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NOV. 14, 1931
Detective
Story Magazine

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SEA LAW
and
BLUE JEAN BILLY
by Charles W. Tyler

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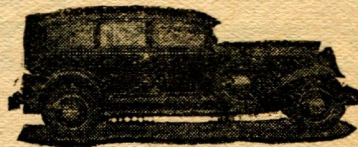
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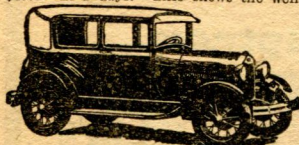
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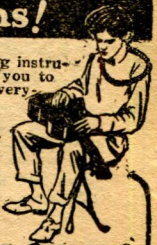
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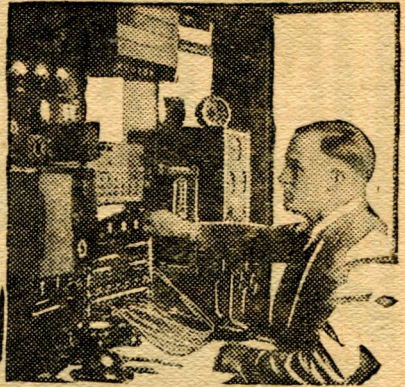
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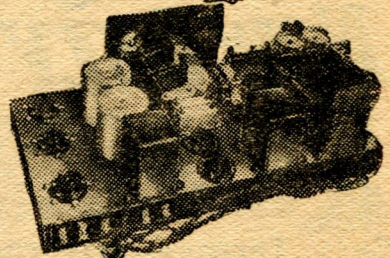
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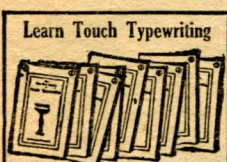
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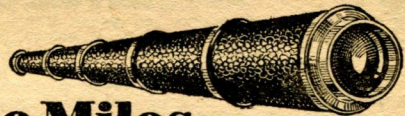
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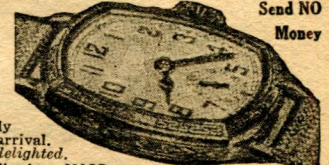
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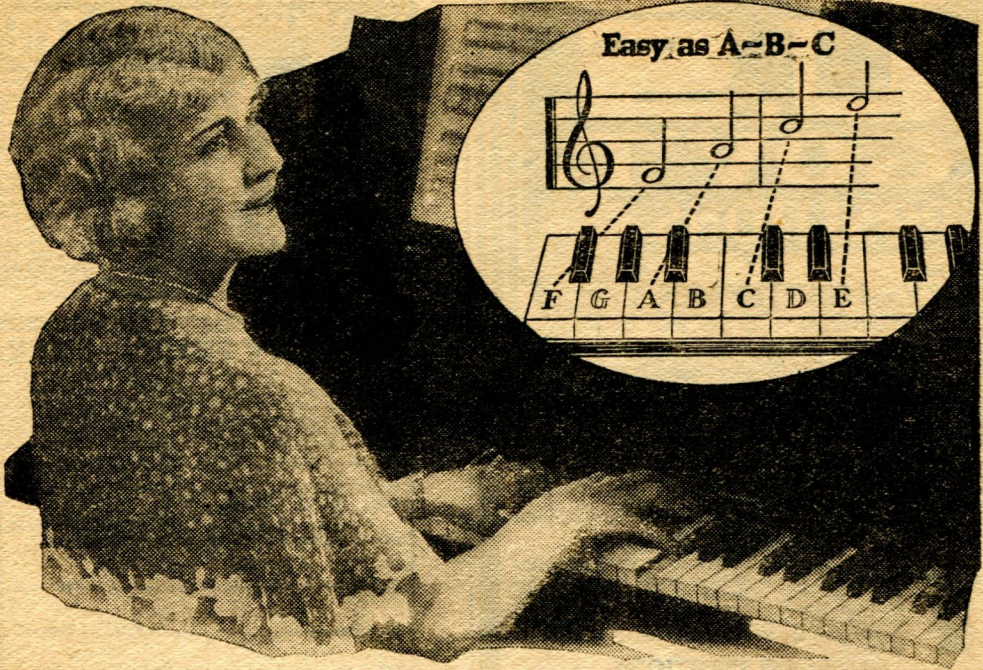
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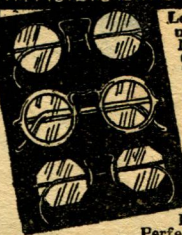
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When You Feel Old at 40



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You may be in the same fix as thousands of men and women past 40, and many far younger. They feel old, run-down and unable to work their best, simply because their vitality is lowered by functional Kidney inactivity and excess Acidity. When these troubles cause Burning, Bladder Irritation, Leg Pains, Getting Up Nights, Nervousness, Backache, Neuralgia, Lumbago, Stiffness, Circles under Eyes, Muddy Complexion or frequent Headaches, it's time for you to take some special medicine.

To combat these conditions, you really need two different kinds of special medicine, because you need two results in fighting these troubles. First, you need a medicine to act as a stimulant diuretic to the Kidneys, to help them in their function of filtering and purifying the blood, thus reducing acidity. Second, you need another medicine to soothe and heal irritation and give nature a chance.

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They are in tasteless tablet form, easy to take, and pleasant to young or old, yet work so fast they start circulating thru the system in 11 minutes. Many sufferers say they begin to feel marked improvement in the first 24 hours or so.

Your own druggist—the man you know is reliable—can tell you that these are established facts, and that Cystex (pronounced Siss-tex) is a splendid medicine of purest ingredients, and that it has proved a blessing to many sufferers.

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An Unpardonable Sin



Must every woman pay the price of a moment's happiness in bitter tears and years of regret? Must millions of homes be ruined—lovers and sweethearts driven apart—marriages totter to the brink of divorce—the sacred joys of sex relations be denied? YES—just as long as men and women remain ignorant of the simple facts of life. An Unpardonable Sin is total ignorance of the most important subject in the life of every man and woman—SEX.

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544 Pages of startling Secrets

The 544 pages of personal secrets revealed in this astounding work were not put together and assembled by the authors with any thought of spreading obscenity—no, on the other hand, the authors' sincerest belief that modern eugenics is a present-day necessity—its heart-felt wish to carry the message before young and old so they may know the

truth prompted them to complete this edition and offer it to those who are deserving of knowing the information therein revealed. If you wish to move onward in life without fear, knowing that you are in the right, fortified with knowledge you are entitled to know, send for your copy today.

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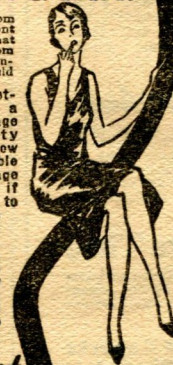
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Girls! DON'T MARRY

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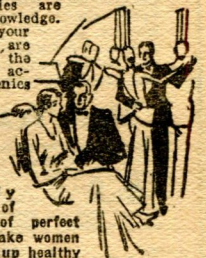
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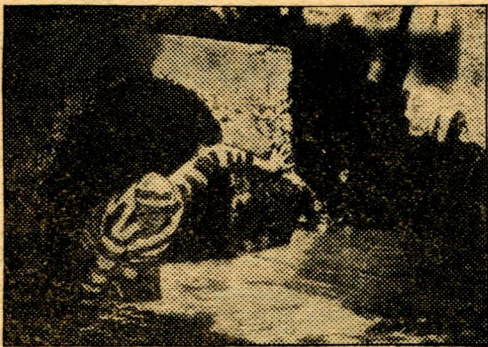
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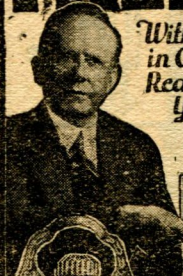
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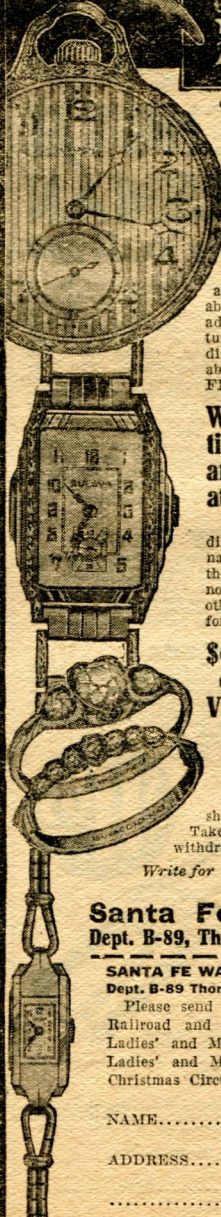
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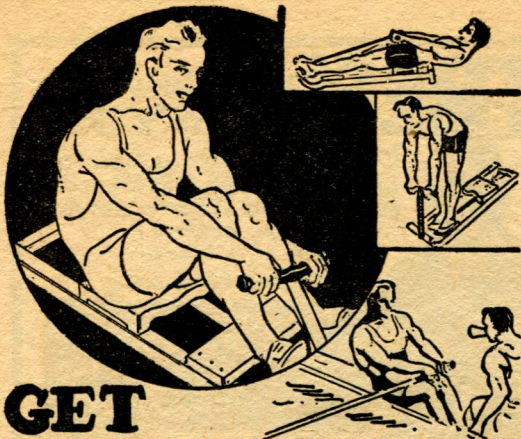
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NO WAY YOU CAN LOSE. . . .

Simply suggest the winning name—that is all you have to do to get the \$500.00. We are giving the prize to advertise our marvelous Foot Balm that is even now used by many professional dancers. Because a famous name is valuable in advertising, the new name chosen for this rising young dancer will also be used as the name for our Foot Balm—her fame will bring us big advertising. . . . It is your opportunity of a life-time. Maybe your own name, or the name of a friend may be the very name we want. Nothing for you to lose—a fortune for you to win.

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Viola Lauder, Oregon, was destitute—her home burned down. She suggested a name for our toilet soap and won a big cash prize of \$900.00! H. L. Adams, Pa., won over \$2000.00. Hundreds of others made happy by

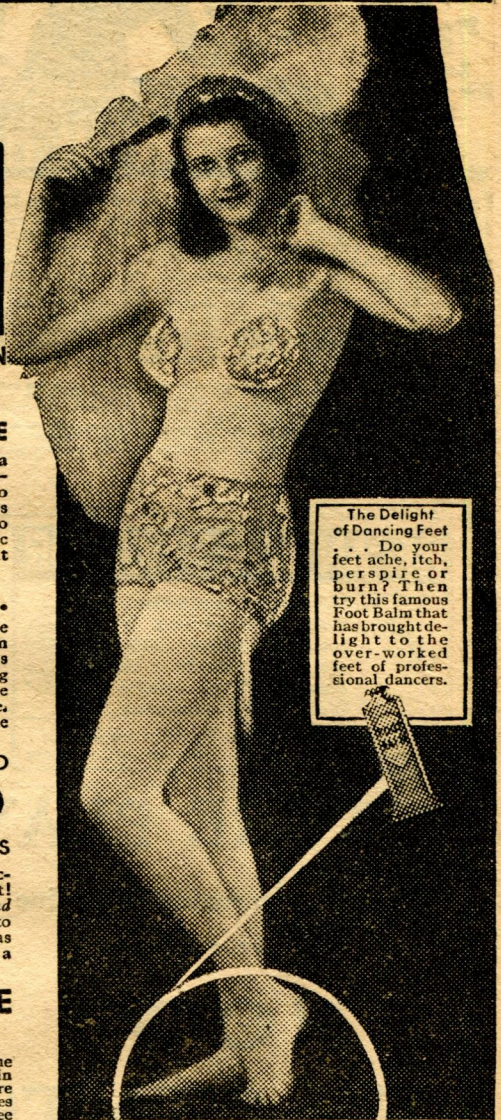
big prizes and rewards. Now, some yet unknown person is going to win \$3,000.00 cash; many others are going to be made happy with scores of prizes as high as \$750.00. Three fine cars will be given.

Read These Simple Rules

Contest open to all except employees of our company. Only one name may be submitted—sending more than one name will cause all names sent by you to be thrown out. Suggest a first and last name for the dancer. Contest closing date given in my first letter to you. In case of duplicate winning names, duplicate prizes will be given. Every person submitting a name qualifies for opportunity to win \$3,000.00 cash or Buick 8 Cylinder Sedan and \$1,500.00 in cash. Use the coupon or write a letter to submit name and receive all details.

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16



KNIFED IN THE DARK

By C. WILES HALLOCK

THE cops never knew what became of Lou Wong,
The Chinatown big shot of Green Dragon Tong.

Crafty Lou Wong—may his ancestors sing—
Wrought bloody vengeance on Hunan Fu Ming,
Rival contender for power and trade,
Smuggler of opium, dealer in jade,
Cunning mogul of dark Doyer Street Tong
“Celestial Sons of the Shimmering Gong.”
Hunan Fu Ming—who would waylay and rob
Cargoes consigned to Lou Wong and his mob.

Crafty Lou Wong, in the hours of gloom,
Stalked and dispatched Hunan Fu to his doom;
Then, the dark phantoms of fear to elude,
Fled his abode as one hotly pursued.
Even his henchmen of Green Dragon Tong
Knew not the hide-out of crafty Lou Wong.

Bolton van Zandt, a young rounder of wealth,
Chartered a yacht, planned a cruise for his health;
Carried a staff of new servants along.
One, a chink valet, was crafty Lou Wong.
Thus hoped Lou Wong to elude—and repose
Hidden and safe from the wrath of his foes.

One night in Hongkong, to prowl and explore,
Wong left the yacht, and was seen nevermore.
Knifed in the dark as he sauntered along,
Croaked by a “Son of the Shimmering Gong”!
Thus runs the menace of Doyer Street Tong
All round the world—to avenge bloody wrong!



SEA LAW AND

Suddenly, they snatched the reins of




BLUE JEAN BILLY

power from this wild daughter of the sea.

By CHARLES
W. TYLER

CHAPTER I.

A SCREAM IN THE NIGHT.



IT seemed that "Blue Jean" Billy Race had found a greater degree of peace and quiet in Calico Lane than she had ever thought existed anywhere in the world. She had, in consequence, come to love the place with an enduring devotion. The Peasleys—"Uncle Lige" and "Aunt Sophy"—were more like a father and a mother than kindly strangers to whom she had come as a summer boarder with the name of Arlin Shores.

The big, rambling white house with green shutters that nestled beneath the apple trees, the lilacs, the old-fashioned garden, the wall-bordered lane, Blue Gingham Bay at its foot, the old wharf there, the fringe of waving marsh grass, and the white-crested blue waters beyond—it all was like a wondrous dream world, through which one journeyed in eternal security and peace.

The tang of salt and sea hung over the place like a peculiar spiced incense, while there was always the soft murmur of licking waters on the shore of the bay, with the boom of breakers on Shabby Rocks in the

background. Far off to the eastward, came the lazy grunt of the whistling buoy on Hungry Ledge.

Out beyond Lish Merrit's barn was the white shaft of old Cornfield Light, or Katy's Candle, as it was known locally. Anchored in the channel was the ancient *Martha Ainsley*, naked of mast and spar, and long since abandoned to the elements. The smaller craft of lobster men dotted the bay, while in the daylight hours the *putt-putt* of these small craft could be heard off-shore.

And all of this, Blue Jean loved, for it was of the sea. And the sea to her spelled freedom. Always there was a path of escape down the lane of blue water. Here, when hard pressed by the police, she could flee, could get away from the grim and sordid battle called life. Safety was out there beyond the white line of the breakers.

Like a veritable sea hawk, a jaeger gull, Blue Jean Billy Race was always poised for flight at the first hint of danger. And danger there was—always. The law never forgot, nor forgave, those who violated its precepts. Society demanded its pound of flesh. The debt the underworld owed was never outlawed. And Blue Jean had sinned. Her daring exploits up and down the coast were a matter of record in the red ledger of things.

So we come to the woman herself—Blue Jean Billy Race, daughter of destiny.

Bronzed by wind and sun, leathery as an Indian, was this young woman. Sleek and lithe as a seal, bright-eyed, full-blown, delicately curved by maturity, soft-spoken. She could be as warm and friendly as a summer sky, or as fierce and unrelenting as a lightning-slashed tempest. Before all else,

she loved to play, to do the things that other young women did. She loved life, freedom, happiness. No satisfaction, no glory did she find in being a highway woman of the sea. She knew no recompense would ever come from being a gun moll, nothing except a cell in the gray wall.

Escape, perhaps, to some distant land, to a new world—that might be the answer, and Blue Jean had often considered it. And yet she could not seem to tear herself away from the scenes that were so closely associated with her memories of both her father and her mother. She liked, now and then, to return to Fiddler's Reach and Raggedy Ann Island, and, sitting there close to the smashing surf, live again the days of her childhood, those happy times before the shadowy menace of outlawry had crept into her life. Castles in the air, she built; dreams of yesterday, and the things that might have been.

But now, here in Calico Lane, she found herself enmeshed in new entanglements, if such they might be termed. Her attachment for Uncle Lige Peasley and his wife, Aunt Sophy, had grown swiftly, until the thought of leaving this atmosphere of contentment filled her with sadness. She lingered on through that first summer, and, almost before she knew it, winter had come and gone, and the apple trees were in blossom again, and the lilacs.

From the first, Blue Jean had firmly resolved never to do anything while she lived with the Peasleys that might, in any way, reflect on these two kindly old souls.

Blue Gingham Bay and Calico Lane, it seemed, were as far as the ends of the earth from anything crooked, from thief and racketeer and killer. It was, Blue Jean de-

cided, a small heaven of its own, secure there by the sea in a nook of the wide-arching arm of Cape Cod.

Blue Jean felt that her present state of happiness was too good to last. And this, it came to pass, was true. For a dark cloud was already spreading its sinister shadow over Blue Gingham Bay, over Little Gurnet, and Pemagussett. Like the bold billows of a thunderhead, it appeared suddenly above the horizon and as quickly became a snarling tempest, sweeping everything in its path, threatening to destroy much that had long been in the building.

The trouble began when young Merle Denton, of the Dentons of Pemagussett, Newport, the Back Bay, got mixed up with one "Trigger" Marlin and his gang of gunmen, river pirates, and hijackers.

The underworld has graduated of late years from the gutter to society. Once folks let the bars down on the booze racket, even the best of them found themselves associating with an individual that had never before been tolerated. When you open the door for a wolf, you can't complain too loudly if, by chance, a few other beasts get in.

It has been said that the bootlegger, like water, merely seeks his own level. And he has, to a certain extent, found it as readily in the social register as in the slums. Pemagussett looked on the bootlegger as a means to an end. The older folks boasted of their pre-War liquor, while the younger set shouted aloud the virtues of their bootleggers and an ability to obtain the "real stuff."

Trigger Marlin, at last in the money, big money, gave the exclusive Pemagussett colony its first severe shock when he bought the old Thomas Mason estate, and moved in with his retinue of suave and

polished killers. Pemagussett was not, and never had been, blind to the fact that Trigger Marlin's boats—varnished, high-powered craft that could run circles around the best coast-guard boat afloat—supplied the South Shore with liquor. However, it was a rude awakening to find this big shot established fairly in their midst, with his own private high-speed cruiser riding to a mooring in Mashport harbor.

Pemagussett went into a huddle with itself; the metropolitan press blossomed forth with the news. Little Gurnet, Truwich, Marshport whispered indignantly among themselves. But there the matter ended—with Trigger Marlin riding down daily from Boston in his big fast car with his bodyguard and his henchmen.

Death lurked in Pemagussett, guns hid their cold muzzles close to Blue Gingham Bay, awaiting the bidding of Trigger Marlin. Something was "on the make." "There was a hen on!"

Blue Jean, from her long experience in the underworld, saw it coming, and shuddered. And yet even old "Quality Bill's" girl little dreamed of the turn the thing would take, of the stark, heartbreaking tragedy that hovered close to Calico Lane.

The affair broke with the stunning suddenness of a bolt from a blue sky. There was no warning—only a shrill, piercing scream that shattered the stillness of a soft and starry July night, a despairing wail cut short.

The sound came from the direction of the shore, just south of the old pier at the foot of Calico Lane, a wild, desperate shriek that was abruptly stilled with a decisiveness that was ominous, appalling. It was followed by a silence that was in it-

self awesome and terrible. No sound, no revealing note came thereafter to relieve the horrible quiet that closed about the mysterious cry. Gently, the waves of the bay lapped at the shore, and in the background was the ceaseless hollow booming of the distant surf.

A window on the second floor of the Peasley farmhouse went up, and Uncle Lige put out his head to listen, for the scream had penetrated even his usual deep sleep. He listened, with his head turned first this way and then that.

A minutes passed, and another, and another. Five. Ten.

Then, had Captain Peasley remained at the window, had he listened closely, he might have heard the faint, steady sound of oars straining with slow precision in oarlocks somewhere out on the bay.

After a minute or two, Uncle Lige turned away from the window, muttering to himself. "I swan, I thought I heard somebody holler. Sounded like a woman." He addressed Aunt Sophy in a low voice. "You awake, Sophy?"

"What ails you, Lige Peasley?" was the sleepy and impatient reply. "Land sakes, it's gittin' so a body can't get a mite of sleep, between you tossin' and gruntin', and gittin' up to listen out of that winder. Git back to bed and keep off your back."

"I heard somebody holler," persisted Uncle Lige. "Drat it, who left that chair in the middle of the room?" he asked, as he stumbled against this piece of furniture on the way to the door that led to the hall.

Creaking boards marked his slow progress down the black hallway. His fingers explored the wall until he came to a doorway farther on. Softly, he pressed the latch and eased the door inward. The room

was that of Blue Jean, or Arlin Shores.

A vague and troubled something had laid hold of Captain Peasley, and he had been unable to shake off the premonition that tragedy was stalking the paths of night close to Calico Lane. He knew the story of Blue Jean Billy Race, of old Quality Bill's girl, did Captain Lige. He had heard it from the lips of this waif of the sea herself. She had kept nothing back. She had laid her soul bare, but it made no difference to the old man and his kindly faced wife. They had infinite faith in Arlin Shores.

Could it be now that the grim chains of events that had been so much a part of the life of Blue Jean, that the fateful happenings of her yesterdays were still weaving their black and mystic spell about her? The grizzled old captain had a feeling that this was true. Forces over which the vivid and pretty Arlin had no control were behind it all, he was sure. The very air seemed charged with an atmosphere of tragedy. He could still hear ringing in his ears that far-flung cry and its muffled termination.

As he slowly pushed the door of Blue Jean's room open, Captain Lige softly spoke the name of the woman, the name by which she was known in Little Gurnet, in Calico Lane, in Marshport.

"Arlin! Arlin, are ye there?" His voice became almost tremulous. "Are ye all right, girl?"

The gentle ticking of a small mantel clock was the only answer, the only sound. The very note of it seemed to spell emptiness. For a moment, Captain Peasley stood listening, holding the door half open as he peered anxiously into the room.

Dimly, he could discern the bed,

while a vague patch of light from the near-by window lay across it. Once, he thought he could see a form there beneath the patchwork quilt.

"Arlin!" Again he spoke, but this time his voice was raised in sudden apprehension. His eyes, becoming accustomed to the gloom, seemed to tell him that, though the bedclothes were piled in disarray, the woman was not there. "Arlin!" He moved forward and stretched out his hand in quick exploration.

Sudden despair gripped the gray old man, an ache clutched his heart. The room was empty. Arlin Shores, alias Blue Jean Billy Race, a woman that had been as a daughter to them, was gone. Old Quality Bill's girl had slipped away again to the open paths of the restless waters beyond Blue Gingham Bay, down the ways of adventure that beckoned in the night.

CHAPTER II.

TRIGGER MARLIN'S THREAT.

LONG versed in the ways of the underworld and its "good peoples," Blue Jean knew that the coming of Trigger Marlin to Pemagussett only spelled trouble. You could not put a gangster of Marlin's type in the quiet, peaceful atmosphere of Little Gurnet and Truwich and the countryside, and not foul it. A swaggering, leering youth, drunk with the power easy money had given him was a force for evil no matter where he was.

Silently, Blue Jean watched developments with cold and practical eyes. With frowning disapproval, this slender highwaywoman of the sea noted the fact that certain mem-

bers of Pemagussett's younger set seemed to look on it as an adventure to know one of gangland's big shots. With youthful folly, they let down the bars as a sort of lark, a dangerous lark, as it proved.

Ellen Maybrook, engaged to Merle Denton, had gone one night with a party to a road house outside of Boston, and there she had met Trigger Marlin. That night was begun the spinning of an insidious web that caught instantly at the skirts of the beautiful Ellen.

She flirted with Trigger Marlin, danced with him, flattered him, and with no heed, no thought that she was playing a dangerous game. The gangster had, in his sordid career, known only painted molls of a type that are naturally attracted to youths of his stamp. Ellen Maybrook was a flamingly pretty girl, with the breeding of a thoroughbred back of her. Quality stood out all over her, in every word and gesture.

To Trigger Marlin, she was different. She awakened in him a desire for possession, while he gave no thought to the fact that she was as far out of his reach as the stars in the heavens. To Ellen Maybrook, the gangster stood for nothing more than a strange and interesting specimen, a person she had read much about, but had never before been privileged to observe at close hand.

Trigger Marlin, however, made it a point to attend the dances at Falmouth and Little Gurnet; he frequented the road houses on the South Shore that were most often visited by the moneyed younger crowd. He made it his business to meet Ellen Maybrook often. He forced his attentions on her to a certain extent, although the girl failed definitely to establish a dead line.

At first, she looked on his persistent advances in the light of a conquest, something that she could jokingly boast about. Suddenly, she realized that Marlin was not one to be easily rebuffed, while there finally came the realization that the fellow was deadly. She and Merle Denton had many bitter quarrels because of the good-looking gang leader. The girl was loath to admit that she had been indiscreet in boldly flirting with Trigger Marlin, though inwardly she knew that she had been very foolish. Young Denton, knowing in his heart that he was little better than the gang of bootleggers that he had been dealing with, realized his own weakness when it came either to defying or antagonizing a killer like this so-called big shot.

"I'm goin' to steal your girl, Denton," Marlin had boldly informed the young millionaire a short time before the opening of this story. "I like her, and you're only a dumb Jake with a lot of coin your old man had to make for you. A woman wants a guy that can grab his own pile like I did. That jane of yours is a nifty skirt, and I'm nutty over her. What a looker! She's got shape, class, and airs. I'm sick of dumb molls."

"You'd better lay off Ellen," young Denton had replied seriously. "She's not your kind, Marlin. And, anyway, we're engaged. At least, there's an understanding."

"Oh, so ther 's an understanding, hey?" jeered Marlin. "You're engaged! Well, get this! I don't give a hoot if you're married. If I want your moll, I'll take her. That's me, guy. You and me are in the same boat. I sell booze, and you buy it—and glad to get it. You're breakin' the law the same as me, only I don't try to kid myself that I'm on

the up an' up. You and your crowd are a bunch of cheap pikers."

"You haven't got any right to say that," demurred Denton.

"I got a right to say anything I want to!" the other shot back. "You can't stop me! The cops are with me, too." He laughed harshly. "I can do anything I want to. Half of the hick bulls in these towns around here are on my pay roll. *I'm* the big shot! See! So if I grab up that swell little filly of yours some night and run away with her, don't go off your nut, but just remember that I told you so, feller."

"Oh, you're kidding," protested young Denton in a voice that he tried to make brave. But away down inside of him was a horrible feeling of emptiness, for something seemed to tell him that Trigger Marlin was very much in earnest.

"I never met a jane like this Maybrook kid before," the gangster went on. "Just didn't happen to. That kind don't come around where I hang out much. Thanks for introducing her."

"But—but," Denton had stammered desperately, "she just wanted to meet you because they called you a big shot. It was a sort of a joke."

"And the joke's on you, feller," said Marlin. "Guess your broad thought she could kid me along, then give me the air. Not me, guy. No skirt does that to me. I do all that stuff myself. What I want I get—and how!"

Merle Denton was frightened. He didn't like the hard little glint that appeared in the eye of Trigger Marlin. This fellow was a ruthless, barbaric killer. That was his reputation. What a fool he had been to get mixed up with this gang of young gunmen! Was civilization moving forward or back, when a gangster could throw down the

gauntlet to society—and get away with it?

What a farce it was! Denton racked his brain for a way out, following his meeting with Marlin. Suddenly, a name flashed before him, and a face, a tanned, pretty face. The only person in the world that Merle Denton felt he could go to in his trouble, the only one he believed capable of coping with the situation was a person who was herself outside of the pale.

Blue Jean Billy Race! She knew the underworld. She knew of Trigger Marlin and his kind. Perhaps she would have something to suggest; she might know a way out, for she was courageous and resourceful. Blue Jean, alias Arlin Shores, was his friend. They had been thrown together in a strange, grim adventure once. He'd go to her and tell her of the threats made by Marlin.

The young folks of Pemagussett and Little Gurnet had accepted Arlin Shores unto themselves with all of the comradeship of the happy crowds that yearly gathered here on the shore. She was one of them. However, only the Peasleys and himself and one or two others knew that this same Arlin Shores was the famous Blue Jean, stormy petrel, outlaw woman.

Blue Jean listened gravely to the story of young Denton, while at last a grim little smile played about her lips. The incongruity of it all, the ruthless thrust of the tides of life that tossed hither and yon humanity's frail crafts! Here was a member, in good standing, of the same society that demanded of her its pound of flesh for offenses committed, and he was asking her to defend him against other wolves who were outside the law. Merle Denton, like many others of his kind, had been a patron of a law-

breaker, thereby becoming a law-breaker himself.

Society haughtily drew its skirts aside that it might not be contaminated by evildoers, while at the same time it lent both moral and financial support to rum runner and gangster.

Blue Jean shook her head, while her eyes held steadily to the disturbed face of young Denton. "Are you asking me to become Miss Maybrook's bodyguard?" she demanded in a low voice. "Is that it?"

"I—I'm not trying to hire you," Merle hastened to assure her. "But I am afraid for Ellen. I thought—why, I sort of thought you might keep an eye on her. You have been out with us a lot, and you two are friendly."

"You made a mistake in getting mixed up with Trigger Marlin," Blue Jean said. "He's powerful, and he's a killer. He won't stop at anything." She paused, while Merle watched her anxiously. At last, she went on: "Ellen is a sweet girl. She has been awfully nice to me, considering that nobody knows who or what I am. I'll do anything I can. I wouldn't want to see her get in the clutches of Trigger Marlin. But understand, I am only one, and a woman. It is a serious matter, this racket business. They don't have to have much of an excuse to put you on the spot."

"I'll make it a point to include you in our parties," young Denton went on hastily. "I will feel a lot better."

"None of Trigger Marlin's crowd know who I am," Blue Jean said musingly. "I expect this little game will be interesting."

"Perhaps Marlin will try to make you." Merle forced a laugh.

"Perhaps," said Blue Jean in a hard tone. "But when I flirt with a

rat like Trigger Marlin, it will be with the thing they call a rope's end."

Two weeks later, the thing that Merle Denton feared happened. With all of the cunning and craft at his command, Trigger Marlin struck. As was characteristic of him, he depended on his cohorts to do the actual kidnaping. If anything went sour, Trigger Marlin would not be the one to take the rap.

Merle Denton had been up to Scituate with Ellen Maybrook in his low, speedy roadster. It was a new car, and he had wanted to try it out. He had paid no attention to the big sedan that raced past now and then, only to find frequent excuses to stop by the roadside until the roadster had again flashed by.

Returning to Pemagussett late at a leisurely pace, young Denton and Ellen Maybrook had reached a point a short distance from the entrance to Calico Lane, when once more the mysterious sedan came rushing up from the rear to pass. However, this time the larger car swerved sharply to crowd the roadster to the side of the highway.

Surprised, startled, young Denton jammed on the brakes barely in time to avoid a collision. Angrily, he sprang out to demand of the other driver an explanation. Suddenly, two youths came around the corner of the sedan and closed with him. A blackjack crashed against his skull and he toppled to the ground. The girl, stunned for a moment, found herself seized before she could cry out, while a heavy hand closed tight about her mouth.

She was dragged from the car, and forced into the sedan in spite of her desperate struggles. Young

Denton was dumped unceremoniously into the seat of the roadster, while a youthful member of the band crowded in beside him to take the wheel. A moment later, the smaller machine glided away into the darkness.

The larger car moved off silently to turn, a few minutes later, into a grass-grown road that led to the shore of Blue Gingham Bay. Close by, a small cedar dinghy had been drawn up on the beach, and near it lurked two shadowy figures. They advanced to meet the sedan.

Inside of the car, Ellen Maybrook, having exhausted herself with her futile efforts to wrench free of the grip of her captor, lay for a moment limp in his arms. The youth who held her removed his hand from her mouth for an instant as he kicked open the door and started to drag her forth.

It was then that the girl screamed, a shrill, desperately forlorn cry that pierced the night, only to be quickly smothered by a vicious palm.

"Choke that jane, you fool!" hissed a voice. "Do ya want to wake up all the cursed rubes for miles around."

"Quick!" directed another of the closely hovering figures. "Get her into the boat."

The pair on the beach seized the now weakly struggling girl and placed her in the stern of the small boat. The craft had already been slid into the water. The gangster at the wheel of the sedan let in the gears, and the car, still without lights, swung about and moved away up the grassy ruts toward the highway.

The dinghy was pushed from the shore. With one last rasp of its keel on bottom, it went into deeper water, while the figure that had

shoved it off stepped over the side and took his place at the oars.

True to his threat, Trigger Martin had taken Ellen Maybrook into his insidious web. Gangland was introducing a new racket. Emboldened by his success as a gangster, grown confident because of the apparent failure of the law to cope with him, Trigger Marlin was boldly initiating a slightly different angle of outlawry. He would have another weapon now, which he could hold over the heads of these millionaire fools. They would pay well for the guarding of their women.

Why limit racketeering to booze? Why draw the line at shaking down business concerns for protection money? There was bigger stuff than that in sight. He'd got the idea during his conversation with Merle Denton. For Trigger Marlin had been quick to sense the fact that the young millionaire was deathly afraid of him, afraid for the woman to whom he was engaged. Here was an opportunity for big money. He'd return the girl without harming her, but only after young Denton paid dearly. Then, perhaps, after a few subtle threats, the crowd at Pemagussett would be glad to be assured of the safety of its society belles through the payment of stipulated sums.

From a half-joking threat, the thing had suddenly assumed gigantic proportions. Trigger Marlin, big shot, was looking for new fields to conquer. He'd bring the snobs to their knees. He'd show 'em that respectability couldn't flirt with gangland, and then suddenly pull out.

There was, however, one slight factor yet to be reckoned with, one unforeseen obstacle that stood in the path of Trigger Marlin. And that was a slender, tanned, keen-eyed

person, a veritable sea nymph—Blue Jean Billy Race.

Although she had retired early this night, Blue Jean was far from being caught unawares. Reared and trained close to the sea, she was unusually sensitive to sounds originating out there on the water. Her senses, even when she slept, seemed tuned to every note that came creeping in. The rattle of an anchor chain, the clatter of oarlocks, the rhythmic mutter of an exhaust, the slat of a sail—any of these, and other sounds, were enough to stir her to consciousness.

She had been too long a fugitive from the law, too long dependent on her own alertness ever to become careless of the little things. Sounds were always whispering in from the sea of a dark night, and one had but to interpret them. She seemed to know almost instinctively when something was wrong. Storms seldom come without casting warnings for those who can easily read them.

To-night the usual quiet of Blue Gingham Bay had been disturbed by a number of things. To the ordinary person, they would have borne no significance, but to Blue Jean they spelled instant warning, for there was about them a certain atmosphere of stealth.

They had dimmed into slumber, penetrating the thin film of sleep that had enveloped her. Few craft left their moorings in Blue Gingham Bay after nightfall, for most of the boats belonged to lobster men or other fishermen, and at dusk their day's work ended. Here and there were small cruisers belonging to summer folks, but the big, flashy boats of the Pemagussett colony were anchored off the channel of the yacht club in Little Gurnet and at Truwich. Hence, it was the

unusual rather than the usual when power craft appeared off Calico Lane at a late hour.

It had been close to eleven when Blue Jean awoke. She heard somewhere the purring motor of a boat with twin engines. Then there was the rattle and bang of oars rolling back and forth across the seats of a dinghy on a mooring as it rocked sharply in the backwash of some moving craft. Came, then, the heavier slap of this same wash on the pebbly shore, and the movement of rowboats hitting together at the float.

Blue Jean got up to look out of her window. Her eyes swept the black waters beyond, but she saw no red and green running lights, no riding lights of white. Neither were there anywhere visible such a dull yellow glow as might come from portholes or open hatchway. The thought that first presented itself was that somebody had been out raiding lobster pots, but there was then the thought that a craft large enough to be powered with two motors would hardly be so employed.

The woman listening at the window in the old Peasley house, next caught the sound of oars clucking in their rowlocks. Evidently, somebody was coming ashore in a dinghy. There was about their manipulation of the oars a certain unmistakable stealth; of this, Blue Jean felt certain.

She frowned, while she became aware of a premonition of impending trouble. Somewhere out along the highway came the sound of a speeding car, and she caught the flash of its headlights for a moment beyond the trees. Another machine followed close behind. She lost them where the road dipped across the bridge.

Her attention was again drawn to the shore, and she forgot the cars until she caught the sound of a motor on the old road through the field beyond the stone wall. An instant later, there was a woman's scream.

Without an instant's loss of time, Blue Jean slipped out of her night-dress and pulled on her bathing suit. She then tossed a light one-piece gingham dress over her head, and took from a drawer her old gun and its belt and water-tight holster. An instant later, she was letting herself into the hall. Noiselessly, she descended the stairs and left the house by the kitchen door.

She did not hesitate a second, but moved quickly down the lane toward the water. She secured the gun belt about her waist under the dress as she went. Her pace quickened into a run, which soon brought her to the old wharf on the shore of Blue Gingham Bay. Here she paused, listening. After a little, she heard again the gentle splash of oars and she made out the faint shadow of a boat moving well out from the shore.

Blue Jean's lips tightened grimly. The despairing cry that she had heard was still ringing in her ears. It was no time to hesitate now. Some one was in trouble, serious trouble, perhaps. Foremost in her mind now, was Ellen Maybrook and the threat that Trigger Marlin had made to Merle Denton.

With quick, strong fingers, Blue Jean loosened the half hitch of the painter that had been passed through a ring of the float to secure the skiff. She stepped in and pushed it off. She moved to the stern and picked up an oar, dropping it into the smoothly worn notch that had been cut to receive it. Then, with the sureness and deftness of a fish-

erman born, the woman began sculling the light craft with one hand.

The bow swung out into the bay, as the boat moved steadily, silently through the gloom, and on toward the stark, savage adventure that lay down the lanes of the sea just ahead.

CHAPTER III.

OUTLAW BOAT.

ONCE they were away from the shore, the two youths that held Ellen Maybrook captive, relaxed their stealth a little. Now and then, the oars splashed noisily on the back stroke, and the rowlocks carried a note of hasty, jerky oarsmen. It was not difficult for Blue Jean to follow the course of the escaping boat.

It cut across the grassy mat of eelgrass that was just coming to the surface of the ebbing tide, and made for the spindling spar buoy at the edge of the crooked channel beyond the flats. Blue Jean tried to keep the boats on the moorings between her and the fleeing boat, while she strained her eyes for a glimpse of the larger motor craft that she felt sure must be anchored offshore.

At last she saw, rising in dim outline out of the gloom, the shadowy shape of a strange boat. It was low, racy, with an approximate length, Blue Jean judged, of some forty feet. Once these mysterious invaders were aboard, there would be, the woman was sure, nothing in the local waters that could overhaul them. She allowed a grim smile to play over her features for an instant, as she thought of the one and two-cylinder dories and slow-moving pleasure craft that rode to their moorings in Blue Gingham Bay.

She could not hope to scull the skiff much closer to the speed boat beyond without fear of discovery. She was picking up the cards in a game with opponents to whom human life meant little. They hesitated no more over the killing of a woman than a man, granting that the woman had knowledge that was dangerous to them.

The only chance there was, Blue Jean knew well, was that of strategy. She must once more resume her rôle as a veritable highwaywoman of the sea, a denizen of the thundering waters. She was armed, and she was dangerous when aroused. And now she was determined to search out the mystery of that feminine cry that had slit the night.

Some one hundred yards from the mysterious speed boat, Blue Jean ceased sculling, and laid the oar carefully across the thwarts. She started to slip out of the sleeveless scanty and flimsy one-piece dress that she wore over her bathing suit; then hesitated. Though it would hamper her swimming a little, she felt that, once she reached her objective, this outer garment might stand her in good stead.

Should she be discovered before she had had a chance to conceal herself aboard, as she planned, this bit of gingham dress would mask the fact that she wore a holstered automatic at her belt. She stepped to the stern and slipped to the seat, swinging her feet overboard. An instant later, Blue Jean Billy Race was letting herself silently into the black waters of Blue Gingham Bay.

Gracefully, she rolled into a slow overarm stroke and began propelling herself forward with surprising grace and ease. She was as much at home in the sea as she was on it, and the dress bothered her very lit-

tle, there being no more cloth in it, or as much, as in a lady's bathing suit of a few years past.

Thus there were moving on the waiting speed cruiser from two different points, actors of opposing factions, both outside of the law, and both determined to carry through the tasks that had been allotted them.

In the cedar skiff, Trigger Marlin's trusted lieutenant, Joe Belatti, and Al Nelson, a swarthy, evil-faced youth, continued toward the boat in the channel. Ellen Maybrook had fainted, and lay in a limp heap on the grating in the bottom of the dinghy.

"Don't splash them oars so much," growled Belatti in an undertone.

"The cursed tide is goin' out," replied the other. "They keep catchin' in the blasted eelgrass. 'Whatcha belchin' about, anyhow? We're away, and the bulls won't get tipped off for hours yet."

"Well, there might be somebody else around," said Belatti. "Look at that." He suddenly pointed toward the shore. "There's a light in that house back there. They must 'a' heard somethin'."

Nelson glanced over his shoulder. "We're most to the boat, anyhow."

On board the craft beyond, a spindling, bleak-eyed gangster known as the "Wharf Rat" awaited the coming of the dinghy. His eyes played continuously over the black waters. Once he thought he saw a suspicious movement off on his right, but, while he watched, squint-eyed, his attention was drawn to the returning tender, coming from the opposite direction. When he again peered toward the spot where he thought he had observed a boat's shadow, there was nothing there.

Joe Belatti and Nelson came

alongside, and the Wharf Rat greeted them with a relieved oath.

"Thought you stiffs wasn't ever comin'. Didja get the jane?"

"O. K.," said Belatti. "Give me a hand. Nelson, hold the skiff up close, you dumb-bell."

"Ellen Maybrook stirred and groaned, as two pairs of hands hoisted her roughly into the cockpit aft.

"She flickered," said Nelson.

"Come to papa, baby," purred the Wharf Rat, seizing the captive and pulling her into the cabin.

Belatti scrambled over the side, while he called over his shoulder: "Make that painter fast, Nelson. We'll keep the skiff in tow unless we happen to get in a chase. If we do, cut 'er loose. Not much chance of anythin' pickin' us up, unless one of them sneakin' coast-guard boats should happen to throw a searchlight on us some place outside."

The pair of two-hundred-and-twenty-five horse-power motors in the powerful bandit boat had been idling, that they be ready for instant use. Tucked away in a snug engine room beneath the bridge deck, there was scarcely a sound from them, while only the faintest note escaped from the exhausts.

The trio of gangsters lost little time in preparing to get away. The Wharf Rat went forward to break out the hook, and Nelson moved to the controls to ease the boat ahead. Joe Belatti remained for a few moments with the girl. They could not afford to risk the chance that a hysterical young woman might try to throw herself overboard, and at the same time, Trigger Marlin's orders had been to treat her with all the consideration possible under the circumstances.

Belatti, therefore, was in a quandary for a little. The girl was cry-

ing now, and he didn't like the idea of securing her hands and feet with rope. She seemed such a frail mite that even the gangster hesitated to make her uncomfortable.

"It's all right, sister," he assured her. "You're just goin' for a nice little ride in a boat, and then we'll be there. Ya boy friend will prob'ly be after ya in a day or two, so don't go and throw a fit now. I was goin' to tie ya up, but I'll just lock ya in here all by ya lonesome. Be good to yourself, broad."

He left the small cabin by the door that led to the cockpit aft, securing the door behind him. The forward door led to the bridge deck, and this he fastened as he went to join Nelson at the controls.

Intent on the business of getting under way, the three gangsters failed to observe the bobbing head that came inching up astern of the dinghy. Blue Jean was using a breast stroke now, and swimming silently. She soon was in a position where she was hidden by the skiff, but already the youth in the bow of the power boat had put a strain on the anchor line, and the craft was gradually moving ahead. Then the propellers began kicking over slowly.

Blue Jean buried her face and returned to the speedy overarm, which quickly brought her up directly behind the dinghy. She seized it by the stern, and rested for a little; then drew herself slowly into the boat. Here she remained for a few moments, crouching low in the bottom.

Once the speed cruiser got under way, there would be no hope of pulling the skiff close enough to board the larger boat. The strain on the painter would be terrific, with the skiff riding the stern wave at thirty miles an hour or better. She must

chance getting aboard the power craft now, for there would be the danger that the tender might break away if there was much of a sea running.

Easing herself into the bow, Blue Jean gently pulled the skiff close to the broad stern of the mother boat. For an instant, she balanced herself, then crawled across into the cockpit. The low-roofed cabin that held Ellen Maybrook prisoner separated this cockpit aft from the bridge deck, now occupied by two of the three youths aboard the speed cruiser. The third member of the renegade crew was occupied in the bow with the anchor. All backs were on the stern, and the silent figure that crept aboard.

For a moment, Blue Jean hesitated, while she crowded against the closed hatchway of the after cabin. Suddenly, she grew tense, for there reached her ears, from within, the sounds of gasping sobs. Here, then, was the temporary prison that held the victim of the mysterious boatmen. Here was the answer to the cry that had sounded on the shore of Blue Gingham Bay.

Quickly, Blue Jean's fingers explored the small door and its fastenings. The bow of a small padlock was caught through the staple of a hasp, which held the hinged door secure against release from the inside, though the lock itself had not been snapped. Softly, Blue Jean undid the fastening and swung the door open. She then stepped down into the cabin.

With a low-voiced admonition, she dropped beside the dim form of the sobbing girl.

"Ellen, is that you?" she whispered.

Instantly, the other jerked erect, while she smothered a cry of joy.

"Yes!" she whispered. "Yes, it's Ellen! Who are you?"

"Arlin!"

"Oh, Arlin!" Ellen said in a meaning undertone. "This is terrible! What is it all about? What are they going to do with me?"

"Sh!" warned Blue Jean. "They'll hear you."

"But what are you doing here? Where did you come from? And you're all wet."

"I came to help you," Blue Jean said, close to the girl's ear. "I heard you scream, and I rowed and swam out to find what it was all about. Are you hurt?"

"N-no," Ellen replied brokenly. "I—I'm all right. Just scared half to death. Why have they done this to me?"

"Pull yourself together," whispered Blue Jean. "We may be in for a fight, but that's better than taking it on the chin without a struggle. You never know what's going to pop when you get in the clutches of gangsters. I don't think there's much chance of getting away now, unless we go overboard. You're a pretty good swimmer, but I doubt if we could get anywhere before they'd pick us up. How many of these water rats are there?"

"Three, I think. There were two brought me out here, and one aboard, waiting."

Old Quality Bill's girl, soggy and dripping, gave Ellen Maybrook a quick little hug. "Keep your courage up now. There may be a gun fight, but I can talk that language as well as these cheap swine."

"Oh, but, Arlin——"

"Don't worry," Blue Jean cut in a little harshly. "I'm no sweet, lisping lily, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. If I have to, I can be just as darned tough as any

of Trigger Marlin's cowardly gorillas."

At that moment, the speed boat swung around toward the channel. The rear door of the after cabin banged sharply back and forth. The sound reached the ears of Joe Belatti, and he jerked about in sudden alarm. He moved aft with a quick stride that carried him the length of the bridge deck. Once more, the door swung on its hinges in answer to a slight roll of the boat.

The movement caught the eye of the gangster. "How did that door get open?" he snarled. "Something is cockeyed here."

He caught the handrail and skirted the cabin to drop into the small open cockpit beyond. Already, his fingers were snatching a flashlight from his pocket, while his right hand jerked an automatic from a shoulder holster beneath his left armpit. The next instant, a white beam of illumination stabbed down into the cabin, revealing within its silvered circle the fact that, beside their prisoner, Ellen Maybrook, there was another person aboard.

The invader was, though drenching wet, vividly pretty. Soaked garments clung to her, revealing the fact that she possessed a lithe, well-formed body. A mature young woman was here, a bronzed, bright-eyed creature that was even more alluring to look on than Ellen Maybrook herself.

As he stared at the stranger, an evil smile played across the face of Joe Belatti. It mattered little who she was, or why she was here. She had come unbidden, and she should be a prisoner of war, a pawn in his hands.

Might this strange sea nymph not be considered henceforth as Joe Belatti's moll!

CHAPTER IV.

GUN MOLL.

BLUE JEAN'S long, wet lashes cunningly veiled the flame that burned within her. She was playing a game that was grim and vicious. One betraying glance, one false move would precipitate a fight to the finish. She knew Trigger Marlin's reputation; she knew that his men were cold-blooded killers, confident that their wicked deeds would go unpunished until they were caught under the muzzles of the guns of rival gangsters.

Out here, they were supremely sure of themselves. Black water separated them from those who might prove dangerous. They made their own law; their code was ruthlessness. If she was to thwart this human piracy, she, Billy Race, must utilize every weapon at her command.

Blue Jean squinted at the dazzling light that had suddenly deluged her, and a half-contemptuous smile flickered for an instant about her lips.

"Well, what's the big idea?" She tossed her head defiantly.

"Hey, what are you doin' here, broad?" cried the gangster.

"Oh, I just dropped aboard to be neighborly," said Blue Jean, in an even tone. "Any objections?"

"Not so's you could notice it." There was a kind of cold exultance in the voice of Belatti. "Glad to have ya along. Make yourself right to home, kid." There was a pause, then: "But remember, I got a gat here, and ya try anythin' funny, and I'll pump lead into ya. Keep that in ya nut, sweetheart."

The Wharf Rat returned from stowing the anchor in the bow, and

joined Nelson at the wheel. The speed cruiser was picking its way along the crooked channel, threading the treacherous eelgrass flats that flanked it, for the tide was low and many jutting bars supplied constant menace. To go aground would mean hours of waiting, and the failure of their plans.

"What's the matter with Joe?" growled the Wharf Rat, glancing toward the after cockpit.

"I dunno," mumbled the other. "That dame must have come to life all of a sudden. Watch out on your side. If we get out of the channel, it's goin' to be tough luck."

The outer breakers on Lobster Claw sent their dull, monotonous roar through the night. There was now the smash of the surf on Shabby Rocks, and the tolling bell on Pumpkin Knob. Curling waters whispered across the black reach of Apron String Channel. Soon the sleek and varnished craft would have passed out of Blue Gingham Bay, while she laid a course for that haven that Trigger Marlin had long ago selected.

Joe Belatti called to Nelson, while he held his flashlight on the dripping figure. "Open the forward door of this cabin, Nelson. We got a stowaway."

The gangster on the bridge hastened to obey, a startled oath on his lips. He flung back the door and stared down at Blue Jean. "Where'd you come from, sister?"

Blue Jean did not answer. She turned her head and shot a glance at this second youth, a glance of keen appraisal, while she plucked the wet folds of her dress away from her body. These gangsters must not see the bulge of that holster underneath.

"Go out to the bridge deck," directed Belatti, addressing Blue

Jean. "We want a little talk with ya."

The outlaw woman moved to obey. She was tense, alert. The flashlight in the hand of Nelson covered her now, as he stood aside to make way for her. Belatti again secured the doors of the small after cabin; then joined the little group on the raised bridge deck.

The boat was now cleaving the waves out past Lobster Claw Point. Shabby Rocks were abeam, and the open sea lay ahead. The Wharf Rat, at the wheel, relaxed his vigilance. In a few minutes, the bell on Pumpkin Knob would be dropping astern, and they would be free of dangerous ledges and shoals. He increased the craft's speed; then turned to stare at the woman who stood behind him.

Blue Jean was caught now full in the revealing glare of the light in the hand of Nelson, while this swarthy gangster regarded her with a sneering grin.

"Take a look at the moll, Wharf Rat," he said.

The latter turned from the wheel to stare at the woman in the circle of light. "Baby, you're liable to have to walk home from this ride," he leered. "Whatcha doin' out in the bay this time of night, anyhow?"

"Ya know," put in Nelson, "it ain't so healthy sometimes when ya see too much."

"I saw her first," said Belatti, with an ugly grin. "You guys lay off my skirt."

"How long since there has been a law against swimming after dark?" demanded Blue Jean, squinting at the shadowy figures back of the flashlight.

"Swimmin' with ya clothes on!" sneered the Wharf Rat. "Just blew down to the drink and walked in

with ya dress on. Tell it to the soldiers."

"Took off her shoes and stock-in's," suggested Nelson, lowering the beam of his light.

Suddenly, the Wharf Rat exclaimed, leaning close to the woman: "Gimme a look at that jane!" He seized Nelson's flash and trained it squarely on Blue Jean's face.

For a little, he stared at her, slow recognition gradually replacing the look of perplexity in his eyes.

"Say!" he cried. "Don't ya guys know who *this* is? It's Blue Jean Billy, old Quality Bill's girl, the stick-up queen. I was in a mob that got in a jam with her once."

"Aw, you're nuts!" rasped Belatti. "This ain't Billy Race."

"I tell ya it is," the Wharf Rat insisted in an excited voice. "Look out for her! She's foxy."

"Yeah, I heard plenty about Blue Jean," said Belatti, "but this can't be her. You're screwy, Rat."

"And who is Blue Jean?" asked the woman, in a cool, even tone. "She sounds interesting."

"You know who she is," shrilled the Wharf Rat. He then turned to his companions. "Cave in her skull, and throw 'er to the fish. She's got wise to somethin'."

"She had climbed aboard, and was in talkin' to that other filly," Belatti admitted thoughtfully. "Maybe you're right, guy."

"Frisk her for a rod," said the Wharf Rat.

"So that's the kind of a broad ya are," snarled Nelson. "Gun moll! One of them tough babies. Well, don't try to be funny with us or we'll cool ya pretty quick."

The Wharf Rat gave his attention to the wheel for a little; then again turned to scowl at Blue Jean. "You had a nerve buttin' in on

Trigger Marlin's racket. "Ya won't be the first moll we put on the spot."

Nelson moved forward. He was not averse to frisking this swell little dame. "Put up your hands, kid," he directed.

Blue Jean's arms had been held tight to her side, as she stood motionless, her bare feet braced against the movement of the boat. Slowly, her eyes went from face to face of these dim figures on the bridge. Her lips were drawn into a thin little line, and her eyes smoldered with an ominous fire.

"You lay a hand on me, you rat," she flung out suddenly, "and I'll kill you in your tracks."

Nelson drew back involuntarily. At that instant, Blue Jean's right hand, until now partially hidden by a baggy fold of her wet dress, flashed upward. Before Joe Belatti, standing nearest her, knew what was happening, he felt a hard something prodding into his side.

As the woman had moved to obey the instructions of Marlin's lieutenant, in the little cabin aft, there had been just an instant when she was free of the imprisoning white glare of the two gangsters' flashlights. It was then that she had managed to slip her automatic pistol from its rubber holster under her dress, to conceal it as well as she might beneath a corner of the flimsy garment she wore over her bathing suit.

Until now, the thing that she held tight against her thigh had escaped the attention of the trio who confronted her. Their first intimation that there was something radically wrong, came when a startling command cracked from her lips.

"Don't make a move! Any of you!" It was the voice of the highwaywoman of the sea of old, and it

carried a convincing grimness. "If one of you rats attempt any gun play, I'll drill this guy in front of me right through the spine!"

"Holy Ned, where'd she get the gat?" gasped Nelson. "She couldn't 'a' carried it when she swum out here."

"I told ya to frisk her!" yapped the Wharf Rat, with an oath. "Every fool knows she always used to pack a gun in a rubber holster."

"Listen, frail," cut in Joe Belatti desperately. "Go easy with that pepper box; it might go off."

"And it probably will!" cried Blue Jean. "All you have got to do is just bat your squeamy eye. Furthermore, it might interest you to know that I am the bodyguard of that girl in the cabin, Ellen Maybrook. The kidnaping is off."

"You're that jane's bodyguard!" exclaimed Nelson incredulously. "The blazes ya say!"

"Aw, you ain't nobody's bodyguard!" rasped the Wharf Rat. "You're just tryin' to muscle in on Marlin's racket. I know ya, and you can't kid us. Ya better throw away that gat before ya get hurt."

"Turn around!" commanded Blue Jean, her words like shafts of steel, while she ignored the gangster's comment. "You attend to steering the boat, and keep *two* hands on the wheel, because, if you ever let go of it, your pirate days are over!"

She then nodded at Nelson. "And you! Put 'em up. The first thing any of you do that looks suspicious, I'm going to ventilate this wop I'm holding my gun against, and I'll ventilate him to a fare-you-well." She dug the weapon once more into Belatti's ribs, lest he forget.

"Hey, you, listen a minute," growled the latter. "Let's have a little understandin' about this thing.

We'll fix ya up all right—only take that cursed rod out of my kidney.”

“Shut up!” snapped Blue Jean. “I'll do the talking, and, when I quit using my tongue, I'll start using the trigger on this automatic. Put your hands around behind you; I want that gat you've got and the flashlight.”

Blue Jean's bit of strategy had been executed in a most adroit manner, and Joe Belatti had been given no opportunity to turn his own weapon on her. He had been standing close beside her on the bridge, and he had paid little heed as she stepped back in an apparent effort to avoid the dazzling rays of the flashlight that the Wharf Rat had shot into her face.

Then had come the significant thrust of something hard against his side. It was not an enviable position that he now occupied, and his mind was filled with a dozen desperate plans to circumvent the woman and offset the advantage that she had gained. His brain reeled with frantic and apparently hopeless ideas. Grudgingly, he relaxed his hold on his gun. Trigger Marlin would kill him for this. But Trigger Marlin was, after all, the more remote of two evils.

Joe Belatti had heard much talk of Blue Jean Billy Race, and he was not deceived as to the fact that she could be very deadly when aroused. It must be a play for time now; they must wait for a break. When it came, they would kill this woman and consign her body to the sea.

Blue Jean caught the barrel of the gangster's gun and flung it overboard. Then she took the flashlight and played its beam onto the three youths before her. She knew full well that she must wage a bitter fight to a finish. There would be no clemency henceforth. Every-

thing depended absolutely on her generalship. She must outwit, not only the gangsters aboard the speed boat, but Trigger Marlin, as well.

Were it certain that Ellen Maybrook and herself could return safely to Pemagussett, to Calico Lane, there would still be the hideous shadow of the gunman mob hovering over them. Killers seeking revenge. The terrifying threat of flaming guns must haunt them in their sleep, dog them when awake. Life would become a veritable nightmare.

For herself, Blue Jean did not mind, but to bring the strife of gangland to Calico Lane was unthinkable. Trigger Marlin had already established himself in a great estate at Pemagussett, fair among the peace-loving folks of the South Shore and the gay summer residents. The thing was like a cobra in a garden, a rattlesnake among hollyhocks. No one could be safe as long as that venomous presence was there.

The police would be, as they had been in the past, powerless. There were no threatening rival gangs to clip the claws of Marlin. Blue Jean's lips drew into a tight little line. The fight was her own. She could see that. There was no alternative now—even had she sought one. The battle involved herself and the big shot of Pemagussett. One advantage she held at the moment, and only one.

She, old Quality Bill's girl, notorious highwaywoman of the sea—she was allotted the choice of the duel's location. To her was given the power to declare where this grim and merciless contest must take place. And on her judgment the outcome depended.

Through the shrewd brain of Blue Jean raced a strange panorama:

pictures there of boiling seas, of screaming breakers, of bold, rocky headlands, of sullen, hidden ledges, of racing tides, of green water and white. Her trails were of the sea; her ways were down the lanes of tempestuous waves to isolated and forsaken sand dune and rocky isle. Here then were her allies, swelling with power as they awaited the calls of their gods of storm and tempest.

The Wharf Rat half turned his head, and, with a snarling sneer, called over his shoulder: "All right, broad, what's the course? Where do we go from here, sister?"

There was a pause, as Blue Jean waited, her brain snatching hungrily at every faint hope, at every dancing suggestion that leaped to her call of distress. And then she spoke, slowly, deliberately, her words chosen carefully and then flung boldly forth with the defiant spirit of an age-old viking who hurled back a challenge to the enemy hordes that confronted him.

"East by north, one point east—straight out to sea!"

CHAPTER V.

HEADED FOR FURY ISLAND.

THE situation was one that offered constant hazard. Two of the gunmen still wore their weapons in shoulder holsters, and to attempt to disarm them must be of a necessity prove exceedingly dangerous. However, until the last one of them had been stripped of his pistols, there could be no certainty but that they might make a desperate attempt to regain control of the boat at any moment.

Blue Jean backed slowly toward the hatchway that led to the small

cabin aft, a distance of but a few feet, while she held the beam of her flashlight on the three gangsters. And then, with a quick movement of her gun hand, she released the catch of the door.

She spoke over her shoulder to the girl within. "Come out, Ellen; I need you."

Ellen Maybrook, once partially reassured by the presence of Arlin Shores on the outlaw craft, had taken herself in hand to the extent that she was no longer bordering on the hysterical. Somehow, she had great confidence in the woman she knew as Arlin, the boarder at the Peasleys'.

Now she left the cabin with no hesitation, and came to stand beside Blue Jean. She was breathing hard, and, had one been able to look into her eyes, he would have glimpsed new hope there, courage. Her tone had lost its terror; it was steady, as she voiced instant admiration.

"Arlin, you're marvelous," she cried. "You're the bravest woman I ever knew. I never dreamed any one could do the thing you have done."

"Oh, it's Arlin, hey!" snarled the Wharf Rat. "The brave Blue Jean is under a flag. Old Quality Bill's little wild cat has got a phony moniker down here with the swells."

"W-what?" cried Ellen Maybrook with a surprised gasp. For she, too, had read of the daring outlaw that had eluded the police for years.

"Yes, I'm Blue Jean," admitted the poised figure, who now stood in command. There was a tinge of bitterness in her voice. "Blue Jean Billy—infamous outlaw. So please don't get sentimental about my bravery; I'm just living up to my name. This courage stuff is the bunk. Bravery with me is a vice,

not a virtue. I won't mislead you any further, Miss Maybrook. I am what I am, and have no excuse to offer."

She paused, then added: "I think I can save you from Trigger Marlin and these tough eggs that do his bidding." A hard little laugh broke from her lips. "You know they say it takes a thief to catch a thief; a crook to cross up a crook."

"You are, nevertheless, a brave woman," Ellen Maybrook said with a show of spirit. "I don't care who you are. I am eternally in your debt. I guess I know a game sport when I see one. Anyway, it was all my fault in the first place."

"You're sure a thoroughbred, all right," said Blue Jean. "I want to tell you, though, that we're not out of trouble yet. We're on the high seas—and headed offshore. We can't go back to Blue Gingham Bay now, or we'll have the whole mob on our heels. We could land at Truwich or Marshport, but there would still be this bird they call Trigger Marlin to contend with. Your future safety, Ellen, depends on how badly we lick the big shot before we go back to the mainland. Are you game to stand by?"

"Am I?" cried Ellen Maybrook. "Try me!"

"All right," Blue Jean directed crisply, "just step up behind that spindling pair of would-be pirates and take their gats. Frisk 'em good."

"Search them. Keep one gun and throw the rest into the ocean." And to the gangsters, she said: "Don't try any tricks, or I'll kill you just as sure as the sea is salt."

Ellen Maybrook, moving a little timorously, relieved the Wharf Rat and Nelson of their weapons. A small .38 with a two-inch barrel, she kept. The other black and ugly

guns that rewarded her search, she flung overboard.

Blue Jean then took a second revolver from the person of Joe Belatti and also consigned it to the deep. "We might find a use for them later," she said, "but right now it will be safer to have them out of the way."

The Wharf Rat spoke now, his voice hoarse with rage. "It ain't goin' to do you any good, this stunt you're pullin', Blue Jean. You're all done. Trigger Marlin will put ya on the spot, and if ya get away from us, the bulls will be after Arlin Shores. Ya can't go back to Blue Gingham Bay, or no place around there. The best thing you can do is listen to us. I'll make ya a proposition."

Blue Jean laughed. It was not a sound to cheer the three members of Marlin's mob on board the speed cruiser. "You're in a fine position to make *me* a proposition," she said. "I'm debating with myself this minute whether to hang you from a yardarm, or make you walk the plank. Seeing that there's no yardarm, I'm afraid it will have to be the plank. And to make the job complete, I'll probably have to weight you down with lead." Her voice cracked viciously. "I mean it."

"Say, listen to reason, will ya?" cried Joe Belatti, a sudden panic gripping him. "We'll admit ya got us bang to rights. We'll be good, but, for cripe's sake, don't go off ya nut."

"Well, what are ya goin' to do?" demanded Nelson. "We wanta know."

"Trigger Marlin is a land crook," Blue Jean said tersely. "He holds things pretty well in the palm of his hand on shore. *I'm* a sea crook. Pirate, if you please! Salt-water

hawk! I am at home out here. I know the islands, the coast. Let Trigger Marlin come and get me—if he can. He has three good and sufficient reasons to bring him out here.

"In the first place, there is Ellen Maybrook, this girl he kidnaped; he'll probably want her back. Second, some of his pet killers have fallen into evil ways. And finally, I guess he would like to get his hands on Blue Jean."

"Aw, ya're all wind!" exclaimed the Wharf Rat. "How's he know where ya are?"

"I'll send word to him where to find me," said Blue Jean with deliberation. "He'll have no excuse for not coming—unless he is yellow to the bottom of the last vertebra on his crooked spine. I'm going to teach him to keep his dirty fingers off of decent folks like this girl you soiled with your hands. Bootlegging is just about the size of Trigger Marlin's racket. When he steps out of that, he's over his head."

"How ya goin' to send word to Trigger?" demanded Nelson skeptically. "Telephone 'im?"

"There ain't no radio on this outfit," put in Belatti.

"One of you three birds are going to *take* a message to Trigger Marlin—personally!" Blue Jean's words spat from her lips like cold drops of water falling on a hot stove.

"What do ya mean by that?" There was sudden real alarm in the Wharf Rat's tone.

"I'm going to turn one of you adrift in that tender back there." Blue Jean indicated the trailing skiff with a little jerk of the flashlight in her hand.

"Aw, good night!" gasped Belatti. "Say, lady, that water is rough."

"So am I, gangster," snapped the

woman. "I'm giving one of you a chance to either *row* ashore or drift ashore in the bottom of that dinghy with a bullet hole through you. Somebody is going for a ride, as you guys are so fond of saying."

"Let the Wharf Rat go," said Nelson. "I ain't no sailor."

"A boat'll swamp in this stuff," cried the Wharf Rat, peering apprehensively into the gloom. "Have a heart, woman!"

The swells were heavy, and white water was continually slapping over the craft's trim bow to crack against the glass wind screen.

"You're a fine bunch of sailors," sneered Blue Jean. "I could *swim* ashore from here."

"Wait until daylight," suggested Joe Belatti, suddenly very humble. "Ya wouldn't send a feller off in that cranky little tub," he said, referring to the skiff that now rode with its nose high on the stern wave.

"I'd send one of you gunmen to a lot worse place than the open sea," Blue Jean asserted. Then she added: "I won't guarantee that something worse than getting turned adrift in a small boat isn't going to happen to the two who stay aboard."

"I'll go!" Nelson said quickly.

"Stop the boat," Blue Jean directed the Wharf Rat. "And you"—to Joe Belatti—"unfasten the dinghy and get it alongside."

"What'll I tell Trigger if I get ashore?" asked Nelson.

"Tell him," Blue Jean commanded, "that he will find Miss Maybrook with Billy Race at Fury Island! We'll be waiting for him."

"Fury Island!" cried the Wharf Rat, whose water-front experience had included a knowledge of this surf-lashed bit of upthrust rock. "You ain't goin' there to-night?"

"We'll lay a course for Fury Island the minute this crook"—jerk-ing her head toward Nelson—"is on his way."

"But ya can't land there at night!" The Wharf Rat was suddenly apprehensive. "It's tough to go ashore on that devil's own no man's land in daylight. A lotta boats has been busted up on them ledges."

"And there probably will be a lot more cracking up in that selfsame ocean graveyard," said Blue Jean. "However, that is where we are going, and that is where this Marlin big shot will find his boat. What's the name of this cruiser, anyway?"

"Falcon."

"Outlaw name and outlaw boat." She laughed grimly, and again gave her attention to Nelson, who waited, white-faced, for the command that would leave him alone in the dinghy. "That's all. And if you take my advice, you won't try to make it back through Apron String into Blue Gingham Bay. Keep Katy's Candle over your port bow about four points, and you'll go in on the outer beach at Lobster Claw."

A moment later, Nelson found himself tossed on the white-crested swells that rolled in from seaward. Weak, futile curses fell from his lips as he picked up the oars and began his task of getting back to the mainland.

Blue Jean, with hardly a glance after the skiff, turned to the Wharf Rat. "Go ahead!" she ordered. "Keep to the course I gave you until you pick up the whistling buoy on Danger Field Ledge."

"Thought you was goin' to Fury Island," grumbled the gangster. "That's way north of here."

"Half speed," directed Blue Jean, ignoring his inquiry. She then addressed Ellen Maybrook: "I want a

pencil and a piece of paper," she said. "See if you can't find something aboard. I want to send word to Merle Denton and your folks. They will want to know that you are safe, and they'll probably be able to help us if there is a fight at Fury Island."

Joe Belatti laughed. "Get a postage stamp, too," he jeered. "This dame is goin' to drop it in a mail box on some bell buoy."

"There are plenty of ways of communicating with the shore, if you know them," Blue Jean pointed out. "I am at home out here, as you're at home in some crook's hang-out."

A few minutes later, Ellen Maybrook returned from the forward cabin with the desired pencil and paper.

"Now," said Blue Jean, "search the little cabin aft, and be sure that there are no guns hidden there. I am going to lock these gunmen up."

When the other reported that there were no firearms of any kind in the cabin, Blue Jean ordered the Wharf Rat and Joe Belatti inside. She then secured the doors, and took her place at the wheel.

"Go into the forward cabin, Ellen," she said, "and turn on a light. Then write a note to Merle or your father. Tell them that you are safe, and that Blue Jean Billy Race is with you. Say we are going to Fury Island."

"I will say that Arlin Shores is with me," said Ellen, with spirit. "No need for them to know that you are Blue Jean."

"Merle knows who I am."

"He does?"

"Yes; it is quite an old secret. Something happened one night, and Merle was there."

"He never told me."

"No; he wouldn't. He's a good kid. Straight, and a sportsman."

"What else shall I say?"

"Tell them to come prepared for trouble, and to bring officers. For there will probably be a fight. Warn them to use every precaution in approaching Fury Island, because there is little doubt but that the gangster we just turned adrift will reach shore before my note, and Trigger Marlin will probably 'stake out' Fury Island just as quick as he can get out there."

"Stake it out?"

"Put it under surveillance, to see that we do not get away until he has a chance to try and figure out whether we are lying, bluffing, or what."

"But how are you going to get a note ashore, Arlin?"

"It's very easy—once you know how. Just watch."

Blue Jean's hand at the wheel steadied the *Falcon*, as she eased it over the mounting seas. A certain deftness was there that was entirely foreign to the Wharf Rat. Now and then, her eye went from the gray horizon to the compass beneath the binnacle lamp. Already, the note of the whistling buoy on Danger Field Ledge was close.

Blue Jean throttled the motors until they were barely making steerageway. Then she found the switch that controlled the searchlight, and turned it on. She swung the white beam across the black water, moving it here and there, as though in search of some definite object. At last, she found that for which she sought. She put the wheel over and called down to Ellen Maybrook:

"You'll find a boat hook forward somewhere. Bring it to me." She added: "And the note, Ellen. Also find me a piece of wire or a bit of twine for a lashing."

Deft in manipulation of the sleek craft was Blue Jean in the next few

minutes, as she maneuvered it into a position beside an object that suddenly appeared bobbing in the water. With the boat hook, she picked it up and dragged it, dripping, aboard.

Quick and sure was the highway-woman of the sea now, and, in a few moments, she consigned back to the elements in which she had found it, the striped block of wood she had pulled from the water. She laughed, and the note of it was light, reckless.

"Underwater telegraph," she said exultantly. "We'll see if it gets results."

"For Mike Tonella," said Ellen Maybrook, repeating the name she had written on the folded bit of paper. "Please deliver to Merle Denton, Pemagussett. I think I begin to understand." There was admiration in her voice as she added: "I have heard that Blue Jean's wits are very sharp. Now I know it."

"They have to be," said Blue Jean, "as the wits of the hunted are—from necessity."

She then spun the wheel over, opened the throttles of the engines, and the slender bow of the *Falcon* thrust its cutwater cleanly into an arching wave—and Billy Race, outlaw, and Ellen Maybrook, victim of gangland's newest grim racket, were away on the course for Fury Island.

CHAPTER VI.

GANGSTER CONFERENCE.

LIKE a half-drowned rat, Nelson picked himself out of the smashing surf on the outer rim of Lobster Claw, and staggered beyond reach of the lapping, hungry waters. He

paused here to shake his fist at the blackness that lay over the sea, while he snarled a vindictive oath.

"I'll get that broad," he rasped, spitting out salt water, "if it's the last thing I ever do! I'll get her, and I'll beat her to death with my hands, a smash at a time. I'll kill the cursed devil, so help me!"

Nelson had endured endless tortures, and now that he was safe at last, there was the reaction. He laughed, and screamed, then ran stumblingly up the beach. He had bailed and rowed, and rowed and bailed. His arms ached; his soul was tortured; his body was racked. And, at last, with the shore close, he had been caught in the boiling surf and flung into the water with gratings and oars flying about his ears. He had narrowly avoided being brained by the empty boat, as he pawed frantically out of the welter of the sea with firm, white sand at last, under his two feet.

With head lowered and arms dangling, Nelson plodded wearily along the shore, the flourlike sand of the higher beach slumping beneath his soles with every step. He skirted Blue Gingham Bay, crossed the adjoining fringe of marsh to the south, and made his way, finally, to the highway.

It was an hour when few people were about, and his attempt to hail the two or three cars that sped past, were fruitless. He reached the old estate that Trigger Marlin had leased, about an hour before dawn.

He made his presence known with no undue ceremony, and at last flopped into a chair in the big living room. Trigger Marlin, in pajamas, his eyes drugged with sleep, blinked almost stupidly at the gunman from the *Falcon*. Then anger blazed.

"Whata ya doin' here?" he snarled

at last. "What's happened, ya rat? Where's the girl and the rest of 'em? Quick! Spill it, or I'll croak ya! Did th' coast guard run ya down? Harh? Hey, Chug!" He raised his voice and bawled at another member of his gang, who was, at that moment, feeling his way down the stairs. "Come 'ere!"

"The whole job went sour," Nelson at last managed to stammer. "A gun moll got to us before we was outta the blasted bay."

"A gun moll?" yelled Trigger Marlin, running his fingers through his hair, then clenching his hands. "What gun moll? Who, ya babblin' fool? Who?"

"Blue Jean!" Nelson stared uncertainly at his chief, fearful of what was to come. "The dame they call Billy Race. That broad's a she-cat, Trigger! She tumbled to somethin', and jumped us before we got started, I tell ya."

"You're a fine bunch of guys," snarled Marlin. "I got a good mind to plug ya."

"Boston Red" and a youth known as the "Slowfoot Kid" now hastened to join "Chug" Clesoe and the two central figures beyond.

The gang leader was beside himself, and he appealed to his companions to witness the fact that the three youths, to whom he had trusted Ellen Maybrook, had been tricked and beaten by a woman. Old Quality Bill's girl had suddenly come to life from nowhere, to defeat the purpose of Trigger Marlin.

"Ya're full of boloney!" yapped Boston Red. "That dame faded out a couple of years ago."

"Sure-e, she jumped the country," asserted Clesoe.

"Ya're nuts, youse guys," persisted Nelson. "She's been livin' some place right round here, and

travelin' with a lotta swells. She knew that Maybrook skirt! Said she was the Maybrook broad's body-guard. She swum out and sneaked aboard the *Falcon*. She was soak-in' wet, and we didn't think she had no gat on her, and first thing we knew she had it stuck in Joe's ribs."

"And ya let her get away with it," sneered Marlin.

"Say, that jane was tough," protested the other. "She was goin' to cool Joe, no foolin'."

"What did she do with Joe and the Rat?" demanded Boston Red. "How did you get away?"

"Yah, how did I get away!" snarled Nelson. "She put me in the skiff, and turned me loose in the cockeyed ocean—with a message for Trigger Marlin. That's what she done. It was black as the inside of a crow's belly, and the water was rough as the Rocky Mountains. I'm tellin' ya somethin'. It was tough. And then I darn near got killed when the boat got in the surf off Lobster Claw. I had to shag it all the way here. Somebody gimme a drink."

"A message for me?" cried Marlin. "What da ya mean, a message for me?"

"She says if ya want that dame ya kidnaped and ya boat, to come to Fury Island and get 'em," declared Nelson.

"Aw, ya're crazy!" grunted Chug Clesoe. "There ain't no sense to that."

"I'm just tellin' ya what she said," retorted Nelson sourly. "I don't know if she's goin' to leave 'em there. That's just what she told me to tell ya—believe it or not."

"It's a trap," declared the Slow-foot Kid. "She's goin' to run in and tip off the bulls."

"I'm goin' to get that Maybrook

filly again," said Marlin, in a slow, grim voice, "and I'm goin' to kill that other dame. Maybe it will be at Fury Island; maybe it will be some place else. But I'll get 'em."

"Sounds like a phony to me," said Boston Red, "this goin' to a forsaken dump like that. Feller, there's a tough spot the smoothest day the sea ever saw."

"I'll go to Fury Island," persisted Trigger Marlin, his eyes smoldering. "I'll go out there. I'll take a chance. I ain't goin' in daylight, though—not on a boat. I'll fly over the place two or three times to-day, and check up on that dame. She ain't puttin' nothin' over on me."

"You been to Fury Island?" asked the sleek and plump Chug Clesoe, eying his chief a little skeptically.

"Yeah, I been to Fury Island!" snapped Marlin. "There's a couple old shacks on it that some ginnys used to live in. I'm wise to the place. If the *Falcon* is there, and them two janes, that's all I want to know. I'll phone Nolan, the big guy in town, and tell 'im to find out if the harbor division got any reports on a kidnapin', and if there is any chance the police boat is goin' to be out toward Fury Island to-day or to-night. It's out of their district, but they might be workin' with the coast guard."

"I'll get a tip where that coast-guard cutter is before we start. There ain't nothin' else goin' to bother us. When it gets dark, we'll go to Fury Island."

"Don't kid yaself," said the Slow-foot Kid. "It ain't goin' to be that easy."

"This Blue Jean probably didn't think about me scouting the place with a plane," Marlin went on. "It won't take me long after daylight to find out whether the *Falcon* is off Fury Island."

There was no more sleep at the beach home of Trigger Marlin that morning. Dawn found the gangsters busily preparing for a counter attack, that they might regain the ground lost by the unexpected entrance of Blue Jean Billy Race into the affair. No stone was left unturned, no effort spared to defeat the purpose of the highwaywoman of the sea.

Members of the gang were dispatched to Truwich, Marshport, and other shore towns, in an effort to discover some possible trace of the speed cruiser *Falcon*. Fishermen were apprised of the fact that the boat was missing, and were asked to be on the lookout for her. A sizable reward was promised to any one that brought word of the craft's whereabouts. A telephone number at Pemagussett was given, that no time might be lost in getting in touch with the owner.

Dawn had not yet finished its task of defining the details of the shore line and picking from the mists the gently rolling hills of the mainland, when Trigger Marlin's fast and luxurious power yacht, the seventy-five-foot, twin-screw *Black Phantom* cast off its mooring and pointed its nose seaward. Swiftly, it sped north along the coast, hoping to intercept the *Falcon*, should the speed cruiser make a last-minute attempt to move shoreward from the vicinity of Fury Island.

Trigger Marlin himself slipped beneath the wheel of his low, fast roadster, and raced away toward the metropolis to the north. At a small basin, south of the city, he arranged with one of his rum-running pilots to fly him over Fury Island. An hour later, the big shot found himself staring down at a chain of rocky ledges and the white surf that fringed them.

Fury Island stood out like a huge, frownsy head—a head fringed with breakers that beat continuously against its frowning bulwarks. The surface of the sea itself was gray, smooth, oily. Every object on its surface stood out distinctly, even from a distance.

A trawler was moving in from the direction of the lightship. A steamer stood out against the horizon, a wisp of smoke trailing from her stacks. Ginny boats were rolling home. A lobster man was hauling pots, his long string of buoys plainly discernible on the gray and glassy surface of the sea.

All of these things Trigger Marlin saw, as he peered down through his goggles, and more. He picked up Fury Island when they were a long ways off, and, as he stared at the dot below him in the placid Atlantic, he also made out a speck that remained fixedly on the sea a short distance from the island itself.

As the plane came closer, the gang leader discovered that the speck was a boat, and that it was anchored just clear of the breakers. He pulled off his goggles, and brought a pair of field glasses into play. Yes, it was the *Falcon*, all right. And there were figures on the bridge deck.

The body of the gangster grew tense, as he turned and motioned the pilot to circle the island. The woman had come to Fury Island then, as she had told Nelson. And she was apparently waiting insolently for him.

Trigger Marlin was puzzled, and a little troubled, more than he would have cared to admit. Why had this strange outlaw woman not returned at once to the mainland with Ellen Maybrook as soon as she had gained control of the boat? What was her idea in coming to this

forsaken and dangerous spot? Was it her intention really to await his arrival? There must be some sinister purpose back of it.

Perhaps she would hide the girl, and attempt to drive a bargain with him before delivering Ellen Maybrook again into his hands. Molls of the type he judged this woman to be, were not above double-crossing those in whose employ they were, once the opportunity presented itself. They could be very ruthless, too, more ruthless than men. This Blue Jean Billy probably was not above betraying the woman she had been hired to guard, if the story Nelson had told was true.

For once in his life, Trigger Marlin was at a loss to command. He had suddenly become on the offensive, and it would be very easy, he could see, to make a move that might prove disastrous. That a woman should suddenly steal his thunder was something that he had not foreseen. In a twinkling, his power had been, to a certain extent, usurped, while a stranger dictated terms to him. He could follow out the instructions of this pretty bandit queen, or go hang. He had his choice. It was retreat or attack.

Trigger Marlin chose to attack.

CHAPTER VII.

SEA FIGHT!

CUDDLED in the lap of Trigger Marlin, as the hydroplane approached Fury Island, was a sub-machine gun. The gang leader had considered the possibility of recapturing the *Falcon*, should it be his fortune to come on the missing craft, without the necessity of a

night visit to the spot designated by the woman.

Once he was near enough to bring the "chopper" to bear on the vaunted outlaw woman, it would be only a matter of loosing a short, savage burst. And another victim would be credited to the youthful and insolent big shot of local gangdom. He'd wipe her out, and then hurl a sneering taunt at the bulls for their failure to end, long ago, the career of the sea pirate known as Blue Jean. He'd show 'em how Trigger Marlin put a dangerous enemy on the spot. Bullet law! That was the answer.

The beady eyes of the gang leader clung to the spot where the speed boat rode the gentle swells just outside of the lacy fringe of Fury Island, while his hands fondled the deadly weapon between his knees. He'd order the pilot to set the ship down on the water a short distance from the *Falcon*. Then he'd signal with a white handkerchief, while the man at the controls gradually taxied the hydroplane toward the craft beyond.

Like a hawk intent on its prey, the plane circled lazily above Fury Island. While on board the *Falcon*, Blue Jean watched with eyes that reflected both alertness and suspicion.

"Some of our friends are looking us over," mused the woman who had snatched the boat from the gangsters the night before. "We can expect almost anything, from a bomb to a bullet."

The moment that she had first observed the approaching plane, Blue Jean had prepared for battle. She had considered the possibility of Trigger Marlin scouting Fury Island and vicinity from the air, but she doubted that he would endanger the lives of all on the *Falcon*.

merely to be revenged on Billy Race. However, she could at no time relax her vigil, for the gangster would let no opportunity slip to take Blue Jean herself for a ride.

When the approaching plane had been but a speck in the sky, Blue Jean had broken out the anchor, stowed it away, then started the engines. The tide was on the turn, and there was little or no current, and it was an easy matter to hold the boat in its position. To give the impression that the craft rode to an anchor, the woman dropped a loose rope's end over the bow and strung the inboard portion through a chock, thence to a cleat, about which she took a turn.

After having warmed the engines up, she shut them off, and gave her attention to the plane that was now winging almost overhead. It circled at about a thousand-foot altitude, finally to glide downward in a wide arc. White water ruffled beneath its pontoon, and it stopped on the surface of the sea some quarter of a mile from the *Falcon*. After a little, it began to move slowly toward the speed boat.

As it drew near, a handkerchief fluttered above the helmeted head in the rear cockpit. Blue Jean smiled contemptuously; for it betrayed the fact that those on the plane came expecting trouble. It must, therefore, be some of Marlin's gang.

To allow the plane to come too close would be the height of folly, for the *Falcon* would most certainly be at the mercy of the gangsters' guns.

A slow flame kindled in the eyes of Blue Jean. Her lips tightened, and she wondered just how far the occupants of the seaplane were prepared to go out here in daylight. Would they risk a fight? Or were

they most concerned in getting information that would aid them should a night attack become necessary? They very probably desired to learn more of the woman who had muscled in on their kidnapping racket.

A machine gun could play havoc, once it got within range. However, Blue Jean doubted if Trigger Marlin, or his representative, would chance killing Ellen Maybrook and the pair held captive merely for the sake of being avenged on herself. There might be an attempt to sink the *Falcon*, as this offered the most logical course, for those on board would have to take to the water, where they would be at the mercy of the men on the plane.

Retreat offered little, for the plane could pursue and attack from the air. To release the two gangsters in the little cabin aft and order them out to the bridge as a shield against gunfire from the ship beyond was, also, hazardous, for she could not maneuver the *Falcon* and watch them, too. Ellen Maybrook was an uncertain quantity, when it came to a gun fight, as was only natural.

In the end, Blue Jean decided to rely solely on her own generalship. She had a fast and powerful craft under her. She must manage to outwit, outmaneuver the occupants of the seaplane.

Ellen Maybrook had been asleep in the forward cabin, exhaustion having at last claimed her. Blue Jean stepped to the hatchway and called down to her now. When the other appeared on the bridge, the plane was pointed out to her.

"They are looking us over," said Blue Jean. "And it may not be so good. I'd tell you to go overboard and swim to the island, only if these fellows should happen to

get the best of me, you'd be at their mercy."

"I'd much prefer to stay with you, Blue Jean, if you don't mind," said the other. "Perhaps I can help. I don't know so much about guns, but I can handle a power boat."

"Our task," declared Blue Jean, "is to cripple that plane so that it can't get off the water, and will have to limp back where it came from. I have a sneaking suspicion that there are guns on it, and we are sure a fine target. They won't want to injure you, but they'll not be so particular about me."

"What are you going to try and do?"

"It all depends on how the fellow with that white rag behaves," said Blue Jean. "If he just wants to assure himself that we will still be waiting here to-night, and then shows an inclination to go about his business, that will be quite all right. But if that guy is just using a flag of truce to get to close quarters—well, then it will be nothing else but fight."

"If I have to bait the fellow into trying to get me, Ellen, I want you to take the wheel and get away from that plane as fast as the motors will drive you. Then pick me up later."

"But you're not going to go overboard."

"I may have to. I just want those fellows to know which of us is Blue Jean. They will probably get close enough to recognize you, and then it will be easy enough to guess who I am."

The plane was moving slowly closer, while two heads peered from the cockpits. The bow of the *Falcon* was pointed toward the airship, the craft having swung partly around. Had Trigger Marlin been

conversant with the tide at this time, he would have discovered that the boat beyond was headed the wrong way for a craft that was riding to an anchor. It was one small detail that he missed, and on it much depended, for Blue Jean had taken advantage of this fact to start the motors now. With the exhausts hidden behind the stern, the gang leader was further deceived.

Trigger Marlin was sure that the plane was bearing down on an anchored and defenseless craft. His eyes told him now that the figure standing near the wheel of the *Falcon* was Blue Jean Billy Race. He saw a brown creature whose hair was thrown back from her face, and whose easy posture was that of one born to the movement of rolling decks and restless seas.

Her feet were spread slightly, and her hands rested on her hips in an easy, half-defiant posture. Her light print dress fell away carelessly from a square-set pair of shoulders. It was open at the throat and a bit awry. The abbreviated sleeves, one of which was ripped, revealed two bronzed and capable arms.

"That's her," Trigger Marlin told himself. "The haughty, cursed pirate!" And to the pilot: "Keep getting in close."

However, at that moment a voice challenged them, a clear, cold voice in which there was no hint of trepidation.

"On board the plane! That's near enough! What do you want?"

"I want to talk to Blue Jean Billy Race," called Trigger Marlin. His hands instinctively closed about the grips of the deadly weapon in his lap.

"I am Blue Jean."

"Can I come aboard? There are some things I want to talk over with you."

"Talk them over from where you are."

"Say, I want to talk business with you."

"Come back to-night."

"To-night? What's the idea?"

"Because I said so."

"How do I know you'll be here to-night?"

"How did you know I was here this morning?"

"Have you got a couple of guys aboard there?"

"I've got a pair of rats here."

"Can I talk to 'em?"

"You know 'em?"

"Sure I know 'em."

"Well, that identifies you then."

"How?"

"Are you Trigger Marlin?"

There was an instant's hesitation; then: "Yes; I'm Trigger Marlin. Does that mean anything to you, broad?"

"Yes. You ought to be traveling under a red flag, not a white one. Crooks like you are a pestilence."

"This ain't gettin' us any place."

"No one is keeping you from going any place you want to, gangster."

The propeller of the plane increased its revolutions slightly, and water began to curl under the pontoon.

"Listen, you!" Blue Jean flung out the words sharply. "I said keep away."

"Go to Hades!" came back the angry retort. "I'm going to shoot that boat out from under you. Maybe you'll talk from the water."

Trigger Marlin jerked himself erect in the cockpit, the submachine gun held against his side.

"Quick!" cried Blue Jean. "If he cripples the boat, we're done."

She snatched at the engine-room controls, pulling the throttles wide. The powerful motors roared, shak-

ing the *Falcon* with their vibration. Blue Jean crowded home the reverse levers—the starboard full speed ahead and the port full speed astern.

The boat leaped ahead in a vicious arc that pulled it directly in front of the whirling propeller of the hydroplane, and out of range of the weapon that Trigger Marlin clutched in his two hands. The pilot gunned his motor and kicked right rudder to meet the unexpected maneuver. The plane, however, responded sluggishly as compared with the lightninglike rush of the speed cruiser.

The *Falcon* was away in a sudden smother of foaming white water. Quick as its start was, it, nevertheless, was still within range of the deadly chopper when, at last, Marlin swung the weapon to bear, clear of the whirling propeller.

The killer did not fire, for a new development had been projected into the affair with startling unexpectedness. The woman at the wheel of the *Falcon* had relinquished the controls to Ellen Maybrook, while she leaped to the rail. Here she hung poised for an instant, to call something over her shoulder. The next moment, she had leaped far out to disappear in the churning wake of the lunging speed cruiser.

Trigger Marlin uttered an exultant oath. Blue Jean had evidently sacrificed herself to give Ellen Maybrook a chance to get away. She was dumb after all. He'd wait until she came to the surface; then shoot her head off. It would then be but a matter of minutes before the plane overtook the escaping *Falcon*. Its subsequent capture must prove but a matter of time, patience.

The eyes of Trigger Marlin and the pilot scanned the water. Each moment they expected to see the

head of Blue Jean break through the surface, but, as the seconds passed with no sign of the outlaw woman, the mob's chief became uneasy.

"She must have been hit by one of the boat's propellers," he called to the pilot.

"Sunk," agreed the other.

The plane, veering around broadside, had come to a stop in a position that would allow Trigger Marlin a chance to fire after the *Falcon*. It was now less than a dozen yards from the spot where the speed craft had been a few moments before, and where the woman had disappeared beneath the waves.

Suddenly, a voice from an unseen somewhere addressed the pair in the seaplane. It was weird, startling. Trigger Marlin swore explosively, and flung frantic eyes on the water about the plane.

"This is for you birds," called the voice. "Don't move that plane, or I'll shoot the prop off."

"She's come up under us," cried the pilot. "She's down under the nose of the pontoon."

"She can't use no gat!" cried Marlin. "She's in the water. She's bluffin'. Swing the plane around, you fool, so's I can get a crack at her!" He stood up and leaned over the edge of the cockpit, the murderous machine gun held in readiness.

Blue Jean, from her position close in front of the stubby pontoon, caught a glimpse of the gangster. She was partly holding herself up with her left hand on the pontoon. In her right was an automatic.

Coming up fairly beneath the plane, Blue Jean had turned onto her back and slipped the gun from its rubber holster at her belt. She now held the weapon clear of the water and ready to make good her threat. Out past the northerly end

of Fury Island, she saw the *Falcon* rapidly drawing away. Her task now was to make it impossible for the plane to follow.

Almost above her head were the flashing blades of the propeller. It was a wooden prop, and a single bullet would render it useless, and the wings of gangland, for the time, effectively clipped.

Suddenly, the slowly revolving blades lost their identity in a thunderous blur. The motor roared, and the plane surged ahead. In an instant, Blue Jean was engulfed in a storm of wind and water, as the slipstream created a tempest of its own. She swung her automatic, in that first fraction of a second, and sent several shots in the direction of the racing propeller.

Her eyes were blinded by the water, but to her ears there came the sound of a muffled crack. This was followed by a racking, discordant note from the motor. The first blast had swept the plane clear, leaving her exposed in the open water. Instantly there burst on the air the rivetinglike snarl of a machine gun, as Trigger Marlin twisted himself about and brought the ugly weapon into play.

Lead flayed the already churning waters, as it searched the foam for that vague figure. The king of killers, his face distorted with rage, swept the sea with death, while he struggled to retain his balance. One glimpse he had of a bobbing head, there in the white backwash, and on it he trained his gun. Little geysers spurted upward, spiteful jets that leaped from the impact of bullets.

Blue Jean dipped under water, and swam until it seemed that her lungs were on the point of bursting. Then she came to the surface to open her mouth wide and snatch

a deep-drawn breath. Lead struck about her, but again she went under. Each time she broke water, Marlin fired, but the distance was steadily getting greater, while the gray swells served more and more frequently as effectual barriers.

And then, as suddenly as it had begun, there came a calm. The motor of the hydroplane ceased its irregular beat. The propeller came to a jerky stop, revealing a shattered blade. The disturbed waters became quiet, as the white foam was gradually wiped away by a gray smoothness. The ship rolled to the lazy ground swell, as before.

Gulls wheeled above Fury Island, their raucous voices raised to a shrill, monotonous pitch. The circling birds and the never-ending boom of the breakers were the only sounds. And, strangely enough, they were sounds that merely seemed to blend at last into the silence of these vast reaches of water.

The *Falcon* came about finally, and again pointed its bow for the bleak and rocky island. Out off a black ledge that was at intervals wrapped by a lacy coverlet of spume, the speed craft came alongside the bobbing head of Blue Jean. Skillfully, Ellen Maybrook throttled the powerful engines and worked the cruiser close.

The helpless hydroplane was some half a mile distant at the far side of the island, while its two companions watched the *Falcon* with smoldering eyes of rage. Suddenly, Trigger Marlin pulled himself up in the cockpit and reached for his glasses. An instant later, he focused them on the speed boat. Then an exultant cry broke from his lips, for at last, it seemed, the fates were turning their smiles on the gangster mob.

Ellen Maybrook threw out the

clutches and left the wheel to help Blue Jean from the water. She had laid her revolver on the roof of the forward cabin behind the glass wind screen some time before. Half forgotten in her mind was the pair of hard-faced youths in the cabin aft. Apparently, they were resigned to their fate as prisoners.

However, they had not been idle. With a very sharp pocketknife, the Wharf Rat had set about cutting a hole in the panel of the door leading to the small cockpit in the stern. To have attempted to smash the door would have only attracted attention, but to escape their lavish dungeon silently, craftily, was another matter. Soon, the Wharf Rat had hacked a hole of sufficient size to permit him to slip his hand through and reach the fastening without. Having accomplished this task, the gunmen settled themselves to await patiently an opportunity to regain possession of the boat.

When Blue Jean leaped overboard, the two youths, who watched the swift chain of events from the windows of the cabin, knew that the chance they sought would soon present itself.

The Wharf Rat had been all for stealing forth and overpowering Ellen Maybrook at once. Joe Belatti, however, opposed this. "Wait," he whispered, "until the dame goes back for that Blue Jean broad."

"Trigger got her with the chopper," muttered the Wharf Rat. "Didn't ya see him givin' it to her?"

"Maybe he got her," growled the other. "Maybe not. We got all day to get this skirt now."

The moment the gangsters had waited for, came when Ellen Maybrook turned from the wheel of the *Falcon* and reached down over the rail to seize Blue Jean's upraised hand.

Like giant spiders, the Wharf Rat and Joe Belatti scurried from the little cockpit aft, where they had been crouching, over the low roof of the cabin to the bridge deck. They moved with a fleetness that was startling. Ellen Maybrook whirled to face them, her eyes wide with horror. A scream broke from her lips, and she instinctively recoiled, trying to escape the clutching hands of the Wharf Rat. But it was too late.

The fingers of the gangster closed about her arms like the savage talons of a bird of prey, and an exultant cry rang from him. "That's one on you, pretty face!" And as she fought to release herself, he snarled: "Behave now or I'll bust ya!"

Joe Belatti had caught up the revolver from the niche formed by the deck roof and the glass wind screen, and leaped to the rail, swinging the gun to cover the woman in the water.

"Take a look at that!" he yelled, brandishing the weapon. "Take a look at that, and start sayin' ya prayers, broad!"

Once more, members of Trigger Marlin's hard-bitten gun mob held the upper hand in the fight with Blue Jean Billy Race, while they rode fiendishly with the red reins of power that were theirs.

CHAPTER VIII.

MIKE TONELLA, LOBSTER MAN.

MIKE TONELLA finished his task of transferring a sizable load of glistening green lobsters from his grimy and odorous power dory to the big, slime-coated "car" that lay awash a short distance out

from the wharf in Marshport harbor. He then picked up his mooring buoy near by and transferred himself to a much-tarred and cranky little skiff, and rowed ashore.

Mike nodded at the two or three early-morning loungers on the old wharf, and slopped up the landing in his heavy boots toward Main Street. He proceeded to the drug store, and there solicited the aid of the druggist in making a phone call.

"Mornin', Meesta Bake'."

"Mornin', Mike. How's the lobsters runnin'?"

"Soma time leetle. Soma time beeg. I guess I catcha beega one this mornin'. I dunno. You know thisa fella, Denton, Meesta Bake'. Beega rich guy at Pemagus'."

"The old man, or Merle, Mike?"

"I guess he'sa youn' fella. You calla heem for Mike, Meesta Bake'."

"Sure," said the druggist, "I'll call Merle. What will I say?"

"You tella heem coma see Mike Tonella by Marshpo't pretty soon. You joosta tella heem Tonella catcha somet'ing 'way outside by Dang'riel'. Maybe he lika to know." Mike shrugged his broad shoulders and raised his eyebrows. "You feex, Meesta Bake'. Mucho 'blige. I go home now an' licka my ole woman."

Pemagussett throbbed with a strange, grim excitement. Since the moment that Merle Denton had reached the home of Ellen Maybrook, following her kidnaping, a gray blanket of terror had spread itself over the exclusive summer colony.

Merle had gone straight to the girl's father. Frankly, he told of his acquaintance with Trigger Marlin, the notorious gang chief, while he attempted to hide the part that Ellen Maybrook had played in the affair earlier.

Gordon Maybrook was a big, brown-faced man, a strapping figure, and used to commanding. He was not given to a show of feeling, and, though the news that his daughter had fallen into the hands of Trigger Marlin's gang caused fear to clutch at his heart, he gave no outward indication of it. He was at once for calling down heaven and moving the earth in an effort to rescue her.

The local authorities, the Federal authorities, the coast guard, the navy, the air service—he would enlist them all! A new racket, was it? Well, he'd show the so-and-so of a band of skulking wolves that Gordon Maybrook was not one to allow them to get away with anything like this, not by a long shot. Why, he——

His tirade, however, was interrupted by Merle Denton, who pointed out that Trigger Marlin was a shrewd and crafty gangster. He had in his power a sweet and pretty woman, and, if he found the authorities crowding too close, there was no telling what he might do. Ellen was a hostage. Without doubt, the gangster would hold her for a large reward, running, possibly, into a stupendous sum.

Her safety, very likely, would depend much on the manner in which those most concerned conducted themselves. There could not be, young Denton declared, any open movements of search or subsequent hostility, should the gangster rendezvous be discovered. If Trigger Marlin found a situation developing that he could not cope with, the girl very naturally must bear the brunt of his wrath.

"It's a terrible thing," cried young Denton. "And I am almost crazy. I feel that it was my fault, for Ellen was with me when they got her.

But, I beg of you, Mr. Maybrook, don't do anything to arouse Marlin. He'll stop at nothing! Somebody that knows the underworld, knows their ways and their methods, has got to be the one to aid us, not the police. Half of them are in with Marlin themselves. You don't know who of them would reveal to that devil every move we plan."

"And who, in the name of the crook of the twelve apostles, is the son of an underworld devil we can get?" demanded the other.

"I—I don't know," Merle had stammered, "but I'll find her—him. There is a young—a young woman down here by Blue Gingham Bay who used to be, who used to have something to do with the police. I'll get her. And she knows the shore, too, and boats. And how!"

"Get her!" cried Gordon Maybrook forcefully. "Get her! What are you standing here for? Let's do something! Great Scott, boy, this is no time to be running around in circles!"

"I went there the first thing after they got Ellen last night," young Denton said miserably, "but she was gone. She lives with the Peasleys. They were all upset, too, for this woman had gone to bed earlier, only to disappear mysteriously."

Gordon Maybrook waved his arms and searched vainly for words to express his feelings. "This other woman is gone, too?" he thundered. "Perhaps she had something to do with the kidnaping! Who knows? It looks funny to me. Who is she? Where did she come from? What's her name? Did Ellen know her? Harh? What?"

The conference between Merle and Gordon Maybrook had taken place in the big living room of the Maybrook home. Awed servants moved through the house on tiptoe,

pausing now and then to gather and whisper in timorous little groups. Ellen's mother, after that first hysterical outburst when the news had been broken to her, acted very much the part of a thoroughbred. She was pale, tight-lipped and carried the pain of it in her eyes.

She held Merle blameless, and spoke to him in a motherly manner, attempting to cheer him up even as she stubbornly fought the emotions that tore at her heart.

Merle's father hurried to the Maybrook home and joined the council that feverishly debated ways and means. Others came—neighbors, friends—for word had fled from mouth to mouth with surprising rapidity. The atmosphere was hushed, awesome. Money was represented here, wealth. Gangland had thrown down the gauntlet to society. What had happened to Ellen Maybrook could happen to others. What protection did they have against this terrible racket? The police were already powerless to combat the ruthless order inaugurated by racketeers.

No man, woman or child would be safe from marauding gangs. Trigger Marlin and his clan could demand money without limit; the price of protection. Every person of wealth would contribute to this king of hoodlums, that his family might be guaranteed freedom from molestation.

The sheriff came from Marshport and joined the conference. He was a pouchy, red-faced man, and plainly ill at ease in the presence of wealth. He had little that was of a helpful nature to offer, while he was inclined to the belief that the thing had passed out of his jurisdiction. He would do what he could, of course, but he did not wish to raise false hopes. Marlin was all-

powerful in the underworld, and the gang leader had one of the biggest places at Pemagussett, which placed him on a high pedestal as far as the local minion of the law was concerned.

"I got a court case comin' up this mornin'," the sheriff hedged, "but I'll send Bill Stiglow down. Bill is a good man, but just a little dumb."

The sheriff meant "by being dumb" that Bill Stiglow was out of reach of bribes. There were times when an officer of the law could know too much, when by knowing less he would be credited with being a "wise guy."

Merle Denton, his father, Gordon Maybrook, and the sheriff had returned from Captain Lige Peasley's, in Calico Lane, when a servant, calling from the Denton home, explained that a message had come from Marshport for Merle. He was to get in touch with Mike Tonella as soon as possible.

Merle, puzzled, shook his head. "I don't know any Mike Tonella," he said.

"Mike Tonella!" cried Gordon Maybrook excitedly. "Black Hand! It's one of the gang. They're sending for a reward. Let's get down there. If I can lay a hand on that fellow, I'll break every bone in his body. Telephone for the car! Come on, let's go!"

Who was Mike Tonella? The question caused the sheriff to lift his eyebrows speculatively. He knew Mike Tonella. Mike was a lobster fisherman. He didn't know that Tonella belonged to the Black Hand. He had heard that dago red flowed occasionally, in particular at christenings and on those holidays that came along now and then. He had intended to make it a point to raid Mike's house some night. The law had to be enforced. Besides,

Mike didn't contribute to the support of the law, for Mike didn't have any valuable trucks going through Marshport at midnight. Marlin did.

Arrived at Marshport, the excited little group from Pemagussett were directed to Mike Tonella's shack down by the water front. Mike welcomed his visitors with a grin. Bread crumbs adhered to the black stubble about his lips as he came to the door. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and there was about him a suspicious aroma, as of good old dago red. A stout draft to wash down the bread! A good Italian man, Mike Tonella, whose greatest crime was to drink a bit of wine, perhaps, or now and then sell a "short" lobster or two to a particularly special customer.

"How do!" said Mike. And eyed the group that crowded his doorstep with slight surprise. "I joosta eat."

"You sent word for me?" said young Denton. "I am Merle Denton."

"Oh, shoor," said Mr. Tonella "Meesta Bake", he telafo."

Slowly, the dull gaze of the Italian went from face to face. As his eyes rested on the sheriff, a trace of suspicion was reflected in their jet-black depths.

"Wha'sa mat', *wellyo*?" He looked almost accusingly at young Denton. "You bring beega crowd."

Gordon Maybrook moved forward to confront the fisherman. "Say, look here, you!" he cried. "We want some information about something that happened last night."

"You'd better tell what you know, Tonella," put in the sheriff officiously. "Why did you send for Mr. Denton here? What do you want of him? Get it out."

Mike Tonella scowled. He had

never liked that sheriff. "Wha'sa moller you?" demanded the swarthy son of Italy. "Did Meesta Bake say I want lotsa fella, or joosta Meesta Dent'n?" He reached out and took Merle by the arm and, with a sweeping inclination of his head toward the door behind him, pulled the other within. "You come by my house," he growled. "I show you som't'ing. Maybe you show to theese fellas. I dunno. What *you* do, I doan' care." He shrugged his shoulders. "What *I* do is pleas' for Mike Tonella. Me no look for troub'."

A moment later, Merle Denton joined the group that stood in front of Tonella's house. In his hand, he carried a stained and wrinkled slip of paper that gave evidence of having been in the water. He held it out excitedly.

"Look!" he cried. "Here's a note from Ellen."

"From Ellen?" exclaimed Merle's father incredulously.

"I knew that blasted Italian had something to do with it!" exploded Gordon Maybrook.

"I guess I'd better arrest him," suggested the sheriff with a sudden show of bluster, "before he tries to knife some of us."

"Ellen is all right," young Denton went on breathlessly. "She wrote that herself."

"They made her write it, you mean," declared Gordon Maybrook. "This man is a go-between. How'd he get the note, if he isn't one of the gang?"

"Aw, you talka too mooch, bigga fella," put in the fisherman angrily, glaring at Maybrook. "All weend. Leesen, *wellyo*, I pulla my pots 'way out on Dang'fiel'. I geta dees note tied on ona my lobsta buoy. Nobody *geev* it to Mike Tonella. Nobody *geev* Mike Tonella not'in' but

joosta keek in da britch." He fixed his fierce eyes on the sheriff. "You 'rest me? Harh? Whatsa moller you?"

"Found it tied to a lobster buoy?" cried one of the group of excited men. "What do you know about that?"

"It's Ellen's writing," persisted Merle. "And she wrote on the outside, 'Mike Tonella. Please deliver to Merle Denton, Pemagussett.' Here, listen. It says:

"I am safe. Arlin Shores heard me scream and came to my aid from Calico Lane. She got possession of the boat by a ruse. Two of the gang are locked in the cabin aft. One Arlin sent ashore with a message to Trigger Marlin. We are headed for Fury Island. I believe Arlin was afraid that gang would get me again if we returned to the mainland. Miss Shores hopes to outwit Marlin at Fury Island, I know. Send help, for we will need it. But, oh, be so awfully careful. These thugs are murderous.

"ELLEN."

Merle passed the bedraggled note to Mr. Maybrook. The latter stared at the handwriting, and nodded slowly. "It's Ellen's writing, all right. Thank Heaven she's safe, or was safe when this was written."

"Thank Heaven, Blue—I mean that Arlin Shores is with her!" cried Merle. "Now I know she'll be all right. I—I—well, I sort of asked Arlin to look after Ellen."

Gordon Maybrook thrust out his hand to Tonella. "Forgive me, my man," he said. "You have been of inestimable help to us at this time. I never heard of such a thing as sending messages by the lobster-pot route. It's almost incredible. It is. I'll make this right with you a little later."

"Shoor," said Mike, grinning. "Mucho 'blige, mista."

"Fury Island," muttered the sheriff. "Why, that's away outside.

Hm-m-m! You'd better get in touch with the coast guard."

"Coast guard!" exploded Gordon Maybrook. "I'm going to Fury Island in a speed boat as fast as I can. Fury Island may be out of your jurisdiction, but it isn't out of mine. My daughter is there, sir. And in danger. And who cares about the jurisdiction? Tell me that!"

Like many another well-intentioned officer, the sheriff of Marshport had fallen afoul of sinister gangsters. He had accepted money without at first realizing that a big shot was bringing in liquor and "greasing" the highway to the city. He had met Trigger Marlin, and he stood very much in awe of the gang leader. The fellow bore a far-reaching reputation. The press gave him much space. Certainly, it did not behoove a man like himself to risk his life by antagonizing a killer mob that had taken up their abode fairly in the midst of his own bailiwick.

The sheriff fidgeted uneasily. At length, he said: "Well, then, Bill Stiglow, perhaps. He's a good man, a salt-water man. Used to sail out of Gloucester. He knows the shore and the islands. He knows boats. I'll send him down." He turned to move away, and hesitated. "But if there is anything I can do——"

"There isn't," said Gordon Maybrook with terse finality. "Get us this man, Stiglow."

CHAPTER IX.

BILL STIGLOW.

BILL STIGLOW came, a tooth-pick stuck in the corner of his mouth. He swaggered toward the wharf with insolent deliberation, his eyes fixed speculatively on the group

of men now gathered before the old rambling wharfinger's shed.

Stiglow was a scowling, hulking brute, but a man, nevertheless. Rough-spoken and coarse of manner he was, and a bit inclined to vulgar jest. He could bully a little, too. He was enough of a fighter to want to wear the sign of it on his sleeve. Moreover, he much preferred using his fists on lawbreakers to arresting them and having to appear in court. Summary justice—that was Mr. Stiglow's forte, so to speak.

No one, he contended, kept the law, only for the fear that they might have to suffer the consequences of their misdeeds. Fear! That was what made men good citizens. And he was just the bird to keep 'em that way.

Honest! Bill Stiglow was as honest as sunlight. And courageous. He was a good officer, if, at times, a little overzealous.

Yes, he knew Arlin Shores. He had good and plenty reasons for remembering her. They had had a bit of a run-in once. She was a square-shooter, and a fighter, like himself. Privately, Bill Stiglow owned to a close acquaintance with Arlin Shores, alias Blue Jean Billy Race. He knew her, and he knew her story. But that was all right; she had been a victim of circumstance, he guessed. The thing of it was, though, she had proved to Bill Stiglow that her heart was big and her word, why, her word was final. She never betrayed a trust.

Once Bill Stiglow's son had fallen in with thieves, and Blue Jean had been instrumental in extricating the boy. Stiglow had never forgotten that; he never would.

He didn't have much use, personally, for the "swells" at Pema-gussett. They were no better than anybody else. They helped the

bootleggers do business, and if that Maybrook girl got in trouble—well, that was not his lookout. He'd seen her at some rather sporting road houses with young Denton. If they got in a jam, that kind had it com-in' to 'em.

Bill Stiglow was quickly acquainted with the facts, from the time that the gangster car had crowded Merle Denton's roadster into the ditch a short distance from Calico Lane to the finding of the note on the lobster buoy by Tonella.

As he listened to the exciting recital, the deputy sheriff scowled thoughtfully out at the gray horizon, while he picked methodically at his teeth. When the story was done, Bill Stiglow mused, more to himself than to the others:

"The sea has got a greasy look. There'll be some weather makin' up 'fore night."

Gordon Maybrook had already dispatched a man into the harbor to bring to the wharf his speed boat. He turned and spoke to the deputy, spoke authoritatively, and as one who does not expect to have his decisions questioned.

"We'll go to Fury Island at once. We can make it in less than an hour and a half."

Bill Stiglow grunted, and eyed the millionaire disdainfully. "Oh, yeah! Did you stop to think that Trigger Marlin probably has boats or planes out there already. Boats with machine guns and killers on 'em. Did you think of that? You would go bullin' out to Fury Island, and ye might get there and ye might not. You're one of them impulsive fellers, I guess."

"Why did that woman go to Fury Island?" cried Maybrook. "If she did?"

"Yes," said John Denton, "and why in the devil did she send one

of those hellions ashore with a message to Trigger Marlin? Somebody tell me that."

"Marlin has a power yacht out here, hasn't he?" asked Maybrook, casting his eye over the fleet of pleasure craft that were moored in the harbor.

"Yeah," said Stiglow with gruff sarcasm, "he keeps a classy cruiser out here, but it's gone off the moorin' now, if ye notice. *Black Phantom*. Nice tub for a gangster to have. I got a one-lung affair, and am hard put to buy gas for it."

"You wouldn't go to Fury Island?" said Gordon Maybrook, raising his eyebrows. "Afraid?"

Bill Stiglow shook his head slowly. "I ain't afraid," he said in a growling voice. "And I ain't a fool."

"What do you mean by that?" challenged Maybrook.

"Any fast boats headin' toward Fury Island will attract plenty of attention from Marlin," declared the deputy. "In fact, most any sudden movements will come under his eye. Guess Miss Shores must 'a' had some good reason for headin' out for that place. We'd ought to sort of play along and see if we can't be as foxy as she'll be. Unless I miss a bet, Trigger Marlin is goin' to get a lesson. He may be a big shot in the underworld, but there's a woman that will make a bum out of him on the water. I know. I had a swell little mix-up with her myself once, out off Shabby Rocks, and what she showed me about salt water was plenty, gents."

"What do you advise then?" said John Denton.

"You want me to run this expedition?" demanded Stiglow. "Or are you goin' to call in the coast guard and the navy?"

"We are not going to do anything that will tend to arouse this man,

Marlin," said Gordon Maybrook. "At least, not until we know more about the situation. It is very possible that my daughter and Miss Shores have fallen into his hands again long before this. If such is the case, Ellen will be in immediate danger of harm, possibly death, every moment. We'll not be able to threaten Marlin, under those circumstances, without threatening her. Mr. Stiglow is right."

The burly deputy eyed the men before him for a little; then he said: "Tell me what ye can do. Any of you gentlemen that have fast boats, send 'em up an' down the coast, like ye was searchin' the shore and inlets. Let 'em step, let 'em lay a lot of white water behind 'em. Show Marlin a lot of action—but keep 'em away from Fury Island!"

Gordon Maybrook nodded his approval.

"Don't let Marlin know that the girl got a message ashore," Stiglow went on.

"And the next move?" said John.

"I'll make the next move," the deputy said. "Guess me and Mike Tonella can fix to organize a little expedition of our own."

"You and Mike?" queried Maybrook.

"Me and Mike."

"Well, get started!" cried Merle. "I'm going with you, too. I've got to. I'll go crazy if I can't do something."

"Miss Shores is a seaman," Stiglow pointed out. "And so is Mike Tonella. Anybody that has watched Mike haul traps with a sea runnin' in one of them eighteen-foot dories with a three-an'-a-half horse-power engine, they know there's plenty salt in his veins. Might be that the sea is goin' to beat Trigger Marlin. Him what ye might term a land-goin' gent. Looks to me like Arlin Shores

sorta figgered the place to fight 'im was out there." Bill Stiglow canted his head emphatically toward the harbor, and beyond, where white water rimmed the long protecting arm of dunes that formed the outer barriers of Marshport harbor. He pursed his lips and nodded slowly. "Smart woman, Miss Shores. And a fighter, too. But I guess likely she'll need some help to lick that mob."

Stiglow was suddenly as one imbued with a grim purpose. A flame was kindled there. A smoldering something burst forth into a blaze. He called an order to a fisherman on the float beside the wharf, at the same time discarding the toothpick.

He turned for an instant to Gordon Maybrook and the little group with him. "Fill the gas tanks on those varnished motor boats of yours," he directed, "and start 'em off. Keep to the shore though, and make lots of speed goin' no place."

"And you?" Maybrook eyed the burly deputy questioningly.

"I'll be pokin' outside. A bit to seaward, maybe." Again he cast an eye at the water and the sky. "Weather's makin' up. I wouldn't get too far from port in them fast tubs. They pound in a sea."

"Fury Island?" queried John Denton.

"Fury Island," said Stiglow.

CHAPTER X.

ON GANGLAND'S ALTAR.

BLUE JEAN smiled up at the swarthy, scowling Joe Belatti—a wet and salty smile into which was written a hint of scorn, derision. Her lip curled.

"Hello, gangster," she said, verbally slapping his face. "I see you're working at your trade again."

"I'm goin' to do a good job this time," snarled the other. "I'm takin' you for a ride, if it's the last cockeyed thing I do."

"And it probably will be," Blue Jean retorted.

Whispering in her ears close by was the sound of the surf: gray-green swells suddenly rent and torn as they thrashed savagely against the rocks of Fury Island; the boom and crackle of combers assaulting the dripping ledges with vindictive fierceness; the intermittent lappings as the somber shoulders of stone seemed to shake themselves free from each onslaught.

A message was there, it seemed, a message from the sea, murmuring words of encouragement to one of its children in distress. Unseen hands had gently swung the *Falcon* broadside to the onward marching windrows, and the varnished craft rolled sharply over each swell.

Silently, the forces of sea and tide were setting the speed boat in toward the ledges. Close under the *Falcon's* forefoot, even now, were unseen and outthrust banks of rock, kelp-laden and dressed with long, trailing gowns of weed.

Ellen Maybrook was struggling desperately to release herself from the clutches of the Wharf Rat, and they wrestled about the small bridge deck in brief but furious combat. The girl was far from being a ready victim now, for there had been imparted to her, it seemed, something of the fierce spirit of Blue Jean herself.

Ellen Maybrook was not a weakling, and she was well-trained in those athletics that tend to build muscle and stamina. And she was fighting for deliverance from these

dread gangsters, for freedom, perhaps her life. The Wharf Rat was soft, though he naturally possessed the greater strength. No doubt but that he could subdue the girl, but not in a moment. He tried to slug her with a hard-driven right, but the blow missed its mark, while Ellen Maybrook countered with her thumb, which almost lifted the Wharf Rat's left eye from its socket.

Blue Jean was watching Joe Belatti, her keen eyes awaiting that slight tensing of the muscles, the ominous glow in his eye that would betray the fact that he was going to fire. And then, suddenly, it was there.

Blue Jean instantly called sharply to Ellen Maybrook.

"Quick! Get overboard!"

Then she herself saught recess beneath the water, sliding down into the cool, protecting depths even as the muzzle of Joe Belatti's weapon spat its leaden messenger of death. The bullet hit the water, to be stripped instantly of its deadliness and drift away toward the bottom as sluggishly as a pebble. Again and again the gun roared, as the baffled gunman sought vainly to put on the spot the girlish figure that taunted him in the clear depths below. Only spouting, vicious little jets of water rewarded his efforts. He cursed loudly, as he realized that Blue Jean was again beyond range of his killer gun.

The Wharf Rat yelled at Joe Belatti, for the deck under him was without stability, and the tigress he sought to subdue was bending her every effort to reaching the rail.

"Tap her on the nut!" screamed the Wharf Rat. "Don't let her get overboard!"

Joe Belatti whirled and leaped to the aid of his companion. But in that instant the boom of a huge

comber sounded close in his ear, and he flung startled eyes in the direction whence that ominous note came. A cry broke from his lips, for the receding wave had exposed a dripping and ugly head a scant dozen feet from the *Falcon*.

"We're into the breakers!" shrilled Belatti. "We're goin' onto the cursed island!"

At that moment, Ellen Maybrook succeeded in partially freeing herself from the grip of the Wharf Rat. She lunged desperately over the rail. The other, giving no heed to Joe Belatti's cry of warning, if he heard it at all, lurched after her, and together they fell into the sea.

Too late the Wharf Rat sought to save himself, while the startled oath that was on his tongue was drowned by a quantity of sea water. As his head appeared above the surface, he gasped out a dampened cry.

"Swing the boat over here, Joe! Gimme a hand!"

However, as the Wharf Rat shook the water out of his eyes and shot a frantic glance about for Joe Belatti and the *Falcon*, he perceived that neither were going to be of any aid to him in the present crisis.

With a sudden wave of terror enveloping him, Joe Belatti had leaped to the wheel. He threw the helm hard over to starboard, jammed in the clutch of the port engine and opened the throttle in a frantic attempt to swing away from the clutching jaws of Fury Island's breakers. The *Falcon* responded with a quartering leap forward. Open water beckoned, and Joe Belatti knew a quick sense of triumph, exultation. But it was short-lived.

A swell rolled under him, and in the valley of waters left behind it, appeared a frowsy ledge. Black jaws, dripping with froth, loomed

almost beneath the trim bow of the *Falcon*. A racing propeller crashed against a rock. The rudder was ripped away, and the next wave set the speed craft down beside a second close-lurking ledge.

Joe Belatti, a panic in his heart, reversed the starboard motor and snatched the throttle wide. For just an instant, the *Falcon* seemed on the point of backing clear, but the sea was not to be cheated. As the next swell came heaving in to hurl itself against the rugged shore, the beautiful power boat that was Trigger Marlin's struck. For an instant, it held shudderingly to a bit of ledge, while the gangster, white and terror-stricken, hung poised at the rail. Then he leaped desperately into the smother of the thunderous waters.

Fury Island, with its adjacent submerged ledges, its racing tides and swirling cross currents, had not been named without purpose. It had always been a danger spot, a dread graveyard of the Atlantic. Ships had gone aground there, to founder and break up. Ocean-going tugs, caught off Fury Island in storms, had lost their deep-laden barges, and watched them crumble in those relentless breakers. Small pleasure craft, as well, had known sorrow on this same bit of shore.

Legend recited tales of strange whirlpools that were supposed to exist there, and many an old salt had often expressed himself as firmly convinced that, once a luckless boat came close to Fury Island, it was caught in the evil spell of sirens, who lived there with the spirits of the dead.

Not without cause had Blue Jean Billy Race chosen Fury Island as a battleground. There were forces here that laughed at the powers of the underworld, of rackets and big

shots, of political bosses and higher-ups. Here the sea gods ruled supreme, and took their tribute from those who passed that way.

Sacrificed on the altar of gangland's crimson racket was the *Falcon*, as beautiful an example of a boat builder's handicraft as ever slipped down the ways. Here again the dread spot was reaping its fearful harvest.

There was a dull, crunching impact, and the *Falcon* again suffered a fatal blow from the dripping rocks of Fury Island. Not alone did the invisible spirits there demand an offering of wood and steel, but of blood, as well.

Joe Belatti fell into the trough of a wave that came curling its white crest on high, and with eyes of horror saw the rearing hull of the *Falcon* almost over his head. In mad desperation, he strove to swim clear, but a mighty hand held him, a relentless undertow laid hold of him, the backwash of a breaking comber it was. He screamed, but the sound died into a watery gurgle.

Together, gangster and gangster boat were thrown onto the rocks. Together their spark of life dimmed and went out in the arms of the sea. Already, Fury Island was counting its toll.

The Wharf Rat received, for the moment, a more favorable verdict from the spinners of life. More dead than alive, soggy, bedraggled, gasping, he was at last flung onto a broad, sloping ledge, where he managed to cling just clear of the breakers.

Blue Jean quickly swam to the aid of Ellen Maybrook, to find the girl treading water and viewing the situation in a surprisingly calm light.

"Are you all right?" asked Blue Jean.

"I am," cried Ellen Maybrook fervently. "It was a fearfully close call. The boat's gone."

"Yes, and one of the gangsters, I think. Can you swim along with me for a little?"

"Fortunately, not being overburdened with clothes in the first place, I can."

"If you can't, kick 'em off. There'll probably be an old pair of pants in one of those shacks on the island, and maybe a coat or shirt, such as it is."

"You saved the day, Blue Jean, when you crippled that seaplane."

"Maybe I just prolonged the agony," the other said a little grimly. "I'm afraid there will be other gangster boats in a short time. There is some sort of craft moving out from the mainland now."

"At least, it's a breathing spell. Will there be any chance to hide on the island?"

"Not much. However, we will have the advantage of being there first, I guess."

Together the two women began now to swim around toward the northerly side of Fury Island, which would take them for a little out of sight of the sullen, watching eyes on the plane.

Bitterly, Trigger Marlin had executed the two youths on the *Falcon* for being a pair of blundering fools. Just when it appeared that they had gained possession of the speed boat and recaptured Ellen Maybrook, the whole thing had gone haywire with a disconcerting suddenness. And now the *Falcon* was wrecked, and one, or possibly both, of the men he had depended on done for.

The seaplane itself was in no immediate danger, though the breakers were closer than the pair in the cockpits would have liked them. It was not difficult to see that the cur-

rents were gradually edging the ship closer to the island and those crackling crests. There was no way of working the plane off.

For a little, Trigger Marlin raved and cursed in a sort of futile fury, while he alternately measured the distance to the shore and scanned the horizon to the eastward.

"I told those guys on the *Black Phantom* to stand off here!" he cried. "And where are they, curse 'em! Right when we need the fools, they're no place in sight."

Vaguely, Trigger Marlin was aware of the fact that a most sinister purpose lay behind the challenge of Blue Jean to meet her at Fury Island. It was her element, the sea, but not his. He hated it; he had always hated it. It was one thing to throw a party on board the *Black Phantom* in Marshport harbor, or take a short cruise on calm waters, or even to ride out to some rum boat off shore when the weather was fair. It was, however, an entirely different matter to be threatened with a lee shore and a fight in a place like Fury Island.

The gangster big shot cast anxious eyes at the sky, but saw nothing there to give him immediate alarm. The air, too, was still, with no sign of a breeze. Not a ripple was on the water. And still Marlin was worried. It seemed that summer storms developed from nowhere on just such days as this. And what a devilish spot Fury Island would be in a blow!

The pilot, in the forward cockpit, suddenly stood up and pointed toward the vague haze that was the distant shore line.

"Ain't that a boat off there?"

Marlin trained his glasses on the speck, studying it a long time. "Looks like the *Black Phantom*," he said at last. And an ugly scowl

settled on his face, as he again turned his attention to the island. "I'll get that Race woman," he snarled, "and string her up in the door of one of those shacks, and riddle her with bullets. There'll be a pay-off around this dump pretty soon."

Once more, he examined the rapidly approaching craft.

"That's her," he declared. "We'll be out of this mess in a little while."

"I hope so," grumbled the other.

With a glimmering white bone in her teeth and a trailing wake of feathery white, the *Black Phantom*, palatial gangster yacht, bore swiftly down on Fury Island. On the bridge, members of Trigger Marlin's mob watched the surf-rimmed spot ahead speculatively.

Their early-morning search had failed to reveal any trace of the *Falcon*, and they entertained scant hope that the woman known as Blue Jean would keep her rendezvous at the place appointed. Fury Island! It was a laugh.

CHAPTER XI.

GINNY BOAT!

THE Wharf Rat, much bedraggled, dragged himself at last well beyond reach of the spume and to a high bit of shelf. Here he gradually assembled his wits and regained his strength. He saw the plane, and waved his hand. Then, for a little, he sat staring at the *Falcon*, being battered to pieces at his feet. Once he thought he saw a soggy human form, whipped by the surf, far down in a crevice of the ledges.

He looked about him, half expecting to see Joe Belatti making his way ashore; then concluded that Joe

Belatti was not coming ashore. That must have been Joe he saw down there in the sea. He shrugged his shoulders with typical gangster indifference. Tough luck!

After a little, the Wharf Rat began to wonder what had become of the two women. He pondered this with suddenly awakening concern. Had they been drowned, or were they somewhere on this rocky bit of island? It was hardly likely that the wild cat known as Blue Jean had gone down. No such luck! The other dame, maybe, but not the gun moll.

The Wharf Rat had been sitting with his legs flung wide and his body propped up by his two arms. He got to his feet, with water dripping from his garments and forming little rivulets about him. His hair was plastered close to his head. Little beads of moisture still clung to his face. A crimson gash was on his forehead.

Slowly, he made his way toward one of the shacks beyond. Suddenly, he stopped, his peaked features bleak and ugly. Two figures stood just clear of the breakers on the one bit of sloping shore surface that the island boasted. They had apparently reached the island but a few moments before.

Blue Jean and Ellen Maybrook saw the Wharf Rat almost as soon as he saw them. For a moment, they stared at him, and even as they watched saw him pick up a piece of driftwood and advance slowly, his eyes flaming with murder.

"I lost my gun in the sea after I shot away the propeller of the plane," Blue Jean said. "We may have to go back into the water. That fellow is bent on murder. We might be able to gang him, you and I, Ellen, and we might not."

"There's a boat coming!" cried

the other, a sudden note of hope in her voice. "Perhaps it's dad, or Merle."

The Wharf Rat, following the gaze of the two figures below him, saw the approaching craft, and he paused to watch it.

Blue Jean's lips compressed and she shook her head slowly, at the same time studying the boat that was plowing its way swiftly toward the island. "No," she said at length, "it's not for us. It's Marlin's *Black Phantom*, I am sure. I have seen it off Marshport several times. It's the only black motor yacht around there."

Ellen Maybrook's lips quivered, and she sought to check the tears that suddenly filled her eyes. She shuddered and spread her hands in a gesture of hopelessness. "It's no use then, Arlin. They've got us!"

Blue Jean turned to face the girl. "Not yet," she said. "We have as good or better a fighting chance as we had before. I don't believe there is anybody aboard the *Black Phantom* who is skillful enough to land a skiff on this island. They'll never be able to get it through the breakers without capsizing." She paused, then added: "And there should be help coming soon, too."

"But this human devil." Ellen Maybrook's eyes went fearfully to the spot on the rocks above where the Wharf Rat stood. His garments clung to his spindling frame, and his face was that of a demon as he again leered down the slope. "He'll kill us!"

"We may bluff him," suggested Blue Jean. "But if we can't, we'll just have to hunt a club and knock his block off. I've yet to see the gangster I was afraid of. Our retreat into the sea is cut off, so it is up to us to resort to primitive methods, I'm afraid. Courage, El-

len. I'll dance at your wedding yet."

On board the *Black Phantom*, an excited group stood on the bridge, watching. The engines were rung down some quarter of a mile from the seaplane. A power tender was lowered, and two men put off for the plane. Trigger Marlin and the pilot were quickly transferred to the power yacht.

The gang leader hastily recited, with many lurid punctuations, the story of the recent happenings at Fury Island. He was in a black mood, and he lost no time in preparing to launch an attack that was meant to seal the doom of the woman known as Blue Jean Billy Race.

Marlin addressed himself to the skipper of the *Black Phantom*. The latter was a squat, scarred, bleak-visaged man, a fellow recruited from a gang of water-front hijackers, but a seaman.

"Can you land a boat on that island?" Marlin demanded.

The other squinted at the rocky shore and grunted. "Some fishermen used to fish out of here summers," he said. "They done it a couple of times a day, but them Bank dories is built for this stuff. We got keel-bottom skiffs, which was meant to tie up at a wharf, and not at no cockeyed island. Better run in with the power tender and anchor it just off the rocks; then let a feller go ashore with a line."

"I don't give a hoot how you do it!" stormed Marlin. "I want that Maybrook girl, and the other one goes on the spot."

"If Blue Jean has still got a gat in that cursed rubber holster of hers," put in Nelson, "it ain't goin' to be so easy."

"I don't think she's got it," Marlin declared. "Just as she sent a

bullet into the prop of the plane, the pontoon went over her. I can't figure anything but that she lost the rod."

"If she ain't got a gat," said Boston Red, who had been watching the island through a pair of glasses, "it's just goin' to be too bad for that broad. The Wharf Rat has got a club and is startin' down across the rocks toward 'em."

"Get that boat away!" cracked Marlin. "Nelson, you go along with the captain and Boston Red. You guys are good seamen."

"We can stand in closer with the *Phantom*," the skipper stated. "Plenty of water here."

"Hey, what's that boat off there?" suddenly demanded Chug Clesoe, indicating a low gray craft that had appeared.

"Ginny boat," said Marlin, after a brief examination through glasses. "Goin' to pass pretty close. But that's all right; it's just some dumb Italians. They fish out off here some place."

"Wait until they get by," suggested the *Black Phantom's* skipper. "Yeah?"

"Better get in the power tender," Marlin said, "and make out as though you were goin' in to put a line on that plane. They might get curious and hang around. It gives us an excuse for bein' here anyhow."

Across the water came the rhythmic beat of the exhaust of the big, two-cylinder, two-cycle motor. *Punka-punk, punka-punk, punka-punk!* A note all its own had the so-called ginny boat, reflecting power, dependability.

Of the famed boat itself, a word in explanation! It was built for the purpose of fishing, and there was nothing of beauty about it. Stout ribs and stouter planking, and a big

oak keel, big enough for a full-rigged ship! There was a flush deck, above which the rail extended a foot, perhaps, and scuppers, so that water coming aboard could flow back to the sea. There was one or more hatches in this deck, with bins below for ice and fish.

The engine was well aft. It was housed by a cabin, the roof of which extended but a very little above the deck. A hatch led down into the engine room. The wheel was beside the hatchway. Thus the pilot could stand just in front of the motor's flywheel, with his head out of this hatchway, and steer. At the same time, he had easy access to the controls which were few and simple.

Inside of the engine room were such crude accommodations for the crew as one might expect on a boat of this kind. Eating and sleeping were accomplished here after a fashion. Anything bordering luxury was far removed from a ginny boat. The craft itself would weather almost any kind of a blow, and come plugging home serenely in the teeth of a gale.

Two unkempt and frowsy heads were visible to those aboard the *Black Phantom*, as the fishing boat came nearer. These were thrust up out of the engine-room hatchway in curious contemplation, it seemed, of the world in general.

Aft of the engine cabin were numerous bamboo poles, rigged with weights, at the base, and, a little higher up, blocks of corks, that these poles might float upright in the water. At the tips were black and ragged flags, which served as markers to denote the position of the trawls after they had been set.

A keen eye might have observed here, had its owner been alert, a slightly discordant note, for, among the tattered flags on the bamboo

staffs, was one shaped in a blue triangle with a yellow star in its center. It was not at all conspicuous, this bit of pennant. However, it was there.

It was the flag of the Pemagussett yacht club. And below it, partly obscured by the fluttering black buoy markers of the fishing boat, was the private signal flag of Gordon Maybrook.

Mike Tonella, his face like a mask of stone, was at the wheel. As the fishing craft came nearer, he surveyed the scene with a practical eye; then translated his findings to unseen passengers crouched below with picturesque brevity.

"Beega blacka bo't joosta offa da island'. I dunno who she is, but I teenk *Blacka Fan* mebbe. Airplane, too, in close. Whatcha say, *wellyo?*"

"Work around the other side of the island," directed a voice, "as though you were going to try fishing here."

Very gradually, the ginny boat changed its course in answer to the guiding hand of Mike Tonella. It swung away a little to the north, which would soon place Fury Island partly between the fishing craft and the power yacht.

As it came abreast of the island, the ginny boat's engine was throttled. The boat lost headway, and now another swarthy son of Italy climbed from the motor compartment and stood on the deck, as though he were, perhaps, mindful to set his trawls hereabouts.

The dingy craft rose and fell to the gentle thrust of the swells, its motor's exhaust giving forth a lazy, irregular note.

The distance to Fury Island was hardly more than one hundred yards now. Mike Tonella examined the upflung bit of rocky terrain, and reported that he saw two women

close by the breakers, and higher on the slope a man.

Blue Jean had watched the ginny boat from the moment that her ears had brought the familiar note of it to her.

"Only a fishing boat," Ellen had said, her voice filled with despair. Her eyes went back quickly to the Wharf Rat, who was advancing slowly toward them, his beady eyes agleam.

Blue Jean's gaze went again and again toward the slow-moving ginny boat. Could it be possible that Mike Tonella had failed to reach his string of pots that morning? Had the scrap of paper secured to one of the buoys washed away? Or, perhaps, Mike Tonella had given no heed to that bit of message. There should be help coming now.

Then her eyes suddenly brightened, and she spoke excitedly to the girl beside her. "Look, Ellen! Over the stern of the ginny boat—that burgee with the black marker flags."

A low, joyous cry broke from the lips of Ellen Maybrook, and tears filled her eyes, to stream unheeded down her cheeks.

"It's the Pemagussett yacht club flag! And there! Under it! See, Blue Jean! It's dad's owner pennant. They're letting us know that help is here. They've actually come for us!"

"Good old Mike!" whispered Blue Jean. "I could kiss that man. He came through."

"Can we swim out?" cried Ellen Maybrook. She turned and waded into the water to her knees.

"If we do," said Blue Jean, "the *Black Phantom* will be on top of us before we're halfway there."

Suddenly, the sultry air of the morning gave way to a cool draft that swept in from the northeast.

Blue Jean shot a glance whence it came; then cried out excitedly.

"It's a squall. It'll be on us in five minutes."

From nowhere, a black summer storm had developed. Hidden by the gray haze that had hung over the sea, ominous clouds had marshaled their forces. Almost in a twinkling, it seemed, thunderheads had cast their thick billows over the horizon, white tinged with an ever-deepening blue-black. Lightning zigzagged across the heavens, and there was the low rumble of thunder.

The greasy gray that had been on the sea gave way in the northeast to a line of swiftly advancing blue—a blue that was crested by ruffling white. There was a deathly hush. The sea birds had disappeared. The breakers even carried a new note almost of awe. A tempest was close to Fury Island.

The Wharf Rat alone was unmindful of the approaching storm. He was only intent on the two girlish figures there on the rocky bit of shore. He advanced, pushing his hair back on his forehead. He was less than a hundred feet away now.

Blue Jean turned to face him. "Keep back," she warned. "I still have a gun."

"Ya lie!" snarled the gangster. "If ya did have a rod, ya'd show it. I'm wise to ya." He lunged ahead, intent only on beating to death this cool, bronzed woman before him.

Suddenly, a gun cracked, a rifle, and a bullet struck close under the feet of the Wharf Rat, and lead spattered about his legs. He uttered a shrill cry of alarm and pulled back, his eyes going to the gray boat that rode the seas just beyond.

On the deck, his feet spread, a rifle in his hands stood Bill Stiglow.

Again he raised the weapon, but, before he could fire, the Wharf Rat hurled himself down between the rocks.

On board the *Black Phantom* there was sudden consternation. Trigger Marlin leaped to the rail and bawled a command at the trio that were getting away in the power yacht's motor tender.

"Come back here!" His voice rose in a frantic wail. "It's that cursed ginny boat. They're shootin' at the Wharf Rat. I guess they popped him off. We got to get to 'em."

"And it's goin' to blow," called the *Black Phantom's* skipper. He flung his hand toward the horizon. "There it comes!"

"Thunderstorm!" yapped Nelson, helping to pull the power tender alongside the larger craft. "Not me out in this blasted thing!"

"It's a bum lay, anyhow!" snarled Chug Clesoe.

"Run down that ginny boat!" yelled Trigger Marlin. "Sink it!"

"Better stand off until the blow is over," counseled the skipper, climbing over the rail. "I tell ye, Marlin, this is one fierce hole in a squall. We're too close now."

The gang leader hesitated, his gaze going from the black eastern horizon to the boat around the point of the island. Suddenly, he brought his glasses into play. The next moment, he cried excitedly: "Those dames are goin' into the water. They're divin' through the breakers. They're goin' to swim for it—out to that boat."

"I bet there's bulls on it!" cried Nelson. "That frail musta got word ashore, somehow."

"Maybe put in some place before daylight," said the youth known as the Slowfoot Kid, "and spilled the works. Then come out here to bait the trap."

"Chances are that there is a coast-guard boat hanging around some place," declared Boston Red. "We're in a fine mess, if ya ask me!"

"Shut up!" snarled Marlin in a rage.

"Better call the job off," advised the master of the *Black Phantom*, "and run for it. We got a good chance to get away clean now."

"Who asked you to say anythin'?" cried Marlin. He flashed an automatic and menaced the other. "Take that wheel and do as I tell ya, or I'll plug ya and throw ya to the fish!"

Sullenly, the skipper obeyed. The bells in the engine room jangled, and the *Black Phantom* pointed her bow toward the easterly end of Fury Island, the ginny boat waiting beyond.

CHAPTER XII.

BLACK SQUALL.

GRIM and deadly forces were mustering themselves on the sea. A black squall was marching in from seaward with appalling swiftness. The thunder peals were louder, more frequent. The lightning play was vivid, terrifying. The wind came in sharp gusts that disturbed the smooth surface of the water. Waves grew to enormous size from tiny ripples in a twinkling.

There was a sullen roar, and darting pellets of hail, streaking down slantwise. The sea became a green-and-white inferno. Spindrift was snatched from the tops of arching waves and was flung away in a fine mist.

Two heads bobbed in the boiling seas, as Blue Jean and Ellen May-

brook fought their way toward the fishing boat. Mike Tonella maneuvered the sturdy craft ever closer, for it was plain that the women in the water would be beaten before they could hope to come alongside. The tide was on the turn and was already exerting a strong pull about the rocky shores.

On the deck of the ginny boat was Bill Stiglow, Merle Denton, Gordon Maybrook, and the Italian owner of the craft. They braced themselves and peered fearfully toward the swimmers. Young Denton would have flung himself into the water if Stiglow had not restrained him. He shouted hoarsely and waved his arms.

White water boiled over submerged ledges now, revealing the fact that treacherous shoals lurked here on Fury Island's northerly side. At intervals, black and ugly reefs were exposed, only to be lost again beneath the ruthless, onward marching seas.

Bill Stiglow shook his head and glanced toward Mike Tonella. The wind and tide were against them. Fury Island was under their lee. It was a tough spot.

"Goin' to make it, Mike?" A gust of wind snatched at the words that fell from the deputy's lips almost before they were uttered.

The lobster man, standing in the open hatchway, allowed his eyes to lift to the face of Bill Stiglow, his friend. He grinned, even as he struggled with the wheel.

"Shoor-r! Joosta lika taka candy from da baby."

"They'll never make it!" cried young Denton. "They're not making headway now, and we're going to get it worse than this in a minute."

The Italian on the deck spoke to Mike Tonella in his native tongue.

Mike shrugged his shoulders expressively, but made no reply.

The rain hit, a white and savage sheet that drenched those on the deck of the fishing boat in an instant. Gordon Maybrook shook his head hopelessly. He was on his knees now, hanging to the low rail. "We'll all be onto the rocks!" His voice was suddenly raised, as for an instant he caught sight of the sea-battered figures beyond. "Ellen! Ellen! My poor girl!"

Water dripped from the swarthy features of Mike Tonella, as a wave broke over the bow, but he wiped it away with a careless sweep of a brawny paw. "Whatsa mat', *wellyo?* You don't teenk I know deeza place? I feesh here two-t'ree mont' one tam'. You steeka wi' me. Harh?"

It seemed that ledges were closing all about the stout-hearted ginny boat. And yet, in some strange manner, the man at the wheel seemed to avoid them. Gradually, the wind and tide set the craft closer to the thundering breakers, while Mike Tonella held the bow quartering to the waves.

Bill Stiglow climbed out on the stern and took a line from the second Italian. In a few moments, they would be close enough to get it to the struggling figures in the water. Ellen Maybrook was quite helpless, while Blue Jean fought the mounting seas close beside her. Once she waved; then waited for the boat to creep closer, the fingers of one hand caught tight in the dress of the frightened girl beside her.

At last, a coil of rope shot across the water. Blue Jean seized it and managed to take a turn about both Ellen Maybrook and herself. Slowly, they were drawn toward the reeling, pitching boat. Seas were almost continually breaking over the sturdy craft, threatening every in-

stant to sweep away those who now lay prostrate on its deck.

Hands reached down to seize Blue Jean and the girl who clung to her, and a moment later they were safely aboard. A cry of gladness broke from the lips of Gordon Maybrook, as he at last threw his arms about his daughter. "Thank God!" A sob choked further utterance.

Unmindful of the storm that beat upon them, the men on the deck assisted the two women through the hatchway into the engine cabin. Tears mingled with the raindrops on the face of Merle Denton, and he uttered his sweetheart's name repeatedly. All would be well now, he knew, in spite of storm or gangsters. Too, he called a word of praise to Blue Jean, and the woman flashed him a smile through the water that streamed from her face.

Fury Island towered out of the crashing surf close above the staggering boat. The impact of the waves sounded at times like rifle shots, while the suck and grip of hungry waters seemed to lay hold stubbornly on the keel of the fishing craft.

Mike Tonella opened the throttle, and the big two-cylinder motor began its powerful beat. *Punka-punk, punka-punk, punka-punk!* Something calm and reassuring there was in the sound of it, as many a fisherman, fighting home, could have told.

The ginny boat careened crazily over a great, snarling comber, only to smash into the trough with terrific force. And yet, though staggered, it came back to meet the next onslaught with an unshaken front. Green water poured across the deck, but those on board were already crouching in the motor compartment, and Mike Tonella ducked his head and slid the hatch closed for the moment of its passing.

Fury Island, to the north, has spread before it outstretched ledges like the toes of a hen's foot, reaching away fanwise into the sea. At half tide they are, largely, submerged. Their lengths vary, ranging from one to five hundred yards. Hence, while deep water is to be had close to Fury Island on three sides, there are treacherous shoals off the northerly shore.

Each and every one of these grim, black reefs was known to Mike Tonella, for there had been a time when he had occupied one of the shacks on Fury Island. He had threaded them daily, until they were as the streets of a city. He saw them now in his mind's eye, as he peered from the half-open hatchway just in front of the engine.

The *Black Phantom* skirted the easterly end of Fury Island; then, with engines throttled, stood off to await the ginny boat. The bridge deck fairly bristled with machine guns, for Trigger Marlin was determined to annihilate completely both boat and crew. He'd put 'em all on the spot. He'd show the highway-woman of the sea something. Squall or no squall, he was out now to clean up. He'd wipe 'em off.

The gray fishing boat battled slowly away from the island, while overhead the heavens loosened their full fury. Lightning slashed downward viciously, and the thunder crashed with jarring, deafening detonations. The wind was terrific, and the rain fell in torrents. The wave crests broke and were flung away in breath-taking savageness.

Fury Island was quite blotted out. The sound of the breakers had become a continuous roar. The sea-plane had been caught almost in the first squall, and flung onto the rocks, where it disintegrated in a white smother with amazing rapidity.

The power yacht, *Black Phantom*, was of sufficient length and beam to ride out the squall with no difficulty, and those on board were filled with supreme confidence. They laughed and shouted at one another.

"Wouldn't we have looked fine out in this in that little tub of a motor tender?" cried Nelson.

"I'll tell the cockeyed world!" agreed Boston Red, pulling his neck down into the collar of his oilskin. "We'd been sunk! And how!"

Suddenly, those watching on the *Black Phantom* saw the fishing boat veer off and begin fighting along on a course that carried it away from the outlaw craft.

The *Black Phantom*, like a grim, avenging destroyer, began to move in a wide arc, that it might intercept the ginny boat as it reached deeper water.

Blue Jean had now joined Mike Tonella, her head appearing beside his in the engine hatchway.

"It isn't the squall that we've got to be scared of," said the woman. "It's that boat there, Mike. Tough mugs looking for us, fisherman."

Mike Tonella grunted. "Joosta toof lika us. Whatcha say, gal? We shoot, too. Plenty gun. Don't you be 'fraid."

The *Black Phantom* was closer now, and, as the fishing boat appeared on the top of a foaming swell, a machine gun flung out its vicious leaden hail. Splinters flew from the deck of the smaller craft to the accompaniment of a savage *rat-a-tat-tat*.

Mike Tonella waved his fist and yelled an Italian insult that is said to be very effective in creating trouble. Bill Stiglow pulled Blue Jean out of the way and thrust himself into the opening, a rifle gripped in his hands. He braced himself against the pitching of the boat, and

fired at the bridge of the *Black Phantom*. The bullet smashed a pane of glass in the pilot house.

Instantly, one of the gangsters at the rail of the bridge deck replied with a prolonged burst. The range was closer now, and lead ripped and tore at the deck and cabin top of the smaller craft. Bullets pierced the superstructure and showered those crouching within with splinters.

Mike Tonella gasped and slumped down in front of the whirling fly-wheel. Bill Stiglow pulled him into a corner. The boat fell away into a trough of the sea and was rolled almost onto its beam ends.

The engine cabin became a ghastly inferno. Its occupants were flung about savagely. Pots and pans and gear crashed about their ears. The swarthy boat owner stumbled against the hot exhaust pipe and came away with his hands like two pieces of raw meat. A curling sea broke, and water poured through the hatch to deluge the motor and those about it.

The always reliable make-and-break mechanism of the big engine, however, continued to function with absolute regularity, and the boat plodded on.

Blue Jean leaped to the wheel and threw it over. The boat met the next sea, bow on. The gangster craft was working closer, while the gunmen on the deck threw volley after volley at the sore-oppressed fishing boat. It seemed that nature had conspired with a killer mob to wreak vengeance on the luckless little fisherman.

Snarling and triumphant, Trigger Marlin watched the ginny boat reel and stagger from the blows of the sea, watched the bullets of his guns raking deck and cabin and hull. Standing at the wheel, he worked

the bow of the *Black Phantom* around. In a minute now, the craft yonder would be a fair target for the sharp prow of the big motor yacht.

"I'll cut the cursed tub in half!" he cried with an added oath. "I'll ram it into the sea so far they'll never find anything but a bunch of driftwood. It's my turn now. They got the *Falcon* and the plane. I'll make 'em pay. And how!"

The bells jingled, and the *Black Phantom*, tossing a wave off its bow, swept toward the intended victim, now dead ahead, and fair in the path of the ruthless outlaw craft.

CHAPTER XIII.

CALICO LANE.

BLUE JEAN knew Fury Island almost as well as Mike Tonella, knew it as one who has many times picked his way among its reefs and shoals. And now she threw herself into the breach. She saw, through the swirling sheets of rain, the *Black Phantom*, saw it work about, and guessed the thing that was in the mind of Trigger Marlin.

She spun the wheel to port until it would go no farther, and held it there while the boat came around. They must get clear of that menacing black craft. Fury Island was but a blur. She had no bearing, and yet, prompted by instinct, Blue Jean chose a course that bore slightly to seaward. With trained eyes, she watched the boiling seas ahead, looked for areas where the crests seemed almost continually white, watched those ridges where the water was the roughest.

An area, there over the stout oak stem of the ginny boat, where the

rolling seas were broken! An out-flung arm that reached away from Fury Island that held a vague and sinister menace!

The ginny boat pounded on, and was at last caught in the churning sector of white. It fought through, with the *Black Phantom* rushing in its wake.

The eyes of Trigger Marlin were like two wells of molten metal, for he would in a minute ride down the despised gray craft that wallowed in the sea before him.

Suddenly, the captain of the *Black Phantom* uttered a startled cry, and leaped to the wheel, his hands clawing desperately at the spokes, as he thrust Trigger Marlin aside.

"Shoal!" he yelled. "It's a cursed sunken ledge!" He jammed the wheel to port and rang the engines full speed astern.

A kind of numb horror seized the gangsters on the bridge. They peered into the sea, but to their untrained eyes there was nothing unusual here. They searched the faces of one another, and stared at the frantic skipper.

"Shoal?" shrilled Nelson. "Where?"

"He's nuts!" snarled Boston Red. "There ain't no shoal."

The *Black Phantom* responded, it seemed, very slowly to the backward tug of her racing motors. The bow swung away a little from the dread ridge of white.

Trigger Marlin's jaw sagged, but he was reluctant to believe that a ledge was in the vicinity that their five-foot draft would not clear.

"We're out too far to hit anythin'!" he heard himself saying. But there was no conviction in the words, for a sudden premonition had laid hold of him. He stared toward the gray fishing boat, and

caught a glimpse of a woman's face framed in the hatchway over the engine. It was the same face that had taunted him, eluded him before. It was the face of Blue Jean, the woman who had thrown herself, for some mysterious reason, into the fight to save Ellen Maybrook.

The face and the ginny boat faded, faded forever from the eyes of Trigger Marlin.

The *Black Phantom* lifted on a swell, and then dipped downward. Suddenly, there was a gentle shock, and a shudder ran through the sleek motor yacht. The floor slid out from under the feet of Nelson, and he sprawled to his knees. The machine gun he had clutched flew from his hands.

The Slowfoot Kid, Chug Clesoe, and Boston Red found themselves prostrate. It seemed strange, for there had only been a little bump. They gathered their legs under them and staggered erect. The deck had assumed a frightful pitch. The starboard rail was almost under water. A sea rolled by, and snatched hungrily at every movable object.

"What did ya do?" cried Boston Red. He gaped accusingly from Trigger Marlin to the captain. "I thought youse guys knew how to run a boat."

"We hit somethin'." The gang chief spoke like one in a daze.

"Yes, you cursed fool!" shrieked the skipper. "We hit somethin'. We're on a ledge. I bet the whole bottom is knocked out. I told ye we was too close in! Fury Island was always the devil's own buryin' ground. It'll prob'ly bury us. We ain't got no boats or nothin' else!"

A green wall of water struck the half-submerged starboard rail and shot over the deck. Nelson felt himself going and threw out his hands. His fingers closed on a wet sleeve,

and he gripped it in desperation. Chug Clesoe released his hold on the rail with one hand to strike at the other.

"Leggo of me!" he screamed. "Ya fool, leggo!"

The next moment, both gangsters were swept into the sea.

The huge combers swung the outlaw craft broadside, and it began to slip off of the ledge, at the same time settling by the stern. Everything that was loose went into the water. Then the seas began their relentless attack on doors and hatches and canvas windbreaks, on everything within their reach.

Trigger Marlin caught up a life preserver, but, before he could secure it about him, Boston Red had snatched it from his hands. Every wave was now crashing over the half-submerged craft, seemingly intent on driving it beneath the surface of the sea. The black, lightning-streaked sky loosened a thousand furies, while the wrath of the entire north Atlantic seemed to concentrate on the gangster ship.

The sea gods, sitting in judgment, rendered their verdict in a court of last appeal. And it spelled the doom of Trigger Marlin and his gang rule. No lawyers here, no high-priced mouthpiece, no bail, no reprieve. For once, the power of an underworld big shot was scorned. By the law of the sea, he stood convicted. Crimes without number were written against him. His sentence was final.

On Fury Island, the Wharf Rat had stood peering toward the spot where he now and then glimpsed the dim outline of the two boats through rifts in the storm. He cursed, and shivered, a strange chill seeming to reach the very marrow of his bones. His hand went up frequently to wipe the water from his

face. Suddenly, he grew tense; then an inarticulate cry burst from his lips.

Where he had seen the gray shape of the *Black Phantom* but a few minutes before, there was now only a wallowing hulk, a hulk over which the seas were breaking.

"She struck!" he shrieked. "The *Phantom* is sinkin'!"

The Wharf Rat ran blunderingly down the rocky slope. He slipped, stumbled, fell, and pulled himself up to run again. His mouth shaped strange and terrible oaths, which were whipped from his lips by the wind almost before they were uttered. He reached the water's edge, only to turn and again stumble up the way he had come. For him, Fury Island had been, a short time past, a haven, as it was now a prison to confine him.

The gray fishing boat, following the law of the sea, stood by the sinking *Black Phantom*, that it might render what aid was possible. With the utmost difficulty, the captain of the outlaw craft, the engineer, the pilot of the seaplane, and Boston Red were rescued, but only because of the skill and courage of Blue Jean, Bill Stiglow, and Merle Denton.

Trigger Marlin, Nelson, Chug Clesoe, and the youth known as the Slowfoot Kid perished in the sea, there off the ledges. With the *Black Phantom*, they crossed the bar to join others who had passed through the graveyard of Fury Island.

The black squall passed. The seas grew calm. The sun came out. The bullet-scarred ginny boat pointed her bow for Marshport harbor, leaving there on the rocks the wreckage of the seaplane, the *Falcon*, and the *Black Phantom*. A lawless fleet, gone forever! And sailing their decks to the unknown

ports of a distant shore, a gangster chief, Trigger Marlin, and five of his henchmen!

Later, a coast-guard cutter took off the Wharf Rat. In a few hours, he had lived a lifetime of remorse. He was sodden, spiritless, and in his ears there still rang the cries of his companions. He saw, too, the eyes of Joe Belatti staring stolidly up at him from a sea-washed crevice.

Warm hands, outstretched, waiting at Marshport! Happy hearts, beating excitedly! Eyes shining through tears—for loved ones were coming home! It was a time for rejoicing, thanksgiving. Words were futile, for they could convey so little of the things within.

Folks of high station and low—millionaire and fisherman, the proud and the humble, white hands and soiled—they all met there by the old wharfinger's shed. All lines were wiped away. Silk and calico rejoined together.

Ellen Maybrook found herself in her mother's arms. And mother's arms also caught Blue Jean, Arlin Shores, close—so close it seemed that they would never let her go.

"It was Arlin that saved her!" cried Gordon Maybrook. "The girl from Calico Lane!"

"No, it was Mike Tonella!" declared Blue Jean. "Mike, and that blessed old ginny boat!"

"And Bill Stiglow!" put in Merle Denton. "The cop who wasn't afraid of crooks of gangland."

With her long lashes moist, Ellen Maybrook recited the story of her capture and ensuing retreat to Fury Island. All credit, she declared, all praise, should go to Arlin Shores, the brave-hearted woman who had come to her aid there in Blue Gingham Bay. Vividly, she painted the picture of the struggle between the

gangsters and the bronzed, slender person known as Blue Jean Billy Race.

"I can never repay you, Arlin," she had said. "Never! For it is one of those things that leaves me forever indebted to you. I shall love you with eternal loyalty." And she had gazed deep into the shining eyes of Blue Jean. "No matter what happens. You're one in a million."

For the first time in her life, the daughter of old Quality Bill found blue-blooded royalty paying homage at her feet, and it left her a little bit dazed.

Greasy, grimy Mike Tonella! Mike had a bullet through him. So Mike went to the hospital. He had a private room and nurses and specialists and white-coated attendants without end. He didn't know a man could be sick so luxuriously. It annoyed him; it worried him. He was a poor man—"joosta a poor fishamun"—and how was he going to pay for "alla deeza fuss."

And that wasn't the half of it. When Mike came rolling home in a big limousine, with a Maybrook chauffeur out in front, he owned a new house, and Mrs. Mike Tonella had a new silk dress—a yellow one—and the little Tonellas had a lot of the things that youngsters always dream of having. There was a new boat, too, the finest fishing boat that had ever sailed out of Marshport harbor. His friend, who had lent him the big ginny boat, was also richly rewarded for his part in the fight at Fury Island.

Never does Gordon Maybrook go to Marshport now that he does not drop around to speak a word of neighborly greeting with Mike Tonella, and, maybe drink a bit of dago red with this swarthy son of Napoli.

The real home-coming, the hap-

piest moment for Blue Jean, was when she walked again through the door of the old white house in Calico Lane, and there was received into the arms of Aunt Sophy and Captain Lige.

Here was the true haven for Billy Race. Guns and crooks seemed

very, very far away from the big rambling house, with its apple trees, its lilacs, its old-fashioned garden, the wall-bordered lane with Blue Gingham Bay at its foot. A dream world, Calico Lane, through which one journeyed in eternal peace and security!

PROWLED THE WRONG HOUSE

TWO burglars recently entered the wrong house when they were looking for something to steal. The owner of the house which the two burglars entered was an ex-War veteran and an expert rifleman. He lived at 1440 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

The young man came home at ten o'clock in the evening and found two men prowling about his home. The bandits drew pistols and forced the owner to stand with his face against the wall. Then they made a hasty exit, but they did not know that their victim knew anything about shooting. The moment he heard a door slam, he grabbed his rifle and went after the thieves.

He sighted one of them and chased him for several blocks. The fugitive ducked down behind an organ grinder. The War veteran was afraid of wounding pedestrians, so he climbed on top of an automobile, stretched himself out flat, and aimed at the organ grinder's wagon. There were two quick shots, and then the robber behind the wagon was still. When the rifle expert reached the man, he found a bullet had gone through his jaw and one through his shoulder. The only loot that was found on him was a pair of opera glasses.

ATTICA'S NEW PRISON

THE new prison being erected in Attica, New York, is said to be the most modern and elaborate one in the world. It is very nearly completed.

Just as modern teachers say that small classes can be more efficiently taught, so small institutions can better handle their inmates. In the new Attica prison there will be a thousand prisoners in maximum-security cells, five hundred in medium-security cells, and two hundred will occupy another section where they will be under observation. Penologists say that more than a thousand prisoners cannot be properly handled.

During the construction of Attica's prison there was a great deal of discussion as to the cost and plans. The plans were changed once. It was believed by many that the use of decorative stone and ornamental brickwork was money wasted, that a higher type of personnel is far more important than beautifully and expensively constructed buildings.



EVEN IN DEATH

By ARTHUR MALLORY

In his arms, he carried the frail creature that had bested him in life.

AMOS GREGORY sat on his front porch and watched the workmen gather up their tools and make ready for the night. Though the six-o'clock whistle had just blown, dusk had begun to gather. The days were growing shorter; soon winter would be here.

The men set lanterns at each end of their frames. They were laying a cement sidewalk. All the way across Amos Gregory's half-acre lot, they had smoothed and leveled the ground to make a bed, and had set up rows of six-inch boards, edgewise, five feet apart. Their ungainly cement mixer was in place, flanked by

piles of crushed stone and sand, and neatly stacked bags of cement, ready to set up its coughing, grinding roar to-morrow when they began to pour. The molds would be filled; then this space that was like an elongated cold frame would be poured full of grout, topped with smooth cement. Amos Gregory would have a sidewalk, then—a sidewalk just as good as George Boggs's.

"I'll keep even with that worm if it kills me!" Amos told himself.

Ever since their school days there had been an intense rivalry between big, coarsely handsome Amos Gregory and this meek little person. Always, Amos had been bigger,

stronger, cleverer; Boggs, always small and weak, and disgustingly mild and apologetic, yet, in some unexplainable fashion had always come out ahead.

George Boggs had been valedictorian of their graduating class in high school, chosen at the last moment after the place had been conceded to Amos by every one—because the latter had been unable to conquer the temptation to make witty answers to examination questions. Later, when Amos had been ready to marry Mary Rockly—even to the building of this house in which he now lived, a bachelor—Mary had seen him, one night, with that girl from the cannery; and she had married George Boggs next day. Amos had planned a big real-estate deal, and one of his backers had refused to put up cash enough, whereon George Boggs took up his, Gregory's, options and made thirty thousand dollars, selling lots in Rockburg Subdivision.

So things had always gone. Amos Gregory was the better man; of that, Amos was perfectly sure. Why, every one, or almost every one, said so. At least, ten years ago, every one would have said so. Yet, by the merest luck, through a series of blind coincidences, simpering, meek little George Boggs had crept and wriggled his apologetic way ahead, like the worm he was, while Amos had slipped back. And, most infuriating of all, the fellow persisted in acting as if he admired, and even envied, his big, bluff neighbor. It must be hypocrisy, Amos was assured; and he resented it bitterly. Whenever he met Boggs's wistful, half-smiling, apologetic glance, Amos bristled, and longed to strike the creature down, to stamp upon him for the worm he was.

George was mean. He hadn't

been content, last year, with having a new cement sidewalk laid in front of his own house, but he must keep after the town commissioners, and pester property owners with petitions to sign, until he got the whole street into it. And now Amos Gregory's old board sidewalk, which had been good enough to last for years, even if a few planks had rotted a bit, must be ripped up to make room for a new five-foot cement walk that would cost him more than he could afford, just now.

Amos winced and scowled at that reflection. He really ought to have paid something on his mortgage, this fall—the interest, at least. But he couldn't, now; Hank Mullins had been so unreasonable, insisting on cash before he would set his men to work. Just as if the Gregorys hadn't always paid their bills! His credit was good, Amos guessed; maybe he had been a little slow, here lately, but he'd always paid his bills sooner or later. At any rate, he intended to.

Thus the man sat, chewing the bitter cud of his own reflections, while dusk faded into darkness. George Boggs was down at the corner grocery, he knew, playing the one careful game of checkers he allowed himself twice a week. At nine, promptly, he would come prancing back again to his wife, who was infuriatingly prettier and more desirable now than ever as a girl.

Here came the little man, now, hurrying back to her. He carried a large paper bag under one arm, and picked his precise way along past those piles of sand and stone like a cat crossing a puddle. Amos could make out so much by the dim light of the red lantern hung upon the cement mixer. It was too dark to see the fellow's face, but he had no doubt that it wore a meek, propitia-

tory smile as he turned his head toward the house.

Upon a sudden, unreasoned impulse, Amos Gregory came to his feet and hurried down the steps.

"Hello, Georgie!" he greeted the other hatefully. "Gotta hurry back to the missus, huh?"

George Boggs paused and shifted the heavy paper bag. "Hello, Amos," he said uncertainly. "Nice night, isn't it?"

"Huh!" The bigger man's fingers itched. He longed to bully little Boggs, to torture him as he had when they were boys, to pull his hair, or "make the fox bite him." He gripped George Boggs's shoulders with roughness only half playful, and shook him back and forth.

"What you got in that bag, Georgie?"

"B-beans. Ugh, careful, please, Amos. I know you don't mean it, but you hurt my shoulder, kind of. You don't realize your strength." There was a wistful note, as of unconscious envy, in the smaller man's voice. What weakling ever lived who did not envy physical strength?

"B-beans?" mocked Amos Gregory. "Why, Georgie Boggs! I didn't s'pose you knew beans. That's no kind of victuals for a man, Georgie. Good enough for you, probably; but a real he-man needs meat victuals. You oughta try a bit of meat some day. Might make you hold your head up."

The little man listened with an uneasy smile. In the dim glow from that red lantern, his face showed timid and half alarmed. He began to breathe fast.

"Ugh, Amos," he said hesitantly. "Ugh, Amos. That mortgage of yours——" He paused and coughed again, wriggling with embarrassment.

Amos Gregory's hand tightened

upon his shoulder, then relaxed and fell away. "What mortgage? What is it your business if I got a mortgage?"

"W-why, nothing, Amos. Nothing at all. Only"—Boggs smiled up into the big man's face—an apologetic, admiring smile.

"Only, there's a note overdue, isn't there, and some interest?"

Amos Gregory said nothing. George went on in growing unease, flustered by the other's ominous silence.

"You see, the fact is—— Well, having a little money idle, I just thought—that note being overdue, and all—well, anyway, I bought your mortgage from the bank to-day, Amos."

A sudden uprush of blind rage set Amos Gregory to shaking. So that was it! This worm had framed him. Knowing he was short of funds, Boggs had railroaded this sidewalk ordinance through, had forced him to spend all the mortgage money on cement sidewalks, just so he could buy up the mortgage and foreclose!

"Put me out in the street, would you?" asked Amos, through his teeth.

"Why—why, Amos!" quavered the other. "I only—— Stop, Amos! Don't!"

The little man flung up his arms so that his bag of beans flew through the air, right into the open maw of the cement mixer, and there burst. He squeaked faintly, as a nipped rabbit squeaks.

Amos did not hear. The blood roared in his ears; long years of bitter brooding, topped by this last insult, had set him mad. A drowning flood of rage surged through his brain. Before his eyes, everything was red—redder than the dim glow of that lantern. And ready to his

hand lay a pickax, where some workman had left it leaning against the cement mixer.

"Stop, Amos! D-don't! Oh-h, please don't!"

It was too late. As if by its own volition, that pickax rose into the air, poised, swept downward with a sickening plunk! And George Boggs crumpled together and fell in a heap, limply, without a sound.

Amos stood over him, weapon poised, but no second blow was needed. It was like that worm, thought the man, confusedly, to have dropped thus, without striking a blow in self-defense, without so much as a scream. Why, that little whimper couldn't have been heard across the street!

The sound of the pickax striking his skull had been louder. Amos fancied he could hear it yet. It had sounded like the hollow noise of a watermelon when you burst it open. Suddenly, Amos Gregory shuddered.

The roaring in his ears diminished; he discovered that he was trembling violently. A bitter nausea racked him. Why, he had killed a man!

A man? We-ell, no! Only Georgie Boggs! Only that miserable worm who had planned to ruin him! It didn't matter; at least, it wouldn't unless he was caught. But they'd send him to the electric chair as quick for killing George Boggs as anybody else. Quicker, maybe, seeing that Boggs was so small, and he so big and burly.

But it served the creature right, Amos told himself with uneasy emphasis. It served him right. Hadn't he been planning another dirty deal? Of course, he had! Amos repeated it aloud, striving to convince himself, for a nagging inner voice kept telling him that poor little George hadn't meant to foreclose at all, that the little chap had only

meant to do him a favor, to carry that mortgage for him, so the bank wouldn't sell him out.

That wasn't true. It couldn't be true; it mustn't be true, Amos told himself violently. George Boggs was—had been—a sneak, a snake in the grass. He must believe that; he must, for his sanity's sake.

Slowly, the man's shaken reason resumed control. Amos Gregory began to look fearfully about. It was dark—almost pitch dark—even here by that red lantern. Nobody could have seen what he had done. Nobody could have seen, even if there had been watchers; but the nearest house was fifty yards away, and that was dark. It was nine o'clock and after; few people were about.

Yet some one might pass at any minute. Galvanized by this thought, Amos stooped swiftly and picked up the frail, limp body. How small it was, and light, and helpless! Amos shuddered. He must hide it somewhere quickly.

Those thick bushes at the edge of the porch—there was the place! He would lay Boggs's body between the bushes and the porch, and nobody could see it there; not until morning, at least.

The man's brain moved swiftly, in dizzying flashes of thought. George Boggs must disappear; that was all. Folks would say he had skipped out—that he'd been too good to be true. He must vanish completely. Where to hide his body so that no one could find it until the Judgment Day? A ton of rock would not be too much to hold that limp body down; from beneath anything lighter the little worm would manage to writhe and twist his way, somehow. You could never keep him in his place while he was alive.

"Hold on, you fool!" said Amos Gregory, aloud. "You're crazy."

Indeed, his mind was full of delirious fancies. He imagined that little Boggs, lying there beneath the bushes so quietly, was only pretending to be dead. The little worm was waiting patiently; waiting his chance to crawl away so that he might rise with a great hole in his head and laugh at his slayer from a safe distance. "I gotta think of something that'll hold him down!"

Then the man laughed suddenly. Why, of course! Everything was ready. He could bury George Boggs right here, in his very front yard, where he might trample upon the creature's limp body daily, and savor his continuing triumph. Surely a five-foot slab of concrete, eight inches thick, would suffice to hold him down! Why, Gabriel would have to blow his trumpet twice, before Boggs could manage to rise at the last day.

He had only to wait until midnight, to be sure that no one might pass by and question his activities.

Amos Gregory set himself to wait. The time seemed long indeed; more than once, he had to rise and go out to where his victim's body lay beneath those convenient bushes, to make sure that little Boggs was still there.

At last, midnight came, and Amos Gregory went out into the black night. The town slept; no window anywhere showed a light; it was as still as if the whole world were dead—dead as George Boggs, with that ugly hole in his head. No one would disturb him now; he must get to work.

First, he blew out the red lantern; then, with the very pickax that had struck his victim down, Amos Gregory broke the smooth-packed earth in the exact center of what would be a cement sidewalk to-morrow. He chose a place nearest the cement

mixer, where the workmen would begin pouring. Boggs couldn't be covered too quickly.

The ground broke easily beneath quick blows from that pickax. Amos swung it furiously, grunting; each blow, he told himself, would have killed George Boggs over again. Not for always could such a weakling hope to keep ahead of a strong man—for he was strong, was Amos Gregory. He rejoiced in the power of his swelling muscles. He wouldn't even need to clean this pickax, now. The earth had wiped away all stains from its point.

The grave need not be deep. Just enough to get him out of sight, and eight inches of concrete would do the rest, to-morrow. Amos selected a long-handled spade from the pile of tools beside the cement mixer, and began to shovel out the loosened earth.

There! His hole was fully a foot deep, now, and six feet long. Longer than need be, for little Boggs, and plenty deep enough. Amos laid down his spade, and went after his victim's body. In the storybooks, he reflected, folks were always talking about how hard it was to dispose of a body. Shucks! Easiest thing in the world, if you had brains. Here this had come onto him all in a flash; he hadn't dreamed of killing George Boggs until that last minute, when the little man told him about buying the mortgage. Turn Amos Gregory into the street, would he? Look at him now! Yet, all unprepared as he had been, it hadn't taken him ten minutes to find a perfect hiding place. Here George Boggs would lie, unknown to all but his slayer, until the very end of the world. Oh, he was a smart man!

He groped beneath the bushes, and went cold all over. What, had little Boggs moved already?

No. With a tremulous gasp, he felt cold flesh beneath his groping fingers. No, George hadn't moved, of course. He couldn't have moved. It was only that he'd misjudged the distance, here in the dark. The body lay still; it was clammy cold, and began to stiffen. Of course, the little man was dead. Why, Amos could have put three fingers into that hole in his head.

Amos Gregory dragged the body from its hiding place. He was perspiring profusely, and his knees trembled and knocked together. Wild fancies buzzed through his brain. He must buck up; mustn't let himself get upset over such a worm as this.

Yet something urged him on to blind, panicky haste. Panting, he carried the frail figure over the grass, groping with his feet until he located the shallow grave. Now he laid George Boggs therein, and composed his body with care. How thin the creature was! He needn't have dug so deep.

Working with feverish haste, Amos shoveled loose earth over his victim, covered him well, and packed the earth down with shovel blade and hands, stamping, packing, and smoothing until the ground was level again, and none could have guessed what lay beneath its surface.

Down on his knees, the big man felt all over with careful fingers. At last, he relighted the red lantern, and hung it back on the cement mixer, and by its dim light surveyed his work. No, nobody could have guessed that the ground had been disturbed. It looked just the same as before.

But what was that? Nothing. Nothing save a moving shadow. The lantern still swung back and forth. He steadied it, wiping cold

perspiration from his forehead, and stared at the ground until his eyes ached.

The earth had not moved. George Boggs had not stirred. Of course not! He couldn't have moved. He was dead, wasn't he?

Amos Gregory brushed the dirt from his fingers. To-morrow they'd pour concrete into these forms, and George Boggs would be covered securely, buried beneath an eight-inch slab of concrete, five feet wide and eight feet long.

Everything was done now. As far as he could tell in the dark, no sign of the tragedy was left. He'd go to bed for a few hours' sleep, and rise very early, to make sure before the workmen came that he had left nothing suspicious.

Amos Gregory went to bed; but not to sleep. He could not rest. He strove to divert himself by wondering what folks would say to-morrow—to-day, rather—when they learned he had vanished. Even now, Mary, his wife—his widow—must be wondering, must be sitting up, staring out of the window, watching for her husband's return. Perhaps she had been outdoors; perhaps she had even walked past, to see if George had fainted on the way home. Perhaps she had walked over his dead body, all unknowingly. Amos Gregory laughed at that—but with a catch in his breath. He sat for a long while, staring at nothing, while his imagination pictured George Boggs stirring and then sitting up, with earth caked all over face and clothes, and staring into his wife's face. With that great hole in his head, too! Ugh!

Sunrise found the man leaning against the cement mixer, too uneasy even to sit down, his eyes glued to that spot where George Boggs lay.

He couldn't have done a better

job in broad daylight, Amos conceded. He had covered his victim well; no one would guess what lay below the surface. Perhaps in one place, he'd smoothed it out a bit too much. He rectified this error, and began to look about.

There weren't any bloodstains. There were no clues at all. Except—and Amos gasped. Except that burst paper bag, which had been full of beans. When Boggs had thrown up his hands, when Amos grabbed the pickax, his bag of beans had flown through the air, had landed square in the funnel-shaped mouth of the cement mixer, where the men poured in sand and cement. That looked bad.

Hurriedly, Amos reached in and drew out the sack. But less than a handful of beans came with it. The rest had gushed through the burst sides of the bag, and into the works of the mixer. Amos stared into a complex of gears and scowled. He'd never be able to get those beans out, even if he could reach into the drum. Well, it couldn't be helped.

Moreover, now that it was full daylight, he couldn't afford to be seen fussing about like this. Hurriedly, he scraped up what few beans he could reach. Then he caught up a shovel. Wasn't it queer, he thought, how every tool that he required stood ready to his hand? Surely, the Fates must have decreed George Boggs's death, and the ultimate triumph of his slayer.

He began to toss crushed stone and sand into the cement mixer, until all those beans were covered up. When the workmen came, they'd think one of them must have started mixing grout last night—or, Amos could tell them he had done this much to hasten their work.

To-day, he felt extraordinarily well. The strain of last night was

gone; he was fresh and cheerful. Strength coursed through his veins; he could have shouted with joy. Now, all must go well with him. The tide had turned. He could see success just around the corner. How long would Mary Boggs insist on waiting, he wondered. Six months would be enough, certainly, to mourn. Doubtless, she would feel relieved, beneath her pretense of grief, to know that she was rid of him, and free to marry a regular he-man. Amos Gregory's chest swelled; he felt very magnanimous to think that he had been true to her so long—that he had been willing to wait for her to come to her senses. He'd be gentle with her, though. He wouldn't ever rub it in. Of course, she'd be grateful to him; that was to be expected. She had more reason than she would ever know for being grateful! But he'd always be good to her. He wouldn't punish her for her past foolishness.

Thus the man's thoughts ran, until he began to strut back and forth in the yard, humming under his breath in sheer pride of strength.

Here came Hank Mullins now, just as the seven-o'clock whistle blew. "More work for the undertaker!" sang Amos, and laughed aloud.

"Feeling pretty lively, f'r so early in the morning, ain't you, Amos?" asked the contractor sourly.

"Why not? Ever'thing's rosy with me. I wisht you fellows'd get busy and finish this little job to-day. See, I've made a start already."

Amos gestured toward the cement mixer, and caught up the shovel again, and flung more crushed stone into it. "Bet I can mix faster'n you fellows can pour!"

"Huh! Needn't think I'm gointa pay f'r it, if you do."

"I don't need your money, Hank."

One by one, the workmen appeared, each with his early-morning grouch; and soon the clattering roar of the mixer drowned all other sounds. Methodically, they fed stone, and sand, and cement into its rapacious maw, while the grout poured from its spout into the waiting wheelbarrow, viscous and uninviting, like—like lumpy pancake batter.

Amos Gregory chuckled at the thought. They were making pancakes, after all; big ones.

"What's so almighty funny, Amos?"

A sullen workman in smeared overalls was dumping his barrow load now. Amos Gregory watched while the thick stuff poured sluggishly from the metal vat of the wheelbarrow. It must be landing squarely upon the midriff of the little man who lay buried there. Amos had chosen the spot well; it was right there that they had begun to pour.

"Funny?" he repeated absently. "Oh, I was just thinking, if you made pancakes outa grout for batter, why, they'd set gosh-awful heavy on a body's stomach!"

He slapped his thigh, and roared with laughter so that the others eyed him askance. "I don't see anything so funny about that," muttered Mullins.

Amos laughed the louder, enjoying his secret joke. He knew one fellow—one miserable, crawling worm, on whose stomach this concrete was setting gosh-awful heavy this minute. Let him try and get up now! Let him see if he could crawl out from under that!

For a breath, Amos felt an irrational impulse to address his enemy. How these others would stare, if they knew what he knew! "Try and get up now, George!" he wanted to say,

and his lips parted, the urge was so strong.

As he turned to enter the house, Jack Parsons, the constable, came hurrying up, and paused.

"Say, lissen, boys, any of you seen George Boggs this morning? He's been out all night, and his wife's just about wild over it."

The workmen stared at him, and at each other. "Boggs? No," they said. "He was to the store last night, like he always is," said one. "I met him as he was leaving," said another. "Along about nine o'clock, it was. I remember he had a big sack of beans. Looks like he musta started f'r home."

The constable scratched his head. "Seems that way. But that was the last anybody saw of him, far's I can find out. Didn't see him go past your house, did you, Amos?"

Amos Gregory shook his head. He was perfectly cool and untroubled. "Why, no. Course, he could 'a' gone past and me not see him; but I was setting on my stoop until half past nine or later. No-o, Jack, I don't believe he did pass the house last night."

Of course, he hadn't! He never got any farther. But those fools would never guess. "Has anybody looked——" Amos began, and stopped short. Best let the suggestion come from some one else.

He had not long to wait. "Treasurer of the Building Association, wasn't he?" inquired Mullins. "Anybody started checking over his accounts?"

The constable rubbed an unshaven chin. "Ain't had time yet, hardly. Course, he might show up any minute. If it was some folks, you wouldn't think about it twicet; but George, he was one to stick close around home."

"Yeah. Them's the worst kind,

oncet you get them started," declared an elderly workman, and winked one rheumy eye. "Out with some woman, like as not," he suggested. "Layin' drunk in the ditch, or like that. Yeah, or mebbe he's skipped town. You can't tell about them goody-goody, Sunday-school superintendent kinda fellers."

That was the consensus of opinion, as Amos Gregory had shrewdly guessed. Little Boggs had led an all too blameless life; therefore his neighbors were ready to believe the worst of him. When he failed to reappear, every one would be convinced that his secret sins had found him out. Like as not, he was short in his accounts, anyways, thought Amos darkly. It'd be just like the sneaking worm.

The work went on apace, while all the men chewed this pleasurable cud or gossip. But Amos Gregory was restless, he knew not why. Presently, he went into the house and cooked breakfast.

He could not eat. His throat was too dry. He gulped down a cup of coffee, and hurried outdoors again. Must keep an eye on these fellows; they might get to poking around.

Already, they had filled half the molds with grout, and two men were mixing the surface dressing in a big, square vat. George Boggs would have to hurry, if he expected to get out of there before the concrete dried!

Amos hesitated. He wanted to stay outside; he craved companionship, yet he feared that some crazy impulse might force him to disclose his secret. Knowing what he did, he could not bear to listen quietly to the random speculations of these others.

He'd get the car out and take a drive. That would rest him, maybe.

His eyes began to burn; he felt the effects of his sleepless night.

So Amos Gregory got out his roadster, and drove it furiously, mile after mile, striving to outrace the somber thoughts that pursued him. But the farther he went, the greater grew his tension, until at last he was forced to turn about. What might not have happened while he was away? Suppose the earth had settled where Boggs's body lay, and the workmen had dug down to see what was wrong with their footing.

Amos pushed his car to its top speed, and never drew an easy breath until he turned into the temporary driveway that led across his neighbor's land, past the end of his new sidewalk.

The walk was practically finished. They were smoothing the top dressing now: two men, with the edge of a plank, scraping the cement off level with the edges of the mold. It would be hard by to-morrow, and then he would be safe. Then he could rest easy. He would sleep the clock around.

That night, Amos Gregory slept the sleep of exhaustion, but he was harried by dreams from which he awoke again and again, twitching all over.

Amos awoke, groaning, and sat on the edge of his bed, head in hands. He was tired, so horribly tired that life seemed a burden. But he dared not sleep again. Anything was better than these dreadful visions that kept pursuing him through his slumber.

He'd get up and go outdoors. Maybe it would quiet these crazy notions if he took a look at that sidewalk. Once he had looked carefully at that, and satisfied himself that the concrete was hardening, maybe he could rest. He could scarcely make a scratch in it with

his finger nail. It was hardening nicely.

Amos welcomed the daylight with a ghastly smile. The days were hard enough, but the nights were unbearable. He'd be all right to-night, though. By then, the concrete would be dry, and hard as stone, and all his worries would be over.

The search for George Boggs continued. Amos stayed close at home, and heard as little of it as he dared; but the whole town was stirred. No one spoke of anything else. They had brought a certified public accountant out from the city; he was going over the Building Association books. He had already found a hundred thousand dollars' shortage, it was whispered. Amos guffawed at that, for the Building Association had never had fifty thousand dollars since it was founded; but the story spread: He had been seen with a peroxide blonde at some road house last week; he'd eloped with her, leaving his wife flat. A dozen wild stories were whispered up and down the streets, but no one, yet, had even suggested that George Boggs was dead.

No one except his wife, that was. From the first, Mary Rockly Boggs had insisted that George was dead. He must be, she declared, or he'd have come back to her. He would never have let her suffer so while he lived; he'd have come home, or sent word, at least. He'd always been so thoughtful.

Amos resented this faithfulness. It irked him, that Mary should mourn a creature so inept as her late husband. But perhaps it was pretense; perhaps she insisted he was dead because she secretly hoped that he might be, leaving her free to marry a better man.

But try as he might, Amos Gregory could not recapture the carefree

joyousness of that first morning. He was anxious, haggard, restless. He could not eat; his throat was always dry. His heart beat painfully, in great, slow throbs, and, whenever he recalled that great, ugly hole in George Boggs's head, it would stop beating for an instant, and his stomach would seem to turn over and knot itself together.

Somehow, that day passed. By night, the new sidewalk was entirely dry. Amos felt of it, and stamped on it with his boot heel. He could not make a mark. The workmen removed the molds, swept off the straw they had covered the fresh cement with, and went away. The sidewalk was open for traffic. Hank Mullins sent a tractor after the cement mixer.

It was over. He was safe now—quite safe. Amos Gregory drew a deep, tremulous sigh. To-night he would sleep in peace.

He went quietly into the house, prepared his supper, and ate with an appetite. All his nervousness, all those silly qualms, had passed away. He was his own self again.

It was wonderful to be at peace again. Amos reveled in his new-found calm. He went to bed early, and slept soundly and well; in all the long night, he did not dream once. He woke next morning and lay quietly, smiling at the ceiling. Again he was strong, and rejoicing in strength. Life was very good.

The future lay before him, pleasant to contemplate. From now on, things would be different. George Boggs was dead, and his body was laid—laid beneath forty square feet of concrete, eight inches thick. The future belonged to him, to Amos Gregory!

He rose, singing a quiet song, and looked out of the bedroom window. In all his life, he had never felt hap-

pier, stronger, or more hopeful. It was a beautiful morning. The birds sang, the grass was freshly green, and his new sidewalk——

Amos stared, and rubbed his eyes. Wh-what ailed it?

His heart began to beat in great, sickening leaps, thudding against his chest. His knees shook beneath him as he stumbled down the stairs and out into the yard.

Right up to that new sidewalk he went, slowly, with a queer reluctance, as if he dragged a chain. Over it he stood for a while, staring down right at the spot where George Boggs's body lay.

For six feet in either direction the entire width of cement, that had been so firm and smooth last night, was crumpled and broken into bits—as if something had risen beneath it, and had shattered it to fragments.

Right where George Boggs's body lay! It was too much.

"I—I might 'a' known," said Amos thickly. "I might 'a' known he'd manage to wriggle out, somehow."

He spoke heavily, hopelessly, without emphasis, and turned about and went back into the house, walking like a very old man.

Presently from within came the sharp crack of a pistol shot, and a heavy fall. After that, silence.

An hour later, Hank Mullins passed that way, and stopped to stare. He stooped, muttering pro-

fanelly, and picked up some fragments of crumpled concrete.

"I'll be gosh darned!" he said. "Now, how the devil did that happen? I oughta sue the cement company. The idea! Letting beans get mixed into a bag of cement. Anybody'd know they'd sprout and spoil the set."

Even in the handful he held, one could see two or three beans, each with its greenish-white sprout—strong enough, for all its apparent softness, to split stone-hard concrete asunder.

"It's a wonder," Mullins ruminated, "Amos ain't noticed this a'ready. He'll be out here, raising sand, I s'pose. Beans, huh?"

He stared down into his hand. "Now, what was they about beans, here lately? Sa-ay, my good gosh a-mighty!"

George Boggs had last been seen carrying a bag of beans! Mullins strode into the house, intent upon demanding an explanation from Amos.

But Amos Gregory lay on his back, arms widespread, staring blindly up at the ceiling. Gradually, the meaning of this worked its way into Hank Mullins's slow mind, and he went away to notify the sheriff, and afterward to get workmen, and find out what lay beneath that crumpled concrete walk.

Amos Gregory's fears had been justified. The worm turned, after all.

"THE TERROR'S TOKEN."

A Thrilling Novelette, by DONALD G. McDONALD,
will appear in Next Week's Issue



In the shadowy dimness, she saw a figure that taunted her with its mystery.

BRIDES OF CRIME

By ELISABETH SANXAY HOLDING

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

AFTER the ceremony of her own wedding, Dolores has a call, supposedly from her stepdaughter, Liza, to come and help her out of trouble. She leaves her husband and is driven by a man to a shabby house. Here, the man throws at her the necklace which has been stolen from her, and he tells her that Maisie, the maid who was blamed for stealing it, is suffering. Then he locks her in a storeroom.

(BACK NUMBERS ARE EASILY PROCURED.)

CHAPTER V.

THE DREADFUL CRY.



LITTLE chill of fear ran through her at his words; but Dolores's voice was steady when she spoke.

"This is ridiculous," she said. "Please explain—if you can."

"I think I can manage," he said.

"You'd better eat your dinner first, though."

"Thanks!" she said, looking straight at his face. "But I'm dining at home with my husband at half past seven."

"If I were you," he said, "I shouldn't be too sure of that. And—if I were you, I'd eat now."

He was slight, frail; he looked ill,

yet there was in him some force that appalled her. By instinct, she knew that no reason could move him, or any appeal. That strange light in his hollow blue eyes was the light of a fanatic, utterly reckless of consequences, a man who would die for an idea. He had not the bearing or the speech of an educated man, yet that inflexibility, that passion, gave him dignity.

"I'm waiting for your explanation," she said.

He lit a cigarette.

"I suppose," he said presently, "that you've forgotten Maisie."

"No," she said, a bit uneasily.

"I know how you look at it," he went on. "She was poor; she was nobody. She ought to have been grateful for a chance to keep Liza Keyes out of a little unpleasantness."

Her face, always pale, grew whiter.

"I think I understand," she said. "It's blackmail, isn't it? Somehow, you've found this out, and——"

"It's not blackmail," he said. "It's—retribution."

In spite of herself, the word turned her cold.

"You mean?" she said.

"You've committed a crime that the law can't punish. But you're not going to get out of paying for it."

"Just what is my crime?" she asked.

"That you let Maisie—an innocent girl—suffer for something you knew she hadn't done."

"I didn't intend to let her suffer."

"That's your point of view," he said. "You didn't see why she should mind being falsely accused and disgraced. But she did mind. She was a good girl." He stopped for a moment, and she saw his

mouth twitch. "She was a good girl," he repeated. "She had pride and self-respect. She didn't like being accused of being a thief, any more than you would. But she knew from the first that she had no chance. She knew who'd taken the necklace. And she knew what would happen if there were any argument between her and Liza Keyes. She ran away, because she had to run. She was to be sacrificed, and she knew it."

"I don't intend to justify myself to you," said Dolores. "You may think what you please."

"You couldn't if you tried," he said. "I happen to know the truth. I know what you did to Maisie. She told me herself, here, in this flat—a few hours ago. She knew what was going to happen to her. She had to take the blame for Liza Keyes. She knew she could never get another job, after you——"

"I never discharged Maisie. I'd be only too glad to get her back."

"You needn't worry," he said. "You've finished with her. While she was here, waiting for—some one she thought could help her, your private inquiry agent came. She'd never been questioned by a detective before and she didn't like it. She was pretty young, you know. And your agent knew how to handle her. He told her that, if she wouldn't confess, she'd go to jail. She'd read tales of the third degree. She thought they'd find some way to make her confess, to save Liza Keyes from any little embarrassment. She saw that she'd probably get a jail sentence, and certainly lose her good name and her own way of earning a living. So she—got out."

"What do you mean?" asked Dolores with fast-growing fear.

"The woman Maisie used to work

for before she came to you, used to take some sort of drug for her nerves. Once, when she had a fit of remorse and decided to swear off, she gave a box of the tablets to Maisie, to throw away. But Maisie kept them. And after your agent had talked to her a while, that looked to her like a good way out. While he was sitting here, pretty well pleased with the way he was handling this case for you, she left the room for a moment, went into the bathroom, and swallowed as many of the tablets as she thought she'd need."

Dolores rose to her feet.

"I must see her!" she cried. "I must——"

"You can't," he said. "She's unconscious now. Dying, in the hospital. The job's finished. And you can face the fact that you killed that girl, as surely as if you'd put a bullet through her head."

Dolores stood with one hand on the back of the chair, in a daze of horror. Before her eyes was the image of Maisie's gentle, pretty little face, her smile. Maisie's deft hands had dressed her hair only that morning. And Maisie was dying.

"What can I do?" she asked.

"You can pay," he said.

"I'm more than willing to pay, to do anything. I'll get her the best doctors."

"You're not going to pay with Frank Keyes's money," he said curtly. "It's too late now, anyhow, for money to help her."

"Then what do you want me to do?"

"Eat your dinner first," he said.

"No, I want to hear whatever you have to say at once. I have no time to waste. I'm sailing at midnight."

"You're not," he said. "I'll tell you what you're going to do, after

you've eaten your dinner. And not until then."

Again a panic fear seized her.

"I'm not hungry," she said. "The food would choke me."

"Oh, no it won't," said he. "However, I've got plenty of time to spare. I'll just sit down and wait—until you've eaten."

"Why do you torment me in this way?" she cried. "I tell you——"

"You're not in a position to tell me anything," he said, and lit a fresh cigarette.

She was obliged to realize that, and to see that she would do herself no good in persisting in her refusal. Rising, she took the tray from the trunk beside her, and returned to her chair with it. There was a bowl of tepid stew on it, and a cup of coffee; nothing else. With hot rebellion in her heart, she ate the unappetizing meal, while he watched her with his hollow, brilliant eyes.

"Now!" she said. "Perhaps you'll be good enough to tell me what you want, and let me go."

"I'll let you go," he said deliberately, "to-morrow morning. Tonight, you'll spend here."

She half rose, but sat down again.

"I won't stay here," she said. "You can't make me stay here quietly—unless you murder me."

"I'm not going to murder you," he said with a shadow of a smile. "You're going to live and learn. You won't get away, either."

"My husband will find me."

"That's not worrying me. Now you'll go into the other room and go to bed."

"No!"

"You'll go," he said, "either on your own feet, or I'll carry you."

He pushed the trunk out of the way, and opened the door widely.

"Come on!" he said.

"No!" she cried again, but, as he took a step nearer, she said "Yes!"

"Come on!" he repeated, and she followed him through the door into the hall. For a moment, she had the idea of screaming for help, but his fingers closed about her arm. "If you make a sound——" he said.

He did not need to finish the threat; she knew, she had felt from the beginning, that he was without pity and without fear.

The tension of this interminable day had reached its limit.

"Let me go!" she cried, her voice rising almost to hysteria. "Let me go! I'll give you the necklace. I'll get you all the money you want."

"Keep quiet!" he said fiercely. "And don't offer me money again. I'm not going to let you go—yet."

Before her eyes rose the image of Frank, pacing up and down the library waiting for her.

"Please!" she cried. "Oh, think what you're doing! You can't—you can't—do this!"

"I have done it," he said.

"Let me send some word—just let me tell my husband that I'll be back—in the morning—so that he won't suffer."

"Think I care how much Frank Keyes suffers? You ruined and killed Maisie. And you're going to pay for it."

"How can you dare?"

"No use talking to me about daring," he said scornfully. "I don't care what happens to me. Or to you. There's not a thing on earth I care about—now."

Looking at his thin face, she believed that. She saw nothing there to appeal to, no possibility of sympathy in that worn, haggard, handsome face. Yet she made one more attempt.

"Can't we—talk this over?" she

asked, deliberately gentle and appealing.

"That wouldn't help you," he said. "You wouldn't change me, if you talked all night. I've learned what I suppose every man has to learn some time. Never to trust a woman." He threw open a door. "Here's your room," he said. "I'll give you twenty minutes to say your prayers and get into bed. You needn't be afraid of me. I'm not going to bother you. The prettiest girl in the world doesn't mean a thing to me now. But I'm coming back in twenty minutes, to see if you've done what I said. And if you haven't, there's going to be trouble."

He closed the door, and she heard a key turn in the lock. She started forward.

"I've got to get out," she cried to herself. "This can't be true. I've got to get out."

The shutters outside the one window were closed, and nailed; the door was locked. She stood looking about her at the cheap little room, lit by an unshaded electric bulb hanging from the ceiling; her trembling hands clasped, struggling against a blind panic terror, the terror of a trapped animal, insensate, that makes any pain, even death, preferable to the agony of utter helplessness.

"I've got to get out!" she cried, aloud. "Let me out! Let me out!"

The sound of her own desperate voice was dreadful. She began to beat on the closed door with her fists.

"Let me out!"

The door opened suddenly.

"That's enough," said her captor. "Any more of that, and I'll have to settle you. Now get to bed, and keep quiet."

After he had gone, she sat down

on the edge of the narrow bed and began to weep silently, from grief, exhaustion, the terrific strain of this day. And the tears eased her heart. She had thought that sleep would be utterly impossible here; but her eyes grew heavy, and a crushing fatigue descended upon her.

"No!" she said to herself. "I've got—to think. I've got to make plans."

But perhaps, with her head so heavy, she could think better if she were to lie down. There was a man's dressing gown over the foot of the bed; she slipped off her dress and put it on, and took off her shoes. If he saw her lying down, perhaps he would be satisfied and not talk.

"I couldn't talk," she said to herself. "I'm—too tired."

As she laid her head on the pillow, it seemed to her to grow strangely and most pleasantly light. Wasn't the bed swaying a little? A gentle rocking motion? Of course. They had sailed at midnight. It was nice to lie here like this, if only the foghorn were not bellowing continually. She heard Frank's voice, very far away, telling her that they were not going to France. "Much farther than that," he was saying. "And we'll never get back." His voice died away, saying that. "We'll never get back."

She wanted to tell him that they must get back to Liza. But after all, Liza was on the ship with them. Liza was here, in this room.

"I'm asleep," Dolores said to herself. "I'm dreaming."

In her dream, she thought she opened her eyes and saw Liza standing in the doorway. The light from the hall made her hair glitter like silver, but her face was shadowed. Why did she stand there, so very still?

Because this was a dream. Because Liza could not be here.

The figure in the doorway stirred. Dolores made a desperate effort to move, to speak. She thought that perhaps some faint sound came from her lips, but she was not sure.

"Liza!"

Liza was going away. The door closed softly. And in the blackness of the shuttered room, the vision faded utterly. There was nothing, nothing but darkness and quiet—and sleep. Liza was no more than part of a dream that shifted, that was sometimes bright with sunshine, that was sometimes gray, somber, terrible.

But that was part of no dream, that dreadful cry. She sat up in bed, weak, bathed in perspiration, trembling. She strained her ears, but there was silence now. Nothing remained but the echo of that dreadful, low cry of anguish, uttered, she was sure, in Liza's voice.

CHAPTER VI.

BEHIND THE DOOR.

SHE got out of bed, but a swirling dizziness assailed her, and she fell back, lay breathing quickly, oppressed with a sense of terror and haste. Why should Liza cry like that?

Again she tried to rise, more slowly this time, sat on the edge of the bed until the faintness and dizziness had passed. Then, moving carefully, still trembling with weakness, she groped her way across the black room to the door. It was locked.

Her head was growing clearer now; the last misty fragments of her dreams were dispersing. She was

well aware now of her position; she knew where she was; she remembered how she had come here.

"I've been drugged," she thought. "There was something in that dinner."

She had been drugged, and visions and nightmares had haunted her. But Liza had been no vision; she had come here, into this room. And she had given that dreadful cry.

"Has that man hurt her?" she thought. "Killed her?"

He was capable of anything. And, on Maisie's account, he must also hate Liza.

"What can I do?" she thought. "I must keep cool and think."

But she felt strangely ill; the sick faintness rushed over her again; she staggered back to the bed.

"Am I—going to die?" she thought.

Going to die, locked up in this room, without a ray of light, without a human creature near? She faced that prospect resolutely, for she had courage, though little fortitude. She could struggle and rebel, but she could not quietly endure, and she meant to struggle now—if she could.

She thought: "Perhaps he's killed Liza, and soon he'll come here to kill me." And she tried to think of some weapon, some method of defense. There was none. Shut up here in the dark, she was utterly helpless.

She sat on the bed, waiting, not tense, not in terror, but with a sort of dogged and scornful readiness. When he came, she would do her best. But her limbs were heavy; from time to time, something like a mist clouded her brain; it was only with an effort that she kept erect and awake. She had heard of drugs that were fatal only when they

brought sleep; she remembered stories of men being kept alive by being forced into activity. She tried to rise, and walk, but she could not.

Then, through a cracked pane in the shuttered window, she heard a sound, a long, mournful bellow. That was a ship in the near-by river, one of the big liners, ready to cast off. She had no idea of the time, but she thought:

"That's the ship we were going to sail on."

A great nostalgia seized her, a craving for sun and air, for friendly faces and voices, for life again. She thought of Frank, and desperation seized her. What would he think of this disappearance of hers on their wedding night? Either he would be half wild with anxiety and fear, or he would believe that she had gone of her own accord. And that latter uneasiness would be worse.

"Don't let him think that!" she prayed in her heart. "Don't let me die here without his ever knowing why I went. If I could only leave him a message."

She was sitting at her little desk, in her old room in her aunt's house, taking up the Russian enamel pen that had been a Christmas present.

"No," she said to herself. "That's not real. I'm here—locked in."

But she was there, too, at her desk. She discovered that you could be in two places at once. There was one Dolores sitting on the bed in a dark room, sick, faint, trembling; and there was another Dolores, in that other, a familiar room, writing a note to Frank at her little desk.

Then they both rose, and walked toward each other. But who could *she* be, who watched them both? They drew nearer. She wanted to

call out to them that if ever they touched each other, they would dissolve. But they did not hear. They stretched out their arms to each other. They melted into blackness, and there was no one left to see them. There was nothing at all.

When she opened her eyes again, her head was aching furiously. She sat up, moaning, dazed, pressing her hand to her forehead, until her whirling thoughts began to grow steady. And then she saw that the door of the room was open.

Instead of relief, she felt a fear greater than any she had known before, because it seemed as if whatever was to be done was finished now, and irrevocable. As she rose to her feet, she found that much of her weakness had gone; there was only this throbbing in her head. She threw off the dressing gown and put on her dress and her shoes. For she did not know what she would meet when she left this room, and she must be ready—for anything. She crossed the room and stood in the doorway, listening.

It was quiet, too quiet. The door of the opposite room was open, and the daylight was coming in. But no one stirred. She crossed the hall, and looked in there; it was evidently a woman's room; the bureau top was crowded with cheap little things, a pin-cushion doll with faded satin skirts, a celluloid toilet set, and—what was that? She drew nearer, and she saw there a little glass jar bound with silver, with a cracked lid. She had given that to Maisie, not three days ago. This, then, was Maisie's room. And Maisie was dying.

She stood still for a few moments, her thoughts a requiem for that gentle and ill-starred spirit. Then she turned away. It was Liza she

must think of now, Liza whose cry still rang in her ears. She was sure, she knew, that some horrible thing had taken place in this quiet, shabby little flat.

In the kitchen, she was surprised to see a pale ray of sun shining in at the window. She had almost forgotten that there was a sunny, lively world outside. She opened the window, and heard the sounds of that world: a child was playing in the courtyard below, the janitor was shifting ash cans with a resounding clatter; she could hear, faintly, the rumble of the elevated. It was good to hear them; yet somehow she felt no less isolated, the dread that weighed upon her in no way abated.

She went down the hall, toward a closed door, and she went with fearful reluctance, for she thought that somewhere in this place she would find Liza. And she was afraid to find her. It was difficult to turn that knob. She found nothing but a sad, dingy little sitting room, very neat.

The dark little bathroom with its cheap, old-fashioned plumbing was empty. There was no place to look now, except in the storeroom where she had been first imprisoned. If Liza were in this flat, she must be there. With her hand on the knob, she stopped, in a sudden spasm of fear.

"Liza!" she called excitedly.

No one answered. The sound of her own desperate young voice died away, and the little flat was utterly still. Perhaps the door would be locked, and then she would go for help, would bring people in here, voices and footsteps would break this monstrous stillness. Why not get help now, before she opened that door?

Her pride rebelled. Suppose she

were to bring some one in here, and the room were empty?

"I won't be so cowardly," she said to herself, and opened the door.

She started back with a smothered scream. For in the broken armchair, facing the door, a figure was sitting, shadowy in the dimness.

"Who—is it?" she faltered.

The figure did not stir. It sat facing her, and did not speak or stir.

She could endure no more. Slamming the door shut, she ran down the hall to the front door, frantic to get out of this place.

She could not open the front door. Swiftly, she turned the knob and rattled it; the door would not open.

"No, I can't," she said, half aloud. "I—can't stay here."

She thought of going to a window, and calling for help. But for any human being with dignity and pride, it is difficult almost to impossibility to utter a cry for help, except in an extremity of danger.

"I'll wait," she said to herself. "Some one must pass by here sometime. Then I'll knock on the door, say I'm locked in."

She stood pressed against the door, struggling against her stifling fear. What had that been, that sat facing the door, shut in that dim room, and did not speak or stir? Some one hurt, whom she ought to help? She turned back at that thought, but her feet were like lead. She could have faced an active enemy, but not that thing that did not stir. Something beyond reason told her that that was no wounded creature, nothing that she could help.

Then she heard a footstep outside. Some one was mounting the stairs. She waited, to see if the steps would

reach her door, so that she could knock. And they stopped at this door. Then she heard a key turned in the lock.

She thought it was her captor come back again; she stood with her back to the wall, ready to face him. But it was a stranger who entered, stood looking down at her, while she regarded him with the insight that danger brings.

He was a slender young fellow, black-haired, with a dark, narrow face, and dark brows so level that they gave to his glance a curious intensity. His features were finely modeled; there was something subtle and vigorous in that face that put her in mind of a portrait of the Italian Renaissance. He was well-dressed, in a dark suit and soft hat, yet his air did not suggest either a business office or a drawing-room; he had the restrained alertness, the supple, quick grace of a savage. A man, she thought, competent to handle any situation—but a man she could not read.

"What's wrong?" he asked directly.

"There's something—some one in a room here," she answered as steadily as she could.

"Let's see," he said, and followed her along the hall to that closed door. Without hesitation, but with a hand that trembled, she turned the knob. He gave her a quick, sidelong glance; then he felt for the switch near the door, and turned it on.

A harsh light flooded the small room; now she could see clearly the figure that sat in the broken armchair; the light fell on the white face, made the gray hair at the temples glisten like silver. It was Frank Keyes.

She tried to speak. Blackness rushed over her, and she fell.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAP.

WHEN she opened her eyes, she was lying on the bed in Maisie's room, and the stranger was standing beside her.

"Better?" he asked in his soft, rather drawling voice.

"Yes," she answered faintly, and then, remembering what she had seen, sank back again into the abyss.

He was bathing her face with cold water when she revived again. When she opened her eyes, he took a flask from his pocket, poured a drink into a glass, and held it to her lips. The smell of whisky was distasteful to her; she turned away her head.

"Take it!" he said. "I'm afraid you're going to need it. And we don't want a doctor in here."

She sipped at the whisky until a little color came back to her pale face, a little warmth to her frozen heart. Then his words returned to her.

"What do you mean?" she asked, her voice still weak. "We—must have a doctor."

"Take another swallow," he said. "Then I reckon we'd better talk."

"Is Frank——"

"Ready to hear?" he asked with his level glance on her face.

She closed her eyes for a moment, then opened them again.

"Yes," she said. "I'm ready."

"He's dead," he said quietly.

She had known that, yet the words were like a blow.

"Dead? But how?"

"He's been shot through the heart."

"Shot?" she repeated after him, searching his face as if to find there

an explanation for an incredible enigma.

He made no answer, but drew up a chair and sat down.

"Mind if I smoke?" he asked. "It helps me to think."

His voice was mild and polite, but his eyes were cold.

"You can't sit here like this," she said. "You must send for the police—for an ambulance."

"We'd better talk it over first," he said.

"No!" she said sharply.

"Yes," said he. "As soon as you can pull yourself together, we'd better talk."

Shocked, stunned as she was, his tone had something in it that flicked her pride.

"I'm quite well enough now," she said. "I'd like to hear why you haven't already called in the police."

"I think you'll agree with me," he said amiably, "when you've faced the situation. By the way, may I introduce myself? Lawrence Reynard."

She had no intention of giving her name to this man, this stranger; she was silent while he lit a cigarette.

"Has it occurred to you," he said, "that this might look a little queer?"

"It hadn't," she answered coolly.

"You might think it over a little," he suggested. "The police, you know, would want a story, and they'd want a good one."

Then the significance of his words reached her. To any one brought up as she had been, the worst thing imaginable was a scandal. She had scarcely had time to realize the horror of her husband's tragic death; now she had to face something else that sent a chill through her. Frank Keyes dead, here, murdered, on his

wedding night, in this shabby little flat, and his bride shut up here, alone with him.

Her mind began to work with extreme lucidity. She imagined herself telling her story to the police: that she had been lured here by a false telephone message, drugged, kept a prisoner here; that she did not know when or how her husband had come here. No one would be likely to believe that.

"Not so good, is it?" said Reynard, watching her face. "A break for the tabloids, though. 'Millionaire Found Murdered in Mystery Flat on Wedding Night. Bride Denies——'"

"Don't!" she cried.

"I'm sorry," he said. "It's only to make you realize——"

"Tell me, how did you know who I was?"

"I've seen your picture in the newspaper," he said. "Now, don't you think we'd better talk?"

"Talk? There's nothing to be done but to face it."

"If I were you," said Reynard, "I'd get out of here, and get out quick. Before the murder's been discovered."

She sat up straight.

"No!" she said. "I have nothing to hide. It won't be pleasant, but it's got to be faced."

He lit a fresh cigarette, and smoked for a moment in silence.

"That's admirable," he said. "But it's not very practical. Keyes's people have a lot of money, you know, and they'll press this case hard. And I don't think you quite realize how things are going to look."

"I'll tell the truth!" she cried. "I know absolutely nothing about this horrible crime. I was brought here—drugged. I didn't even hear a shot."

"I see," he said. "But, unfortunately, there's this."

From his pocket he took a little pearl-handled automatic and held it out to her.

"This was in the room with Keyes," he said. "I think it'll be found that it was a bullet from this that killed him. And I'm afraid it's got your initials on it. D. D. That's for Dolores Donaldson, isn't it?"

"Yes," she said. "It's mine. Some one gave it to me, three years ago, before I went on a long motor trip."

"And there's this, too," he went on. "Your necklace, isn't it? Lying on the floor at his feet."

She looked, with terror, at those softly gleaming pearls that had brought her such anguish.

"Some one's done all this to incriminate me," she said.

"Well, some one's succeeded," he said tranquilly. "Of course, I had no business to touch these things. And if I don't put them back, I'll be an accessory after the fact. I only showed them to you to convince you. I think I can tell you pretty well what the police theory will be. They'll say you came here, either to meet a friend, or to bribe some one who was blackmailing you, and that Keyes followed you here, and accused you, and you shot him."

"That's a horrible lie," she cried.

"I'm not the police," he said. "And I'm not your judge. I'm simply giving you the best advice I can. If you call in the police, I think you'll be in jail to-night, and your story in the tabloids."

She thought of her aunt, whose carefully maintained position in the world would crash down into ruins. And she thought of Liza.

"If the police ask me questions——" she thought, and a new terror

seized her. "No! I won't tell them that it was Liza who telephoned to me. I won't tell them that she was here last night."

But at heart she was little better than Maisie in this matter. She, too, had heard of the third degree; she, too, could believe that they had powers unknown to her by which they could extort secrets.

"They'll find out," she thought.

And why had Liza telephoned to her? What had Liza seen to make her give that dreadful cry?

A thought too horrible to endure came to her. She remembered all Liza's recklessness, her furious quarrels with her father when she wanted money.

"No!" she cried aloud.

Reynard sat quietly smoking; she could read in his lean, dark face nothing but a blank patience.

Then her thoughts went back to that other man, the man who had been so supremely generous and chivalrous to her, the man whom she had meant to make happy, and who was dead now. She remembered the last time she had seen him alive, pacing up and down his library, waiting for her. A lonely man!

He was gone. She could never repay him now by gratitude and affection. But perhaps she could do this one thing for him. Perhaps she could protect his daughter. And she could do that only if she answered no questions.

She looked at Reynard.

"Very well!" she said. "I think I'll take your advice and not call the police."

She rose to her feet, holding the back of a chair to steady herself. She wanted to get away from this man with his steady, level glance that seemed to read all her confused and desperate thoughts.

"Would you mind telling me

where you think of going?" he asked, rising, too.

She did not know. She wanted only to get away from him, and from this horrible place.

"I haven't decided," she said. "I—to my aunt's, perhaps."

"Better not," he said. "The police would be after you at once. You'd have to explain to them where you'd spent the night, and that wouldn't do."

It seemed to her almost as if the walls of the room were drawing in; she turned her head with a quick, half-feline gesture, looking for escape. She was beginning to see now.

"I—I have a little money," she said. "Perhaps I'll go away, for a time somewhere."

"Where?" he asked.

"In the country!" she cried with a sort of desperation.

"You'd be recognized anywhere you went. And you'd be caught in the end."

She was in a trap. Now, she saw that. No, she dared not stay here, and, if she tried to get away, she would be caught. She would be questioned. And she could not answer the questions that would be put to her.

"You say you left your home in response to a telephone call. A call from whom? From whom?"

They would ask her that, again and again, until, in some way, they found out.

"Did you hear anything during the night?"

Once they learned that it had been Liza who had telephoned, that Liza had been here during the night—Frank's daughter—

She was looking blankly at Reynard, and he looked back at her.

"Can you suggest anything?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered briefly.

"What is it?"

"I haven't much faith in physical disguises," he said. "Not unless you're an expert in that line. But there's one way to disguise yourself that's effective. That is, to be where no one would ever expect you to be, and in a rôle no one would ever expect of you. For instance, I knew a fellow who was wanted badly, down on the border. He rode into a little town, and joined the sheriff's posse to hunt for himself. He got away with it. Now, when the police look for Mrs. Frank Keyes, they'll be looking for a fugitive. So that if you're not a fugitive, if you're settled in some definite occupation, so that you won't stand out against the background — You'd better sit down again."

She did so, her eyes fixed on his impassive face.

"If you'll take a job like Maisie had," he said. "If you'll live a life like Maisie's, I think there's a chance for you."

"I don't understand."

"If you'll take a position as a servant—a maid!"

"But I couldn't get one."

"I can get you one."

"No one will take a maid without experience, or references."

"I can get you one," he repeated. "The question is, if you'd be able to see it through. You don't realize the humiliations and hardships."

"Oh, what difference does that make!" she cried impatiently.

"I think it might make a lot," said he.

"You're wrong," she said, and became silent for a moment, thinking. "But don't you see," she said presently, "that, if I do this, if I run away, every one will be certain that I'm guilty?"

"I'm afraid they will be, anyhow,"

he said. "But there's this advantage in your clearing out now. You won't be questioned. And—well, you know—if the murderer is found while you're absent, you never will be questioned by the police. Your friends might be a little curious, but you could get up your own story for them."

He was civil enough; he was doing his best to help her. Yet there was, in his attitude, something indefinable that angered and dismayed her.

"If I stayed here," she said, "I could help the police. I could give them a description of the man who brought me here."

"You can't help much—in jail," he said reasonably. "And maybe they won't believe in this man."

"Do you mean——" she began hotly.

"I said before that I wasn't your judge," he said. "I'm pointing out certain things to you, that's all. If you feel that you can make the police accept your story, if you feel that you can answer all their questions satisfactorily, then you'd better stay. In that case, I'll go. Because if they questioned me, I'd have to tell them things that maybe wouldn't help you."

"Why do you want to help me?" she asked with reluctant curiosity.

"Well," he said, "I'm a man. And you're a woman—in pretty bad trouble."

Again, she was silent for a time.

"It seems to me absolutely certain that the man who brought me here is the murderer," she said.

"Maybe you're right," said Reynard. "Only he's not here." He glanced at his watch. "It's after eight," he said. "You'd better decide. Do you want me to take you to this job, or shall I clear out?"

She thought of his going, leaving

her here, alone, to call the police, to face their questions.

"You say you came here in response to a telephone call. Who called you? You wouldn't leave your home because some stranger summoned you. Who called you? You say you were here all night. You were here, then, when Frank Keyes was shot. Did you hear anything? Did you see any one?"

They would go on and on; they would ask her those questions until her resistance was worn down, until by some gesture, some unconsidered word, she had betrayed herself.

"I'll go," she said suddenly. "I've got to go somewhere where I can think things out."

"Then I'll get some breakfast," he said. "And in the meantime you'd better change. Put on some of Maisie's clothes. You'll want to look like a maid, you know."

Closing the door after him, she looked in the closet and the bureau drawers. And the sight of Maisie's possessions made her heart ache. Maisie dying, and Frank dead! Frank, dead, shot through the heart, only a few feet from where she had been sleeping!

For years, the hope, the dream of her life had been a brilliant marriage. In her aunt's little house, in the midst of all the humiliations inevitable to a girl without money in the society of people with plenty, she had dreamed of the day when this obscurity, these mean little makeshifts would be done with, when she, with her beauty and her pride, should enter a larger world, would have a sure position, exquisite clothes, jewels.

Well, she had made her brilliant match; she had her string of pearls. And with them she had grief, misery and dread. She had married Don

Dinero, the mighty cavalier, but he could not protect her now. She could not even mourn for him in peace.

She found a neat little black dress, a flimsy black jacket, a small dark hat. After washing, she dressed in haste; only Maisie's shoes would not fit her narrow foot, and she kept on her own high-heeled pumps. And she kept, too, without being aware of it, her air of elegance and aloof reserve.

In the kitchen, she found Reynard.

"Will this do?" she asked him.

"I'd advise you not to wear those rings," he said.

She slipped off her diamond engagement ring, but hesitated over the other.

"No," she said. "There's really no objection to a maid's being married."

"As you please," said Reynard. "I've made coffee. Now, would you like bacon and eggs?"

"I'll cook the breakfast," she said briefly.

"D'you know how?" he asked, as if startled.

She smiled faintly, remembering the hundreds of meals she and her aunt had prepared for themselves. Taking off her jacket, she moved deftly about the little kitchen, while Reynard sat on the edge of the kitchen table.

And suddenly, like a blow, the thought came back to her that Frank was here, dead. She stopped, in the middle of the room; the horror of it grew and grew upon her. Frank was here, dead. Left alone in that room.

"I've got to go to him," she said. "I've got to stay with him."

Reynard spoke, but she did not hear him, her dilated eyes did not see him until he laid his hand on her

shoulder. She pushed it away, and drew back.

"No! Let me alone! I've got to—stay with him."

As she turned to leave the room, he caught her wrist, with fingers like steel.

"Wait!" he said. "Pull yourself together. This is your bad hour that had to come. And you've got to face it, and live through it. No, wait! You won't help Keyes by this. He's gone. He can't see you or hear you. You're acting on impulse now. You're not thinking. And you've got to think."

She stood there, like a captive, looking into his dark, unreadable face. And his even voice, his words, reached her consciousness through the tide of emotion that had been rising perilously high.

"This is your bad hour that had to come. You've got to face it, and live through it."

She gave a long sigh, like a sob, and he released her wrist.

"Sit down," he said. "Drink a cup of coffee. And if you're a smoker, I'd advise a cigarette."

She did what he suggested, blindly; but she could eat nothing. The image of Frank, in that dim room, haunted her cruelly.

"We'd better get going," said Reynard.

"No," she said. "Suppose no one finds him for days. I can't."

"I'll see to that," said Reynard.

His tone was not gentle; he had not spoken a single word of sympathy. Yet his quiet, alert manner gave her a curious comfort.

"You promise he won't be here—alone to-night?" she said with a sob.

"I promise," he said. "Now, if you'll put some little things into this bag—you'll know what's right."

Back in Maisie's room, she packed the bag hastily and carelessly, with

but one thought in her mind. If she could only say good-bye to Frank!

The hall was empty. Noiselessly, she stole toward the storeroom, her heart beating wildly. She must see Frank again for the last time in this world.

Her hand was on the knob—when the door was opened from within, so unexpectedly that she stumbled back against the wall, and Reynard came out.

"What were you doing there?" she demanded.

"We'll have to start now," he said.

"I want—I *must* see Frank."

"No," he said.

"You have no right," she began, but, as their eyes met, she stopped. It seemed to her that there was something almost terrible in that glance of his, something entirely inflexible and inexplicable. She turned away; he picked up her bag and led the way to the front door.

"Wait!" he said. "Better not be seen leaving here."

He opened the door, looked up the stairs and down.

"Quick!" he said, and she followed him down the stairs and into the street. They walked to Ninth Avenue, and there, near the corner, a car was parked, a handsome little sedan.

He helped her into the back, took the wheel, and they set off. She did not know where they were going; she could not even imagine a probable destination, and she scarcely cared.

It was a sweet, fresh morning; as they drove uptown through the city she knew so well—Fifth Avenue, Central Park, the teeming upper West Side—she looked about her as if what she saw were a play, in which she had no part, as if, in

the last few hours, she had stepped out of the world she knew into some nebulous region of utter unreality.

They drove out of the city and into Westchester, by roads along which she had often driven with Frank. She wondered idly what would happen if the car were to be stopped, if there were an accident, and some one were to recognize her, sitting here, in a shabby black dress, in the car of this man of whom she knew nothing. She looked at his broad, slender shoulders, his well-set dark head, and she fancied that any emergency would find him prepared. Whatever he was or was not, he was competent.

Then again her thoughts went back to Frank; she sank into a sort of stupor of grief and bewilderment, until the car turned into the gates of a thickly wooded estate, and stopped in the drive.

"You're going to be interviewed by Mrs. Sackett," he said. "Here's a letter of recommendation from Mrs. Payne. It gives your name as Mary Fallon. It explains that you've never been a maid before, so you'd better accept any salary she offers."

He got out of the car, and, opening the door, took out her bag, and set it down on the road.

"Sorry," he said, "but you'd better walk the rest of the way. If I drove Mrs. Sackett's maid up to the house in my car"—he paused, and for the first time she saw him smile—"people might think you weren't respectable."

She sprang out, and stood in the road beside him. Something like panic assailed her at the thought of being left here, alone.

"How can I do this?" she cried. "I don't know the work. I don't know what's expected of me."

"You'll learn," he said. "You'll

only have to do for Mrs. Sackett what Maisie had to do for you."

Again, his tone held something that flicked her pride. She picked up the bag and turned away. Then she remembered, and turned back, found him standing there, looking after her.

"You've been—very kind," she said. "I can't thank you now. But if I should see you again——"

"Oh, I shan't lose track of you," he said, raising his hat politely.

She set off along the tree-shaded drive. Before her, she caught a glimpse of a graystone house with turrets, like a theatrical little castle. And she could not conceive what she would encounter in this house.

CHAPTER VIII.

CARITA.

AS she mounted the steps of the stone terrace before the house, she saw a slender man with a dark mustache, dressed in white flannels, sitting in a chaise longue, reading a newspaper. He glanced up at her, but returned to his paper, not interested. And that was her first taste of this new life, that she had walked past this man, carrying her own bag, while he went on reading.

She rang the bell, and the door was opened promptly by a butler in morning livery.

"Side entrance," he said in a tone of hushed horror, and closed the door in her face.

She stood there for a moment, a hot color in her cheeks, then as she turned away, the young man laid down his newspaper.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

"Nothing, thanks," she answered briefly, for she was not accustomed

to talk, standing, to men who were comfortably seated.

"Something wrong," he said. "You just tell me, pet; I'll set it right."

He spoke with a faint trace of foreign accent, and in a singularly pleasant voice; indeed, his manner and his appearance had a curious charm. He was slender, dark, debonair, with blue eyes fringed with very long lashes that somehow gave to his face a certain look of innocence.

She did not answer his words, but went past him down the terrace steps, and along the drive around the corner of the house to a side door. She rang the bell there, and waited and waited, and presently a maid opened the door for her.

"About the situation?" she asked. "Come in."

Dolores entered a little hall, so dark that she could see nothing, and was left standing there while the girl disappeared through a door.

Presently, the maid returned.

"Mrs. Sackett will see you," she said. "This way!"

Dolores followed her through the door and up the back stairs, across a carpeted hall to a door on which the girl knocked. A voice said "Come in!" and Dolores turned the knob and entered.

It was a dazzling room, almost painfully bizarre. The floor was black and polished like glass, and on it lay scattered white velvet rugs; the walls were paneled with plaited white silk; there were low easy-chairs of black wood, upholstered in black-and-white-striped satin, and in the center of the room stood an enormous green-and-gold lacquer bed, with curtain about it, on a sort of platform approached by two shallow steps. The morning sun streamed in; the summer wind

stirred the curtains, making the room seem still more artificial.

"*Alors, venez, mademoiselle,*" said a voice from behind the bed curtains.

Dolores went a few steps forward, and hesitated, and a torrent of French poured forth from the invisible speaker.

"*Je veux vous voir!*" were the first words. The curtains were pulled aside, and a lovely nymph was visible, black hair curling about her shoulders, framing an exquisite, delicate face.

"Ah!" she said. "*Comment vous appelez vous?*"

"Mary Fallon," said Dolores.

"Oh, you're not French then?" said the other. "I'd forgotten. Let's see. You worked for Laurie's cousin or something, didn't you? My dear, you're cute!"

Dolores knew nothing to say to this.

"Come here and sit down!" Mrs. Sackett continued, and, as the girl approached, flung out a green-and-black-striped silk cushion. "There! On the step! My dear, can you give a facial?"

"I'm sorry," said Dolores, "but I——"

"Oh, you're the one that never had a maid's job before, aren't you? Nella rang me up last night. She knew that devil of a Margot had walked out on me, and that I had to have some one. Well, what can you do? I mean are you good at sewing?"

"Yes, Mrs. Sackett."

"And you can do my hair, can't you?"

"Yes, Mrs. Sackett," Dolores answered, for she had rather a knack for hairdressing.

"Well, we'll simply do the best we can. Anyhow, you're cute. I simply can't stand any one sour. Run

my bath, will you? And I'll wear a white tennis dress."

"A cold bath, Mrs. Sackett?"

"No!" said the other candidly. "And call me 'madam,' deary. It's cuter."

Dolores went into the bathroom and started a warm bath running. She put in a handful of pine crystals from a jar, spread out the immense bath towel, arranged the soap, brushes and wash cloth, trying to remember how Maisie had done things.

When she returned to the bedroom, Mrs. Sackett was up, standing in the middle of the floor, stretching, thin, supple, startlingly beautiful in sleeveless, diaphanous green pajamas.

"No," she said, "I'll wear that little green sports suit; green suits me better. If I could only have some ham and eggs!" Tears came into her eyes. "I'm so hungry all the time."

"But you don't need to diet," said Dolores.

"Yes, I do! My audiences always notice if I even put on two pounds."

"You're on the stage?" Dolores asked.

The other stared at her.

"Don't you know who I am?" she asked. "Didn't you know I was Carita Dupont?"

The name was not familiar to Dolores, but she said nothing that would further expose her ignorance.

"I left the screen to get married, a year ago," Mrs. Sackett went on.

"Carl's just crazy about me. I've just got everything a girl could ask for. Carl wouldn't stand for me to go back to my career. He's so jealous."

She bent over and laid the palms of her hands on the floor, lithe as a cat.

"He's just grand," she said.

But Dolores had not failed to notice something forlorn in her tone, some shadow on that lovely face. She moved about the room, looking for the little green sports suit in an enormous wardrobe, collecting the shoes, stockings and underwear she thought would suit, while Mrs. Sackett went through a series of the most complicated and difficult somersaults, all with effortless ease. Then she went in to her bath, leaving the door open so that she could go on talking.

"Carl's away now," she said. "He had to go to Washington on business. I mean, he's got a lot of influence and all. He likes me to do a lot of entertaining when he's home, so, when he's away, I just kind of take it easy. I've just got René Gallagher here and Mrs. Whitely. I mean, I've got used to having a lot of people around. I'd go wild in this place if I was alone."

She talked all the time she dressed, and in her garrulousness, Dolores found something pathetic. Not happy, the lovely nymph!

"I like to talk to you," she said abruptly. "You're—I don't know. You've got class. What did you do before this?"

"Just—light housework," said Dolores.

"Oh! Like a sort of companion, or something?"

"Yes."

"You've got a sort of educated way of talking. And you're good-looking. If you had more pep, you'd be grand in the pictures. You've got a swell figure, and all. Only, you've got that sad look. Fallon. Are you Irish?"

"My father was Scotch."

Mrs. Sackett told her a long story about a friend who was Scotch, and when that was finished, she was

dressed, and sauntered out of the room, smoking a cigarette. Dolores stood looking after her, very much at a loss. What had Maisie done when not in actual personal attendance?

The whole thing was so casual, so very much easier than she had expected. Mrs. Sackett was so different from any employer she could have envisaged.

"It won't be hard to get on with her," she thought. "The whole thing won't be hard."

She began to pick up the various things scattered about the room, feeling a certain curiosity about this other woman, suddenly so important in her life. On the dressing table was a large photograph in a silver frame of a portly man past middle age, baldish, with a scrubby light mustache. And across it was written: "Carita, with devotion—from Carl."

So that was Carl. And this other woman, this girl of her own age, had done what she herself had done—married Don Dinero.

She was looking at it, in a queer mood, when the door opened, and the maid who had admitted her to the house entered, a trim little person with crisp black hair and sharp features.

"Taking a look at him?" she said. "Not much to look at—the big sap!"

Dolores had no intention of entering into any conversation of this sort. She smiled faintly, and went on dusting off the dressing table.

"My name's Agnes Kelly," the other went on with a trace of hostility. "The last maid madam had was French, and we was hoping this time she'd get a good Irish girl."

"My name's Mary Fallon," said Dolores reluctantly. "Will you tell me where my room is?"

"It's up on the floor above," said Agnes. "There's only the three of us in the house. Me and the cook and Selma; she's a Finn. And the chauffeur outside. It's a good place to work if you catch onto the ways. She won't bother you except when she goes on a rampage. Then all you got to do is just hold your tongue, and, afterward, she's sorry and gives you a present."

Agnes had begun to make the bed, and Dolores saw that the care of the room was no part of her duties.

"I think I'll go up to my room," she said.

"It's the only one empty," said Agnes. "But you better come quick when she rings. She don't like to be kept waiting."

Thankful to escape now, Dolores mounted the stairs, and, after opening two doors, found the vacant room which she was to occupy. It was under the eaves and stifling hot; a mean little room, dusty, carelessly and cheaply furnished. She unpacked the few clothes that were still in the suitcase, and put them into the bureau drawers, set the brush and comb on the top. And then stood looking about her blankly. And now what was she to do?

Sitting on the foot of the bed, she could look out of the low window, and catch a glimpse of a tennis court behind the trees. It was strange to her to realize that she could not walk out on that lawn, could not stroll down the stairs and move about the house as she pleased.

A bell buzzed, close to her head, and she rose, and hastened down to Mrs. Sackett's room.

"I want the red flat crêpe," said Mrs. Sackett. "Opera pumps and black stockings. And find that gar-

net set. Hurry up. The car's waiting."

No trace of friendliness in Mrs. Sackett now. She was in a hurry, and the new maid was of no interest. In her short little slip, she sat down in a chair for Dolores to put on her shoes and stockings.

"Oh, hurry up!" she cried. "I've got a date for lunch."

Not easy for Dolores to kneel before that other girl!

"Do my hair flat, will you? This hat's tight. No! Not like that! It's got to be more off my forehead. No! That's better. Hurry up!"

When she was ready, she went off in a hurry. Dolores heard her voice downstairs, her laugh, sweet, clear, a little shrill. Going to the front window, she saw a car out there, with the chauffeur holding open the door. Mrs. Sackett came out, followed by a tall woman with gray hair and a superb, supple, youthful figure, and then by the man she had seen on the terrace. They all got into the car and drove off, and Dolores turned away. She tidied the room, and was mounting the stairs to her own room when Agnes called her to lunch.

The table in the servants' dining room was set out with good china, linen and plate, disposed with great correctness. The butler sat at one end, the cook at the other; Agnes and the parlor maid together on one side, and Dolores alone facing them. The butler rose as she entered.

"We're very pleased to see you, Miss——"

"Fallon."

"Miss Fallon."

Agnes brought in bouillon in cups; they all set to, and with an obvious air of constraint that verged on hostility. Either they had taken an instant dislike to her, or Agnes had made an unfavorable report.

"Let them!" thought Dolores, and ate her meal in silence, more disturbed by this unfriendliness than she cared to acknowledge.

The others talked to each other with veiled allusions she could not understand. No one addressed her except to ask her if she wanted this or that. And on her part she scarcely noticed them. What could they matter to her? When the meal was finished, she went back to her own room, and, closing the door, sat down determined to think seriously of the situation.

But the thought of Maisie obtruded persistently. This had been Maisie's life. What had she done in her leisure moments? What had she thought and felt?

Dolores had believed herself kind to Maisie; certainly, she had always spoken to her politely. But what had she known? What interest had she taken in that pretty young creature under her roof? That day—only yesterday—she had seen that the girl was downcast and unhappy, and she had let it pass. She remembered one glimpse of Maisie in her aunt's house: Maisie coming downstairs from her attic bedroom late one night, in a flannel dressing gown, a towel over her arm; Maisie a little apologetic to be caught on the way to a bath, a stranger in another woman's house.

What were these men and women, who lived this strange, separate life? She began to wonder over it, and her attitude seemed to her now to have been altogether wrong. She was the stranger; she had come in, unsmiling, uncommunicative, obviously aloof; it was natural enough that they decided to let her alone.

"They're simply people," she thought. "I wouldn't have gone among any other group of strangers like that. I was arrogant."

When Agnes came to call her to tea, she went down in a different mood. She smiled at the cook, a portly, gray-haired woman of authority, and the cook smiled back, a trifle grudgingly. Then she glanced at Selma, the parlor maid, a pale, fair-haired young woman with a big nose.

"I wonder if there's anything I ought to have done this afternoon," she said. "I've never had this sort of job before."

"You're supposed to look over madam's wardrobe every day, and see what needs mending and pressing," said Selma. She spoke with severity, but she liked being asked.

"May I ask what class of situation you had before this?" asked the butler.

He was a bald Irishman, with a long, cynical upper lip, and remarkably fine diction and accent. There was something curiously theatrical about him, as if he were a clever actor who had thoroughly assimilated his part; even his name, Jardyne, had a tinge of the theater. He was discreet and subtle, but his ugly, inward contempt for those he served was not to be concealed. When Dolores answered that she had been a companion, he smiled.

"You could write a book," he observed cryptically.

The first day was a sample of those to follow. Mrs. Sackett came home while Dolores was at tea and rang at once for her maid. She was nervous and irritable. Something had gone wrong with her. She wanted a bath, and a massage, and she was angry because Dolores did not know how to give a massage. Then she wanted hot milk and the shades drawn down so that she could take a nap. She told Dolores to go, but almost instantly, she rang for her again.

"I can't sleep!" she cried. "Go and see what Mrs. Whitely is doing. See if she'll come and talk to me."

Mrs. Whitely, in a black lace negligee, was lying on a couch in her bedroom, smoking.

"Oh, Mary," she said pleasantly enough, "you might see what you can do with that white satin of mine. It's a little large under the arm. I've pinned it. And you can do my hair early, before Mrs. Sackett wants you."

She went in to her hostess, while Dolores took the white satin dress up to her own stifling little room to alter. So many steps, so many details to remember, so many trifling, tiring little tasks. She did Mrs. Whitely's hair, then she helped Mrs. Sackett to dress, and by half past seven she was tired to the point of tears. The servants' dinner was at half past eight; then Agnes had to turn down the beds and make the rooms ready for the night; the cook and Selma cleared up in the kitchen; Jardyne sat down, with a pipe and a newspaper; Mrs. Bryan climbed upstairs to bed; Selma wrote a letter to her mother, and Agnes went out to meet a boy friend.

"If I was you," said Selma, "I'd get a little sleep before madam comes up. She's generally late, so you'd have time."

So, slipping off her dress, Dolores lay down on her bed. She had meant to think of Frank, of the future, but she was asleep almost at once. At one o'clock, the bell awakened her; she dressed and hurried downstairs. She was dazed with sleep, but she had to be brisk and obliging. Madam wanted more hot milk, and a veronal tablet.

"I can't sleep," she cried. "I just lie awake."

She swallowed the tablet, and lay

back on the pillow, and tears began to run slowly down her cheeks.

"Mary," she said, "you don't need to envy me because I've got money. Believe me, money isn't everything. When I was out in Hollywood, lots of times I didn't have enough to eat, and I had so many worries. But I had good friends. I mean, real friends, like I haven't got now."

After she had fallen asleep, Dolores left her in her bizarre, enormous bed, and she pitied her.

She pitied her more after Selma had told her more.

"Her husband's crazy about her," Selma said. "But he's always trying to make her different. You can see for yourself that she's terrible common, and he's ashamed of her in front of his swell friends. His family treat her like a dog. Now she's got this Mrs. Whitely. She hasn't got a cent, that Whitely woman, and she's mean. Never gives you a cent—only old clothes. And they're old, all right, before she gives 'em away. But she's got class, and she can put over anything on Carita. Stays here for weeks and borrows money off her, too. She and that Gallagher fellow. He makes me sick!"

"Why?" asked Dolores.

"French, they call him, but Gallagher's his name. It seems Carita met him over in Paris. And now, whenever old Sackett's away, he's always hanging around, and sort of making love to Carita, in that foreign kind of way. I've seen them like him. He'll get her in bad, in the end."

"Do you think she cares for him?"

"Well," said Selma, "you got to remember her husband's thirty years older than her, and that Gallagher's a good-looking feller. I wouldn't say she cared a lot for

him right now. Not like she cares for Reynard."

"Reynard?"

"Yes. It was his cousin sent you here, wasn't it? Then maybe you know him?"

"I've seen him."

"He's a real man," said Selma. "He's generous, and he's got a nice kind of joking way. Carita was pretty crazy about him, but he sort of discouraged her. I heard he was in love with the Keyes girl. You know Frank Keyes—the one that's just married that good-looking girl. I seen her picture in the paper; sort of like you, she is. Would you think a girl'd do that? Marry one of those old fellows? Well!" She smiled grimly. "I guess they earn their money," she said.

Dolores was unable to speak for a moment. The sound of those familiar names profoundly disturbed her. But she was desperately anxious to know if any hint of the tragedy had yet seeped out into the world through these underground channels.

"Mr. Keyes married a girl—yonger than himself?" she prompted. But Selma had no more to say.

And there was nothing in the evening newspapers.

"He's broken his word!" Dolores thought, lying awake in anguish.

No one had found Frank. He was still there, alone, shut in that dim room, abandoned, cruelly deserted.

Carita had a morning newspaper, but she rarely glanced at it, and Dolores had no opportunity to see it. She was to be thankful for that later.

For when she went down to get her own breakfast, Selma and Agnes were discussing—Mrs. Keyes.

"I think she done it," said Selma.

"Keyes, he was an old man, and she must 'a' married him for his money. And I'll bet you there was some young feller around the corner somewheres. Whatever would a rich man like that be doing in a flat like that? Followed her there, I bet you! And she runs off there, to give some of her new money to this boy friend."

Dolores sat down at the kitchen table, and was silent for a moment, struggling against a sick faintness.

"What's happened?" she asked.

"It's this Keyes," said Agnes, eager to explain. "Found dead—murdered—in one of them flats. You know them flats where them rich women make appointments and all. Shot on his wedding night, he was. And his bride's gone. It says here—wait. Here it is:

"Miss Liza Keyes, daughter of the murdered man, told reporters yesterday that, when the news of her father's tragic death was communicated to her by the police, she at once notified Mrs. Keyes. 'Mrs. Keyes,' she said, 'seemed dazed by the horror of it all. She asked to be left alone. After an hour, I thought some one ought to be with her. Our family physician had arrived, and I wanted him to see her. I knocked at her door, but got no answer. After some time, I became alarmed at the continued silence and summoned the butler to break open the door. We found the room empty. Later in the day, Mrs. Keyes telephoned to me that she had gone away until she had somewhat recovered from the shock.

"When questioned, Miss Keyes admitted that her stepmother had spoken in a strange, dazed way, very different from her usual manner. Doctor Sampler, the Keyes's family physician, gave it as his opinion that Mrs. Keyes's nerves had been seriously deranged by the news of her husband's death on their wedding night. The police have instituted a nation-wide search for the missing woman."

"This Liza Keyes, she says the other was in the house all night," observed the cook.

"Oh, they all stick together," said

Agnes. "And even if she done it, and it's proved on her, nothing'll happen to her. She'll just get up there in the court, and her with all that money, and so good-looking, and they'll find some excuse for her."

Dolores tried to raise her cup of coffee to her lips, but her hand shook so that she had to set it down.

"May I see the paper?" she asked.

It was handed to her, and she read what was there. Frank Keyes had been found dead, in that shabby little flat on the West Side. But there was no word about the revolver, or the necklace. And Liza asserted that she had not left the apartment that night; she even had a maid to testify to seeing Mrs. Keyes in bed at eleven o'clock.

"No one will believe that," she thought. "The police are looking for me. They know."

There was her photograph in the newspaper; another one in the evening paper; not good ones, but recognizable. In terror, she saw Carita looking at that picture, watched the faces of her fellow servants. Surely some one would see—

But no one did.

"She looks like Mary," Agnes said once, but Selma and the cook denied that.

"All made up, the way they are," said Selma. "If you was to really see her, she wouldn't be that good-looking."

Their attitude toward the case was one of very warm interest and faint contempt. Dolores had been three days in the house then, long enough to realize how natural, even inevitable, this was. She herself had had experience of Mrs. White-ly's smiling imposition, of Carita's whims and sudden changes of mood. She had learned how exhausting it was to be perpetually at the beck

and call of another person, to spend one's days, not in definite work, but in suiting another person's convenience.

No one was actually unkind; both Mrs. Whitely and Mrs. Sackett would have sworn on earth that they were very considerate and polite to Mary Fallon. They said "please" and "thank you"; she had enough to eat, a room to herself. The other servants were civil to her, Selma and the cook really friendly. But she was an outsider; they all saw in her something alien, something that forbade any genuine confidence. And for the first time in her life, she knew what loneliness was.

Sometimes at night, she would make up her mind that it would be better to go back, at any cost, to tell her incredible story, and to be at least near her aunt again. Anything would be better than this loneliness, this perpetual dread of discovery.

But then she would think of Frank. The one thing she could do for Frank was to protect Liza.

She was alone in her dilemma. It looked as if only a miracle could help her. Be sure not to miss the following installment in the next week's issue of Detective Story Magazine.

"If they find the murderer!" she thought. "They must find him."

But day after day, she scanned the newspapers, and the murderer was not found. There were columns about herself, filled with the most intimate details; her old life in Porto Rico, her school days; everything was dragged out, made the most of, for she was the most romantic figure in the tragedy.

And under all this, never in actual words, but always implied, was the belief in her guilt.

Her aunt refused, for some time, to make any sort of statement; but in the end she was forced to it.

"Mrs. Casson, the aunt of the missing woman, said to-day: 'I am sure that my niece will soon return, and that everything will be explained.'"

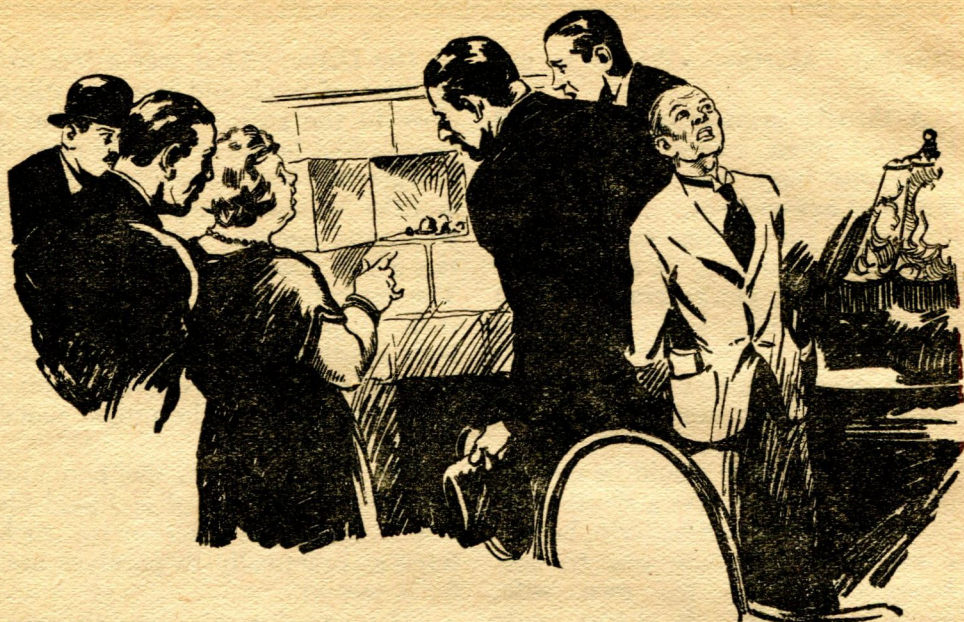
"She doesn't believe that," thought Dolores. "She'd stand by me through anything, but she doesn't know me."

It occurred to her that in the whole world there was no one who really knew her—no one who could have blind and utter faith in her.

FREE AT LAST

AFTER being incarcerated in a Charleston prison in Massachusetts for thirty-four years, Henry Stewart walked out recently a free man. He had been in prison on a murder charge since 1897.

It was a spring day in 1897 when Henry Stewart last looked upon Boston and it was a spring day in 1931 when he again looked upon the streets he had once known so well. Before entering prison there had been no huge buildings, no streets filled with automobiles and elevated trains, nor were there as many pedestrians thirty-four years ago. Of course, he had heard of all of these changes which had taken place, but hearing and seeing are quite different.



IN A NUTSHELL

By ASIA KAGOWAN

It was worth two thousand dollars to be called a dunce.

THERE was an aggravating flavor of mystery about that telephone call. The woman's voice had been so low that Mr. Pooglesnup could hardly distinguish her words. Low and hurried, as if she had been afraid somebody might overhear her. Panicky, too, as if fright had carried her to that verge from which a lady either dives into a faint or flies into a fit of hysterics. But why on earth couldn't she have been a little more definite? Why did she have to hang up the confounded receiver at the end of that single sentence?

"Please come over to Mrs. Marden's, on the Drive, right away."

Little Mr. Pooglesnup's mild features almost managed a scowl as he

gaped at the suddenly silenced telephone.

"My goodness," he squeaked, "but women are exasperating! I've got a good notion not to go."

Almost instantaneously, however, he had a better notion. The spirit of detecting was much too strong within him to permit him to hesitate more than a fraction of a second about answering this S O S. Nobody would send out an agonized appeal to the world's greatest detective like that unless there were imminent danger. Even now, steely fingers might be clutching at Mrs. Marden's throat!

"My goodness!" he repeated, bouncing to his feet. "They might be murdering her this very minute!

Martha! Martha! Where is my hat?"

A throaty grumbling issued from the next room, where Mrs. Pooglesnup was busy with the practical duties of housewifery.

"I ain't got no time to fool away lookin' for your hat," it advised unfeelingly. "If you're crazy enough to imagine you're a detective, you can track it down yerself. You won't need it nohow if she's been murdered. They ain't wearin' hats at funerals."

Obviously, there would be no help from this quarter. As a sleuth, Mr. Pooglesnup reflected bitterly, he had a hard and lonesome row to hoe. Everybody, even his own wife, made fun of him. It almost made him feel like swearing sometimes, in spite of the fact that he had been a Sunday-school teacher for upward of forty years. Almost? By golly, he would swear! This very minute!

"Dang!" he exploded, yanking open a desk drawer violently.

"Ulysses!" came the shocked voice of his wife.

Ulysses did not answer. He dived into the desk drawer, pulled out his revolver, his flashlight, his magnifying lens, a pair of handcuffs, and a false mustache. These things, he transferred rapidly to his coat pockets. A frenzied moment he spent in search of his hat, which, by the way, lay on his desk directly in front of his nose, but the thing eluded him. Then he dashed out the door bareheaded, his scattering gray hairs wildly askew, his bulging coat pockets flopping ludicrously. His sixty odd years may have been evident in the oldish innocence of his face, but one thought only of ninety pounds of animated wild cat as the little man bounced across the sidewalk and into the door of a taxicab.

There was only one Mrs. Marden,

on the Drive. That was a big, old mansion of brick and stone, nestling close to the park, hidden behind a twenty-foot hedge of densely packed evergreens and occupied by a wealthy widowed lady of advanced years and peculiar ideas. The distance was less than a dozen blocks. The taxicab whirled him there with such dispatch that the agitated little sleuth had no time to get what he called his deductive mind smoothed out into the proper mood for deducing things.

One idea, however, did pop into his head as he alighted and paid his fare. It landed there with such force as practically to paralyze him for a second.

"My goodness!" he thought. "Maybe that wasn't Mrs. Marden that called me. She spends lots of time in Europe. Maybe she left the house vacant and some big crooks got in there. They might be trying to trap me. To p-p-put me on the s-s-s-spot!"

Five feet two and ninety pounds is not a build usually associated with great physical bravery. Mr. Pooglesnup occasionally demonstrated this fact by permitting his teeth to chatter and his knees to wobble in situations of real or fancied danger. But he was so overcharged with moral courage that he could never bring himself to avoid anything that resembled trouble. Usually, he fooled around on the edge of it till he fell in.

Caution, in this instance, urged him not to go in—at least, not directly. He walked around the block. At the rear of the premises, he found a gap in the hedge. He slipped through this stealthily, as a detective should. It led him to a hiding place between a bush and the side of the garage, where he stopped to decide what to do next.

"If those crooks think they're go-

ing to trap V. Ulysses Pooglesnup," he boasted, "I'll show 'em something, by dang!"

From his position, he could see the rear door, one side of the house and the walk leading in from the street. Everything was quiet. Abnormally quiet, he thought. There seemed to be that portentous stillness about the place that is supposed to precede volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, presidential elections, and other calamities. He was more than ever convinced that it was a plot of the big crooks to lure him to destruction. Yet, on the other hand, somebody might be in there murdering Mrs. Marden right now. What to do? What to do?

Then he heard a voice. The thing sounded like it was directly behind his left ear, and he jumped a good six inches. Wheeling around, he discovered that it came from an open window about eight feet above him. The garage was a two-story structure, with living quarters for the chauffeur overhead.

It was a woman's voice. Furthermore, it was the same voice that had come to him over the phone: scarcely louder than a whisper; still tense, panic-stricken, tearful.

"George, what on earth are we going to do?"

A man's voice, hoarse, sullen, guttural, answered:

"We're in bad, Mary, that's all. We ain't got a chance."

A pause. The woman was crying. Then:

"George, look me in the eyes. You didn't do it, did you?"

A longer pause. At length, the man growled an answer. But, somehow, his tones failed to carry conviction.

"Naw, I don't know nothin' about it, but a fat lot o' good it'll do to tell 'em that, with the record I got.

The bulls ain't givin' a three-timer any o' the breaks these days. I can feel it in my bones right now that I'm gonna get hooked for this job. I got a good notion to blow right now, while the blowin's good."

"No, please, no. Not that. Can't you see how much worse that would make it look? If they caught you, and they're bound to, they'd just consider that you tried to escape because you were guilty."

"Well, I'm gonna have a run for my money, anyhow, and you better come along. Don't forget you done a stretch yourself once. Them bulls ain't gonna handle you with no kid gloves, neither. The best thing we can do is to lam."

"No, George, I won't. And I won't let you do it, either. We promised each other we'd go straight, and we're going to do it. If we got away from here and couldn't get work, we'd drift back into the old life."

"Yeah, I'm willin' to go straight if they give me half a chance. But they won't do it. Old lady Marden knows we been crooks. Them buzzards o' cops know it. Between 'em, I'm gonna draw that twenty years in Joliet over this; see if I don't. And I wouldn't be surprised if they'd send you up, too. You know how much chance an ex-con's got in court if he ain't got no coin. Once they get the bracelets on us, we're as good as done for, even if they ain't got no real evidence. That prosecutin' attorney can make a jury believe that black's white and a cow's got eleven legs. And you know we ain't got a nickel to hire a lawyer."

"I—I've saved a little money, George. I telephoned for a detective already."

"A detective? What in thunder did you do that for? Them guys

is all in with the cops, hand and foot. What's his name?"

"Pooglesnup. In the telephone directory it says he's the world's greatest detective."

There was another slight pause. Then the man addressed as George roared with laughter.

"That guy!" he exploded. "Say, Mary, don't you ever read the papers? That bloke ain't no detective! He's jist a nut that thinks he is. Works with the cops now and then, and they jist string him along for the fun of it and make him think he's detectin'. Mother o' Methuselah! And you called him!"

Down in his hiding place, little Mr. Pooglesnup fairly gnashed his artificial teeth. It seemed like everybody made fun of him. Whenever he did solve a case, the confounded newspaper reporters wrote it up like it was a joke. Some of these days, he'd sue them for libel, by dang! But just now—

The woman was crying again.

"I didn't know, George. I did the best I could. And I had to do something. We can't just run away."

"Not now," growled George. "The bulls are comin'. See 'em? The place is surrounded by this time. Too late for a fade-out now."

"I guess I'd better go in the house," said the woman. "Promise me you won't try to get away, George. We've got to stay here and prove we're innocent."

"I promise," growled George morosely. "I ain't fool enough to try gettin' away now. So long, Mary. See you in jail."

There was the noise of footsteps descending a staircase. Mr. Pooglesnup, peering through the bush, saw a black-haired, good-looking girl of possibly twenty, dressed in a maid's costume, emerge from the garage

door. Her eyes were red from weeping. Her shoulders drooped dejectedly. He watched her as she disappeared into the servants' entrance of the house.

For a moment more, he remained hidden, his tiny bosom badly torn between two emotions, sympathy for the girl and rage at practically everybody else in the world. A nut, eh? V. Ulysses Pooglesnup a nut! By dang, he'd show 'em! His gray hair fairly bristled as he popped from his hiding place and swaggered around the house to the front door.

As he mounted the front steps, a gruff, genial voice boomed into his ear.

"Hello, Poogle," it greeted. "What are you doing here?"

Mr. Pooglesnup looked up. Head and shoulders above him towered "Big Bill" Conroy, acting chief of the city detective bureau. Ordinarily, Mr. Conroy and Mr. Pooglesnup were more or less on friendly terms, but at present the aberrant little detective was in the mood that starts revolutions.

"That's my business!" he retorted nastily.

"Eh?" exclaimed the surprised Conroy. "Why, you confounded little runt, don't you dare to get sassy to me. Where's your hat?"

Mr. Pooglesnup had forgotten all about his hat. He put a hand to his bare head thoughtfully.

"Oh," he recalled. "I came away in a hurry, you know. I was called in on this case so suddenly that—"

"Dickens you were!" interrupted Conroy. "So Mrs. Marden called you in, too? How long you been here? Find out anything yet?"

Mr. Pooglesnup ignored the first question.

"Well," he piped evasively, "I've been here quite a while. I've done a good bit of detecting already."

"So!" Conroy accused, winking at the group of detectives loitering near the door. "Stole a march on us again, eh? All right, Poogle, speak up. Who did the job?"

Just then, Mr. Pooglesnup recalled that he had not yet ascertained what sort of a crime had been committed.

"What job?" he asked innocently.

"Confound you!" growled the unsuspecting Conroy. "Can't you act dumb when you want to, though! Gotta drag everything out of you with wild horses! Who stole the Rajah's Ransom, of course?"

Mr. Pooglesnup allowed his lower jaw to sag ludicrously. So that's what it was? He knew about the Rajah's Ransom, certainly. It was one of the largest and most valuable diamonds that had ever come to America. Certainly, it was the most famous. When Mrs. Marden had bought it, only recently, the story had been spread all over the papers. The theft of such a stone was a more sensational matter than a murder. The information almost took him off his feet.

However, he concealed that fact admirably by assuming the expression of an owl.

"Of course," he squeaked. "I supposed that was what you meant. But then I haven't got down to detecting who stole it yet. I've just got through detecting who didn't steal it."

The front door opened at that moment, which saved him from further grilling. Conroy and the other detectives from the head office, who had been waiting for admission, swung around and went in.

"Come on, Poogle," grunted Conroy, and that undersized individual trotted along in their wake just like a small boy sneaking into a circus.

It was the maid, Mary, who had opened the door. She led them at once to a room on the second floor. The door to this was of heavy oak, rough, unvarnished, and criss-crossed with strip iron, so that it resembled the entrance to a feudal castle or a seventeenth-century calaboose. Here she rapped.

"Come in," called a woman's voice. Coincidentally, the peculiar barrier slid noiselessly upward and disappeared into a groove.

The bevy of investigators entered. The door fell behind them, effectually barring exit. The maid remained without.

"Humph!" muttered Conroy. "Looks like a museum."

The room was indeed a mammoth affair. There was no ceiling. Only the great beams overhead, and beyond these the roof. The walls had been left unfinished.

The general aspect of roughness, however, was a matter of design. The immense chamber was fairly packed with the most costly of antique furniture. Priceless tapestries hung on the walls. There was a fortune in Oriental rugs on the floor, and several more fortunes scattered about in the shapes of rare vases, statuettes, paintings and other what nots that the wealthy unemployed chase around the world to collect. One might have called it a burglar's paradise, but one was instantly struck by the fact that each of the numerous windows was well protected with heavy bars, and that the only other possible point of entry was the fortified door with the trick method of opening.

Mrs. Marden reclined at ease on a gold-and-purple contraption resembling the throne of a maharani. She was a voluminous woman, fussy, overdressed and bowed down with an air of vast importance. She

lifted a lorgnette and gazed at the intruders condescendingly.

"Be seated, gentlemen," she granted acidly, "while I explain the theft of the Rajah's Ransom."

The detectives looked around hopelessly at the rickety antique chairs, and remained standing. Mrs. Marden got to her feet with difficulty and waddled to an ancient mahogany dressing table that stood by an equally ancient four-poster bed.

"I have always had a theory," she went on, "that simple places of concealment, for small articles of great value, are much better than locks. Safes, you know, are only temptations for fingers that know how to open them, and sometimes one gets servants that are skilled in that line. But first I will show you my safe."

She touched a spring. A great stone in the side of the fireplace moved out, exposing a cleverly concealed crypt. From this, she took a brilliant, egg-shaped stone that bore a remarkable resemblance to a large diamond.

"Here," she went on, "is a paste replica of the Rajah's Ransom. I keep it there for a purpose. If the safe had been broken into by any one looking for the diamond, they would, of course, have taken only the imitation. Unfortunately, in this case, the safe was not molested. The thief apparently knew of the hiding place of the real diamond."

"And where was that, madam?" asked Conroy impatiently.

"In a walnut shell," said Mrs. Marden. "On this dressing table."

"In a walnut shell?" exploded Conroy. "Not even locked up?"

Mrs. Marden turned her lorgnette on the detective chief disapprovingly.

"Personally," she emphasized, "I thought it a very clever idea. I am a lover of English walnuts, and I

always keep a bowl of them on my table. One day I discovered that the stone just fitted snugly into a shell, so I cemented the halves together and left it inside. By marking the shell, I was able to distinguish it from the others, so that I never opened it by mistake. And certainly, you must admit, it would be the last place in the world a thief would think of looking for a diamond."

"Yeah," commented Conroy dryly. "Well, this one must have thought of looking at the last place first. Anything else taken?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Marden. "The peculiar part is that not even another walnut was missing from the bowl. I always keep an even dozen there, so I can tell at a glance."

"When did you first miss it?" demanded Conroy.

"It disappeared between eight and ten this morning, and I was in the room during the entire period."

"Who else was in here?"

"Only one other person. That was the maid who admitted you just now."

Conroy shrugged his shoulders and winked at the other detectives.

"Yeah," he boomed, "I guess we won't need to do much lookin', boys. I recognized her as we came in. Did you know your maid's name was Mary Jasper, Mrs. Marden, and that she done a stretch for shopliftin' once?"

"I did," replied Mrs. Marden. "You probably know that I am interested in an organization for the reformation of criminals. I believe in giving them a chance. This girl has been in my employ since the day she left prison. Not only that, but when her brother, George Jasper, was discharged from his third term in Joliet, I hired him as my chauffeur."

feur. He lives in the garage apartment now."

"Whew!" Conroy whistled. "And with that kind of hired help, you leave diamonds layin' around in nutshells! Did this maid know where you kept it?"

"It is quite possible that she may have discovered that," admitted Mrs. Marden. "Under the circumstances, of course, I realize that she has to be guilty. But here is the trouble. I discovered the theft before she left the room. I charged her with it at once, and searched her immediately, and she did not have it. I have also searched this room thoroughly, and I can swear that it is not hidden in here. What I want you to do"—here Mrs. Marden's voice rose viciously—"is to get the Rajah's Ransom back. The girl took it and I know it, but don't you take her away from here till she tells what she did with it. After that, you can give her fifty years for all I care. I'm through reforming criminals."

Conroy grinned and went to a window near the dressing table. He stood looking out for a minute, whistling.

"Easy enough," he murmured. "She stood here and tossed the thing out between the bars. Tom, run downstairs and see if you don't find some footprints in the flower bed under this window. Then measure the chauffeur's feet and see if they don't fit the spots. Then bring him up here and we'll talk turkey to him. Get the idea, Mrs. Marden?"

The voluminous lady opened her trick door for the detective to depart on his mission.

"I see," she mused. "She threw it out to her brother, of course. I never thought of that."

"Slick pair," commented Conroy, thrusting his hands complacently

into his trousers pockets. "But we'll get 'em. Eh, Poogles?"

Little Mr. Pooglesnup, all this time, had been standing with his hands folded behind him, apparently absorbed in contemplation of the roof. Now he put his head on one side and rewarded Mr. Conroy with something approximating a nasty look.

"Don't bother me," he squeaked. "I'm deducing things."

With that, he whipped out his magnifying lens and stooped over the dressing table in the attitude of a vest-pocket edition of Sherlock Holmes.

At that Conroy bellowed with laughter.

"Deducing things, eh?" he roared. "Oh, grandma, if he ain't lookin' for the criminal's tracks on the dresser with his blessed readin' glass!"

"Who is this person?" demanded Mrs. Marden, drawing her lorgnette on the little sleuth. "Isn't he one of your men?"

"Gosh, no!" supplied Conroy. "He's a—a kind of a private detective. Very private! Nobody knows it but himself. Didn't you send for him?"

"I!" exclaimed Mrs. Marden frigidly. "How ridiculous! I don't understand at all how he got in here. Get out of my house this instant, you—you—"

"I—I guess he's the man I sent for, Mrs. Marden," interrupted the apologetic voice of the maid, who had just stolen in. "I thought he was a big detective and maybe he could find the diamond and—"

"Humph!" exploded Mrs. Marden. "What's the use in keeping up this innocence stuff any longer, Mary? You couldn't fool a child with it. It's utterly impossible that anybody could have taken that stone but you. We know what your

game is. You've hidden the thing and think you'll sell it when you get out of jail, don't you?"

"Yes'm. No'm, I mean," cried Mary.

"Well," blustered Mrs. Marden, "I'll tell you right now that you never will get out of jail, either you or George. I've got influence, and I'll see that you don't."

"Yes'm," blubbered Mary.

"But if you'll confess right now," wheedled the lady of the house, "and bring the Rajah's Ransom back, I'll withdraw charges and let both of you go free, just so you get out of my house. What do you say?"

"I don't know nothin' about it," wailed Mary. "I never even seen the thing."

Mrs. Marden looked at Conroy with an exasperated sigh. Conroy grinned and lifted a finger.

"All right, boys," he said. "Take her downstairs and give her the works."

Two hard-featured plain-clothes men sidled up to the sobbing girl. Each taking an arm, they escorted her from the room with a dispatch bordering on violence. Conroy grinned again.

"Only way to handle them tough eggs," he puffed. "Give 'em a little good, old-fashioned third-degree stuff. She'll soon talk, if she ain't made outta iron."

There was a scuffling noise at the door. Two more detectives entered, dragging between them George, the chauffeur.

"Find the footprints?" demanded Conroy.

"Yep," answered one of the official pair. "Right below the window in the flower bed. And they fit this bird's feet."

"Yeah," growled George. "Of course, they do. Can't a guy even step into a flower bed to pick a

flower without all the dicks in town landin' on him?"

"Pretty expensive flower you picked this morning," retorted Conroy. "Now lookee here, George! You and me know you got twenty years hangin' over you, and you're gonna git it if you don't come clean. What did you do with that piece o' glass your sister tossed out the window to you?"

For a moment, the chauffeur glared morosely at the chief. Then his eyes dropped to the floor and he slumped into a hangdog attitude of guilt.

"I don't know nothin' about it," he muttered thickly.

"All right," snapped Conroy. "Take him in that room across the hall, boys, and sock it to him."

Exit the chauffeur, and the departure was several degrees more violent than his sister's. A door slammed across the hall. There came the sound of blows and a smothered curse. Mrs. Marden gritted her teeth.

"Ordinarily, Mr. Conroy," she said, "I am distinctly opposed to such methods. But, of course, in this case——"

"Sure," said Conroy cheerfully. "It's different when it happens to you. Oh, you'll learn not to be so squeamish about these crooks, Mrs. Marden. Gotta treat 'em rough, tha's all."

From below came the sound of the maid's sobbing.

"That's terrible," complained Mrs. Marden.

"It certainly is," piped up Mr. Pogglesnup suddenly.

Mrs. Marden wheeled upon him with poised lorgnette. She had reached the point where she must vent her wrath on somebody.

"What do you know about such things?" she demanded. "Get out

of my house this instant, you ridiculous little dunce!"

Poor Mr. Pooglesnup gaped at her. His face turned red, then white. He looked at the floor, then at the roof. Finally, he turned his back and stalked more or less majestically out the door.

"All right," he called back. "I will, you ridiculous big dunce!"

Bubbling over with indignation, he went down the stairs and out the front door. From there, he cut directly into the park, which fringed one side of the house, and dropped into a bench to cool off.

This process required some fifteen minutes. After that, for the place was quiet and peaceful, he began to fall into the deductive mood that is the first requisite for solving all great detective problems.

About an hour later, up to which time he had not deduced anything of importance, a phenomenon of nature came to his aid.

"So that's what those marks were on that dressing table!" he squeaked, suddenly bouncing to his feet.

Vastly excited, he pounced upon a small stick and began punching holes in the ground. This peculiar occupation kept him busy another hour. Then, just as suddenly, he dropped the stick and raced back to the house.

"I've got it!" he shrieked, bounding up the stairs.

The entire party were once again grouped in the big room. It was apparent that the third degree had been useless. The detectives were vicious and Mrs. Marden furious. George and his weeping sister, handcuffed together, were lined up ready

for the trip to the jail. Every one stared, open-mouthed, at the funny little man as he swaggered up to Mrs. Marden, holding out what appeared to be a large English walnut.

Mrs. Marden screamed and broke the thing open. Out into the palm of her hand tumbled the blazing, blue-white diamond.

"Where did he hide it?" she demanded.

"He buried it in the park," explained Mr. Pooglesnup. "I saw his footprints on the table with my magnifying lens. Then I sat down in the park and saw him come in after another. There he is now! Look at him!"

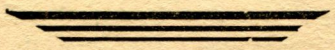
Triumphantly, the world's greatest detective leveled his index finger at a small, red squirrel sitting on the dressing table. While they watched, the little trickster took a walnut from the bowl, scampered up the rough wall to an overhead beam, poised for a second on a high window sill on the park side, and leaped nimbly to the limb of the nearest tree.

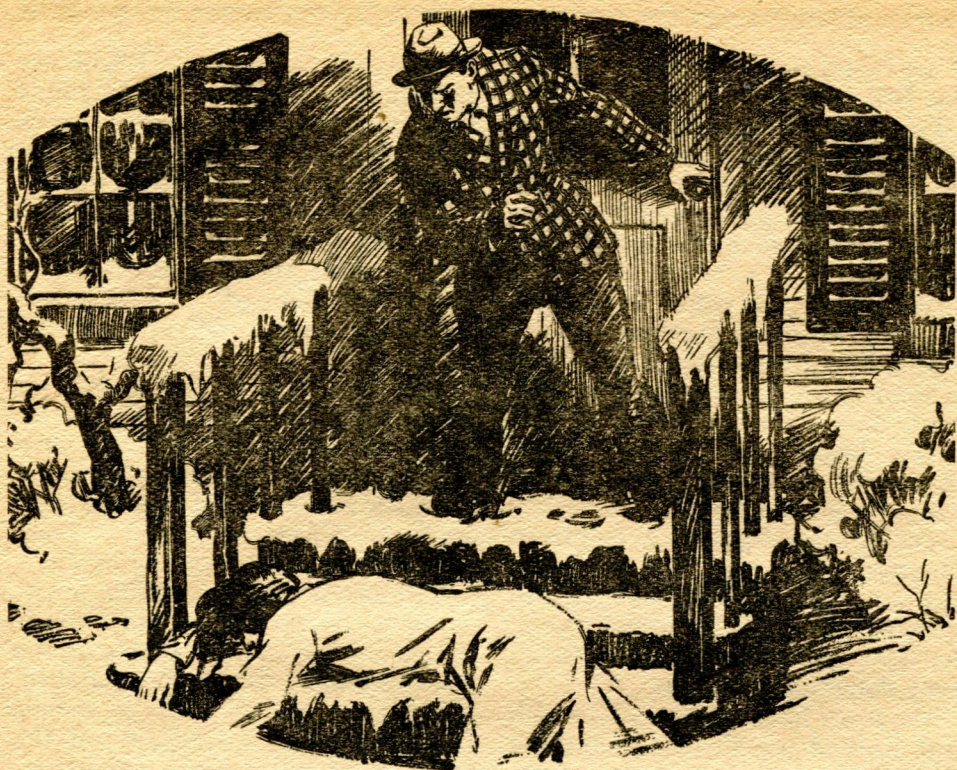
Mrs. Marden broke the silence first.

"Mr. Conroy," she said, "take those handcuffs off. Then take your silly detectives, catch that squirrel, and give him the third degree. I never did agree with your methods, anyhow. George and Mary, if you will stay with me, I'll agree to raise your wages ten dollars a week. What is your fee, Mr. Snooglepup?"

"It's worth two thousand dollars to be called a dunce!" squeaked that individual defiantly.

"Fair enough," conceded Mrs. Marden, as she wrote the check.





WHO KILLED FARMER PHELPS?

(A True Crime Story)

By HUGO SOLOMON

Two killers go free after confessing their crime.

IT was barely daylight when Charlie Stielow, a farm hand, arose, on the Phelps farm near West Shelby, New York. He dressed slowly, for he saw no reason to hurry; to-day was Monday, March 22, 1915, according to the calendar on the wall; all he could look forward to was another week of monotonous toil and

poor food. Inside the house it was fairly warm; through the windows he could see a heavy blanket of snow that had fallen during the night.

Reluctantly Charlie Stielow opened the door and started down the steps, but before he reached the ground he cried out in terror. There, on the bottom step, was the body of Margaret Wolcott, housekeeper for

Phelps, clad only in a white cotton nightgown streaked with blood. Stielow regained his composure and bent over the woman to examine her more carefully; the blood had apparently come from a wound near the heart; when he looked up he saw footprints in the snow which led from the employer's front porch.

The Phelps farm house was on the opposite side of the road; Stielow followed the dead woman's trail until he reached the kitchen door, which was open, with a hole in one of its four glass panes. Inside, Phelps lay on the floor, unconscious, with three gunshot wounds. The hired man glanced hastily at this scene of tragedy, and then ran for the nearest neighbor. Within the hour, a doctor, the sheriff, and half of Orleans County had arrived and had destroyed most of the clues.

Phelps died in the hospital at two o'clock that afternoon without gaining consciousness long enough to say a word. A bloodhound sent on the trail of footprints found nothing; fourteen people were questioned by the sheriff and his deputies, but at the end of the day the only known facts were these: robbery was the apparent motive, since money was missing from a drawer; the murder probably took place about eleven o'clock the previous night; a 22-caliber rifle was undoubtedly the murder weapon, since that was the size of the wound. The sheriff was a popular politician, but his position was challenged by an angry populace that demanded action.

Charles B. Phelps was a seventy-year-old bachelor, noted for saving money and quarreling with his employees. Charlie Stielow lived in the employees' house on the opposite side of the road with his wife, two children, his wife's mother, and Nelson Green, his wife's brother.

None of these people was especially intelligent, but all were peaceful citizens. In spite of their reputation for orderliness, the finger of suspicion pointed in their direction.

At the coroner's inquest, both Stielow and Nelson Green swore that they did not own any firearms, but a private detective agency hired by the sheriff sent operatives who found a .22-caliber revolver, a .22-caliber rifle, and a shotgun which had belonged to Stielow at the time of the murder. On April 20th, two of the private detectives arrested Green; early the next morning they induced him to sign a confession which implicated his brother-in-law. The ink on this document was hardly dry before Stielow was arrested and confined in a cell at a distance from that occupied by his kinsman. He, too, was urged to write a confession. Stielow consented; both confessions agreed in essentials, but a careful examination showed that neither contained any unknown information.

Each confessed to robbing the aged farmer, but each said that the other started the operations and fired the fatal shots. Both agreed that they waited for Phelps to retire, and then pounded on his kitchen door for him to let them enter. Finally, after the lapse of several minutes, Phelps came to the door with a lamp in his hand and admitted them, but demanded the reason for this untimely call. According to their story, the two men then shot Phelps several times, and started for his bedroom, which was supposed to contain money and valuable jewelry.

Before the pair of robbers could reach their employer's sleeping quarters, the housekeeper, Miss Wolcott, ran from her room, darted through the kitchen, and left the

house by the back door. To arrest the woman's flight, the men chased her to the door, and then fired at her through some glass panes. Without waiting to see whether or not their bullets found a target, Nelson and Stielow then searched Phelps's bedroom until they found his money, and then hurried away.

On the way to their own home, the two farm hands said, they were attracted by the sounds of moaning coming from their own porch. Quickening their steps, they soon came close enough to see Miss Wolcott clawing at the front door in a mad effort to gain admittance. Without paying attention to her frantic screams and scratching, Nelson and Stielow went around to the rear of the tenant house, entered, and went to bed. Their women demanded the cause of all the wild crying, but the men dismissed their questions as idle feminine curiosity. "Just a wild cat caught in some trap," was one explanation. Unfortunately for the prisoners, the confessions which they signed proved to be traps for themselves.

On July 12th the trial opened. The confessions were introduced by the prosecuting attorney, but they became boomerangs when it was found that Stielow's statements had not been signed properly. Placed on the stand, the young farmer said that he had made the incriminating admissions to please one of the private detectives, who had promised him a job as deputy sheriff and freedom from molestation in return for the confession.

"They wouldn't let me see my wife," complained Stielow. "I had something on my heart that I wanted to tell her, but they wouldn't let me talk to her until I repeated after them the confession which they had written. When one

of them said: 'Stielow, you're too smart to be a nursemaid for cows. I'll let you see your wife and have a big silver sheriff's star,' that was too much. I signed the papers."

The defense scouted the idea of Stielow's guilt. "Where are the stolen bank notes? Where is the man's missing purse? What was the motive? How can the prosecution link the defendant with the murder gun?" These were the questions asked by the farmers' lawyers, but the public prosecutor was ready to offer an answer to the last question by placing a firearms expert on the witness stand.

The man who introduced himself as a specialist in the field of forensic ballistics swore that his microscope revealed nine abnormal defects in the muzzle of Stielow's rifle, that all of these faults corresponded exactly with the same number on four fatal bullets taken from the bodies of Mr. Phelps and Miss Wolcott, and that these bullets could have been fired only from the defendant's rifle.

Under close cross-examination, the pseudo expert offered some startling facts about firearms. In answer to the question, "How can uneven ridges at the very end of the barrel mark the bullet?" he replied: "The cylinder fitted so tightly against the rear of the barrel that there was no leakage of gases at the breech. The entire force of the gas followed the bullet from the muzzle, and the lead expanded as it left, thus filling all depressions existing at the outer ridge of the bore, and receiving scratches from elevations found between the depressions."

This was silly firearms testimony, but to add to this comedy-tragedy, Stielow's lawyers showed that the prosecution witness had taken his photograph from the opposite side of the bullets, and that neither view

of the death bullets showed the scratches mentioned by the witness. Summed up, the State had a bed-time tale teller who was undoubtedly a professional witness, but not a professional firearms authority.

Stielow offered no spectacular defense as the case approached its end; he was content to state that he was not guilty of the murder, and that the "load on his heart" which he had previously mentioned, referred to the fact that he had lied at the coroner's inquest about the ownership of firearms. As the case now stood, a fair-minded jury would have to bring an acquittal, but the sheriff suddenly arose and took the oath as a witness.

"In the presence of three witnesses," said the sheriff, "Stielow admitted that he committed the murder, and told me: 'I did it. I guess you know all there is to it!'"

This testimony was like a bomb explosion; the sheriff had not mentioned any oral confession to the grand jury that brought the indictment, and he also failed to produce the three witnesses alleged to have heard the farmer's oral statements.

In charging the jury, the judge said: "I shall say very plainly that if it were not for the introduction of this statement dated April 23rd, and a similar oral statement by the defendant admitting his guilt, it would be the duty of the court to order an acquittal." On July 23rd the jury found Stielow guilty of murder in the first degree, and the judge sentenced him to die in the electric chair during the evening of September 5th. That same night Green's lawyer advised him to plead guilty to second-degree murder.

"It'll save the county the expense of another trial," argued the attorney. "They've got your brother-in-law, and they'll get you in the same

way, but if you take a plea, you might get off with twenty years." Nelson Green took his lawyer's advice, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to the prison at Auburn, New York.

Stielow's lawyer was convinced of his client's innocence, and began a series of appeals and stays of execution that delayed the execution of the death sentence; finally the case attracted the attention of the humanitarian cult, an association of people opposed to the death penalty. Detectives hired by this organization began an extensive investigation and found that two wandering horse traders, Clarence O'Connell and Erwin King, were in the vicinity of the murder farm on the fatal night and were even now serving sentences for robbing a store. As soon as this message of hope became known, Mrs. Grace Hummiston, a woman lawyer for the cult, went to the horse traders and secured a full confession from Erwin King.

King's confession disclosed the motive for the murder of Phelps and Miss Wolcott, the details surrounding the crime, and the disposition of the money and purse. These facts were sworn to by King in the presence of the surrogate of Cattaraugus County, the sheriff of Orleans County, and a justice of the peace. These damaging admissions were made in Little Valley, New York, but when he reached Orleans County, the horse trader repudiated everything. What had happened? Had he been "reached" by those whose public records depended upon the execution of Stielow?

Time after time appeals for a new trial were denied by the courts; the governor of the State of New York even requested the State supreme court to hold a special term to han-

dle the farmer's case, but like the other tribunals, this court decided that Stielow had been fairly and honestly convicted.

Finally there came a day when appeals and stays seemed to be things of the past. The prisoner donned the skullcap, his trousers were slit up one side, and a guard stood by a switch while the farmer seated himself in the electric chair. Just as the man at the switch was about to pull his lever there came a knocking at the door of the execution chamber. A stay of execution, signed by the governor! If it had arrived five minutes later it would have been too late.

In November, 1916, the humanitarian-cult lawyers had King arrested and confined. All of his letters written to the Orleans County authorities were intercepted and read; the contents of the letters revealed a suspicious connection between Erwin King and certain enforcement officials. When he was taken before Governor Whitman for personal questioning, King was so surly and evasive that the governor ordered a sweeping investigation of the case at the expense of the State, and commuted Stielow's sentence to life imprisonment.

When the news of the governor's intervention became known, the politicians and leading taxpayers of Orleans County accused the governor of catering to the humanitarian cult and the newspapers who were clamoring for a new trial for the two young farmers. The first trial had cost the county about forty thousand dollars; a second trial would not be any cheaper. People who thought more of their purses than they did of justice openly criticized the governor for his action, but all fair-minded citizens were glad to put honesty above selfishness.

The governor appointed Mr. George H. Bond, of Syracuse, as special deputy attorney general for the new hearing. Firearms again entered the case when Bond in turn appointed Mr. Charles E. Waite, of New York, as advisor for ballistics evidence. Waite, it must be explained, collected firearms statistics and gathered around him a staff of specialists who have since made criminal ballistics a science. Fisher, for instance, invented the helixometer for examining barrel interiors; Gravelle developed the comparison microscope; and Doctor Calvin Goddard systematized the identification of murder guns. Waite, then, was a man with genius for utilizing to the best advantage his associates; Stielow's defenders were encouraged when they engaged his services.

"I did not kill any one!" shouted the indignant Stielow when Waite told him that his investigation would reveal the truth. "If I said that I killed any one, it would be a lie."

To Deputy Attorney General Bond the record of the trial indicated the prisoner's guilt, but Waite was not satisfied; there were too many loopholes to quiet his suspicions. "Why did these two men, Green and Stielow, continue the robbery after they shot the housekeeper? Weren't they afraid that her screams would attract any one? If the housekeeper passed close to the robbers, why did she run toward their house? How could Miss Wolcott run three hundred feet with a bullet in her heart? If she was shot first and then seen ten minutes later clawing at the front door of the employees' house, how do you explain this phenomenon? More important, how could Miss Wolcott stand just outside the kitchen door and be shot through the upper pane with a bul-

let that entered her heart?" These were the questions which awakened ugly suspicions in the mind of the practical criminologist.

The best detective work is often nothing but simple logic. Waite jotted down a few facts, and from these deduced a whole story. Miss Wolcott was four feet eleven and one half inches tall; from the threshold of the kitchen door to the first step was four and one half inches; to the next step was a drop of four inches; from the second step to the ground was a distance of nine inches. The hole in the glass pane of the kitchen door was three feet eight and one half inches from the floor. The height of the wound in Miss Wolcott's heart was three feet eight and one half inches from the soles of her feet. From all of these details, Waite drew the conclusion that Miss Wolcott was standing on a level with the kitchen floor when she was shot, and not on the steps, as the confessions of the two accused men had said.

Additional facts pointing in the same direction were the hole in the glass which was in a straight line, and not at an angle, and the distance of less than two inches on the threshold outside of the house when the kitchen door was closed. These conditions indicated that it was impossible to stand on the threshold outside the house and close the door, and that the bullet would have gone over the head of any one of Miss Wolcott's height who went down the steps, as related in the story told in court.

In other words, if Miss Wolcott could not have received her wound on either the threshold or the steps, she must have been inside the house, and the door must have been closed when she was shot. If these conditions existed, the confessions of the

two farmers were false. The person or persons who, for their own selfish reasons, caused the innocent victims to tell the lies failed to construct a story that would bear the scrutiny of a trained investigator. It was now time to examine the firearms for further light in the darkness that hung over the entire Stielow case.

Deputy Attorney General Bond and Mr. Waite took the firearms in question to a branch office of the New York City detective bureau. There Captain Jones, police-revolver expert, stated that from his examination he could swear that the suspected revolver taken from Stielow's hiding place had not been fired for more than four years; Stielow himself had said that it had been more than six years since he had used this weapon. Discolorations and heavy coats of fouling and dust were visible proofs of the time that had elapsed since the last shot had passed through the barrel, but the captain's careful inspection confirmed what any one could see.

First a sheet of paper was held over the revolver and a black-powder cartridge—of the kind specified in the trial as the fatal ammunition—was fired. Although the expert for the prosecution had said that there was no gas leakage at the breech of the arm that fired the fatal bullet, there was actually so much gas leakage that the paper held over the breech caught fire instantaneously.

Two test bullets were fired before the revolver barrel was cleaned. One, fired into a bale of cotton in the customary manner, agreed in all important respects with another fired into a bucket of water, according to the method advocated by the pseudo expert who had sent Stielow to the death chamber. A third shot

was fired after the barrel was cleaned. All three showed scratches from the rough, poorly treated barrel, in marked contrast with the clean bullets extracted from the bodies of the farm owner and his housekeeper. When these three test bullets were sent to an optical specialist in Rochester, New York, he announced without hesitation that they differed decidedly from the death bullets, and did not bear any of the peculiar markings described during the trial by the prosecution's expert firearms witness.

The only similarities common to both Stielow's revolver and that used in committing the murders were that they were both "Young America," .22-caliber revolvers, having five lands, five grooves, and the same rate of pitch in the barrel. There any resemblance ended. Bullets from the bodies of the victims showed a high ridge, twice the width of the elevation left on the same make of bullet by an ordinary revolver of the same make and caliber. This characteristic had been caused, apparently, by an imperfect tool at the factory. This, together with other measurements, conclusively established the innocence of Stielow, but the next problem was to find the actual murderers.

Although he had previously countermanded the confession he had made to the cult lawyer, King repeated the details of the murder to Waite and Bond, prefixing every remark, at first, with the clause: "That's what I told that woman lawyer." Attracted by stories of the wealth of miserly old Mr. Phelps, King and O'Connel drove a horse and buggy to the town of West Shelby and then went afoot to the Phelps farm. When the old man resisted their efforts to enter the kitchen, they shot him, but were

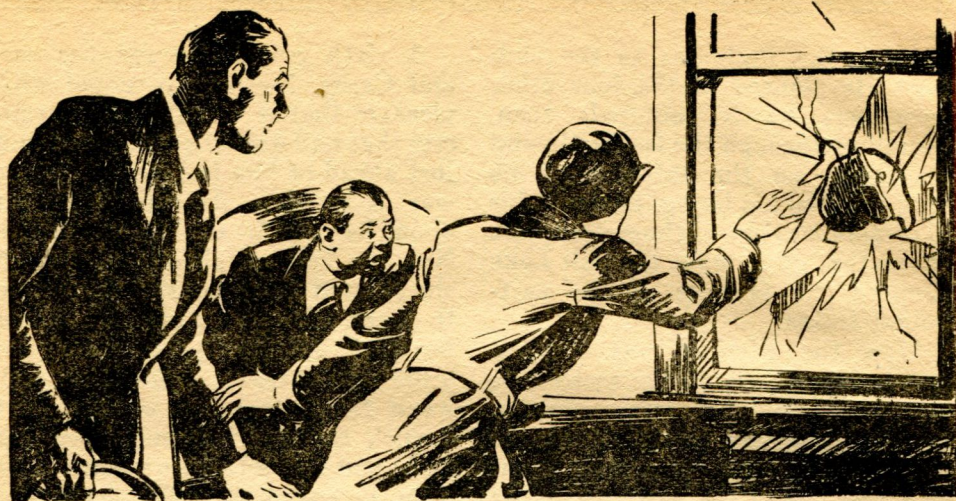
surprised by the ghostlike appearance of Miss Wolcott as she ran past in her wild flight for safety. As she tried to reach the door of the kitchen, O'Connel fired. As soon as the two intruders were satisfied that the woman was dead, they proceeded to loot the house. All details of this confession by King checked with the measurements made by Waite.

As a repetition of a repudiated confession, this new statement was worthless, but King trapped himself by explaining to Waite that the revived account contained several true incidents which had not been told before. Waite and Bond led King back over his admissions, step by step, until he forgot to preface them with the remark that they were merely repetitions; finally he said: "Sure, that's what happened. What are you going to do about it?"

Erwin King was brought before a grand jury, charged with the two murders; for three days the examination continued. Finally one of the jurors asked King if he knew that his latest confession was just as good as signing his own death warrant, and the horse trader acknowledged that such was the case, that he expected to take Stielow's place in the electric chair. In spite of this undisputed confession, the grand jury refused to indict King for either of the two murders.

In commenting on the action of the grand jury, Special Deputy Attorney General Bond said: "The failure of the jury to consider the evidence solely on its merits indicated that the members were actuated by considerations purely local and personal."

Governor Whitman pardoned the two innocent farmers, but the two murderers will probably never be punished.



TWO KEYS

By LESLIE T. WHITE

A slip of a girl tries to put one over on some hard-boiled crooks.

CASEY SHANNON awoke with an unaccustomed sense of motion. Sleepily opening one eye, he glanced out two strange windows and was startled to see the landscape hurtling by. He sat bolt upright in bed and ran his fingers through his tousled hair. What a head!

Then it all came back to him, and, with a sigh, he relaxed against the pillows. At last, he was starting on his hard-earned vacation. The trial he had been covering for the past week was over now, Wilkinson convicted. Funny they'd never recovered the jewels. He yawned lazily. Now to forget about stolen gems, stupid juries, growling attorneys, and the sordid atmosphere of the crowded, stuffy courtroom.

Casey rubbed his throbbing head meditatively. What a party the D. A. had thrown for the reporters last night to celebrate his victory!

He grinned as he recalled the wild rush they had made to catch the train. And where was that nifty-looking little brunette going—the one who had run through the gates just ahead of him? He hoped their destination would be the same.

Peeking through the curtain into the aisle, Casey was disgusted to see that most of the other berths were already made up. Grumbling, he slipped into his dressing gown and made his way to the men's lounge.

But after a clean shave and a hearty breakfast in the diner, he felt greatly improved, mentally and physically. There is no place that compares with a dining car for a cheerful breakfast: grinning waiters, spotless linen, faultless cuisine; and, while you sit, swaying gently to the roll of the train, an ever-changing panorama of scenic beauty passes before your eyes.

Leaving the diner, Casey strolled

through the Pullmans to the club car. He glanced at the four other passengers as he entered; then, thumbing through the leather-bound magazines on the table, until he found one to his liking, he eased his big frame into one of those deep, soft chairs that go to make the Salt Lake *Limited* the favorite of the east-bound trains.

Now the *Limited* was winding and twisting through the rocky hills that separate Utah from Nevada, and the morning sun cast colorful shadows about the weird formations that rose out of the barren soil, like sculptured cathedrals of the gods. The course was honeycombed with short tunnels, where the train plunged from the blazing sunlight of the treeless hills into brief stretches of inky blackness. Shannon found reading difficult, so he tossed aside his magazine and studied the other occupants of the car.

Automatically, he classified them. Across the aisle was the old maiden lady, probably on her first trip away from home, full of eager anticipation, yet fraught with caution at being thrust so openly among strangers. A weary, washed-out blonde sat with her back to Shannon, facing the rear door, now closed to keep out the choking smoke thrust inward by the intermittent tunnels. A confession-story magazine was held in her tired hands, a trifle heavy with rings, and a small purse rested on her lap.

The remaining two passengers were men. Casey decided they were probably salesmen. Dark and aggressive-looking was the younger one. The other was older, stouter, with a thinning coat of gray hair topping a ruddy face. He seemed to be dozing, but would occasionally open one eye, look wearily about him, then relax into a cat nap again.

A sixth person entered the car, and Casey, looking up, noted with pleasure that it was the little brunette that had darted aboard the train just ahead of him last night. There was something strangely familiar about her, but he couldn't place her. Now she frowned slightly as though she spotted some one she didn't care to meet. Shannon tried to follow her gaze, but they plunged into another brief interval of darkness, and, when they came out of the short tunnel, the girl had recovered her poise and relaxed into a vacant chair near the entrance. Idly, she picked up a magazine and began looking through it, but it was obvious to the reporter that she was stalling.

A dusky-hued gentleman, whose cap marked him as the porter, shuffled laboriously down the aisle. Once more, day was turned into night as the train entered another tunnel.

With startling suddenness, it happened! A shot, that could be heard above the clattering of the train, barked abruptly. Then it was followed by the chilling shriek of a stricken woman!

As quickly as darkness had come, the car shot out into the blinding sunlight. The extreme contrast seared the eyes. Shannon gasped at what he saw, and leaped to his feet! The little old lady took one look, and, with a queer squeak, promptly fainted! The other two men were out of their chairs—gaping!

The faded blonde lay face downward on the soft carpet, her head toward the closed door of the observation platform, and her jeweled hands still clutching the lurid magazine. Between her bare shoulders, a black hole oozed a welling flow of blood that trickled down tiny ravines of fat, like a brook down the side of a hill.

A flash of suspicion entered Shannon's mind, and he turned quickly and looked toward the other girl. She was sitting forward now, balanced on the edge of her chair, staring fixedly at the woman on the floor. All the color had drained from her face, and she seemed paralyzed.

The frightened moaning of the porter distracted the reporter's attention from the girl. The scared Negro had turned a couple of shades paler and was now tugging frantically on the emergency cord as though he couldn't let go.

Then the door flew open, and the conductor and his brakeman hurried into the car. They gasped at the sight that met their eyes and looked about bewilderedly. Once again, Casey shot a look at the brunette. Had she fired the shot? Unconsciously, his eyes wandered to the large purse she clutched in her lap.

She was watching him, and, as she followed his gaze, a deep flush spread over her features. She started to rise from her chair, then they hit another spasm of darkness.

The conductor cursed aloud. "Turn on those confounded lights, porter!" he roared impatiently.

"Yas, sah!" came the voice of the porter. But even as he spoke, there came the sound of shattering glass! The lights blinked on!

A small, bone-handled automatic lay on the brown carpet! Near by, a window was broken!

Scowling grimly, the conductor looked from one startled face to another, his own features clouded with suspicion.

"Who owns that gun?" he demanded finally, pointing to the weapon.

No one answered.

Shannon stole a hasty glance at the tiny figure of the girl with the

dark hair, but she avoided his eyes deliberately. His mouth hardened into a grim, cold line. So this little lady had bumped off the blonde, then tried to chuck the rod out the window, eh? Pretty raw!

The conductor crossed the car, picked up a wastepaper basket, and, emptying the contents on the floor, placed it upside down over the gun to protect it. Leaving the group, he turned toward the still form. Casey followed, and, looking over the conductor's shoulder, caught his first look at the blonde's face since he had entered the car. An exclamation of surprise broke from his lips.

Sharply, the trainman looked up. "Friend of yours?" he demanded.

Shannon flushed, realizing that he had made himself conspicuous. He hastily shook his head.

"No, I've seen her in the city, that's all," he explained lamely.

The other frowned slightly, but said nothing further about the matter. Abruptly, Shannon became conscious that the brunette was standing beside him, studying him fixedly. As he faced her, she turned quickly and looked at the dead woman. Then, with a choking little cry, she slumped to the floor in a dead faint, nearly falling across the body.

The train had stopped, and now other passengers were crowding around the club car. The distraught conductor summoned a Negro maid, and, with her assistance, the two trainmen carried the brunette and the old lady to a car ahead. Then the conductor turned to the three men.

"I'm sorry, gentlemen, but I'll have to detain you until the authorities arrive," he said. "If you'll come with me, I'll secure a couple of compartments where you can have a little privacy."

To the porter, he issued instructions for that worthy to stand guard over the car with its dead, and to let no one enter. As Casey filed after the others, he saw that the porter was huddled in a chair just as far from the dead girl as possible.

When they were finally seated in a compartment, the three introduced themselves. The younger man gave his name as Juggins, and his occupation as a salesman for a plumbing house. The stout, gray-haired gentleman introduced himself as Weiss, and stated that he was headed East to visit a daughter. Business: retired dry-goods merchant from Seattle, wintering in California! When they learned that Shannon was with the press, they both asked if their names could be kept from the papers.

Weiss produced cigars, and, for a few minutes, they smoked in silence. Each wondered if the other was a murderer. Finally, Weiss broke the uncomfortable silence. "You seemed to know the—er—deceased?" He addressed his remark to Shannon.

Casey shook his head. "Didn't know her. Just knew who she was," he corrected the other. "Her name is Rita Adams and she was the sweetheart of this bird Wilkinson that just got convicted of grand theft. He was supposed to have got away with the famous Hubbard jewels while they were being cleaned at Tilton's, though they never recovered the stuff. Saw her hanging around him at the trial."

The fat merchant lifted his eyebrows. After a few more puffs, he said: "Did you know the other little skirt—the one with the dark hair? She was looking at you pretty steadily."

The reporter frowned slightly, then shrugged. "I've seen her some-

where," he admitted slowly. "But I can't place her."

Juggins jerked his cigar from between his teeth with a nervous gesture. "Say, how long will they hold us up?" he snapped irritably.

Weiss spread his hands resignedly, and Casey looked out the window in disgust. A fine vacation this was turning out to be. The train started to move slowly.

Suddenly, Weiss, who was sitting across from him, cried out and pointed his finger at a slim figure that was darting away from the moving train. "There's the girl that was in the car with us! She's running away!"

Casey spun around in his seat and looked in the direction indicated by Weiss. He readily recognized the disappearing figure of the girl. Simultaneously, he recalled her identity. He whistled. "I got her now! She's young Wilkinson's kid sister!"

"And she plugged the blonde," finished Juggins hysterically. "For Heaven's sake, stop her! We'll be kept here till Christmas if she escapes!" He stuck his head into the hall and bellowed for the conductor, who came on the run.

Once more, the train was stopped and the men hurried toward the spot where the girl had vanished. There was no restraint now, for every effort was being made to locate the girl.

Casey slipped away from the others, and paused. He wasn't particularly fond of tracking down a pretty young woman, even though she was a murderess. Still, his professional interest was aroused, and he sensed a good yarn.

Unconsciously, his steps turned back along the track and he shifted along at a half trot. The last tunnel was just ahead—the one where the window had been smashed. He

glanced over his shoulder, but other than a small group clustered around the rear car, none of the other searchers were in sight. As he rounded a slight bend in the road-bed, the train was hidden from his view. What a lonely, forsaken waste!

"Stop right where you are!"

Shannon spun around, startled by the sound of the cool voice. A gasp burst from him as he found himself staring down the black-rimmed hole of a revolver held in the steady hand of the very girl for whom he had been searching. He opened his mouth to speak, when she silenced him with an impatient gesture.

"I thought you'd come back for your gun!" she snapped sardonically.

"My gun?" Shannon repeated dully.

A look of contempt crossed her drawn features. "Shut up!" she said bitterly. "I thought it was you all the time. You look like a murderer." She glanced quickly over her shoulder, then frowned again. "Well, you're coming with me, either dead or alive. Which will it be?"

The reporter couldn't resist a wan smile. Probably, the poor girl was crazy! He decided to humor her.

"Alive!" he retorted pleasantly. "If it's all the same to you."

She nodded curtly. "Then get over that hill!" She indicated the opposite direction from that taken by the pursuers. While Shannon would rather have gone the other way and taken his chance at being rescued, he had no alternative but to obey. Leading the way, he found a narrow trail through a small *bar-ranco* that joined a wider trail on the other side of the hill.

"Pardon me, but is there any reason why I can't know where we're going?" he asked over his shoulder.

A bitter laugh greeted his ques-

tion. "Trying to play stupid, eh? As if you didn't know well enough. Well, it won't help you any, because I took her purse and found the key!" She laughed again triumphantly.

"What key?" persisted the reporter. Gosh! Was she clean batty?

"Shut up and walk!" was the brusque reply.

Shannon shut up and walked. After a few minutes' plodding along the dusty road, he heard the doubtful rhythm of an ancient flivver pounding along in their rear. The girl slid the gun into her pocket, then, prodding him through her coat to let him know he was still under its menace, she flagged the vehicle with her free hand. While it was still some distance away, the old man at the wheel could be seen making valiant efforts to stop the aged hack. The brunette turned to her captive.

"We're going riding," she whispered grimly. "Just don't forget this gun is still pointing at you. I suppose I hardly need warn you that I'll use it if necessary."

Shannon bobbed his head. "Apparently there's no doubt about it, Miss Wilkinson," he retorted pointedly.

She started at the sound of her name, but, although her lips tightened perceptibly, she made no reply. The machine had finally ground to a jerking stop in a cloud of gray dust, and now the driver leaned over, cupping his hand behind his ear.

"Did you have an accident?" he squeaked, cocking his head to one side.

With a warning glare at Shannon, the girl smiled sweetly at the old prospector. "Why, yes, we did," she told him. "We are very anxious to get to the next railroad."

The old fellow looked puzzled and

leaned closer. "You say you want to buy a railroad?"

Casey grinned. "No," he shouted at the top of his voice. "We just want to ride on one!"

The driver pointed in the general direction from which they had so lately come. "They's one over yonder," he replied.

Vigorously, the girl shook her head. Shannon made a megaphone of his hands and stepped closer to the deaf old chap. "We don't like that one," he roared. "Haven't you got any others?"

The weather-beaten desert rat scratched his head musefully, then his face lit up. "Waal now, they's a Frisco train wot passes about five mile from here perty soon"—he shook his head sadly—"but I ain't ta goin' that way."

Again the girl smiled—a devastating smile, Casey acknowledged and laid a five-dollar bill in the driver's tough palm. The latter looked at the bill, then at the smiling face, and Casey swore that the leathery face blushed.

"Climb aboard, folks, we gotta ramble, I reckon!"

It was a rough five miles, but finally the tiny junction heaved in view. Trying to stay upright in the bouncing old car was a full-time job, so conversation had ceased completely. At the station, the girl thanked the old fellow, and, stepping close to Shannon, she gave him a dig in the ribs with her gun that started him in the direction of the ticket window. With one eye on the reporter, she purchased two tickets to San Francisco and engaged a drawing-room. At the mention of the drawing-room, Casey grinned delightedly, and the girl flushed scarlet, favoring him with a black scowl.

As they walked away from the

window, she said coldly: "I got that drawing-room so I can watch you. I'm going to sit up and keep you covered all the way, so don't bother to plan any funny stuff. Understand?"

Casey chuckled wryly. "O. K., I seem to be at your service. My name's Shannon—Casey Shannon. That'll save you calling me, 'Hey, you'."

The train was just drawing in as he spoke. The girl sneered pointedly. "Rita Adams always called you Weiss, didn't she?"

Casey stopped short and faced the girl! Weiss! Why, that was the old dry-goods merchant that had been in the car when Rita Adams had been shot to death! He opened his mouth, when she moved closer and prodded him.

"Prance into this car, and shut up!"

Flushed and angry, Shannon followed the porter to the drawing-room, entered, and slumped into a seat. She came in behind him, closed and locked the door, putting the key in her pocket. Then seating herself opposite to him, she brought her gun into view.

"Now, Mr. Weiss, you just stay put," she suggested dolefully. "There is no use in your talking, for, when I'm through with you, I'm going to turn you over to the police."

"Well, if 'eventually, why not now?'" he quoted sarcastically.

Her pretty mouth curled disdainfully. "So you could make bond, get out of jail, and hide the jewelry again, eh? No, thanks, you're coming with me!"

Casey ran his fingers through his shock of red hair. This business was getting too complicated for him. This dame thought he was Weiss; thought he knew Rita Adams.

What jewels was she talking about? He pursed his lips thoughtfully. Was she referring to the missing Hubbard jewels that her brother was accused of stealing? Were Weiss and Adams implicated? Were they accomplices of young Wilkinson?

Shannon studied the girl, his forehead wrinkled in thought. What was that crack she had made about "your gun"? Had a gun really been thrown through the window of the club car? But if that were so, then what about the small, bone-handled automatic that had lain on the floor of the car? She had spoken of Rita calling and talking with Weiss, yet obviously she didn't know Weiss by sight! The entire conversation must have taken place over the telephone.

Yet, if this little dame was part of the gang trying to recover her brother's share of the loot, why had she threatened to turn him over to the police, thinking him Weiss? Could it be that her kid brother had been framed? Gosh, there certainly was a stiff reward out for those stones! What a vacation he could take if he recovered them! And what a story!

But in the meantime, Weiss was free! Mightn't he beat it back to the cache ahead of them and lift the stuff? Another item that had to be considered. He leaned forward; he'd reason with her.

"Listen, miss, you've made a serious mistake," he began earnestly. "I don't know just what you're driving at, but I'm not Weiss. My name's Shannon. Casey——"

She silenced him with a wave of her hand. "Please don't talk to me," she said frigidly. "I'm liable to forget myself and shoot you here. I know all about the safe-deposit box that you and Rita Adams hid

the jewelry in. I also understand about the arrangement where you each have a key and that it takes both keys to open it. Now I have *her* key, and, whether you like it or not, you're coming with me and I'm going to recover that stuff—that, or kill you. Now don't talk to me any more!"

Evidently she meant what she said, so Casey lapsed into a glum silence. Perhaps the girl was on the up and up, but, if she was, then she was certainly wasting her time with him, while in the meantime the real Weiss was probably exerting every effort to beat her to the jewels. Another angle that must be considered, he suddenly realized, was that if it took *both* keys to open the safe-deposit box, then Weiss would be mighty anxious to meet the girl who had the missing key.

Shannon looked at the girl, but she was staring at him coldly, a fixed loathing in her eyes. Disgustedly, he resumed his mental discussion of the problem at hand. How did she get the blonde's key? He whistled softly. Must have pulled it when she went into that faint. Pretty smart stunt, at that! He might try to overpower her, but, if he did, she might refuse to tell him where the stuff was hidden, and then he'd lose any chance of recovering it.

It was miserably close in the room with the door closed, so Shannon tried to open a window. But a Pullman window is one of the most stubborn of inanimate objects, so four inches was the best he could squeeze out of it. However, that little space let in a pleasant breeze that made him drowsy. Closing his eyes, he relaxed against the cushions to think the problem over some more. If only she weren't such a stubborn little fool! Convincing her that he

wasn't Weiss would allow them to work together.

He felt the train slowing down. Opening his eyes, he was surprised to see the girl asleep. The gun, still clutched in her hand, was hanging in her lap, and her head was tilted back against the seat. He hesitated. He could easily secure the gun now, and then try and convince her of his identity; on the other hand, if she decided to close up, then they would lose all chance of recovering the stuff.

Casey decided to play along, when an idea came to him. Hastily fishing a piece of paper from his inside pocket, he wrote frantically for a moment, then, slipping the message inside an envelope, he watched anxiously from the open window. The train had stopped now, and, after some wild waving to attract attention, he managed to catch the eye of a brakeman. When the latter approached, Casey slid the envelope through the window and then passed through a bill, pointing to the telegraph office.

The trainman looked puzzled until Casey pointed to his mouth and shook his head as a sign that he couldn't talk. The other nodded sympathetically, and then Shannon sighed with relief as he saw him enter the telegraph office. Finally, the train started again, so he leaned back in his seat and closed his eyes.

He must have slept for several hours, for, when at last he opened his eyes, the sun had disappeared and only a ruddy halo of burnished gold silhouetted the purple mountains. Carol Wilkinson was awake also, and, from the grim, set look on her face, she must have realized that she had dozed. The first sensation that greeted Casey was a vacant gnawing in the pit of his stomach, and he recalled rather vividly

that he had not eaten since breakfast.

"How about some food, *Simon Legree*?" he asked, grinning at her.

She regarded him sourly. "You'll eat in here, if you eat at all," she warned him.

He nodded briskly and pressed the bell for the porter. The girl backed to the door and unlocked it, then resumed her seat. At first, she refused to consider food for herself, but finally Casey convinced her that she couldn't conserve enough strength to guard a dangerous jewel thief—and murderer—on an empty stomach. At length, she succumbed to that argument, and, when the porter finally stuck his head in the door, they both gave him a healthy order.

"The condemned ate a hearty meal," Shannon said seriously.

Otherwise, the meal was marked by its silence. When the dishes were cleared away, he secured a couple of magazines, and, while he read, the girl slumped lower in her seat and watched him cautiously. And so the ride continued for the remaining hours into the Third Street Station in San Francisco.

It was that cold, bleak hour just before the dawn when they stepped from the shelter of the station into the deserted street. A damp fog hung low over the sleeping city, chilling them to the core. The girl stayed close beside the reporter, her gun hand hidden in her pocket. Casey grinned, as he thought of the telegram he had dispatched, and cast a furtive glance around to see if it had taken effect. He breathed a sigh of relief as he caught sight of two husky figures that hung back in the shadows, watching them.

A large limousine loomed out of the mist and darted toward the curb. Shannon began to draw away, when

the girl jabbed him in the ribs with the gun. "We'll just take this cab," she snapped, a grim note of warning in her voice.

Out of the corner of his eye, Shannon saw the two men approaching. His grin widened.

But the smile turned to a puzzled frown as they drew alongside, for, in their hands, they held heavy automatics and on their unshaven faces, Shannon read a grim purposefulness. Carol Wilkinson saw it, too, for, with an angry cry, she spun around and tried to draw her gun from the pocket of her coat.

But the strangers were too fast for her. The slighter of the pair jumped forward and cuffed her across the head, knocking her against the car and grabbing the gun from her hand. Shannon snarled savagely and planted his fist in the attacker's mouth with a wallop that sent him reeling backward, but his companion struck the reporter over the head with the flat of his automatic, dazing him. Then they herded the man and the girl into the big machine, to whirl swiftly away through the mist-dampened streets.

Shannon cursed himself for a fool. Sitting on the floor of the car, two guns covering his bleeding head, he realized what an unmitigated idiot he had been to let the affair reach its present state of hopelessness.

"Tried to be tough, eh?" growled the gorilla that had struck him. "We'll finish wid you later." He kicked Shannon in the ribs as a promise of what was to come. "An' you too, sister," the thug continued. "You're too smart fer your own good."

The girl said nothing, but in the half light of the car, Shannon met her eyes, and she looked at him strangely. He bit his lip impa-

tiently. The little fool! Trying to play a lone hand at something she knew nothing about! Monkeying around with guns and gunmen, when she probably didn't even know how to discharge a weapon!

His train of thought was interrupted by the stopping of the machine. The two gunmen kicked Shannon to his feet and pushed him roughly through the door into the street. Sore and sullen, Shannon was forced to comply as they forced the prisoners into a small alley that ran alongside a cheap-looking hotel. One of the gunmen unlocked a small door, and, switching on a pale light, he signaled for the others to follow him up a flight of wooden stairs. The reporter and the girl moved behind him, while the other captors took up the rear.

On the first landing, the leader stopped before a closed door and rapped slowly four times. A voice inside invited them to enter, and they walked inside.

Shannon recognized Weiss immediately, although his former benign manner had disappeared, and he now leered at them from the comfortable depths of an armchair. When the girl entered, Weiss smiled sardonically. "I thought you'd be headin' this way, my dear," he said, chuckling. "Take a chair an' let's get down to business." He waved a pudgy hand toward two straight-backed chairs that stood across the small room. The three gorillas, he ignored completely, but they stationed themselves near the door and waited as though by prearrangement.

Carol dropped into one of the chairs, but Shannon remained standing. He saw the bewildered way she looked from Weiss to himself and back again to the other. Weiss saw it, too, for he smiled cynically.

"Now I'll just trouble you for Rita's key," he went on smoothly. "I saw the clever way you filched it. That faint was very neat, I must admit."

"Who—are you?" she stammered huskily.

Shannon couldn't resist it, so he spoke up sourly. "He's the real Weiss, the guy you insisted I was."

She muffled a little cry and bit on her lip. Her soft shoulders sagged brokenly as she saw her mistake. Weiss continued to smile. "So she got us mixed, eh, Shannon? I figured maybe Rita would be stupid enough to pick up a tail; that's why we weren't together." He turned to the girl. "And so you knew there was a 'Weiss' in it, eh? I guess that little automatic was yours. Perhaps you were going to use it on me?"

"And so it was you that killed the girl!" growled Shannon accusingly.

Weiss nodded blandly. "Yes," he agreed wearily. "I couldn't trust her no more. But the little lady here gets the credit, and you needn't feel slighted, 'cause, when I left, they was lookin' for you, too, as an accomplice. Now, if you don't mind, I'd like that key." He held out a fat paw.

Instead of complying, Carol sprang suddenly to her feet and flung her heavy bag at the window. With a crash, the glass gave way and the purse disappeared into the street below. Weiss snarled aloud and made a dive for the girl as Casey sprang to her rescue.

But the struggle was short-lived. The blow Shannon had received earlier in the evening had weakened him, and now another rap behind the ear stretched him across the bed in a semiconscious condition. While still dazed, he was trussed tightly, hand and foot, and a gag thrust in

his mouth. Helpless to assist, he watched Carol receiving the same treatment. One of the thugs eased himself into a chair and cocked his feet on the table. Weiss and the others moved toward the door.

"Well, you kids got yourselves into a nice mess," he mused sympathetically. "You'll have to take your medicine, of course, because you know too much." He reached for his hat and set it on his head. "You can understand that, can't you?" he added apologetically.

"It was the same with Rita; she got too wise for her own good. Same way again with your brother. He was another sucker that walked into a trap." He shook his head sadly. "Now take, for instance, a guy like me; I been at this racket for years, but I'm too smart for John Law. I don't get into no traps, an' I always got an out—or a fall guy. Like young Dave for the jewels, he got the rap. Now his sister gets the blame for bumpin' Rita, and you"—he looked at Shannon—"will be the fall guy for what's gonna happen to this little girl. But don't worry. You won't know nothin' about it." He sighed and spread his hands in a fatherly gesture as though to indicate that, while he had done the best he could for them, the matter was now out of his hands. With a broad grin, he unlocked the door and started to back out of the room.

"I got to hurry down to the alley and recover that purse you dropped," he said, chuckling.

Shannon, watching, saw the dark form that rose up behind Weiss in the hallway. His heart leaped joyfully as he saw this figure wrap a powerful arm around the little crook's neck and jerk him away from the doorway so as to allow two other grim-looking men to dash into the room and overpower the be-

wildered gorillas. Then came the musical clicking of handcuffs, and a tall, military-looking man stepped across the room and unfastened Shannon's bonds. A companion liberated the girl.

"Timed that nice, didn't we?" said the newcomer pleasantly.

Casey shook his head wryly, and, sitting on the edge of the bed, he rubbed his aching wrists. "You sure did, Charlie. But by golly, I'd just about given you up." He turned to the girl who was staring dully at the late arrivals.

"Say, Miss Wilkinson, meet Inspector Charlie Mayer, of the San Francisco police department." He looked pleadingly at the smiling officer. "And for the love of Mike, Charlie, you're a smart cop, so try and convince her who I am, will you?"

Carol Wilkinson smiled weakly. "I'm afraid I've made an awful lot of blunders, inspector," she said gently. "But I still don't understand how you came in just at the lucky moment."

Mayer shrugged, then smiled. "It wasn't anything unusual, miss," he explained. "We all know Casey up here, and he's always shooting us wires giving us hot tips. I got his wire last night, so I was waiting for you at the train and I followed you up here. I was listening with the boys outside the door here when the old gent pops off, and I must admit it's the best self-serving declaration I ever listened to."

A soft, red flush suffused her features, and she looked steadily at Casey. "What wire did you send?" she demanded.

Shannon winked at the inspector. "Well, when you found my company so dog-goned boring yesterday that you fell asleep as soon as we got on the train, why, I just got lonely

and shot a little wire to Charlie here, asking him to meet us at the train and see what was going to happen. I had a pretty good idea old friend Weiss would be somewhere in the offing. But I got badly fooled when these thugs came up, for I thought it was Charlie's men. But I want an explanation from you, young woman. I'm a reporter, you know."

She lowered her eyes, and, when she spoke, her voice was low. "I'm awfully sorry for the injustice I've done you. I knew my brother was not guilty, but I felt that he was protecting some one. I suspected that some one was Rita Adams. I trailed her and overheard a conversation between her and Weiss on the telephone. They were planning to get away with the stuff. I took my brother's gun, intending to hold them up and get the keys just when they opened the box. But on the train, when Rita was killed, I became afraid they would find the gun on me, so I threw it to the floor. I surmised Weiss would go for the gun he had obviously thrown through the window, so I hurried back and recovered it. Mr. Shannon, then you walked back, and, of course, I stupidly took up you for Weiss. I'm dreadfully sorry."

Mayer laughed heartily, and Casey grinned. "All is forgiven," he announced dramatically. Then, sobering quickly, he turned to the officer. "Say, Charlie, you really think you got enough to spring young Wilkinson and hook this old buzzard? I want to call my paper, you know."

Mayer nodded decisively. "Absolutely!" he said briskly. "There's no doubt about it. We got the purse you folks heaved through the window, and I'll have a couple of the boys down at the bank when it

opens. The minute we recover the stuff, I'll personally call the governor, and it won't be long until the kid's released. You can just forget about it, because I'll take care of it myself."

Carol bit her lip and dabbed at her eyes with a tiny wisp of a handkerchief. Casey clapped his hands delightedly. "Atta boy, Charlie! I knew you'd do it. What a yarn! What a yarn!"

As the officers began herding the prisoners from the room, he turned to the girl.

"Now for a meal without looking down the wrong end of a gun over the rim of your coffee cup." He chuckled as he saw the color mount Carol's cheeks.

"Say, miss, would you consider having breakfast with a chap that—well—that looks something like a murderer?"

Coming Next Week, "WISE DUMMY," by LESLIE T. WHITE.

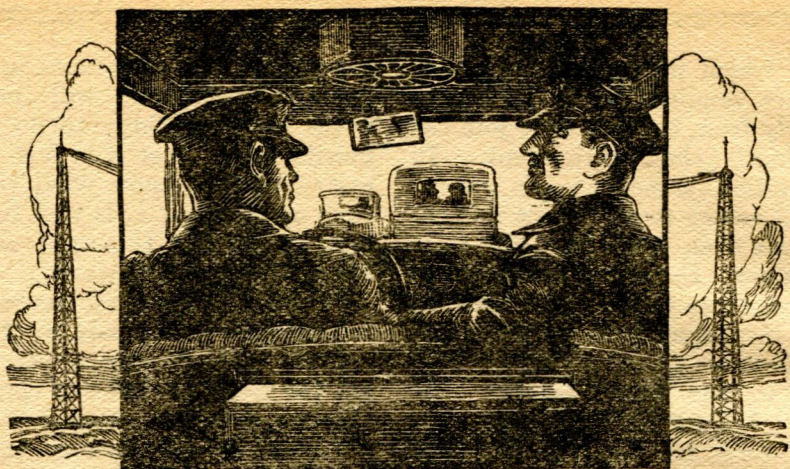
ONLY TWO MONTHS OF LUXURY

TWENTY-THREE years old and bent over a drafting board, Peter Moss, of New York, decided that his six feet of well-proportioned bone and muscle was not getting the breaks in life. Every morning, when he looked at his handsome face in the mirror, he became more positive that the road to being an architect was long and arduous, that a droop was beginning to come into those broad shoulders and a bend into that straight back. If he stuck to drafting, he could see no opportunity to quick riches.

Moss used to drop occasionally into some of the better hotels and watch people who seemed to be affluent. He felt that he could behave with the same grace and poise as these more fortunate folks, providing he had the wherewithal to live in an expensive place.

Finally, the day came when he made up his mind definitely to increase his income. He continued with his work in the daytime, and used evenings for his new line. His first holdup netted him two hundred dollars. The following day he moved into one of the well-known hotels. His next robbery enabled him to buy a horse, which he rode as often as he could in Central Park. Not content with one riding habit, he bought several. After the horse, came an automobile, which is said to have been worth five thousand dollars. He used the machine to make his get-away after the holdups. Unfortunately for him, he chose a car that was easily remembered once it was seen, and several of his victims gave the police a good description of the automobile.

The result was that Mr. Moss only lived in elegance for two months, and then he was arrested. When he was taken into custody, he was carrying a .45-caliber revolver. The detective began asking him questions too dangerous for him to answer without giving himself away. The next day found the young man seated in a prison cell, probably wishing that he had never been bitten by the get-rich-quick bug.



Training Detectives in Milwaukee

By ROBERT E. HART

Milwaukee is noted for its low rate in crime.

MILWAUKEE is a city that fights modern criminals with modern methods. In this period of America's history when every large community has experienced gang violence in one form or another, Milwaukee, located but eighty-five miles from Chicago, capital of all gangdom, has yet to have its first gang murder. In fact, Milwaukee has yet to have its first trouble with a gangster. Criminals, to use the words of a Chicago underworld character, "steer clear of Milwaukee. The cops work too fast there." Burglary insurance rates are lower than those of any large city in the United States. Its remarkably low homicide rate has won national acclaim for years. Here, then, is an ideal city in which to

learn how a modern police department trains its men.

Milwaukee's central police headquarters is a building six stories in height, occupying half a city block. It was recently erected at a cost of almost seven million dollars. Everything that modern criminal science has decreed a policeman should need is contained in this building—literally everything—from a gymnasium for his health to a research laboratory for tracing the clew he discovers.

The head of the police training school is Captain Cloyd C. McGuire. Started in 1922, this school is still the only one of its kind in the United States, if not the world. One of the things that makes this true is the fact that Milwaukee is the only

city in which policemen and detectives are required to go to classes regularly from the day they join the force until their retirement. In other cities, a policeman's special training ceases two to three months after he's been sworn in. Not so in Milwaukee. Here, every member of the force, from the newest rookie up to the inspector, must go to school. None is excused. And Captain McGuire is one school-teacher who can't be bribed with an apple!

But we'll let Captain McGuire himself tell us how Milwaukee trains the men that make up its famous police force and detective bureau:

"For the first thirty days after a man has joined the force, he is placed in a special class for recruits. In that class, he is taught the elementary things every policeman must know. And in this modern day, a policeman is expected to know plenty! For example: the various phases of criminal law; traffic ordinances; department rules and regulations; first aid to the injured; use of firearms: revolver, rifle, shotgun, riot gun, machine gun, tear-gas bombs; self-defense: boxing, wrestling, use of nightstick; military tactics.

"In the olden days, the sergeant used to say to the new recruit: 'Take this club and pistol. Go out on your beat. If you see any one violating the Ten Commandments, you're pretty safe in arresting them.' And the rookies' training was considered completed. But times have changed.

"In addition to the requirements already mentioned, the new patrolman must learn: how to gather evidence; when he is justified in making an arrest; when a warrant is needed; how to summon aid; how to question a suspect. In fact, to sum it up, he must know how to act in any emer-

gency that ever may come up. The average policeman will probably never have anything to do with a murder case. Yet it is just as necessary that he know what to do in such an event as it is that he know how to do the thousand and one other 'tricks of the trade.'

"During this period, the recruit is required to spend part of the time walking a beat with a veteran, to get the training that can come only through practical experience.

"After several months, he is allowed to travel his beat alone. But his police education is not over. It continues as long as he is a member of the force.

"There are many qualities I think a good policeman or detective should have, and which I try to bring out in our school. Honesty, health, courtesy, shrewdness, persistence are some of them. But next to honesty there is one thing I value above all others. It is the quality that every good policeman and detective must have. I refer to observation: the ability to 'gather things' at a glance and make a mental note of small but important details. This asset has aided our men in solving crimes more than any other single factor.

"A few years ago, we were called to the home of a woman whose child had been asphyxiated by gas from a cooking stove. The mother said she had come home and found the child dead. Apparently, a kettle had boiled over, putting out the fire, and allowing the gas to escape. The coroner was about to report it as an accident when a detective took a second look at the kettle. It was an out-of-the-ordinary type. 'That kettle could never boil over,' he said. Investigation showed he was right. And the woman was sent to the penitentiary for murder. An example of

what I mean when I say 'observation.'

"Many of the tests given in our training school are designed to increase and bring out the men's power of observation. For instance: The photograph of a criminal, on a stereopticon slide, is flashed on a screen in the front of the classroom. After a moment, it is removed, and we proceed to discuss some entirely different subject. Sufficient time is allowed for the men to get their minds off the picture. Then they go to a cabinet similar to those used in our bureau of identification. In it are scores of photos, including the one shown on the screen. Each is numbered, and the policemen must find the correct number, corresponding to the picture shown to them, and write it down.

"In another examination, the picture shown on the screen is that of a man violating some law. After some time has elapsed, cards are passed to the pupils and they are required to list just what crime was being committed, the man's description, and any other facts they may have noted. Marks are given for this as well as the other tests. Later I'll explain how we use the marks.

"One day, while I was instructing one of the classes, a stranger entered the room, and, making a loud commotion, ran toward me. Climbing the platform upon which I was standing, he proceeded to argue violently with me. Finally, he aimed a vicious punch at my jaw which I blocked. Subduing him with a paralyzing jujutsu hold, I quieted the man and rushed him out of the room. Returning, I continued to teach as though nothing had happened. Half an hour later, a slip was given to every policeman present. On it, he was asked to describe in detail everything that had taken

place, just as if he were making a report. Then the pupils discovered that it was just another lesson, planned in advance for their benefit.

"Now and then, a crime that actually occurred is acted out on the large stage of the classroom. Finger prints and other evidence are placed as they were found, and it is up to the men to locate them and tell how they would be used in solving crime. Then the officers who were assigned to the case and cleared it up explain to the others where they are right and wrong. It may sound like a lot of childish play, but many a good detective owes much of his ability to those methods.

"All of the tests are not conducted in the schoolrooms. Some of them 'happen' right on a policeman's beat. For instance, we will 'plant' an automobile in the territory he is supposed to cover. Then we report it to him over the police telephone as being a stolen car, giving the license number. A close check is kept on the length of time it takes the patrolman to discover the machine. Many cars really stolen have been recovered with the aid of this training.

"All of the various groups of men in the department attend separate classes, especially planned to suit their respective needs. Individualized courses of training are offered to men divided in classes composed of patrolmen, detectives, sergeants, traffic men, squad-car operators, lieutenants and ambulance men. There is even a class for the captains.

"Milwaukee's system of choosing men for the police department's detective bureau is different, without doubt from that of any other city. In the first place, it is not necessary for a man to be an ordinary patrolman for a long time before being eli-

gible for consideration as a detective. Most departments require that the men walk a beat for several years. We feel that, after six months of actual police experience, combined with the intensive training offered in our school, a man with necessary qualities will make a good detective.

"Few men join the force who do not desire eventually to become a detective. The work is as hard as that of a uniformed officer, but there is more adventure connected with the position, and, of course, the salary is quite a bit larger. But a good patrolman will not necessarily be a success as a plain-clothes man. For that reason, it is a real task to choose the proper men. But with the aid of the 'marks' mentioned before, we are able to select very accurately, and we pride ourselves on the fact that Milwaukee's detective bureau is composed of exceptionally excellent officers.

"The city is divided into police districts, each having a separate station and each in charge of a captain. The latter watches the records of his men closely. He investigates each arrest made, notes any extraordinary skill or bravery shown by the policeman, sometimes even following the case until it appears in court, to see whether or not the arresting officer had secured enough evidence to help bring about a conviction.

"In the meanwhile, every member of our classes has been given a mark for each test and examination he took, as well as for his school work in general. After enough of these marks have accumulated to give something upon which to base our judgment, I confer with the various captains. The marks we have for each man are compared, and it is not hard to see which of-

ficers have shown outstanding ability.

"The policemen whose records warrant it are then given a chance to be what is known as an 'acting' detective. For a period of ninety days, they are allowed to work out of the detective-bureau in plain clothes, and given the same assignments as regular members of that branch of the department. Some of these newly appointed men are officers who just recently joined the force; others are men who have walked beats for years, but who just lately have shown extraordinary aptitude in their work.

"A close check is kept on the performances of those who are having their ninety-day trial. We do not expect them to prove that they are master minds in that length of time, nor are they expected to solve every crime allotted to them. But it is a long enough period for them to show whether or not they have the qualities and persistence to make good. It is the fairest and most efficient means we have found to determine which men shall be promoted to plain-clothes duty.

"At the end of the trial period, the heads of the detective bureau go over the records established and make their decision. If the men are successful, they are recommended to the board of police commissioners for promotion. And as vacancies occur in the detective bureau or new men are added to the force, they take their places as full-fledged members.

"In Milwaukee, as in most cities, plain-clothes men always travel in pairs. The reason for this is that many times a situation arises which cannot be handled efficiently by one man, and which might endanger his life. Years ago, one of our detectives, while working on a case alone,

was attacked from the rear and slain. Since that time, it has been an unwritten law that two detectives must always work together while on duty.

"All of our detective and police squad cars are radio-equipped. Incidentally, most of our patrolmen on foot have been supplanted by detectives and uniformed officers in automobiles. The district patrolled by each car is comparatively small, and in many instances, after receiving the broadcast of an alarm, they reach the scene while the criminals

are still at work. In fact, it seems that one of the first things we hear from a criminal after his arrest is that he 'never even had a chance to get started.' And then he usually adds, 'I wish I had followed the advice I received—and stayed away from Milwaukee.'

"Few crooks will admit it, but the one thing they fear more than anything else is an efficient, well-trained policeman or detective. That's why criminals seldom work in Milwaukee. But when they do, we're always ready for them—with action."

NOT A HEADACHE

A JULY FOURTH celebrant was shot this year without knowing it. A few days after the gala Fourth, the man had a throbbing headache. It was so severe and so unusual that he called a physician. The doctor examined him and found that a bullet was lodged in his neck. Then the young man remembered that he had felt something strike him during the July Fourth celebration, but had thought nothing further of it, and had forgotten all about the incident.

In Next Week's Issue of

Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine

THE TERROR'S TOKEN

By Donald G. McDonald

At the happiest moment of her life, she beheld the token of the most vicious killer, the Cobra, demanding obedience or death.

WISE DUMMY

By Leslie T. White

When he lost this lucky charm, he thought he'd lost his luck.

Also Features by

Elisabeth Sanxay Holding

Hector Gavin Grey

And Others

15 CENTS A COPY

AT ALL NEWS STANDS

NOT A KILLER

By DONALD VAN RIPER

Eager to get two crooks, he shot a friend.

SAY, you! What's the idea? What you doing? Don't budge because I've got the drop on you!"

A shadow had moved at the alley's mouth. From it had come the commonplace words which froze Jim Brock and his partner "Buddy" Aldrich into immobility. There was a metallic undertone of command, the crisp quality of challenge in those few simple words, to warn them that their lawless way to freedom had been transformed into a deadly trap.

In the rear of the alley alongside a loading platform was the truck half filled with stolen silk. Back there, too, somewhere in the mysterious night was the watchman with the questing light which had first startled them. At any instant, he might come on down the alley. Certainly, this copper on the street end wasn't going to drift until he investigated a bit more thoroughly.

They could hear him moving a little now, easing one foot and then the other in stealthy advance.

"You blokes in there!" The copper's voice was chill and hard as steel as he raised it in sharper, surer authority. "I've got the drop on you. What you doing in there?"

No answer, of course! There was always the chance that the copper might figure he had been mistaken and move on his way again. There was even the remote chance that this might be some rookie patrol-



man who would take the most discreet course and amble on his beat once more.

Any such hope died in the next breath. "I'm coming to get you," continued the stern, implacable voice. "So you'll save trouble by walking this way with your hands over your heads."

Jim Brock felt the cold clamminess of fear in his palms. Against his elbow, he sensed the frigid tenseness of Buddy Aldrich's shoulder. This was no rookie copper confronting them. The slightest move, the faintest whisper, and red fingers of fire would spurt killing lead. It looked bad. There was no way out of the trap. Prison or death waited on their next move.

A long, interminable time passed while the copper advanced in grim, well-nigh noiseless stalking. Then, without warning, came a shift in fortune.

A gun spoke, filling the alley with roaring sound. Not from the front but from the rear. The watchman!

The two crooks had fallen prone at once in the common instinct for shelter.

Something whined through the gloom, and there was the rapid explosion of the copper's gun. From in back came two more shots from the watchman's gun.

"Got one of you," came the watchman's exultant shout.

From the street end of the alley came the copper's voice, a struggling, half-choking sound. "And the boys'll tend to you. The crook that kills a copper gets killed."

Suddenly, the realization of what had happened came to Jim Brock. The watchman and the copper had been firing at each other. The same knowledge now sent the watchman scurrying forward, calling wildly as he ran:

"Don't shoot, Sullivan. It's me. It's Mike Crisby, the watchman."

He went on past the two crooks. Jim Brock knew an incredible relief. This Mike Crisby, blundering fool of a watchman, had downed the copper. And now he saw the circle of light as the watchman made belated use of his flash.

They were both up there in the front of the alley. To the rear, not more than twenty feet away, was the truck. Jim Brock nudged Buddy Aldrich ever so lightly.

"It's our chance," he whispered. "Get to the truck. We can make it through to the other street."

The watchman was intent only on the gasping man beneath his flash. He was calling a name frantically over and over:

"Jack Sullivan! Jack Sullivan! Jack Sullivan!"

A sympathetic shiver went all through Jim Brock. It was plain that Crisby and the copper had been friends. From the high, hysterical pitch of Crisby's voice, it was evident that the policeman, Jack Sullivan, was either dead or dying.

As Brock gained the truck seat, he knew that Buddy was at his elbow. Then, stabbing through the black, came the ray of the shifted flash. Full on Buddy's back, it played. Again, the watchman's gun spoke.

Buddy stiffened. Out shot Jim Brock's hand, and his fingers hooked into his partner's arm. With a mighty lurching effort, Buddy Aldrich made the floor boards.

Jim Brock sped one foot to the starter. With a roar, the motor started. With a spinning of wheels, it slithered into motion. Back of them, the watchman's gun barked twice more.

On went the lights of the swaying truck. Jim heard the watchman's

whistle shrilling a new alarm. There were other whistles through the night as men of the law, already running toward sounds of firing, answered the wailing call of the watchman.

Through the turn in the alley, a chattering, whirring taking of the corner, and Jim Brock fed the gasoline faster to the motor. Ahead was the light of the other street. He could hear the near blast of one of the relentless whistles.

Out into the street went the truck. A figure jumping aside yelled wildly for him to stop. Then, as he hunched over the wheel, a leaden slug carried the top corner of the windshield into a vanishing spray of splintered glass. That had been close; the bullet must have torn through the truck cab from the rear and missed Jim Brock's head by the fraction of an inch.

With amazing luck, he worked free, whisked around one corner just in time to avoid two motor-cycle officers, halted in a side street while a clanging patrol whizzed by not twenty yards away. Desperate business this, quick thinking, fast moving! Yet through every fearful second, deeply fixed in his brain was the knowledge that Buddy Aldrich had not spoken. The only sound to pass Buddy's lips had been an occasional grunt or gasping little groan. Nor had Buddy moved other than to jolt or slip with the wildest lurches or swings of the speeding truck.

Round the corner from their rooming-house headquarters, Jim Brock eased the now slow-going truck to a stop. He jumped out, ran around, and leaned over Buddy.

"What's the matter, Buddy? Hurt bad?"

"Not hurt much at all," whispered Buddy. "But, somehow, I

can't seem to work my legs. The second time the fellow fired, he got me. Low down in the back somewhere. I can't get up, Jim."

There was nothing to do but to get Buddy up by main strength. Merely helping him along was out of the question. He could use his arms enough to hang on, but his legs dangled helplessly as Jim Brock carried him along.

At the corner, Jim paused just long enough to see the quiet, deserted reaches of Churchill Street. He stepped out swiftly. Luck was still with him. Only a few feet, three houses from the corner, and they were safely in off the street.

Lucky that it had not been the other way around! What chance would the slim, lightly built Buddy have had to haul the husky form of Jim Brock? Why, even for the hard-muscled, great-shouldered Jim Brock, it was no easy feat to carry one hundred and forty pounds of dead weight from the car round the corner, into the house, and up the stairs to the second floor back.

Yet he did it with such silent dispatch that he was reasonably sure that, in this vital part of the get-away, no one had seen or heard them.

Inside, with the blinds drawn tight, he rolled Buddy over on the bed next to the wall and asked questions as he inspected the wound low down in the fleshy part of Buddy's back.

"It's not bleeding much outside," he said. "How's it feel?"

"I can just make out your hand," answered Buddy.

Jim moved his hand lower. "And now?"

"Now what?" asked Buddy.

Realization came to Jim, but he asked the question again. "Now? Can't you feel my hand, Buddy?"

"Nope. Can't."

"Listen, Buddy——" Jim leaned close and whispered. "I'm going for Doc Rempstone. And the truck has to be ditched farther away from home. I'll be back as soon as I can. Just don't you move or nothing because you're fine the way you are. And listen, Buddy, I'll hurry—understand?"

Jim reached up and pulled the snap chain of the hanging light bulb. With the inadequate, but friendly gloss of light gone, the room seemed more shabby than ever.

"Can't you leave the light, Jim?" pleaded Buddy. "It's kind of fierce to be in darkness like this. Just light the light so's I can see the torn place in the wall paper again. That looks naturallike. Makes me feel easier."

Jim reluctantly pulled on the tiny metal strand again. "Sure you can have the light, Buddy. And I'll be back with the doc in no time at all, and he can fix you right up. Old Doc Rempstone's a wonder on bullet wounds, kid. He'll patch you right up."

Out into the night again went Jim Brock. Tough business this! He must take more long chances now. There was the truck, half filled with stolen silk. He must get into the driver's seat again and drive it away. No snoop patrolman would find the telltale truck so close to the room of Jim Brock and Buddy Aldrich.

He drove it away, not at a break-neck speed, but at an unsuspecting, easy-going pace. He slouched over the wheel in well-simulated weariness, but he was unceasingly alert to every vehicle which passed. Ten blocks across town and then five more toward the river, he went. There in the bleary shadows of deserted warehouses, he left the car

and the loot. To try and fence that loot now would be folly. A copper had been badly shot up, perhaps killed, and any one trying to dispose of stolen loot would find himself in a hot spot.

Back then afoot, he went, halting now and again, to blend like one shadow into another, ducking into the gloom of an alley, skulking on again and again. At last, he walked through a block, traversing yards, climbing fences, until he stood in the comparative safety of the back entryway of Doc Rempstone's place.

Rempstone, sleepy-eyed, shook his head dubiously as he listened. Gunshot wounds were no new thing in his experience. Simple work much of it, but it paid extra well. Crooks would pay high fees to the physician who would take a chance. It was worth a lot of money for Rempstone, this business of sneaking out nights to tend some injured crook, and forgetting to report a wound of violence to the authorities.

"That doesn't sound so good, That business of his legs being paralyzed. There are nerve centers along the lower back. The job may be very dangerous."

"Dangerous or not," observed Jim Brock, "it's got to be done."

He stared hard into Rempstone's greenish gray eyes—a compelling look which brooked no denial. He was thinking that, if this rat of a doctor refused to come along, he, Jim Brock, would hand him a proper beating up. There was no other doctor Jim knew of who would tackle this sort of work. He must make Rempstone come along.

The thought passing within Brock's mind must have communicated itself to Rempstone. Abruptly, he nodded. "Wait here. I'll be right out again as soon as I'm dressed."

Brock remained wedged in the doorway. Rempstone smiled crookedly. "Don't worry. I won't change my mind. I'll do what I can for your partner."

What Rempstone could do would not be enough. After an examination and a slight probing, he halted. He turned toward Brock, with his usually pallid face actually gray white under the yellow overhead light.

"I'm afraid to go on, Brock. A single slip in there would be bad."

From the stripped figure on the bed came a pleading whisper. "Take the chance, doc," moaned Buddy. "You can't leave me like this."

"You can't," echoed Jim Brock. There was harshness totally at variance with Buddy's pleading tones in Brock's voice.

Rempstone's face was lined into a frowning, half-fearful mask. He shrugged his shoulders helplessly. He beckoned Jim Brock to the far corner of the room. Leaning on the dresser top, he spoke softly to him.

"The worst of my risk has been taken, Brock. I can go on probing. But there's ticklish going. The wound's deeper, bigger than I thought. And there are centers of nerves there. I'm talking simply for you to understand."

"Go on," urged Brock quietly.

"My hands!" Rempstone raised his hands—long, frail hands, almost blue white where the skin thinned between the fingers. They were delicate, yet showed years of skilled work. Brock noticed how the hands quivered. "My hands aren't up to that job. There isn't one surgeon in a hundred would be able to do it—right. That's his chance if I try—one in a hundred."

There was obvious, unmistakable sincerity in Rempstone's voice.

"What then?" demanded Brock. "You can't just let him lay there like that."

"There's a fellow over in Willerton—"

"That's a couple of hundred miles away," protested Brock.

"I can dress his wound. You could move him."

"This Willerton doc," prompted Brock.

"He'll do it and do it right. No slips. But he'll want the old dough—re—mi—before his lifts a hand."

"How much?"

"Five hundred dollars is my guess."

"Five hundred dollars!" gasped Jim Brock.

Rempstone nodded solemnly. "And even if you went to a law-abiding surgeon—" Rempstone sneered at the word, "law-abiding." He smiled thoughtfully as he continued. "Even if you dared, they'd tax you almost that much. Your partner needs to go on a table, nurses handy, anæsthesia and all. And with a hundred-to-one shot, doctors want big pay."

"But all the way to the city of Willerton—two hundred miles. And five hundred dollars. It's impossible."

"I'll write down the fellow's name and address," said Rempstone. "Me? I'd just as leave earn the five hundred myself. But I sort of admire the nerve you show sticking by your friend like this. I'd mess the job. Don't you understand—I'm giving you the best advice I can?"

Slowly, Brock nodded. "Better dress the wound some, doc. And me—me—"

"Why not ask Trick Chapman for the money? Enough to pay for the trip and the doctor?" Rempstone was already back and kneeling beside the bed. "Better get going. I'll

dress the wound. Any old car will do. Just don't go too fast—that's all. I'll fix him so you can prop him right up on the seat beside you.

"Trick Chapman," sighed Jim Brock. "I don't know how he'd take it, me asking a favor. Of course, he'd do it, but he might bear down pretty hard on me after that. Trick Chapman got to be the king-pin in the Riverside section by getting more than his money's worth for every dollar he used."

Rempstone bobbed his head in agreement. "Just the same, if your side partner is to have a chance, you better go see Trick Chapman."

"Trick" Chapman was virtually a king in the Riverside section of the city of Warehampton. Indeed, everywhere in the city, no matter what section, Trick Chapman was an underworld figure to be reckoned with. Now, in the waning night hours, the best chance to locate Trick would be at his headquarters. Chapman's office was a small room tucked away at the rear of his Riverside night club.

The Riverside night club had plenty of atmosphere. Trick had taken a lease on a pier from which the water had receded, due to dredging of the harbor channel. It was useless for commerce but quite usable for the money spenders of the city's night life. Outside, it was a slab-sided structure with crazily placed windows, the sole decoration being the word "Riverside" which was bleakly outlined in electric bulbs against the river's night fog.

Inside, it was all light, sound and color, laughter and gayety and night madness. There was the sinister taint of the underworld, particularly in the plain little room where Trick Chapman carried on his rackets and schemes.

Chapman was red of face and pudgy of build. Only a second glance at the small, slaty, narrowly spaced eyes revealed the lurking, brutal devil which was the true man underneath. Chapman was flashy in dress; he was wearing a checkered smoky blue suit with a gay, orange-and-red tie. A huge diamond glinted on his hand as he lifted it in a mock military salute on seeing Jim Brock standing before him.

"Trick," said Brock, "I gotta have help."

The diamonded hand flicked an imaginary dust speck from the cuff of the heavy silk shirt. "You ain't the first one I ever heard sing that song. If just once, some of you cheap guys would blow in here and say, 'Hello, Trick, I've got good news,' I'd probably drop dead of the shock."

Brock did not trouble even to smile at the big shot's attempted witticism. He had no time for mere acting and delay. His need—Buddy's need—was too urgent. Minutes might prove just as vital as dollars.

"I gotta have money, Trick," he said. "A whole lot of money."

"What you mean—a whole lot?"

"Six hundred dollars." Flatly, without any "build-up," he flung the request at Trick Chapman. Six hundred dollars! A lot of dough for Jim Brock. Just a night's spending money for one of Chapman's prodigal sprees.

"Why? Let's hear the reason."

Swiftly then and clinging to the truth, Brock recited the story of the night's events. No good lying to Chapman! The truth always got to Chapman, somehow. Stopping, he stared pleadingly at Chapman.

"Maybe it's true," sighed Chapman. "More like not. But I just got the inside info from a friend of

a friend of a copper that Patrolman Jack Sullivan was dead."

"What of it?" demanded Brock. "Neither me or Buddy even had a gun on us. You see, Buddy was pulling his last job, and he made me leave my gat home, too. It was like I told you—the watchman Crisby did it. Shot the copper by mistake."

Chapman shook his head in a cruel, hard negative. "The leak from police headquarters had the story that Crisby ran up first after all the shooting, and found Sullivan dead. This watchman was a fast thinker. He leaves it up to the coppers to catch a couple of vanished crooks. Who could ever prove otherwise than that you two drilled Sullivan? Why, a jury would send you to the chair for just telling a yarn like you told me."

"But even so," persisted Jim Brock, "what about the money? I'll do anything you say if you'll only let me have the money."

"Nothing doing," answered Trick Chapman. His beady eyes were squinted down now to twin points of fire. "You're hot. You and that partner of yours. There's been a copper killed, and it's your word against the world as to how he got it. I wouldn't touch a hand to any part of it."

"But," cried Brock, "if you slipped me the money, I'd let them carve me to pieces an inch at a time before I would mention you, Trick."

"All crooks squeal," answered Trick. "And another thing—what chance have I got to get my dough back when the bulls slip you and your partner the rap?" He raised a hand as Jim Brock started to speak. "Yeah, I know—they won't catch you. That's what you say, but the odds are all in favor of their spotting

you both. When a copper gets it, the other coppers work overtime."

"But, Trick——"

"Nothing doing." The last pretense of half-hearted amiability fell from Trick Chapman as he spoke. This was his final flat refusal. Stunned was Jim Brock as he saw the other's blunt, heavy forefinger pointing to the door.

"I'll do anything," Brock cried.

"Suppose I asked you to bump a certain party off. Suppose I was to tell you that, just before daybreak, a certain well-known guy was coming out of his place of business and meeting a runty little guy he trusts. Suppose I gave you a rod and told you to be in the basement entrance of this guy's house. The little runty bloke isn't going to shoot straight to-night. You pull the trigger and take it on the lam to the next corner south where a fellow will be sitting waiting at the wheel of a car to drive you on the get-away. What would you say to that? I'm paying a bird a grand to do that—just two hours from now. You can play cut rate and take the job for seven. That's a hundred more than you asked for."

"Me?" gasped Jim Brock incredulously. "Me—turn killer?"

"You need the money. And I save three hundred. The runty guy is selling out his boss. You drill the boss and then the runt. No one to tell tales. And the get-away car waiting to whisk you away."

"I'm no killer," said Brock steadily. "Anything else but that."

"Beat it then," growled Chapman. "You don't know a good break when you get it."

It was not until Jim Brock stood outside the Riverside night club once more that he felt free to breathe once more. He had fled

from the little office, passed the thronging dancers on the floor with the instinctive accuracy of a blind-man. In truth, he had been blind for those fleeing seconds to all else except the red rage he felt for Trick Chapman.

Now, as he halted beyond the last glimmering of the door's lighted sign, he raised a clenched fist in trembling, inarticulate protest. If ever he found Chapman in a pinch, how Jim Brock would laugh! But, then, men like Trick Chapman did not get in tight places.

No? How then about "Honey" Martin? Even a fool could read the truth from what Chapman had said. A big shot with a runt for a body-guard! A fellow who lived in a house with a basement entrance! That meant Honey Martin. Not quite as big a shot as Chapman, but one of the big ones just the same.

And just before daybreak, Honey Martin was to be put on the spot. Even now, Chapman was waiting for a final chat with his hired killer.

Even now! Jim Brock gasped as he realized that, with what he knew and could guess, he might yet get the money he so badly needed. He drew instinctively nearer the darkened side door of the night club. In the deep shadows there, he could wait—wait for the killer.

There weren't many men in the city of Warehampton game enough to tackle the killing of Honey Martin. Any one of three or four coming to that door now would be the right man. When such a one exited again, there would be a chance for Jim Brock. One last long chance in a night of chances!

The man came at last—slightly built, head carried just a bit to one side, and with the merest hint of a shuffle in his walk. A blur in the darkness, and yet Jim Brock knew

that this was "Bullet" Karg going to a rendezvous with Trick Chapman.

Bullet would be coming out with the murder gat and with at least half, more likely all, of the money. Jim Brock trembled at the thought. It was no tremor of fear but the tense reaction of a man who decides to dare everything in one desperate action.

Bullet Karg had passed within arm's length, totally unaware of Brock's lurking presence. All Jim Brock needed to do to maintain the advantage of position was to stay put. Man to man, and neither armed, he knew he could handle Bullet Karg like a wisp of straw. However, Karg would be armed and keyed to killing pitch. Against that was the far superior physical strength of Jim Brock and the startling edge of surprise which would also favor the bigger man.

At last, he heard the guarded, muffled sound of a door opening, caught a fleeting glimpse of a weak blur of light. The light vanished, and there was the low easing noise of the door closing once more; a hesitant tread in the darkness, a faint shuffling step alternating with the sure, firm beat of Bullet Karg's good foot.

Jim Brock pressed back as if he could compress himself yet deeper into darkness. He had spread his fingers wide into ready hooks. He felt the slow surge of power as he leaned ever so slightly forward. The shuffling one was nearer, almost abreast of Brock in ambush.

He waited until he could make out the blurry shadow of Karg's canted head against the lesser shadows of the alley's mouth. One step, two steps—and three!

Brock launched himself with clutching hands. In a great leap-

ing effort, he went into the attack, and, just as the startled Karg hesitated in a quick little shuffle, the big hands of Brock circled round his neck.

Deep went Brock's fingers with all the force of unleashed steel springs, hard down against the throat, the thumbs pressing with paralyzing power against the back of the little gunman's neck. The viselike fingers shut off wind and voice alike, and, at the same instant Brock's knee raised and crashed heavily against the fellow's back.

Then, with a fury of desperate need, he lifted the stunned and breathless Bullet Karg and shook him as a big dog might shake a mongrel cur. With one great hand still exerting that fearful force against Karg's throat, Brock used the other to find the little man's weapons.

Two guns; one ready in the side jacket pocket, the other holstered and strapped high on Karg's chest near his armpit.

All this was done as quietly as though the darkness were silencing, smothering velvet.

Next Brock found the money, a crisp-edged roll of bills tucked away in Karg's hip pocket.

Meanwhile, his choking fingers had kept their unrelenting grip. Karg was going limp, as helpless as a rag in the power of Brock's hard-tensed fingers.

No time to be chicken-hearted! No business now for Brock to be merciful! He whirled his victim about and drew back his free hand into a mighty mauling fist. Like a great piston, his arm doubled and drove forward. Once, twice, thrice, that monstrous, hard-knuckled fist smashed into Karg's face.

Then with both hands Brock held him, felt the sodden sagging of Karg's helpless muscles. Karg was

definitely out of the picture, plainly knocked cold.

Easing the unconscious Karg to the ground, he shoved him well over against the wall. He drew forth the guns he had taken and shoved them atop some rubbish as he rose. Brock wanted nothing to do with a killer's guns. All he wished now was to sneak away safely and with dispatch and get to his injured partner once more.

He made it easily. Behind him somewhere, he had stirred up a hornet's nest of trouble. The chances were that Trick Chapman, on learning what had happened to Karg, would be able to read the truth. Then the life of Jim Brock would hardly be worth a dime.

Rempstone had just left when Brock came back to the room. Propped up a bit on the bed, white of face but smiling, was Buddy Aldrich.

"The doc has me all fixed up for travel. Says you and me are going to Willerton. Said you'd be back with the dough."

Brock pulled out the snug little roll of bills which he had taken from Bullet Karg's pocket.

"We'll pay Trick Chapman back as soon as we can," sighed Buddy Aldrich. "I was quitting the game, Jim. But with a whole lot of dough to pay back, I'll have to stay with it a while longer."

Jim Brock shook his head decisively. "No, you won't. Fact is we're leaving the city of Warehampton for good. You see, to get that dough I had to cross up Trick Chapman and Bullet Karg. It won't be healthy for me ever to come back here. You, either, for that matter. Being my partner, Chapman would probably bump you off at the same time just for luck."

"Leave Warehampton? Never come back? You mean we have to stay in some new place like Willerton? Gee, that's tough on you, Jim. Being a crook in strange territory ain't so easy. Me—going straight—it won't be so tough."

"Let's not worry about it," gruffly answered Jim Brock. "Just now, I'm lugging you downstairs. There's a cab waiting up the block for me to signal. I'm slipping the driver a lot of jack to get us safe to Willerton and keep a shut head about it."

Buddy Aldrich grinned faintly. "You sure have been stepping all night, Jim, taking chances for me."

Jim grunted. "What you would have done for me, old-timer. Come on, let's go."

A week later in the little private hospital in Willerton, Jim Brock seated himself beside the chair where Buddy Aldrich sat.

He shoved a paper at Buddy, pointing a great forefinger at the heading in the paper.

WAREHAMPTON GANGSTER KILLED

"Trick Chapman," said Jim Brock. "And the coppers got a confession out of Bullet Karg that he did it. Karg had the idea that a few nights ago, Chapman paid him some money only to set some gang of sluggers on him to take it away again. Karg was in the hospital for a few days—busted jaw and all bruised up. And when he came out, he went gunning for Chapman."

"That means you can go back," sighed Buddy Aldrich. "A good break for you, Jim."

"But I'm not going," answered Brock. "You see, this doctor says you have to stay still for a couple of weeks more. Says when you come out that you'll be all right. But knowing I had to wait and

thinking I never could go back to Warehampton, I kept job hunting."

"Job hunting?" gasped Buddy.

"Right," answered Brock proudly. "And yesterday a fellow hired me. I came clean with him. Told him I haven't always been on the level and that I wanted to go straight. Driving a truck. And when you come out, he'll place you, too."

"A guy willing to hire crooks? What a break!"

"Nope. No break. I saw this guy talking to his garage manager. He was talking without moving his lips, talking low—prison whisper or I didn't know a thing. So I came clean when I braced him for a job. He's a big successful contractor."

"Can you beat it?" murmured Buddy Aldrich. "You mean you've decided to go straight, too."

"You bet. For a week, I've lived in fear of Chapman's vengeance. And then, when I see what my new boss did by going straight, I made up my mind that maybe the sob sisters were right. Crime didn't seem to pay. And to clinch it is the way Chapman winds up. Dead as the next one. All his wits, scheming and dough didn't save him."

"And you're going to take a chance on going straight like I've been asking you to do," muttered Buddy.

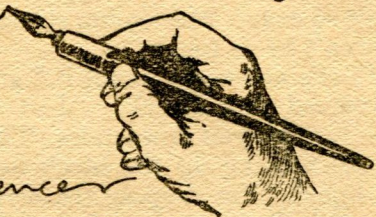
"Take a chance—nothing," scoffed Jim Brock. He placed a gentling assuring hand upon his partner's blanketed shoulder. "I took all the long chances of a lifetime the other night, Buddy. I'm going straight, and no gamble about it. This time, I'm playing a sure thing. What trucks I drive now will be on the level. Night work? Double pay for overtime the boss says. No more chances, Buddy—I'm going straight—with you. And it'll be a cinch for both of us."

What Handwriting Reveals

Conducted

By

Shirley Spencer



If you are an employer and desire to place your employees in the positions in your office or factory for which they are best fitted; or if you are just about to step out into the world to earn your own living; or if crimes involving handwriting have been committed in your community; or if you want to know the characters of your friends as revealed in their chirography—send specimens of the handwriting of the persons concerned to Shirley Spencer, Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., and inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. Shirley Spencer will analyze the samples submitted to her and will give you her expert opinion of them, free of charge.

Also, coupon—at end of this department—must accompany each specimen of handwriting which you wish read. If possible, write with black ink.

All communications will be held in strict confidence. When permission is granted, cases will be discussed in this department, with or without the illustrations. Of course, under no circumstances will the identity of the persons concerned be revealed.

Every care will be taken to return specimens of handwriting, but it is to be understood that Miss Spencer cannot be responsible for them.

F. G., New York: I suppose that your reason for "passing up" my department is one that holds true for many. They have associated graphology with astrology and numerology and think it is some kind of fortune telling. I have been trying for years to correct this impression that the public seems to have. It is quite logical that one's handwriting that is so individual should show character and mental development. To claim more puts that person in a class with charlatans. Graphology is a scientific study which should be approached sensibly and with the open mind of the student. I'm glad that you were persuaded, after read-

ing my department, that it was worth looking into.

*I am 40 years old
I have passed
my department for a long
not belittling it.
say but because
I am a believer of*

Your "sketchy" script reveals a quick mind, vivid imagination, intuition, humor, love of pleasure, and a vivacious personality. The lance-like *t*-bars show temper and a combative nature. If you were not too old to start in, I'd suggest law. Per-

haps selling will hit nearer the possible vocation for you now.

You are impulsive, hasty in your judgments, very supersensitive and "touchy."

A. W. R., New York City: I don't have to point out to my old readers who are following this department as a graphological study that your capitals are artistic and show constructive ability as well as talent in the art line. Dramatics should appeal to you. You love to set the stage and are anxious to have personal glory. Independence and a self-centered nature are revealed in the upright, tall letters.

Dear Miss Spencer
Please
my hand writing
The man who never felt

You are still a little affected and impractical, but are the type that really has talent which can be developed. You love to build, imagine, and manage things. Just now, the dreams are uppermost but soon you ought to want to realize actually these dreams with constructive thought and action.

J. C.: I just have to use your script as an extreme example of inflated ego. You are such a happy-go-lucky and irresponsible person that I know you aren't going to mind at all.

Now that you see it pointed out to you, it won't be hard for you to discover the inflated capitals that represent the ego. Your writing is full of signs of an impractical nature—the tall curling terminals, the unconventional and adventurous as

well as humorous beginning strokes on your *m*'s, the wavy *t*-bars, and the varying size of writing with the uneven pen pressure. Pleasure loving is written all over your script.

Obp ya July 19 31
Miss Spencer,
I will appreciate
answering this.

Temper and stubbornness are added in those splashy terminals. Humor is exceptionally marked in the *i*-dots, the *t*-bars, and the curling letters.

A. K., New York City: After all that excess energy shown in the writing of "J. C.," your script is exceptionally severe. The constructive and artistic printed formations show that you have talent for art, and I think that interior decoration would be much better than selling. You are too artistic to be a good salesman and your constructiveness points to making things and planning rather than urging people to buy. You could manufacture if you had none of the business end to manage yourself. The actual making of things is more in your line.

Dear Miss Spencer,—

The writer is extra
what his true vocation
have been kind but
successful at any.

Don't be discouraged because you don't make money. You aren't the commercial type and must be content to get satisfaction out of your work. Some work just to earn money to do other things they enjoy better, and some—like artists—work because they enjoy it and would rather be doing that than anything else. They aren't always as comfortable in a material way, but they can be happy.

W. N. D., Fort George: Yes, The Shadow's laugh is something to remember, isn't it? I also could see the expression on his face as I had to stand beside him ready to go on the air. I was always a little jumpy during my own broadcast in consequence!

*and the "Detective Story"
also enjoy the "Radio"
"The Shadow" — perhaps
a — Quinn Sabers
"from" cover to cover*

I should say that soldiering would suit you, though hard work never will be entirely satisfactory to you. The reason is very evident in those laughing, irresponsible t-bars. They certainly don't match your writing in pen pressure, do they? That means that there isn't enough will to control all the emotion you have. A little discipline needed there.

Yes, drawing maps ought to interest you. Your fine writing shows ability to work on intricate designs and do fine work with your hands.

I'm glad you took courage and wrote. It wasn't so bad, was it?

F. M. A., Saskatchewan: A pleasant, friendly personality is the most outstanding impression your writing creates for me. You are so sensible and yet not severe. You have dignity and reserve and yet are very approachable, tolerant, and sympathetic.

*and I have often
like to take advantage
of your offer.
Your articles
always the first*

That natural slant, the altruistic turn of the y loop, and the tall capitals, gracefully executed, the large writing with the diplomatic tapering which is not too marked, and the generous spacing are what make your writing the expression of a genuine, normal, pleasant person.

I would like the address of S. C. O'Reilly, Ireland, and of J. Szitsky. Some readers are not addressing the envelopes they send and do not give me complete addresses on their letters. They are too numerous to mention here. Please write me again.

Handwriting Coupon

This coupon must accompany each specimen of handwriting which you wish read.

Name

Address

UNDER THE LAMP

By GERARD HOLMES

This department is conducted by Gerard Holmes, for those of you who like puzzles. If there is any particular kind of puzzle that you prefer, please tell us, and Gerard Holmes will do his best to give it to you. Also, won't you work on a puzzle of your own, send it in, and let the other readers wrestle with it?

Answers to this week's problems will be printed in next week's issue of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine.

All letters relative to this department should be addressed to Gerard Holmes, care of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.



WOMAN of mystery from Chicago, Sally-Ann-Jané-Elizabeth; that's the nickname she prefers. She says she has worked hard over this crypt, eliminating and substituting words and that she thinks the solvers are in for a tough time.

1. YU MITLNEZV, PNZ
TD HM TMFIVTZV
OIWZVHFZV, DHTO
NI PHD CHGDZYTMT-
TML FNI CTFWNIM
WITGTML ZS NTD
NZYI, RIVWNIO
HFZR NTD PHEEGU
DFIRGHOOIV, PNIM
NTD GHOOIV LHKI
PHU, FNVZPTMLNTY
SGZZVPHVOD.

Crypts by P. H. Larrabee, 30 Jefferson Street, Bangor, Maine, are

usually hard ones, so watch your step.

2. XWHMW MYHX QY-
XW QWH QYX. MVQW
QVYHWX, MVQW
XZWX, MVQW MYZX
MYX VXWM. VHW
XYQW YZXWX MYHW
QYZXM YHX MVHM
QZX QWYH QZMN.

Composed by John Wilmot, 167 Kavanaugh Place, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and aimed in particular at P. H. Larrabee to get even with him for "Alkali Isaac." He's heavy on your trail, Larry.

3. GUARD MEMO SL-
YLY. SLYFLWEL
GUARZKZR SLYOJA-
ERYI BFEBFAYJC.
GUARD SLEJYI
CZRDYY GLOJEK.

I E L M J Y F S L A J Y
O Z J A O V A Y I. "O Y W-
Z U!"

Ray McGill, 72-36 Sixty-seventh Street, Glendale, New York, steps into the limelight with a long-division problem. The answer is two words that are a bit sinister. Nothing to do with dad shaving, however. Use the 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0-letter arrangement.

4. DAD) SHAVED) H L H

SVHD

LWLI

ISEV

SVOD

SVHD

IW

Answers to Last Week's Puzzles.

Composed by P. H. Larrabee, 30 Jefferson Street, Bangor, Maine.

1. Concealed beneath oceanic depths, giant octopi menace

numerous minor fry who inhabit their circumspect domain.

Did you find that Edward A. Martin, 224 Rockland Avenue, Syracuse, New York, was as good a cryptogrammist as he is a fisherman?

2. Genial genius pursues gnat through laboratory. Gnat eludes genius, hides under epergne. Genii guards gnat. Genius genial no longer.

Yes, we smiled. Cara E. Rice, 7801 Hough Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, is responsible.

3. A fishy old fisher named Fischer
Fished fish from the edge of a fissure;
A fish with a grin,
Pulled the fisherman in,
Now they are fishing the fissure for Fischer.

This long-division puzzle was concocted by Stephen Reynolds, Troy-Lane Apartment Hotel, Sixty-third and Troy Street, Chicago, Illinois.

4. JUXTAPOSED.

PUZZLE FANS' HONOR ROLL

Send in your answers to each week's puzzles, ye fans, and watch for your name on our monthly Honor Roll.

COUPON

How to Solve Cryptograms and Long-division Problems.

If you would like to have the above information please fill in coupon and mail it to Gerard Holmes, care of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York, and full-printed instructions will be sent to you free of charge.

Name.....Address

City.....State

Headquarters Chat

F J. MEADE, 4 Middle Road, Kingston-by-Sea, Southwick, Sussex, England, had completely lost track of his sister. He tried every means at his command to find her. But all proved futile. At last, Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine and its "Missing" department were brought to the attention of Mr. Meade.

Here is a letter that we have just received from him:

"DEAR EDITOR: Thank you very much for putting the 'Missing' notice in your magazine—free of charge—regarding my sister, Miss Mollie Meade.

"I am overjoyed to tell you that it has proved successful, and I have heard from my sister, who is still living in America.

"Thank you very, very much."

In Ketchikan, Alaska, lives Mrs. Margaret Graham. It had been fifteen years since she had heard from her brothers. You can well imagine how Mrs. Graham, living in that little outpost of civilization, yearned and longed to get word from, or even of, those men. All efforts failed, until— But here is Mrs. Graham's letter:

"DEAR EDITOR: I want to thank you for your part in locating my brothers for me whom I hadn't seen or heard of in fifteen years. After

all other things failed, I located them through your 'Missing' department.

"Thanks again, and may your department ever continue its excellent work!"

It was many, many years ago that we started the "Missing" department in Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine; not long, if we remember correctly, after the magazine itself was first put on the stands. And that was over seventeen years ago. Honestly, we hardly dared hope that we'd ever really find any one for a reader. But we did, shortly after the first batch of notices—there were only four or five of them—was printed. Well can we remember our excitement and joy over that success. But this would be the end; luck like that could not keep up; surely we'd never find another person, we thought. And then began arriving letters of thanks and appreciation from friends and relatives who had found persons dear to them through the "Missing" department in Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine.

It has been a never-ending and ever-increasing flow, this stream of letters, giving thanks and expressing appreciation for our priceless services. Priceless in two ways: No greater gift can come than finding again a relative or dear friend who has many years been "missing"; and priceless because there is no charge for the service our

"Missing" department gives. We always thought that it would be a shame to charge money for a service like that, kind of take some of the great joy out of the pleasure it gives us to perform it.

What O. C. Mapes, 683 Middle Street, Fall River, Massachusetts, writes us brings unalloyed delight.

"DEAR EDITOR: I have read Detective Story Magazine constantly for four years, and I have received such an abundance of pleasurable hours from its pages that I am ashamed of my delinquency in forwarding my appreciation, so here it is right from the heart.

"I wish to highly commend yourself, your staff, and host of fine authors for making Detective Story Magazine the finest mag of its kind. You can't make Detective Story Magazine any better, so please don't try."

Here, McDonald, what do you know about this, two letters about you. The first from Frank Quirk, 321 Greenfield Avenue, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin; the second from A. A. Bently, 3744 West Euclid Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

"DEAR EDITOR: Have just finished reading Donald G. McDonald's story, 'One Per Cent Risk,' in Detective Story Magazine. My hat's off to Mac. His stories sure go big with me. Few words, but lots of action. Hope you will continue to print his yarns."

"DEAR EDITOR: This is to thank you for your notices of stories by D. G. McDonald. There are in this office as many as a dozen who don't want to miss his stories and look forward to them. *We want more of them*, and you can't give us too

many, and we hope that you will run them as often as you can."

Leonard A. Reingruber, Lyndonville, New York, has remarked with pleasure the new type that we're using in Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine. He's the first reader to speak of it. We've been a long time getting that type. We're happy to see it in use in the magazine. How many others, besides Mr. Reingruber, have noted the change from the old type to the new?

Mr. Reingruber writes:

"DEAR EDITOR: Please allow me to offer a word of praise for the new type face you are using in Detective Story Magazine. It is so much easier to read and a trifle larger than the old type face. The illustrations are also a wonderful improvement, and the covers are very attractive. I have no favorite authors—they are all good. Perhaps, if I were forced to name a favorite author, I would choose Doctor Poate. His stories are never disappointing, and, as most of them have a medical angle, they are instructive as well as entertaining. I have read your magazine every week for at least fifteen years."

Here's a Wallace fan, Ted Montour, P. O. Box 520, Port Arthur, Texas:

"DEAR EDITOR: At last, I have decided to write you. My aunt takes your magazine and I read every copy. How about some more *Clown* stories, and we would all like another telling of the *Picaroön*.

"His Devoted Squealer' was a hit. The best by Wallace so far. Say, that Edgar Wallace sure knows his stuff, doesn't he? Long live Street & Smith's."

MISSING

This department, conducted in duplicate in Street & Smith's Western Story Magazine and Detective Story Magazine, thus giving readers double service, is offered free of charge to our readers. Its purpose is to aid them in getting in touch with persons of whom they have lost track.

While it will be better to use your name in the notice, we will print your request "blind" if you prefer. In sending "blind" notices, you must, of course, give us your right name and address, so that we can forward promptly any letters that may come for you. We reserve the right to reject any notice that seems to us unsuitable. Because "copy" for a magazine must go to the printer long in advance of publication, don't expect to see your notice till a considerable time after you send it.

If it can be avoided, please do not send a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proved that these persons who are not specific as to address often have mail that we send them returned to us marked "not found." It would be well, also, to notify us of any change in your address.

Now, readers, help those whose friends or relatives are missing, as you would like to be helped if you were in a similar position.

WARNING.—Do not forward money to any one who sends you a letter or telegram, asking for money "to get home," et cetera, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

Address all your communications to Missing Department, Street & Smith's Western Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

MELROSE.—I was born at the Welfare Island Hospital, New York City, and was placed in a foundlings' home when two weeks old. My mother's maiden name was Katie Flagg, and my father's name was Melrose. I also had two brothers who were placed in another home. Would like to hear from any of my relatives or from persons who can give me information about them. Please write to Mary Slidewell, 1345 Nordike Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana.

GARRISON, JAMES H.—Formerly of Western Port, Maryland. Last heard of at Camp Mead, Maryland, several years ago. His mother has passed away, and his father has anxiously been trying to find him for the past eight years. Will any one knowing his whereabouts kindly communicate with his brother, J. Clay Garrison, care of D. C. Brown, Route 1, Box 305, Akron, Ohio.

ENGLAND, T. H.—Was at the Y. M. C. A., Albuquerque, New Mexico, ten or more years ago. Later left for Greeley, Colorado. His present address appreciated by Joseph Meyers, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

GRAY, ROBERT.—A carpenter, whose home was in Dallas, Texas. He was last heard from in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Information wanted by Joseph Meyers, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

MOSS, J. D.—A native of Chicago, or environs. Stayed for a time at the Y. M. C. A., Albuquerque, New Mexico. Please get in touch with Joseph Meyers, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

BROWN, CHARLES.—Left the Y. M. C. A., Albuquerque, New Mexico, together with his father, about ten years ago. Believed to be in California. Has red hair. Please address any information to Joseph Meyers, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

HEIM, GEORGE.—Left Altoona, Pennsylvania, for Toledo or Akron, Ohio, about eight years ago. Information appreciated by Joseph Meyers, Altoona, Pennsylvania.

BUTLER.—My father's name was William Butler, and his home was in Detroit, Michigan, where quite a number of his relatives resided as late as 1897. My father disappeared in 1907, while living in East St. Louis, Illinois, where he then had resided for twenty years. I should very much like to hear from any of his brothers or sisters, if still living. Please write to Mrs. Maudella B. Adams, 162 East Fourth Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

WORTHY, MATTIE VERBLE.—Formerly lived in Fourteenth Street, St. Louis, Missouri, and later on Indiana Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. She had a daughter named Helen. Any information gratefully received by Mrs. Maudella B. Adams, 162 East Fourth Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

HICKS, JULIA.—My mother. I was born July 15, 1893, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was left at a maternity hospital there for adoption. In February, 1894, I was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Hill, of Ashland, Wisconsin. My foster parents are now dead, and I am very anxious to locate my own mother, or any persons who can tell me about her. Records show that the name of the matron in the hospital was Emily Paddock. The names of Mary E. Stewart and M. G. Ripley, M. D., are listed as witnesses. Assistance of any kind will be greatly appreciated by Mrs. L. M. Bliesner, Star Route, Box 89, Longville, Minnesota.

O'BRIEN, STEVE.—Believed to be in Billings, Montana, where he has relatives. His present address is wanted by Friend, care of this magazine.

SILVA, JOSEPH.—Was taken from an orphanage in San Francisco, California, by his mother, Mrs. Josephine Silva, in 1903, and was adopted by people whose name is not known. He would be thirty-one years old now. Any news of him will be gratefully received by his sister, Mrs. H. Regnier, 823 Arlington Avenue, Oakland, California.

SPYTZ, JOE and JOHN.—Missing for several years. Their sister would be very glad to hear from them or from any one having information about them. Please address C., care of this magazine.

ZOLLER.—Would like to hear from members of a family of this name, or their descendants, who came from Pforzheim, Germany, many years ago, and settled in New York and Iowa. Kindly address Gottfried Zoller, care of this magazine.

HUFF, or YORK, EDDIE.—Last heard of in Twin Falls, Idaho. His present address, or that of his mother, Mrs. Maud Huff, will be very much appreciated by Buddy Budine, 3938 Brooklyn Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

NIXON, MARY.—Was in Pennsylvania when last heard from. She is seventeen years old, tall and slender, and has dark-brown hair and brown eyes. At one time she lived near Alger, Ohio. She has two brothers, Elmer and Stewart. Will any one knowing her present whereabouts kindly write to Evelyn Boyd, Route 3, Bellecenter, Ohio.

GAUTHIER, RAYMOND (FRENCHY).—Five feet eleven inches tall, blue eyes, and light hair. Believed to be in Massachusetts. I am lonesome and still care for you. Please write to the address where you left me, or to Dolores, care of this magazine.

MARR, WILLIAM C.—Last heard of in Bradford, Pennsylvania, about forty-five years ago. He would now be eighty-nine years old, if living. It will be to the advantage of any one having information about him, either past or present, to communicate with his son, W. A. Marr, Polo, Missouri.

NOTICE.—Would like to hear from persons who were connected with me in a certain business transaction that took place in Canton, South Dakota, in April, 1904. Kindly write to C. A. Winter, 422 Montgomery Avenue, Spokane, Washington.

PETTY.—Will Mrs. Maude Dowd, nee Petty, formerly of Aurora, Nebraska, and last heard of in Sedalia, Missouri, and Charles Petty, at one time a resident of Pleasant Dale, Nebraska, kindly communicate with their brother, George P. Winter, Don Pedro Dam, La Grange, California.

BERGER, FLOSSY.—About thirty-three years old. Black hair. Was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1924. Information appreciated by John D. Partlow, 422 Eighth Street, Oakland, California.

JARVIS, MANUEL.—Last heard of in St. Louis, Missouri, about ten years ago. Would be about seventeen or eighteen years old. Will he or any one knowing him please write to his cousin, A. W. R., care of this magazine.

GRAYSON, JOHN M.—Between fifty and fifty-five years old. Five feet ten inches tall. Weighs around one hundred and fifty pounds. Fair complexion, blue eyes, and light-brown hair. Last heard of in Electra, Texas, in 1918, when he worked for the Shell Oil Co. there. Belonged to the W. O. W. (Woodmen of the World). His people lived a Strayhorn, Mississippi, and he had an uncle, Doctor Bill Grayson, at Blossom, Texas. His sister is seriously ill, and wishes to hear from him at once. Please address any information to S. H. Duckworth, Ada, Oklahoma.

KRASNEY, MAURICE.—Believed to be in New York City. Will any one having information about him kindly write to his wife, Mrs. Maurice Krasney, 719 South Fifty-fifth Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

JACK.—No one can take your place in my heart. Won't you write and let me explain? Let us make a new start. Bessie, care of this magazine.

W. H. F. or SHORTY.—I need you so much. Important that you get in touch with me at once. Please write to Lila, care of this magazine.

DEAN, WILLIAM E.—Last heard of in North Carolina. He has light-brown hair, blue eyes, weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds, and is five feet nine inches tall. Important news awaits him. Kindly send any information as to his whereabouts to H. G. D., care of this magazine.

HALL, ELOISE, and MITCHELL, RICHARD.—My cousin and my uncle. They were last seen in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1923. Their present addresses will be thankfully received by Mrs. Austin Deadman, formerly Thelma Lee Smith, 421 Sable Avenue, Alpena, Michigan.

ROGERS, FRANK.—Can you remember those years we soldiered together in Company H, Fifty-third Infantry, in 1917-21? Please write to your old buddy, Peter J. Corbey, Thirty-eighth Infantry, Fort Douglas, Utah.

LAVINE, HARRY.—Last heard of in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Please send your address to Letty, care of this magazine.

Strong Men Are Not Born THEY ARE MADE!

I Develop Muscular Giants —I Can Make You Strong

It is a proven fact that strong men are made—not born. Many of today's famous strong men, including myself, were forced to take up physical culture or some form of exercise for their health, because they were physical wrecks. With proper handling they soon developed into veritable giants of strength.

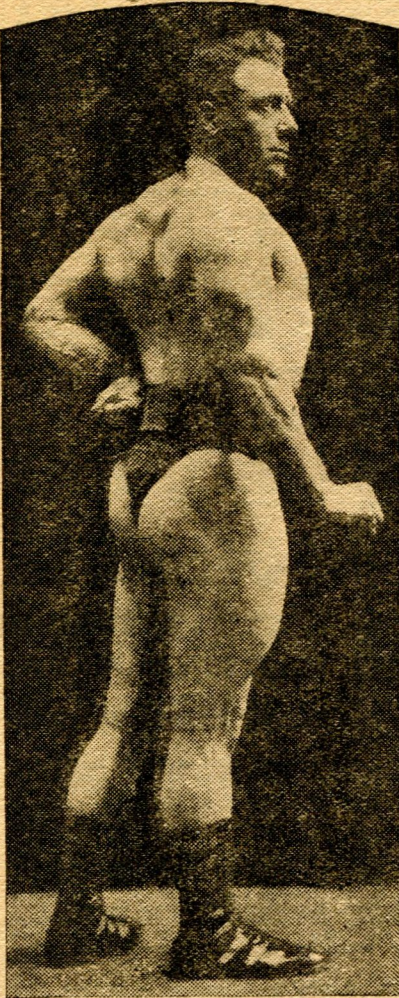
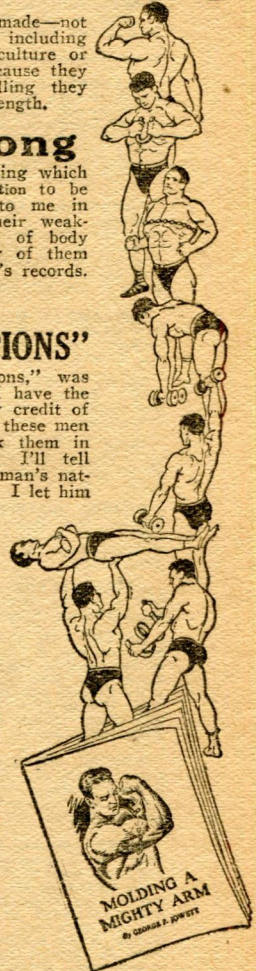
You Can Be Strong

I have perfected a system of mail training which permits anyone to realize his life's ambition to be strong and muscular. Men have come to me in despair because they were ashamed of their weaknesses—needless to say with my method of body building they quickly improved and many of them developed into strong men who broke world's records.

They Call Me

"The CHAMPION of CHAMPIONS"

The title, "The Champion of Champions," was given to me by the men I have made. I have the longest list of champion strong men to my credit of any muscle builder in the world. Some of these men at first seemed hopeless yet after I took them in hand they became world beaters. Why? I'll tell you the reason. I do not try to change a man's natural self or nag him about what not to do. I let him follow his own individual taste and tell him what he should do. In other words, I give him the "know how" of getting strong and doing feats of strength. Regardless of what condition you are now in I know I can help you. My system never fails. I will make you fit and peppy. I will give you the body that you want and that nature intended you to have so that you can be popular and be sought after by both sexes. I will satisfy your hunger for love, strength and happiness. My proven method which has made hundreds of men happy, healthy and strong, will do the trick without hard work or inconvenience. Don't wait another minute! Don't envy strong, healthy, popular men. Come to me! I will give you a body to be proud of. I work with you by mail and perform this miracle without interfering with your daily routine. Every week I visit you by sending instructions which take you step by step into a new world. When I get through with you, you will have a body to be proud of—you will have muscles like mine with a grip of steel and the strength to easily do feats that now seem impossible. From the first lesson you will notice the pickup and difference, you will walk differently—you will act differently—you take on that feeling of assurance that you are "there." Let me prove my method never fails—take me up on my special test offer!



GEORGE F. JOWETT
Champion of Champions

Lend Me Your Body for 90 Days TEST COURSE-25c

I'm positive I can help you! I'll prove it to you! I have prepared six special courses which are listed in the coupon. Each specializes in molding a definite part of the body. I don't ask you to enroll or sign for my full course now! I know you will do that later, if you will try a test course now. Each test course is a complete course covering the subject it's written about. You'll be amazed at the results in 30 days. You'll be dazzled in 90 days. Pick out your course now—rush coupon with only 25c, or if you want all six attach \$1.00 to coupon and get them all.

Jowett Institute of Physical Culture

Dept. 14Ya, 422 Poplar Street, Scranton, Pa.

I accept your offer. Send, by return prepaid mail, the courses checked below for which I enclose.....

- ☐ All 6 Courses \$1.00.
- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Molding A Mighty Arm 25c. | <input type="checkbox"/> Molding A Mighty Chest 25c. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Molding Mighty Legs 25c. | <input type="checkbox"/> Molding A Mighty Grip 25c. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Molding A Mighty Back 25c. | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Man Stunts Made Easy 25c. |

Name..... Age.....

Address

I'll PROVE in Only 7 Days that I Can Make YOU a New Man!"

No other Physical
Instructor in the
World has ever
DARED make
such an Offer!

By CHARLES ATLAS

Holder of the Title:

"The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man"

I HAVE proved to thousands that my system of building powerful, big-muscled men begins to show real results in *only 7 days*—and I can prove it to you.

You don't have to take my word for it. You don't have to take the word of my hundreds of pupils who have added inches to their chests, biceps, necks, thighs and calves in only a few days. No sir! You can prove for *yourself*—in just one week—by the change you see and *feel in your own body*—that you can actually become a husky healthy NEW MAN—a real "Atlas Champion."

All I want to know is: Where do *you* want big, powerful muscles? How many pounds of firm flesh do *you* want distributed over your body to fill you out? Where do *you* lack vitality, pep and robust health? Where do *you* want to take off flabby surplus fat?

Just tell me, give me a week, and I'll show you that I can make a *New Man* of you, give you bodily power and drive, and put you in that magnificent physical condition which wins you the envy and respect of any man and the admiration of every woman.

My own system of *Dynamic-Tension* does it. That's the way I built myself from a 97-pound

weakling to "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man." And now *you* can have a big, balanced muscular development like mine in the same easy way.

No "Apparatus" Needed!

You begin to **FEEL** and **SEE** the difference in your physical condition at once, without using any tricky apparatus, any pills, "rays" or unnatural dieting. My *Dynamic-Tension* is a *natural* method of developing you *inside and out*. It not only makes you an "Atlas Champion," but goes after such ailments as constipation, pimples, skin blotches, and any other weaknesses that keep you from really enjoying life and its good times—and it starts getting rid of them at once.

Let Me Tell You How

Gamble a 2c stamp today by mailing the coupon for a free copy of my new illustrated book, "*Everlasting Health and Strength*." It tells you all about my special *Dynamic-Tension* method. It shows you, from actual photos, how I have developed my pupils to the same perfectly balanced proportions of my own physique, by my own secret methods. What my system did for me, and these hundreds of others, it can do for you too. Don't keep on being only 25 or 50 per cent of the man you can be! Find out what I can do for you.

FREE BOOK

Where shall I send your copy of "Everlasting Health and Strength?" Jot your name and address down on the coupon, and mail it today. Your own new "Atlas body" is waiting for you. This book tells you how *easy* it is to get, my way. Send the coupon to me personally—

CHARLES ATLAS

Dept. 38-L

133 E. 23rd St., New York City



Charles Atlas: As He Is Today.

CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 38-L
133 East 23rd Street, New York City

I want the proof that your system of *Dynamic-Tension* will make a New Man of me—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscle development. Send me your free book, "*Everlasting Health and Strength*."

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

ADDRESS.....

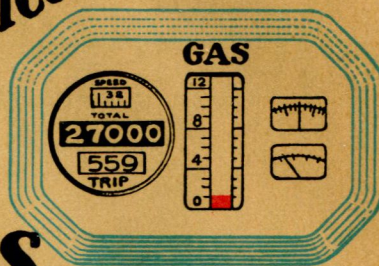
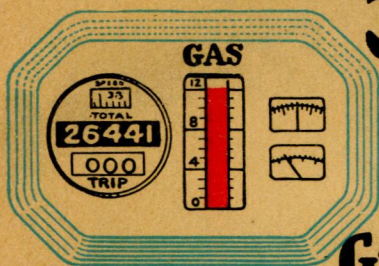
CITY..... STATE.....

Over the Mountains from Los Angeles

559 Miles

on 11

Gallons of GAS



Think of it! FIVE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE MILES over rough mountainous country burning only ELEVEN GALLONS OF GASOLINE. Imagine more than FIFTY MILES to the GALLON. That is what the WHIRLWIND CARBURETING DEVICE does for D. R. Gilbert, enough of a saving on just one trip to more than pay the cost of the Whirlwind.

THE WHIRLWIND SAVES MOTORISTS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS YEARLY

Whirlwind users, reporting the results of their tests, are amazed at the results they are getting. Letters keep streaming into the office telling of mileages all the way from 22 to 59 miles on a gallon, resulting in a saving of from 25% to 50% in gas bills alone.

Mark H. Estes writes: "I was making 17 miles to the gallon on my Pontiac Coupe. Today, with the Whirlwind, I am making 35 5-10 miles to the gallon. Am I glad I put it on? I'll say so!"

P. P. Goerzen writes: "I made an actual test both with and without a Whirlwind, getting 13½ miles without and 34 6-10 miles with the Whirlwind, or a gain of 21 miles to the gallon. The longer the Whirlwind is in use on the machine the better the engine runs, has more pep and quicker starting. It makes a new engine out of an old one, and starts at the touch of the starter button."

R. J. Tulp: "The Whirlwind increased the mileage on our Ford truck from 12 to 26 miles to gallon and 25% in speed. We placed another on a Willys-Knight and increased from 12 to 17 miles per gallon."

Arthur Grant: "I have an Oakland touring car that has been giving me 15 miles to the gallon average, but I can see a great difference with the Whirlwind, as it climbs the big hills on high and gives me better than 23 miles to the gallon of gas, which is better than 50% saving in gas."

W. A. Scott: "I had my Whirlwind for three years. Winter and summer it gives the same perfect service. Instant starting, smoother running, and what I have saved in gasoline these last few years has brought other luxuries which I could not have afforded previously."

Car owners all over the world are saving money every day with the Whirlwind, besides having better operating motors. Think what this means on your own car. Figure up your savings—enough for a radio—a bank account—added pleasures. Why let the Oil Companies profit by your waste? Find out about this amazing little device that will pay for itself every few weeks in gas saving alone.

FITS ALL CARS

In just a few minutes the Whirlwind can be installed on any make of car, truck or tractor. It's actually less work than changing your oil or putting water in the battery. No drilling, tapping or changes of any kind necessary. It is guaranteed to work perfectly on any make of car, truck or tractor, large or small, new model or old model. The more you drive the more you will save.

SALESMEN AND DISTRIBUTORS WANTED

To Make Up To \$100.00 a Week and More

Whirlwind men are making big profits supplying this fast-selling device that car owners can not afford to be without. Good territory is still open. Free sample offer to workers. Full particulars sent on request. Just check the coupon.

WHIRLWIND MANUFACTURING CO.

Dept. 728-A, Station C

Milwaukee, Wis.

GUARANTEE

No matter what kind of a car you have—no matter how big a gas eater it is—the Whirlwind will save you money. We absolutely guarantee that the Whirlwind will more than save its cost in gasoline alone within thirty days, or the trial will cost you nothing. We invite you to test it at our risk and expense. You are to be the sole judge.

FREE TRIAL COUPON

WHIRLWIND MANUFACTURING CO.

Dept. 728-A, Station C, Milwaukee, Wis.

Gentlemen: You may send me full particulars of your Whirlwind Carbureting device and tell me how I can get one free. This does not obligate me in any way whatever.

Name

Address

City

County State

() Check here if you are interested in full or part time salesmen position