crash that sounded to Deal like a pistol shot.

Immediately Slade was in action, scrambling through the brush.

The sky was lit again by a flash of lightning and Deal saw Slade within ten feet of him, gun leveled again. In the brilliant light he could see the twisted features, torn with rage, the malevolent look, the glittering eyes. The gun pointed straight at him. He thought he heard it click, twice, but no flash came.

Darkness fell again. The gun was empty. Deal counted back—five shots. It wasn't an automatic, but a five-chambered revolver, and he had no more cartridges.

"Come on, you rat," he yelled back at Slade. "Come and get me now. I'm waiting for you."

There was no answering shot and Deal knew his guess was true. Slade had no more ammunition and the revolver was good only as a club. His groping hand struck a bunch of oyster shells, cemented together when the oysters began first to grow. It would be nearly as useful at close range as Slade's gun.

Lightning again! There was Slade, coming toward him warily this time, but coming steadily and with deadly intent. He had discarded the gun and Deal saw with sickening clarity a long-bladed clasp knife in his right hand—such a knife as sailors use for every purpose, including murder.

Abandoning the thought of using the oyster shells, Deal threw them at the hateful face. He saw Slade duck—then it was dark again.

Deal stumbled, almost fainting with pain, along the shore. If Mobjack were only alive!

The heavens blazed again and Deal, facing across the cove to where the Sea Gull lay, almost stopped at what he saw. The light made every bush stand out, every detail of the Sea Gull stand out clearly—and there beside the Sea Gull

was Mobjack. The light went out and Deal refused to believe his senses.

He thought he heard a yelp, but closer behind him was the killer, and Deal turned to meet the attack.

In the dark he saw the gleam of the knife descending and he threw up his arm to ward off the blow. He felt a sting in his arm and the hot blood follow the blade. With all his strength he flung his fist into the blob of white which was Slade's face. A second later, lurching forward after the blow, he felt the agony of his ankle as it again doubled beneath him, and he fell.

Rolling over as fast as he could Deal tried to put as much distance as possible between himself and Slade. He could hear the murderer scuffling in the sand as he got up, cursing and furious. His arm where the knife had bitten was numb and aching and he had little use in it. He prayed that the lightning would hold off for a few seconds. It was too late to try the water now, he was already weakening.

If he could get back to the brush he might find a club with which to fight, but it was hard to move. He could hear Slade scuffling toward him in the sand.

Half rising, he tried to meet the attack standing.

Lightning played across the sky again and he stood upright in amazement. Slade's back was toward him and he faced, with knife sweeping before his eyes, a Mobjack such as Deal had never seen. With hackle standing high on his shoulders and fangs bared, the dog was weaving back and forth before the murderer seeking to find an opening for the quick rush, the slashing grip that would throw him.

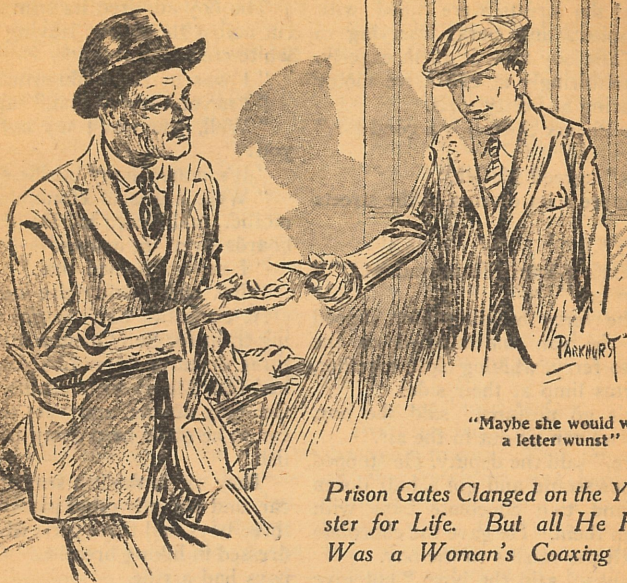
Deal forgot his weakness. Darkness closed in on him, but he could still see Mobjack. Good old Mobjack.

"We've got you, Slade," he shouted. "Give up?"

"Take this damned dog off me," Slade shrieked. "For God's sake, take him. I'm through."



# Too Young to Hang



"Maybe she would write  
a letter wunst"

*Prison Gates Clanged on the Young-  
ster for Life. But all He Heard  
Was a Woman's Coaxing Voice*

By John L. Tiernan

THEY led the boy out into the corridor and introduced him to Deputy Sheriff McGee.

"Glad ta meetcha," said Deputy McGee, and slipped a steel handcuff about his right wrist. Then he snapped the other cuff upon his own wrist.

The chief jailer brought out a bag, a brown hand satchel, pretty well battered at the ends.

"Good-by," he said, as he handed it to the boy. Then he solemnly shook hands.

"Good-by," said the boy, and he and the deputy started down the corridor toward the iron gate. The boy had on a freshly pressed blue suit, a white shirt, a striped tie and a gray cap. He looked real nice. Deputy McGee wore his Sunday suit and a new black hat.

"Where they going?" asked the cub reporter of the chief jailer.

"He's a fish—he's goin' Quentin."

"How long?"

"One hunnerd and forty years."

The reporter scoffed in disbelief.

"That's right," protested the jailer, "he's gotta do seventy years for robbery with a gun and then he's gotta do seventy years for killin' a jeweler."

"Why don't they hang him?"

"Because he's too young," said the jailer, "and this way they will keep him for twenty-four hours after he dies—to make sure."

"Oh," said the cub reporter.

When they were in the sheriff's van Deputy McGee gave the boy a cigar.

"Thanks," said the boy, and took a light from the proffered match. Then



he put his satchel in his lap and sat down at the edge of the long seat—so he could see out into the street.

It was early and there was a brilliant sun, and the streets were filled with stenographers and clerks hurrying to work. The boy took it all in eagerly, gazing admiringly at expensive motor cars, staring at pretty girls.

"The Phenix Special is a good car," he said.

"Yep," agreed McGee.

"You see a lot of cars in the streets now."

"Yep."

"There's a lotta life nowadays."

"You bet."

At the ferry building they slipped out of the van and hurried on the Sausalito ferry, walking close together, their arms limp at their sides.

"Let's go upstairs," said the boy, "where we can sit out in the air."

"Sure," said the deputy. He stopped at the newsstand and got a half dozen cigars and two chocolate bars with raisins in them. He gave the chocolate bars with the raisins to the boy.

"Thanks," said the boy; "but give me one of them with the nuts instead of one of these with the raisins."

"Sure—here, give him what he wants," said McGee.

So the clerk took back one of the bars with the raisins and put out one with the nuts.

On the upper deck they found an empty bench and the boy slid in first, placing his arm up against the rail.

The bay was calm, but there was a brisk breeze that blew full in the faces of those on the deck. As they swung round the edge of San Francisco and headed out toward Alcatraz the boy took off his cap and hung his head over the rail so the wind blew through his hair.

"It's a yacht!" he said, pointing to a slim white cruiser that was coming toward them, its gay pennants standing out brilliantly against the background of the blue Berkeley hills.

"It's old man Stanton's yacht," said McGee, "and it's going to Honolulu and Borneo and then down to the South Seas."

The boy admired its trim lines as it cut across their bow, leaving a trail of white-crested waves.

"I was in Honolulu wunst."

"I never knowed that," said McGee.

"Well, you won't say nothing, will you?"

"It's none of my business."

"Well, I was in Honolulu with my mother, and I used to ride one of them boards over the waves."

"I never knowed that."

"No, and nobody else knowed it."

At Sausalito they caught the morning train for San Quentin and they met three deputies from Los Angeles who had four Mexicans in chains. But McGee only nodded and went to the front car so he could keep away from "them fish."

They sat in the last seat of the front car, and the only other passengers were three boys and three girls who were all dressed in hiking breeches. One of the boys had a rifle.

"They're going hunting!" exclaimed the boy.

"They're going deer hunting," said McGee.

The possessor of the gun was holding it over his head to keep it away from a girl who was playfully trying to take it from him. The boy leaned forward, squinted, and examined the gun minutely.

"It's a 30-30," he said.

"It ain't," said McGee, "it's a 40-45 special."

"Oh—then it's too big for deer."

"No, it ain't—it's good for deer."

"Well, just the same, I always like a 30-30."

One of the girls came down the aisle carrying water for the crowd in paper cups.

"You want a drink of water?" asked McGee.

"No," said the boy.



The girl made a second trip, and this time she smiled at the boy. She couldn't see the handcuffs. When she smiled she was standing in front of an open window and her bobbed hair waved behind her as free—as free as the air.

"I wunst had a girl," said the boy when she was gone.

"I never knowed that," said McGee.

"Well, you won't say nothing, will you?"

"It's none of my business."

"Well she was a holy terror," said the boy and he grinned. "She was a little older and she'd wunst been married, but she sure was stuck on me. She and me was going to get married, and she was stuck on me so much she hardly never left me until I got pinched."

"I never knowed that," said McGee.

"Well, you won't tell nobody, will you?"

"It's none of my business."

"Well," said the boy, "she wasn't only pretty, but she was brave just like a man. She used to cook me hotcakes, too. That's what I like—hotcakes. She used to cook 'em for me all the time."

He arched his head boastfully and then he leaned over to speak softly.

"You know, she was so brave she was with me when I done it," he said.

"I never knowed that."

"Sure, she picked out the place and she told me what to do, and she came right along, holding my hand in the street car. Then she walks right up the street, holding my hand. Then she stands right at the corner, pretty and as saucy as a pup, and waits for me. And she'd a-been right there only I had to shoot and got caught."

"I never knowed that."

McGee picked up the satchel and handed it to the boy, because they were getting close, very close to San Quentin.

"Aint'cha seen her since?" he asked.

"Course not, she couldn't take the chances."

"Ain't she never wrote?"

The boy looked doubtful.

"No, she never wrote—but I guess she couldn't take the chances."

"Never wrote wunst?"

"No, never wrote."

San Quentin was the last stop and they let the boys and the girls in hiking breeches climb out onto the dusty road first, because they were noisy and jostling each other playfully.

"Maybe a letter might get lost," said the boy as they arose.

"Maybe."

They walked to the gate, the boy holding the bag, and there they had to join the gang from Los Angeles. The boy and McGee marched through the gate behind the Mexicans in chains.

"I had a letter get lost wunst," said the boy as they went into the receiving office.

"I never," said McGee.

The attendants hurriedly examined the commitments. Then they checked off the Mexicans and herded them through the big iron door to the inner prison, where they take photographs and shave heads and give baths.

McGee unlocked his handcuffs and stood up at the desk with the boy.

"One hundred and forty years!" said the clerk as he examined the commitment.

He looked up, stared at the boy a moment—and laughed.

The boy laughed, too.

The check-in only took a second, but before he went to the iron door the boy turned to McGee.

"Good-by," he said.

"Good-by," said McGee, and they shook hands.

He started for the iron door, but still he didn't go in. He turned and handed McGee a slip of paper.

"It's the name and address," he explained, "and I thought maybe you might see her and ask her," his expression brightened—"if maybe she would write a letter wunst."

"Sure," said McGee, and the iron door of Quentin clanged.





"I don't believe we are on friendly terms," he said coldly.

# O. Henry's Prison-Made Name

A True Story

*While An Inmate in Ohio Penitentiary the Great American Short Story Writer Probably Adopted His Famous Nom de Plume*

By Bob Davis

IT was indeed ironical that on the 7th of June, 1910, the day set for the burial of O. Henry from the Little Church Around the Corner, a wedding was scheduled for precisely the same hour. The bride and bridegroom gave place to the claims of clay and were united in the bonds of holy wedlock one hour later.

Into the shadows passed the author of "The Four Million." Into the sunlight came the newly wed. Before the remains of the beloved Sydney Porter reached the ferry en route to Asheville, North Carolina, Frederick Thomas and

Ida Louise Crossley were on their honeymoon. Tragedy and romance are kin.

All the world mourned the man who had found in Manhattan an inexhaustible supply of Arabian Nights' Tales and turned New York into Bagdad. Like Aladdin, he rubbed the lamp, mounted the magic carpet and was away on the wings of his imagination.

The news of his death saddened the reading public. Who was Sydney Porter, alias O. Henry? Where did he come from? A widespread clamor for further particulars was set up.



Unfortunately, his intimates could be counted on one hand and they, alas! had received in the past ample evidence of his taciturnity. Nevertheless, a considerable number of biographers, myself among others, made a conscientious effort to define him.

Frankly there was not much that could be said beyond the fact that he had come out of the Southwest, bringing with him the genius that won for him front position among short story writers of his generation. By a stroke of rare good luck I found him in July, 1903, tucked away on the top story of a West Twenty-Fourth Street *table d'hôte* caravansary.

From that meeting to the time of his death we carried on a fairly intimate association, details of which I shall—when I get time—put between covers, and in no wise to his detriment.

### O. Henry's Sacrifice

Many contributors to the biographical addendum dipped into speculation as to how he came to adopt the pseudonym "O. Henry." There is not space in this column to review all the explanations. I myself once asked him where he got the *nom de plume*. "Oh, it looked good in print," was his reply, "and is easy for the lips." Beyond that statement he was evasive, so I dropped the matter. In *Ainslee's Magazine* for December, 1901, we find the name "Olivier Henry." The original MS. was signed "O. Henry." "What does the 'O.' stand for?" asked the editor. "Olivier," said Porter. And that's that. Three times in 1902 the "Olivier" occurred and once in 1903. In all other instances he stuck to "O." when using the surname.

Not long after Sydney Porter's death there came out of the West a rumor that he had served a period of time in the Ohio penitentiary. The story was soon given wide publicity and the fact established that Sydney Porter had sacrificed himself to save a friend. To Al Jennings, one of Porter's closest

friends, and the author of "Through the Shadows With O. Henry," I addressed a letter and asked for information on the subject. He replied:

What Bill really did that the world could know by investigation is not all, but it is the worst. I once asked him after we had been together years what he "fell" for. He answered: "I was cashier. I bet three hundred dollars that cotton would go up; but cotton went down."

The money was given to him by another fellow associated in the same institution. This fellow had social and moral obligations; Porter was foot-loose. When the finger of accusation was pointed at the other man, Bill Porter, cold of face, stepped forward, saying: "You are mistaken. It was I." The other fellow said: "Oh, Bill, don't do that." (You know Porter.)

The expression on his face never changed, and he said coldly, "I don't believe we are on friendly terms." Every intercession was made except by Porter; money was offered, influence proffered, but no defense was made by him and even after the "five-spot" (five years) had been awarded, kindly intervention tendered was refused...

DAN W. WILLIAMS.

Two months ago I learned that Dan W. Williams, chairman of the Ohio Board of Clemency, stationed at Columbus, knew a certain Captain O. Henry whose name could have easily come under the eye of Sydney Porter while a prisoner of the State. Mr. Williams's reply to my letter of inquiry follows:

Prisoner N. 30664, named W. S. (William Sydney) Porter, was admitted to the Ohio Penitentiary April 25, 1898, and was discharged July 24, 1901, having gained six hundred days by good conduct. His full time would have been to March, 1903.

While there he must have heard of Captain O. Henry of the night watch. Or he may have seen the captain's signature on the records of the prison, for Porter was an "honor" man for a long time. Captain Henry's given name is Orrin, but he never used it at the prison, preferring the shorter form, "O. Henry."

Captain Henry is still living in Columbus, serving in the office of the Au-



ditor of State. He retired from the penitentiary in 1887, nearly eleven years before Porter's arrival. However, the signature of the original "O. Henry" is still part of numerous documents, many of which were accessible to Sydney Porter.

DAN W. WILLIAMS.

My communicant admits that he is dealing with what at best may be regarded as theory.

There is, however, an excellent basis for the conclusion. Viewing the evidence chronologically it is significant that six months after the date of his discharge—July, 1901—Sydney Porter used "Oliver Henry" for the first time in *Ainslee's Magazine* December, 1901.

"A Blackjack Bargainer," the first story to be published after his release, was printed in *Munsey's* for August, 1901. It appeared under the signature of Sydney Porter.

Soon thereafter the signature of O. Henry came into vogue and became the hallmark for perfection in the American short story. It may be pure conjecture that Porter found his nom de plume in Columbus, Ohio. It may be nothing more than a coincidence.

But the fact remains that the only two O. Henrys of record in the United States did reside—though not simultaneously—under the same roof.

And the fame of the name has gone around the world.



HERE was the reason one prisoner gave for being in San Quentin Penitentiary to Burton Brace, newspaper man, who interviewed hundreds of inmates. Each one had a different tale:

## The Burglar

I fell in love with a married jane  
 (Been three years ago by prison time  
 Since she said: "My husband don't understand")  
 She fell hard for me. One day she said:  
 "Let's elope!" And like a fool I said: "Okay!"  
 I went home and packed my things  
 And came back to get her, too.  
 She came down to the parlor, all dressed up.  
 "Put a few of the pictures on the walls  
 Into your suitcases, Jack," she said,  
 We'll need 'em some of these days."  
 She went on upstairs to finish packing,  
 And I started to put the pictures away  
 When, *bang!* the front door slammed,  
 And her husband hustled in—unexpected!  
 "My God!" he yelps when he sees me. "A burglar!"  
 He covers me with a gun from a table drawer  
 His wife came down; he told her  
 He found me stealing pictures off the walls.  
 She kept quiet, him suspecting nothing.  
 I kept quiet, too, and got five years  
 For disturbing a framed marriage certificate.

Burton Brace.



# CHARACTER REVEALED IN YOUR HANDWRITING

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — After making character analysis, through handwriting, his hobby for more than a score of years, John Fraser has recently won wide renown in New York City as a popular lecturer on this subject.

He conducts a thriving business of analyzing character in handwriting at one dollar a specimen; and many not-



JOHN FRASER

ables in this country and abroad have complimented him on the accuracy of his findings.

By special arrangement his personal analysis is free to DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY readers. A handwriting specimen must be sent on the coupon in this department and accompanied by two-cent stamp for reply.

*The man wouldn't be perfect  
if I missed my flynn's*

S. — W., Paragould, Ark.—Your coupon gave me food for thought. It both amused and interested me. In answer to our question, "Are You Married?" you write "Yes and No." By this elusive answer, I'm as wise as ever. If you are *not* married you ought to be. Judging by your handwriting, I believe you have more romance in your little finger than I have in my whole body. Not only do I see this by the slope of your pen formations, but in the way you form your "A's" and "O's." Yours is an intense nature, and one which bubbles over with affectionate fervor.

I notice also that you are very self-dependent and cocksure about yourself. Your will power is abnormal, and your temper is nothing to brag about. As a matter of fact, it is as short as a rabbit's tail. It is true that you have great mental activity. That brain of yours will persist in working overtime. You are one of the type who not only believes in making hay while the sun shines, but you have to grow mush-

rooms in the dark.

Furthermore, I observe that you are rather opinionative. You certainly have the courage of your convictions. When your mind is "made up" nothing will stop you. Your popularity might be greater with your fellows if you were less dogmatic in this respect. Try it and see.

*What does my hair  
indicate? I enc  
stamp for reply*

I. N. H., Tuscaloosa, Ala.—No one could call you narrow-minded, nor a man with a one-track brain. Your handwriting indicates a breadth of vision, and a tolerance befitting one who has no time for the petty and unimportant tittle-tattle which goes on around him from day to day. You appear to be a fellow who discards anything in the shape of "crutches" in order to succeed. You are red-blood-



ed and you are self-dependent. In my opinion, that's enough for any one to have.

I notice a suspicious streak in you. You are continually carrying a "point of interrogation" in your mind. You talk quite a lot, and when you get excited—which I think is quite frequently—your glossary of explosives would be an education to any linguist. With it all, you are a good-natured chap, and apparently have the faculty of seeing the humorous side of everything. You possess a strict sense of duty, and honesty of purpose. There is no one more conscientious in the discharge of his duties than you are.

Another thing I like about you is your willingness to help those less fortunate than yourself. That in itself tells me what kind of man you are. Regarding the sentimental side of your nature, I see enough to convince me that you are very fond of the ladies. Of course, it may only be high-blood pressure, but I "ha'e ma doots." Altogether, I like your personality, and I wish you the best of luck.

*"She builds her rosy  
in the air, and the  
stone is a solitaire"*

Clyde W., Douglas, Ga.—You have what I would call a mathematical mind. Exact, and critical about everything that comes to your notice. You have also a leaning toward the higher things in life, and I wouldn't be surprised if you had a beautiful conception of the Deity.

I observe that your sense of humor is well marked, and this, coupled with your vivacity and "go," entitles you to a place among the Optimists. On the other hand, you are far from being perfect. Perfection is somewhat like the horizon which no man or woman has yet been able to bump into. I see you have a nasty temper, which needs attention. You are impatient with

those around you, and would not be easy to live with at times. Moreover, you are apparently timid, and overcautious about attempting new things. Take a chance once in awhile. It will do you no harm to "jump in" occasionally. Remember that timidity and fear are the devil's choicest brands of smelling salts. I would advise you to keep your nose away from them.

You seem to love flattery, and don't object to a little pat on the back now and then. I like your humility. No one could call you self-important or egotistical. I notice that you have quite a lot to say. I would advise you to "soft-pedal" this "weakness." Be more of a listener than a talker. It pays better.

*I think Flynn is  
one of the most in-  
teresting magazines I*

Ruth F., Pawtucket, R. I.—According to your penmanship I observe that you are a quick-tempered and impatient young lady. I'm sorry for this because I believe you have the makings of a "big" woman in you, both spiritually and mentally. In the name of common sense, why should you wear yourself away to a frazzle with this fever of mind. What you need is sleep. You have been slipping up on your beauty sleeps far too long for your own good.

Then again your will power is not much to brag about. A little more stiffening of the mind, and a little less wabbling when it comes to making decisions, would do you a world of good. Above all things, be decisive. The woman who never knows where she stands will not be likely to stand anywhere long. There is, however, another side to your nature which should be a real asset to you in your journey through life. For example, you have a great power of concentration. When you take to something, that singleness of purpose is very pronounced. Your tenacity in this respect is bulldoggish.



Buoyancy and optimism strive for the first place in that disposition of yours. I guess you would be the life of the party wherever you went, and a welcome visitor to any home. We need more people like you in the world. Too many of us go through life like undertakers at a millionaire's funeral.

I would advise you to watch that sarcastic manner which you have acquired. It is nothing but a liability in any nature, and yours is no exception to the rule.

*May I suggest a story laid  
in a prison, secret-stair  
it always gives a new*

Claude S., New York City—Your will power is abnormal, and your ambition to succeed is very pronounced in your handwriting. I admire your hum-

bleness of mind. You are not a man who thinks of himself more highly than he ought to think. Humility is always the first essential to true greatness.

You have also been blessed with a good memory. That retentive faculty is to stand you in good stead in the future. I would say that you are a healthy person with plenty of "pep." Impulsiveness seems to be one of your weakest traits. You are inclined to be erratic and impatient with those around you, and then be sorry for it afterward. I come to this conclusion because I observe that you are, by nature, very affectionate and forgiving.

I have a suspicion that you are struggling against some sort of depressing influence, and so long as it continues to overshadow you, your powers of expression will never have full play. Get rid of those "shackles of circumstance." Where there's a will, there's a way.

For an analysis of your handwriting, fill out the coupon below, preferably in ink. Mail it, with a two-cent stamp inclosed for return postage, and John Fraser will send you his diagnosis of your character and abilities.

If you have some definite likes and dislikes about DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, the editors will appreciate it if you use the coupon to express your opinions.

Handwriting must be on the coupon, accompanied by a two-cent stamp.

(This coupon must be used before September 29)

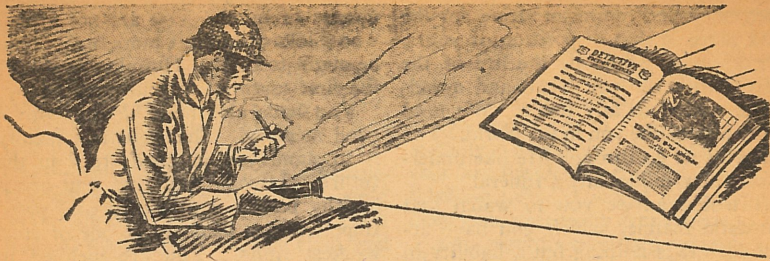
To John Fraser, Detective Fiction Weekly, 280 Broadway, N. Y. City

Signature.....

Street.....City.....

Occupation.....Are you married?.....





## FLASHES FROM READERS

*Where Readers and Editor Get Together to Gossip  
and Argue, and Everyone Speaks Up His Mind*

**T**HREE more of the novels that appeared first in serial form in *DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY* have just been published as two-dollar books: "The Fortescue Affair," by John Stephen Strange, has been published by Doubleday-Doran as a Crime Club book, under the title "The Man Who Killed Fortescue." "The Master of Revels," by Richard Howells Watkins, has likewise been published by Doubleday-Doran as another Crime Club book of the month. Charles Somerville's "A Crook de Luxe" has been published by Curtiss Press as "An Artist in Crime," and its sales are swiftly mounting.

Out in Omaha, Thomas Manley bought his regular copy of *DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY*, read Cyrus Chapin's fact story, "Speaking of Blackmailers," and gave a groan. Then he wrote us the following letter:

DEAR SIR:

Edward Parrish Ware is my favorite author. I always consult the index and if there is a story by him, I read it first. Some of your serials are good, but mostly too imaginative. Your fact stories are the goods when they are fact stories.

But when they are pseudo-fact yarns like "Speaking of Blackmailers," they give one a pain. You ought to see that your fact stories are facts. The story is well written and quite plausible—to the unsophisticated. If it was a fact story, the author wouldn't have

been so careful about concealing the name of the Pinkertons. Another thing, *Sally* would have told him to go to h— when he told her he would expose her daughters. He wouldn't have dared to do so because she could have exposed "Thomas," and she had the whip hand. So clever a little lady wouldn't fall for anything like that.

Still another thing, how come the hotel folks allowed her to make an assignation house of the place? The thing doesn't ring true because of the fictionized manner of telling. Also the author would have described himself in the second person—too much "I."

Crooks don't have children when both are at work at their trade. If *Sally* was that easy, she certainly wasn't the "top-notch" described in the "most exclusive crook circles." This is good fiction, but awful sorry fact. You are not supposed to print facts without permission, unless the actors are dead or the time outlawed. When you do have the right to print them, why go to the trouble of inventing names and places?

"Twenty Years Outside the Law" rings genuine. Please let us have the goods in fact stories: there are plenty of good ones to be had. The magazine isn't near as good as it was to begin with. I used to read every part of the first ones, now I can hardly wade through them. Too much trashy and melodramatic fiction. Plausibility is the main thing even in fiction. These phenomenal heroes are something of a bore. I tried to read "Peter Pepper," but quit; the Clavering dope is about as bad. At that, I suppose the stuff is as much as one can expect for a dime.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS MANLEY,  
Omaha.

Mr. Chapin began his career as private secretary to William A. Pinkerton and then became a Pinkerton operator on cases in this country and abroad for



a score of years, finally going into the United States Secret Service. Few men have crammed more excitement and actual detective work into their lives. In addition, he has been a constant student of the science of criminology. More of his writings will appear in **DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY**.

Here is Mr. Chapin's reply to Mr. Manley:

The absence of the name of Pinkerton is due to the writer's feeling that the editor might object to advertising a detective agency.

The fact that *Sally* made appointments in her suite means simply this: that the average hotel cannot require a marriage certificate from guests on registering, this is apparent to all hotel men and also to the general public.

The matter of writing in the first person, instead of the third person amounts to this: it is the natural thing to write a first person experience in the first person.

As regards criminals having children; there would be few criminals unless criminals had children. Cite for example the Jukes family, of northern New York, and learn what a criminal family is and *why*.

In "Speaking of Blackmailers," the reason I disguised the true names of the characters should be obvious. It was a private Pinkerton case, not on police or other public records.

CYRUS CHAPIN.

### He Likes Us

DEAR SIR:

Sure was glad to read the letter from Edward Parrish Ware, for *Jack Calhoun* is a very interesting character, and I'm sure all readers of **DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY** will appreciate hearing from him, by proxy.

Chanda Lung is ridiculous! What we thoroughly enjoy in our house and look eagerly forward to is facts—mystery—serials. You've had some mighty fine ones in the past, such as "Dizzy McArthur," "The Adjusters," and real good murder mysteries. One serial, though, was a complete waste of time, and I don't mean maybe, and that was "The Red Parroket." Oh, what a tale!

But I want you to know we think you're putting out a mighty fine group of stories on the whole. Inside dope on smugglers, inmates, gang wars, *et cetera*, are always easy to read.

What happened to the detective who read "Letters from the Lovelorn" and shined his shoes so conscientiously? Don't read about him any more. But guess you can't please each reader and want to say I'll always wait the issue date with pleasure. Sincerely,

K. CARR,

13017 Kercheval Avenue, Detroit, Mich.

### She Doesn't Like Us

DEAR EDITOR:

Your magazine is getting worse and worse. Why don't you put *Ruggles* and *Riordan* in some more? I see some other people want

them back, too. You have the same stories every week and it is getting tiresome; Captain Clavering, Peter Pepper, and Ellis Parker in every week.

There isn't enough variety in Captain Clavering, and I don't believe there is such a newspaper reporter as *Peter Pepper* who beats detectives in every crime that is committed. And besides wherever *Peter* goes he always knows some one there. I mean there is some one that helps him in solving every crime.

Why don't the detectives solve some of them? That's what they're for.

The only thing I like about your magazine is the serial, "The Cult Murders."

I read every detective magazine on the market and yours is the worst, although it used to be the best.

Yours for a better magazine,

NANCY RAY,

3901 South Benton, Kansas City, Mo.

### Opinions Vary

Right after Miss Ray's letter, above, came in knocking Peter Pepper and the Ellis Parker series, along came this bit of good cheer:

THE EDITOR:

I am not a veteran reader of your most excellent **DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY**, but I enjoy it as much as any. I believe that the Ellis Parker true stories and the Peter Pepper fictional stories are the best that I ever read. However, if I may ask, where does the esteemed author get the titles? What puzzles me is where the alliteration is procured. My solution is that the author coöperates with men who names Pullman cars.

Yours for more of our mutual friends, Ellis Parker and Peter Pepper.

LEIGH HOMSTAD,  
Cashton, Wis.

### MISSING

M. J. D. Anna very ill. Send money. I will make no trouble for you. Write R. O'Brien.

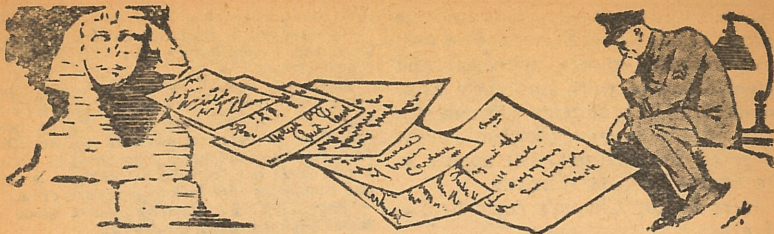
Roy. Please let me hear from you. Everything is all right.  
GIRL

### SEND THE RIGHT ADDRESS!

Handwriting letters for the following have been returned on account of incorrect addresses:

Mr. Wm. H. Bell, 388 Warren Street, New York City; Mrs. Mae Vigelius, 5215 Kimbark Avenue, Chicago, Illinois; Mr. R. C. Black, 3408 Trumbull, Detroit, Michigan; Mr. Thomas Lyons, 144 Bloom Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Mr. Slim Cavanaugh, 223 West Twenty-Fourth Street, New York City; Mr. P. S. Wood, 5232½ Union Avenue, South Laconia, Washington; Mr. O. G. Beans, Holly Hotel, Charleston, West Virginia; Miss Irene Monahan, 533 Leavenworth Street, San Francisco, California; Fred E. Larson, Chief of Police, Ridgefield, New Jersey.





# SOLVING CIPHER SECRETS

*Mr. Ohaver Presents Some Ingenious Solutions to Previous Brain-Racking Ciphers*

**Edited by M. E. Ohaver**

**B**EFORE taking up the new ciphers in this issue, let us first consider the solutions to those of the preceding article, published in the August 11 issue.

Crypt No. 200, by M. Walker, affords an excellent example of the message that can be broken by comparison of prefixes and suffixes. Thus the fifth and ninth groups ended with -UIX, the third and tenth began with UI-, and the tenth ended -URSN. These suggest -ING, IN-, and -IBLE, respectively, with USING as the probable meaning of TVUIX.

Substituting in UIBOONVVURSN we have IN --- ESSIBLE, obviously INACCESSIBLE. After this all is over but the shouting, for the rest can easily be developed in a similar manner. The translation: "Stalwart, sturdy, intrepid explorers, using alpenstocks, courageously attempted scaling inaccessible Himalayan heights." A fine crypt, this, and not too difficult.

C. E. Roe's Cipher No. 201, as you may recall, used a key word of ten letters for the ten digits, a given message letter being represented in cipher by the key letter or letters indicating its alphabetical place. The remaining letters of the alphabet were used as word spaces.

A frequency table here shows that A, B, C, E, K, L, and U, predominate. This indicates that these are letters of the key word, since space symbols would not be used as much as letter symbols. Looking for doubled letters to represent K—11 and V—22, we find LL, UU, BB, and OO, the first two of which are the most likely on account of the higher frequencies.

Of these two letters, L is followed in the cipher by A, B, C, E, J, K, M, and R; while U is followed by E, K, L, M, P, and R. This fixes L as 1 and U as 2; and further limits E, K, M, and R—which occur after both L and U—to 3, 4, 5, 6, and 0, leaving A, B, C, J, L, and P from which to select 7, 8, and 9.

From frequency UK becomes T—20—and so on. Or, thus closely determined, the key word, LUMBER-JACK, may readily be found by the anagram route. No difficulty is experienced in translating with the key, since all two-letter symbols must begin either with L or U. The message: "He kept vexing me with frantic journeys hidden by quiet zeal."

Cipher No. 202 employed the subjoined key and conveyed this information: "Context, frequency, and numer-



ical place in the vocabulary are three factors in the determination of word symbols in this type of cipher."

A-15.16.	N-32.33.	51-and	64-the
B-17.	O-34.35.	52-as	65-was
C-18.	P-36.	53-at	66-we
D-19.	Q-37.	54-be	67-will
E-20.21.22.	R-38.39.	55-for	68-with
F-23.	S-40.41.	56-have	69-you
G-24.	T-42.43.44.	57-in	70-your
H-25.	U-45.	58-is	
I-26.27.	V-46.	59-it	
J-28.	W-47.	60-not	
K-29.	X-48.	61-of	
L-30.	Y-49.	62-on	
M-31.	Z-50.	63-that	

Besides solution by alphabetical approximation and context, as described in the last article, this kind of cipher offers another, and even more interesting mode of solution which will here be briefly outlined.

The method in question is based on comparison of cipher sequences, which, through the relatively small differences existing between corresponding numbers, may be assumed to signify repetitions of the same letters or words in the message.

Cipher No. 205, herewith, will serve to illustrate this method. For example, at about the halfway mark, and along toward the end of this cipher you will find the following two sequences:

20.40.45.44.36.18.  
21.37.48.46.39.16.

The differences between numbers signifying the same letter will, of course, vary according to the size of the alphabet. Here the alphabet appears to run from about 5 up to 60. Hence, no great differences may be expected, and it may be assumed with some degree of certainty that the above two series of numbers represent the same letters.

If this is so, we know that 20 and 21 stand for the same letter. Also that 37 to 40, inclusive, likewise stand for only one letter; and so on. When two more such series overlap they may be combined. Thus 45-48 and 44-46 indicate that all numbers from 44 to 48, inclusive, signify the same letter.

No. 205 offers several such points of comparison. And it is evident that by a continuation of the process the alphabetical part of the cipher may be reduced, in effect, to a simple substitution system, and then solved by the usual methods. The vocabulary, consisting of common short words and represented by letters combined with figures, may then be determined by context.

Cipher No. 205, like No. 202, is also modeled after an old Charles I cipher. But there is this important difference. In No. 202 the alphabet runs in numerical order from A to Z, as previously shown. In No. 205, however, the series is transposed. For example, A might be represented by 54, 55, 56, or 57; B by 7, 8, or 9; C by 40 or 41; and so on.

Other ciphers on this week's bill include a clever crypt by Fred M. Holmes, and an intriguing numerical cipher by Kenneth Clear. The crypt is calculated to keep you guessing for awhile.

So look sharp, and let us know how you solved it! The alphabet in No. 204 is based on a key phrase, which you are bound to get if you solve the cipher. What is it?

CIPHER No. 203, by Fred M. Holmes, Burdett, New York.

LAUGH ORIGFLHAM URJIMG  
RBWOFHS CLWSLOGLCH BHEEM  
OUNEFG SBWUJLGLWE MFISB  
XRUWG BHMGHASUB.

CIPHER No. 204, by Kenneth Clear, Winchester, Indiana.

21-5-17-6-27-4-1-5-17-4-25-27-4-2-7-22-21-  
9-17-6-27-6-7-15-15-9-20-21-27-9-4-27-7-  
17-11-5-27-10-25-27-21-18-5-11-3-9-15-27-  
16-5-21-21-5-17-8-5-20.

CIPHER No. 205.

8.60.7.52.58.49.10.16.24.56.32.15.26.58.  
25.21.9.17.13.35.19.43.39.55.7.36.14.74.  
11.7.26.49.29.35.16.4.54.47.60.49.37.13.  
60.58.8.53.21.15.28.29.24.7.31.18.40.49.  
17.39.14.35.57.46.74.13.9.58.36.20.40.45.  
44.36.18.58.12.60.44.34.50.42.56.5.44.7.4.  
7.24.49.30.39.17.49.18.11.7.48.26.7.10.  
20.21.60.16.37.6.42.7.38.5.14.52.57.38.  
28.31.25.7.30.43.15.38.14.50.54.40.14.60.  
58.8.51.20.74.35.12.7.29.21.37.48.46.39.  
16.4.74.12.20.49.31.11.8.38.45.



## COMING NEXT WEEK!

**H**ARRY LETHROP little suspected the maze of mystery he was stepping into when he rescued the beautiful Christine Vincennes from the brutal assault of a thieving chauffeur.

One hour later he was accused of murder and the evidence pointed so unwaveringly at him that there appeared little room for doubt. Yet he had never seen the victim before. He was horrified, frightened, terribly puzzled.

A sinister force was moving events too fast for Lethrop's comprehension, drawing him surely into a net—a force swifter than the police, laughing at the futile efforts of the best detective talent.

What was it? Who was it?

Lethrop was desperately anxious to solve those questions, for thereon depended the safety of the lovely Christine, his own reputation, and his old father's honor.

Lethrop and the police dogged every thread of evidence, left not a single clew uninvestigated—at the end of every road they came to nothing—nothing but a name—John E. Duke.

Though the name was well known, no amount of searching could uncover a tiny connection between this man, who was one of Chicago's best loved philanthropists, with the sinister events that unfolded so rapidly.

What transpired behind the grim, gray walls of Duke's home? What mysteries did the inscrutable portrait of Duke's grandfather gaze down upon in the shadowy hall?

From the past of an old man's youth rises a specter of hate and vengeance, and a mystery that makes "The Murder at Avalon Arms," by Owen Fox Jerome, one of the year's best thrillers. It is the new serial beginning next week in DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY. Mr. Jerome, remembered for many tales of crime, has written here his most exciting one.



DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY—SEPTEMBER 29





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CA7 New lady's friendship ring, 18K Solid White Gold, 3 perfectly matched, blue white diamonds. \$2.96 a mo.



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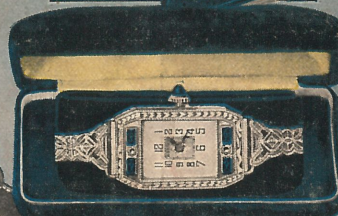
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