The Blessed Interval

WOODROW WILSON once remarked—we quote from memory—that among the things he enjoyed most in life was the blessed interval when he could drop his cares of state for a time and lose himself in a rattling good detective yarn, chasing a criminal to the ends of the earth and finally capturing him. That good two-listed fighter, Theodore Roosevelt, was similarly fond of a swift, adventurous, blood-curdling yarn. These men, each the choice of a great nation, were as far apart as the poles in their tastes and in their characteristics. They had but one thing in common—their humanity. This humanity, this comradeship with the rank and file of Americans, was evidenced by their love for a good, thrilling, fast-moving tale.

It is what we all love. We can talk about literature and the higher grades of culture, but Conan Doyle has a hundred thousand readers to one for Sainte Beuve, Poe and Gaboriau have a million to one for the James boys (Henry and William—not Jesse), and our very own John R. Coryell—did you know that he was the creator of Nick Carter?—has entirely given up estimating the amount of people who have, for a space, found happiness by submerging their problems in the sea of forgetfulness they found in his books.

Art is something for the people—for the masses who walk our streets and crowd our trolleys and till our soil. It is not something so conceived that it is intelligible only to a blessed few. By this standard, the writer who can bring the greatest number of people out of themselves, who can give to the greatest number of troubled human souls that "blessed interval," is the master of them all.

This is treason, of course. It is likely to be sneered at by those who have another conception of art. Let them sneer—we are quite content to have the approval of our readers. And judging by the letters we have received—since the announcement of our change in policy—we certainly have struck a responsive chord in the breast of that great human being, the American.

Vol. I MIDNIGHT MYSTERY STORIES No. 16

Cover—Illustration posed by Florence Brooks and Charles A. Hancock

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An “invisible approach—”
Footsteps “terribly familiar”—
Was it the soldier-husband’s ghost?
Read this story that won a prize of
ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS

By
Helen H. Dudley

My husband and I were rare “pals” and bound together by an unusually close spiritual sympathy. Before he went away, he said that he would surely come back to me; alive—or otherwise!
I received notification that he had fallen in battle and that his body was being shipped home.
I could not be comforted, nor could I find solace in tears, as some women did; my grief was of the story, dazed variety. I used to sit in his Study, hour after hour, and wonder if he could “come back.”

On this particular night, I was holding lonely vigil—as usual... The servants had retired and the house was absolutely silent; I could hear the “Grandfather” clock in the hall ticking solemnly...

Suddenly I was conscious of an odd, smothering sensation and decided to go out into the garden, so I was seated on a bench beside the sun-dial when the far-reaching bell-strokes from the distant tower of Big Ben began to mark off twelve sonorous intonations; the clock in our hall echoed more rapidly—but, ere either clock had concluded its announcement of midnight, I sat up, tense in my deep-mourning attire, my heart hammering wildly...

Questing through the strange silence, footsteps sounded around a bend in the road; terribly familiar footsteps—despite the fact that they halted a little... As though he who walked was lame!... Convinced that my passionate grief and longing had pierced the Border and that my husband had come back to me, as he had promised, I remember wondering if I could see him—or if I would just hear the sound of an invisible approach... As the footsteps came nearer, I could not breathe for a moment, it seemed; the next, I was assuring myself that it was only some wayfarer going home... but when I heard the faint sound of that whistle with which he always announced his arrival at our gate, I was positive that I would behold an apparition!... I got to my feet, somehow, and there—standing weirdly in the moonlight—was the familiar figure in officer’s uniform; most convincingly intangible, because of the swaying shadows of the trees! I must have cried out...

Anyhow, when I “came to” the “ghost” was carrying me upstairs!

My husband had received a wound in one foot and was allowed home-leave. Fearing that a wire would frighten me, he had written—and the letter was delayed in censoring. It arrived the next day!
The death-notification that I received was a mistake.
He had to
Cut his Throat
But he caught
the Thieves

LOGAN Square might be old-fashioned but it considered Fifth Avenue lightly. Anybody could buy their way into Fifth Avenue but Logan Square was aloof. The names on the door-plates of the dwellings were, many of them, renowned and all of them interwoven with the traditions of early New York. Its residents numbered a United States Supreme Court Justice, the dean of American novelists, an Admiral, an eminent scientist and, so on, the modest appearance of the houses little suggesting the rarity and beauty of the possessions within. The most imposing was on the southwest corner, taller than the others and with turreted windows. In it lived the widow of the greatest American financier of the preceding generation, Regentton Logan. She had now come to be an ancient dame, lived in retirement, and was occasionally referred to in the society columns of the press as the "dowager queen of the Four Hundred." Small and narrow beside the big corner house snuggled the Tellenbury home. And if one knew the history of the disaster to the Tellenbury fortunes in the last thirty years, the house with its worn brownstone steps took on a pathetic appearance beside that of its spick and span, opulent neighbor.

It was a morning in June and to the two men arriving in an open touring car with a liveried chauffeur at the wheel the Tellenbury dwelling was further conspicuous because it was the only one on that side of the square whose windows and doorways were not boarded up for the summer. The remnant of the Tellenbury fortunes made a slender purse and did not allow Miss Elinor Tellenbury and her orphaned niece, Alice, to follow their neighbors to Bar Harbor, Newport or the White Mountains.

The difference between the men who casually alighted from the motor car and made their way up the Tellenbury steps at the unusual calling hour of ten o’clock in the morning, was as wide as between gray and pink. Gray, in fact, was the harmonious coloring of one of them. He was tall and lean and his thin-featured face was gray, his small eyes very bright and gray, his neatly cropped hair the same color and the light beard that draped itself well upon his thin body was gray. A costly but crumpled ponge silk suit encaised the massive body of the man who accompanied him. He had a bulging neck and a rounded face, both very pink. And a heavy mustache and eyebrows, very black. A robust, boisterous person he looked, even as his long, lean, gray companion would have been adjudged quiet and restrained. A big diamond flashed on the hand of one, a seal gold ring with a simple crest was on the little finger of the other.

FAT Margaret, the lone servant of Miss Tellenbury and her niece, was impressed by both callers and unhesitatingly made wide the door for their entrance, took the cards they offered and hastened to the little garden patch in the rear where Miss Tellenbury and Alice assiduously nursed the growth of roses.

Miss Tellenbury who, by the way, was not in the least a typical old maid, but a plump person, the color of one of her own Bride’s Maid bubs, stared at the cards Margaret handed her, was plainly puzzled and then read the names to slim, brown-haired Alice.


Her reading ended with a look of speculation which evidently drew a blank. She shook her head.

"Very well, Margaret," she said taking off her garden gloves, "tell the gentlemen I will see them."

"Shall I come too, aunty?"

"By all means, if you are as curious about these unknown visitors as I am."

Miss Tellenbury and her niece entered the cool, shaded drawing room whereat the men arose from their chairs, the tall one sauntily, the other abruptly.

"Mr. Channing?" said the disconcerted Miss Tellenbury toward the lean, gray-haired visitor. He nodded assent and introduced his companion. Miss Tellenbury presented her pretty niece.

"Ah," said Mr. Channing, "Miss Alice Tellenbury here also. That simplifies matters."

"She is concerned in the object of your visit?"

"Quite as much as yourself." A smile flickered over the thin, gray lips of Mr. Channing. "I had intended telling you I was a lawyer from Washington and that my friend here was a natural gas multi-millionaire from Wheeling, West Virginia, looking to buy your house, because as your niece is jointly intestate in the property, her presence at the conference would be necessary and required—especially if she happened to be at home."

"You had intended telling—I hardly understand. You had meant to tell me something that wasn’t true?"

"Yes," said Mr. Channing as his right hand left the side of his coat pocket and came up in front of him. "But both of you coming in together I imagined was the necessity. Yes—that’s an automatic pistol in my hand and my friend has one aimed at your niece. Be quiet, both of you. We’re not to be trifled with. We’ll shoot if you scream. Unless you give us quiet, absolute obedience, you’ll both be bound and gagged."

Mills Tellenbury paled and drew a deep breath. But her courage was high-bred and she drew a firm arm around the waist of her niece and stared sternly at her astounding visitors. The huge black eyebrows of the stout, red-faced man lowered fiercely and his eyes glared; the countenance of the gray-faced man was quite serene, but it was the latter that struck the greater fear in to the two women.

The color, nevertheless, surged back into Miss Tellenbury’s plump countenance.

"Two very brave men," she said with calm scorn. "If your idea is to rob this house you are poor thieves and your ability seems to lie entirely in the direction of trifling women. It is a matter of public knowledge that the Tellenbury paintings, jewels and plate went to the auction block long ago."

"As you say," replied Channing, "that’s been a
matter of public knowledge. We haven't the slightest intention of touching a thing in your house, Miss Tellenbury."

"Then what——"

"That will also become a matter of public knowledge," he smiled coolly, "by tomorrow morning.

The tall man stepped to the old-fashioned, bronze-handled switch in the wall and pulled it. A servant's bell tinkled below. He nodded sharply to Case who instantly departed down the hallway where he met fat Margaret as she came, breathless, to the top of the stairs. She had evidently been adjudged one who would scream first and think afterwards, for big Case immediately clapped a heavy hand on her panting mouth. The muzzle of his revolver dug against her temple; he pushed her before him into the drawing room—white, perspiring and flabby with fear.

"I think," said Channing, "we will now adjourn to the library. "Where is it?"

Neither Miss Tellenbury nor her niece made reply. He turned sharply on Margaret.

"Where's the library?"

"Second floor in the rear, sir."

"Show me—Case, bring the other two."

MARGARET leading, Channing followed and Case growled to the spinster and her niece:

"Go on ahead—step up, unless you want to be shoved along."

In the room of the book-cases, Channing turned back and led Miss Tellenbury by the arm to her writing desk. Alice hurried to a place beside her aunt. Channing disposed his lean frame at ease in a nearby chair.

"The idea," he said, "of your thinking I knew nothing of the Tellenburies. Been making your family a matter of special inquiry as a matter of fact. On the maternal side there are the Dancys of Richmond—a niece, now twenty—Elinor—named for you!"

Miss Tellenbury was silent.

"You will have to write a letter for me."

"I will do nothing of the sort."

"The rector of St. Jeremiah's across the square is on a vacation in Europe; the assistant is in bed with tonsilitis. That leaves in charge—— it was noticeable that a look of high interest came into the eyes of pretty Alice Tellenbury, and a rich deepening of the rose-leaf tint of her cheeks—"the very young but duly ordained Reverend John Crane. I want a letter to him from you on your own stationery."

Miss Tellenbury said:

"I shall do it."

"I needn't tell you how to word it, but I want you to say in effect that he is to be here at three o'clock this afternoon for the purpose of performing a marriage ceremony—that of your niece, Miss Elinor Dancy to Captain Pollansbee Corkran of the British army who met your niece in Europe and——"

"My niece has never been in Europe."

"It is what you are to say to the Reverend Mr. Crane—who met your niece in Europe. They became engaged on the way to America on a ship that's just come into port. Captain Corkran is proceeding by way of San Francisco to the Orient on military orders and may not delay. An immediate wedding has been decided upon that your niece may accompany him to his distant post. And you have offered your home for the ceremony."

"I will not write the letter," said Miss Tellenbury decisively. "I may have to submit to your unlawful possession of my house but when it comes to any voluntary act to further your criminal plans, whatever they may be, I will not do it—not if you torture me."

"Do you want to be bound and gagged and left that way for the next twenty-four hours?"

"I will not write the letter."

"It's what I ought to do with you," said the gray-faced man, his bright gray eyes the brighter for his anger. "But—let me see."

He pushed a brusque arm past her and to the desk and seized Miss Tellenbury's engagement book. He studied the long, angular writing of bygone fashion. "Easy," he smiled, "for me. Change chairs. Case, keep your eye on these two as well as the other. I'll be busy for a few minutes."
an excellence of imitation of the handwriting of Miss Tellenburg that only expert scrutiny might expose. He addressed a mass of other letters and faster handwriting and a letter into it and both into an inside pocket of his coat.

The next act was to step to the telephone on the reading table in the center of the room, and call for a number in the Orchard exchange. And a minute later he said:

"That you, Fitz? O. K. The awning men first—half an hour later the caterer's wagons. Wedding gifts at once."

He hung up the receiver to find his companion standing near his big black mustache pursed forward, heavy black spectacles of the signet, and twin eyes, red and half-grilled.

"Aw, to hell with that wedding stall."

"What? Are you crazy?" said my companion, "What the devil! to ourselves right now."

Why not shoot the bunch in all without that fuss?

Get what you can of us.

"Don't say that," said the lean man sharply. "We'd be the Toms ten minutes after we tried it. It's that very bulk-headedness of yours that's kept you locked up more years than you've been free. I went over it all with you. I showed you what a special and particular watch was kept on this place."

The wedding party is the only thing that makes the job possible. Suspicion can't exist. Awaiting, capturing—cashing in on the fund from the church across tis Square coming to the house to perform the ceremony, departure of the bride and groom, and so, the now, right now, right now."

The tall, lean man reappeared. There was large concern in it too as he said to his beers fellow, "Now to put on the big top. Finish up that one that'll rock 'em fast asleep! Listen to this!"

He picked up the telephone again.

"Hello, central? Police headquarters, please."

"What the——" began Case.

"Keep your voice down on the women,—One of them might blow up and start screaming any minute. Just listen."

I kept a standing in the room listening to the men—men—men—men who might blow up and start screaming any minute. Just listen.

He was standing there—speaking to the telephone."

"And if anything happens—" began Case.

"Yes, keep your voice down on the women."

"Yes."

"I'll be at the Tenderloin police headquarters."

"Good. I'll be there in five minutes."

"Okay."

"I've got everything in hand."

"Okay."

"You're coming, too, aren't you?"

"Okay."

"You ought to be thankful I'm not kicking your head in."

"I might, at that, when I've got a few more drinks."

"Drinks," he nodded to the man in livery, "that's an idea. Come on, Joe."

"Right, Boss."

"We're going to work briskly down the stairs and to the dining room. But they halted in the doorway, for they saw the five women in their brightly colored silk, and the two men in military uniforms and the tall, gray Channing in a tight group at one end of the big, old mahogany table, their heads bent in scrutiny."

"He's there that was spoken of."

All six started violently.

"Doing? My word!" said the blonde-haired, solemn-looking man of the group who always seemed to have the sensation of going straight to the Tenderloin house and finding out what it all meant. But he checked that impression on his face when he saw Case, and establiishment he had best remain where he was.

But shortly after noon he saw crossing the Square directly toward the rectory, a man in a blue, silver-buttoned livery and a black derby hat, absurd in contrast, perched upon his head. The man pressed the button of the rectory bell and soon thereafter John, the bellman, came to the door of a letter which he swiftly, adroitly, the man. He had been led into the house to get a letter from a gentleman, and that he was being led into his confidence he had best remain where he was.

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The Cup of Vengeance
by Benjamin Vaughan

The little pearly clouds were all gathered round her the evening sun just over the wood of Ham- mont. Above the sea the sky was quite clear, a tranquil blue growing slowly darker.

Gulls were chattering from the cliffs and the abrupt grey rock islets which studded the bay.

Renee Barbelle sat crouched near the edge of the cliff, her back to the sun. Her dress, a black dress to the demands of the deep, dark, darkness of the sky, her hands clasped around her knee. She had sea-green eyes, beautiful, melancholy, and they seemed held by the mystery of the deepening purple dusk. Her heavy brown hair falling around her shoulders left her face in shadow. Screaming hunched and still she suggested Fate brooding over the world.

A man coming quietly over the grass of the uneven plateau that crowned the cliff, paused when he saw her. The pause was undramatic. It was evident that he expected to see her. He had at once looked in her direction when he had breast the last yards of the hill that led to the plateau.

His thin lips smiled at the sight of Renee, his eyes softened. He walked forward to her side with quiet, quick movements, a tall, lithe, thin man. It was unusual that a man should move so quietly in heavy sea-boots. His approach suggested subtly the stalking of a feline animal.

Renee heard him when he was some yards away, but she made no movement. She sat crouched and impassive, staring at the sea. She spoke without moving her head or her hands.

"The sea is very still tonight," she said. She had a low full voice that held a hint of mystery in its cadence. She frequently spoke long sentences on one note, but her voice never grew monotonous.

"There is hardly a ripple out there where the sky darkens, Jacques." The man's face changed suddenly. At the first sound of her caressing voice his smile had grown. Now he frowned, and an angry light showed in his eyes. He clinched his thin hands, and his lips parted a little, showing a gleam of white teeth.


"You, Paul Verdeau?" she asked slowly. "I thought you were still at sea. . . ."

"The Saint Joseph made the harbor on the top of the tide this morning. You might have known easily, Renee. They knew on the quay, in the markets. Just a question, Renee. . . . but it was not worth while, eh?" He spoke slowly, as though he had some difficulty in containing himself.

Again she was silent for a few moments before she spoke.

"Why should I inquire?" she asked at length.

"Why? Because you are affianced to me." That is not so, Paul Verdeau." She had no hesitation now.

All but affianced to me, Renee. You have led me to expect it. All my life is bound up in you. It is your mother's wish, it is my desire. Last week, I went aboard the St. Joseph happy. You had promised when I returned—"

"To give you an answer," Renee interposed hurriedly.

"An answer . . . you smiled. I could not doubt what your answer would be. I could not. I was in a transport. The winds blew fair. It was an omen. We had a big catch. It was an omen. We carried to Cherbourg and sold at big prices. It was an omen. I never had such luck. And every moment I thought of you and happiness, Renee; and when I sold the fish, it was the money for our home and wedding feast. . . . Ma foi! The wind carried us back to Cardeaux nearly as fast as my heart wished. It was an omen. . . . And then, on the quay, there is no Renee. I ask. She is on the cliff, I am told. She looks out at the sea—she looks for me, I whisper to myself, and climb joyously up the long, dry, white road. . . . And you call me Jacques?" He used his hands in graceful gesticulation; he was caressing, dramatic, severe in turn. He spoke earnestly, pleadingly, but there was an undertone that menaced.

"You have fooled yourself," she answered. "It has not been my work." "You smiled at me, Renee. It must have meant something."

"You are, you are my friend."

"That is not so. I may love you, I may hate—but friendship . . . bah! I have come for my answer, Renee." He tried to look into her eyes, stooping over her, but she gazed steadily out into the darkening purple dusk. "For your mother's sake, for mine—"" He paused, and continued in a lower tone. "For your own."

Something in his voice prompted her quick, alarmed question.

"What do you mean, Paul?"

"For your own sake," he repeated.

"I do not love you," she answered at length. "I will not marry you."

"Jacques Boursalni!" he cried. "The chemist, the pill-maker, the palid, white-blooded chemist! Mon Dieu! he can bleed, he can wear Paris clothes at Mass, he has damned airs . . . and you like that! I spit on him, Renee! Look out then, Renee! The night is coming. Do you see it—the night, purple, mysterious? And whisper to your soul the night is coming!"

"Paul, do you think I fear you?" she asked con temptuously. "You have always tried to bully me—and me and my mother. But I am a Breton too. I love where I love, and hate where I hate . . . it is nothing to you."

"It is everything to me!" he cried passionately. "You have cheated me!"

"I have not. You know you have really never hoped," she answered.

---

Paul—the sailor
Jacques—the chemist
Renee—the girl
She chose—
And then—

---

I may love—I may hate—But friendship—"Bah! You have cheated me!"
"Before Jacques came—"
"Your Friend, Paul," she interrupted.
"My friend! I told him my hopes. He sympathized. See how great a sconce!—is he! Rene, you cannot love him!"
"I do," she answered steadily.
"You do!" he shouted.
"He has spoken— we are to be married," she said gravely.

"Ah!" The exclamation was like the cry of a wounded animal. "You were waiting for him?"

"He comes sometimes— when he can. It is too late now."

"He comes here— where I have found you so often!"

"It is my favorite spot."

"I know— I know," he answered. Then he drew himself up and looked round at the wood of Haumont, blood-red now from the wounds of the dying sun.

"It is a red sunset," he said.

"That makes it all the redder tomorrow."

"Who knows?" he answered. Something in his voice made her turn quickly towards him. She could not see him very well from her crouching position upon the grass. She rose to her feet in her graceful, unhurried manner, and gazed at him intently with her curious sea-green eyes. Standing back from her, his face turned to the sunset, Paul Verduce was bathed in red light. It laved him, his face, his long, slim hands, like a sea of blood. And then suddenly the last rays dropped behind the curtain of the wood, and he was in shadow.

"I will stand away from her, still speaking in the strained, hard voice of one who holds himself in leash, with that unutterable of something infinitely mysterious, continued. "You have decided— nothing will change your mind? Nothing that I can say, or your mother say? No consideration?"

"I have decided—"

"I must be quite sure— quite sure. There must be no doubt."

"There is no doubt," she answered. "It is Jacques I love. Nothing can alter my love for him."

"There is one thing— death."

She shivered. Her eyes— the pupils of her eyes dilated.

"Is that a threat?" she cried. "You are a coward, a mean coward, to threaten a woman."

"I didn't point out what a threat," he answered slowly. "I am a fisherman, and death is always near and familiar to us ...

"Jacques is my friend."

"He is— he is!" she protested vehemently.

"I know that; I have come to know that. Do you speak bitterly?"

"I am not conscious of it."

There is nothing more to be said. He moved slowly away from her. She watched him. More, and suddenly again.

Then in a few quick steps, she was beside him with outstretched hand.

"Paul, if I have given you cause to think hardly of me, think it only of me. I have gone too much in fear of your wishes, perhaps, be honest with you."

"That is all done with."

He did not appear to see her outstretched hands. He pushed on his slow way. Watching him go over to the white road that was now almost indefinite in the twilight, his dagger-hand suggested to her the odd fancy that he was being led—that (so different they were to his ordinary quick, silent movements) he was half reluctant to be led.

In a few minutes she ran to the edge of the plateau in a sort of panic, and peered after him. The white road ran into darkness, and some way down it a darker shadow moved slowly from her.

In the main street of Cardeaux was a little chemist's shop. Paul Verduce came towards it slowly, but less heavily, and paused outside. His eyes were bright with some purpose; the rest of his bronzed face was impassive, a mask. His long, thin hands moved nervously, were never still— suggested, indeed, the tentacles of some marine animal seeking its prey. Standing inert before the little shop, he passed his tongue over his thin lips as though they were dry.

It was quite dusk now, and the powdered stars showed clearly in the sky. A little wind moaned quietly up the street. It sounded like the cry of a wandering spirit, low, complaining, lost. Paul suddenly turned and stared back over the road he had come. Then slowly he looked at the shops, the cobbled road, the sky overhead, a lingering, comprehensive, dispassionate look. His eyes shone with a red light, baleful, discontented. He slipped one long, twitching hand into his pocket, dragged out a handkerchief, and wiped his lips. Then he opened the little door of the shop and entered.

Jacques Bourrais, behind the counter, stood with his back to the door, searching among the bottles.

He looked around at the click of the latch. A big footstep creaked, and the door closed. The white face from Norman sea-savers, the linear successor of one who might have sailed with Rollo, he seemed out of the in the door-sprung shop, and the snug, rather ornate clothes he wore. He stared uneasily at Paul and forced a smile.

"I heard that the Saint Joseph was in," Paul said. "You had a fair run and a big catch."

"Yes."

"As owner that will mean something to you."

Jacques spoke heartily, but watched his friend in a curious, wondering manner.

"Yes. That."

Paul blinked at the shining bottles. His eyes—he was conscious of their strangeness—were turned away from Jacques.

"You look ill, my friend," the chemist said— "relish, grey, what is the matter?"

"Mon Dieu! I feel— I feel sleepy. The room is hot— and your coffee is unusually strong."

"There is nothing the matter," Paul answered dully.

"But you look as though you had not slept for nights! Jacques spoke with some sympathy in his voice.

"I am tired," Paul replied. He stared as though fascinated by the brightness of the bottles. Then a sudden intelligence crept into his face; his eyes shone, if Jacques could only have seen them. "I have had the chance; it has been good, very bad. It is better now. But there is a pain."

"I am sorry, Paul," Jacques answered.

"If I had a little laudanum— to rub outside — the pain is not bad, but it is better if it is without altogether."

He tried to smile.

"The very thing!" cried Jacques. "Mon Dieu! You must have suffered, he added, staring at his friend.

"I have suffered," his friend replied grimly. "I have indeed suffered— as I thought no one could suffer. ... Pain creeps into the brain, Jacques, and one sees and thinks—if I might ask you— oh! thank you."

Jacques reached down a bottle and poured a little of its contents into a medicine glass and handed it to Paul, who rubbed the liquid into his jaws with twitching fingers. Jacques stared at the other man. In taking the glass his hand had trembled.

"This is dangerous stuff," the chemist said, leaning over the counter.

"Yes, yes, I know. How much could a man take? Now, for the sake of curiosity, what would be a fatal dose?"

The chemist told him.

"Ah, so little. . . . Do I hear a kettle boiling over, Jacques? I should like some coffee."

He smiled broadly at the cup of coffee, and Paul often shared it with him in the inner parlor when the shop was shut.

"I am glad. It will do you good, my Paul. You have not sat with me for weeks. It is time to close. Will you shut up, as usual, while I see to the brew?"

Paul nodded. He had been ordered that. Fate was playing into his hands.

When Jacques had disappeared into the parlor, Paul jumped lightly over the counter and drained the last of the bottle of laudanum from its place on the shelf. Into the medicine glass he poured very carefully the amount Jacques had said would be fatal. He dropped the glass and raised his hands shook, and he had to pause once or twice. The light beating upon his forehead glinted upon beads of perspiration. He opened a drawer very carefully, took from it a small, slim phial, and poured the dose into it. This corked, he placed it in a breast pocket.

"Are you ready, you lazy sailor?" cried Jacques. "Very soon, very soon," answered Paul. He closed the door, locked it, turned out the lights and entered the inner parlor.

Jacques was busy with the brewing coffee. He filled two big cups, and pushed one across the table to Paul.

"Sit down," he cried heartily, lighting a cigarette. "Moi, too, but you look bad!"

"I shall be better soon," Paul answered slowly. "I have no doubt I shall be better soon. Name of a pipe, I have no cigarette!"

Jacques turned his back to search a box. He looked for a few moments only— quite a minute fraction of time—but it was enough for Paul's purpose. He punched out the phial and returned it to his pocket empty.

"I have something to say to you, Jacques," he said suddenly. "Sit down."

(Continued on Page 28)
Can the revengeful hand of a man executed for a murder he did not commit guide the hand of a murderer ten years later to commit a series of horrible and baffling crimes? A blood-freezing story, in which the worlds of the real and the unreal seem to meet in death-dealing currents.

MICHAEL MORAN, Commissioner of Police of the greatest city in the world, sat before the library table in his home, holding in uneasy silence the note which his clenched teeth had twisted with impatience between the typewriter keys. He had torn the note from its envelope as though it were a piece of gunny bag and was trying to read it under the dim light of his reading lamp. He had found it in the contents of a letter he had just received from his old friend and associate, Martin Davies. It was a note from Moran, asking for news of his old friend, Martin. Moran had been out of contact with Martin for several years, and he wanted to know if Martin was still alive.

Davies had been a police officer in New York for many years, and Moran had been his friend and colleague. They had worked together on many cases, and Moran had always admired Davies' ability to solve difficult crimes. Moran had left the police force several years ago, but he still kept in touch with Davies and followed his career with interest. He had heard that Davies had retired from the police force and had become a private detective, and he was eager to learn if Davies was still active in the field.

Davies had written to Moran, asking for news of his old friend. Moran had written back, asking for news of Davies. He had not heard from Davies since he had left the police force, and he was curious to know what had become of him. He had been out of touch with Davies for several years, and he wanted to know if Davies was still alive.

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Think of the risks. Take one man, at least, with you. Let me go," The Commissioner of Police doubted up a fist, brawny as a champion pugilist’s and his eyes narrowed grimly until his heavy brows were drawn down to a straight line of implacable determination.

"Single-handed I’ll get him and that’s the single hand I mean," he snapped, bringing his fist down upon the table with a crashing blow. "The man is a friend of Gillooly—one who knows we made a mistake when we sent him to the chair. I don’t mind admitting to you now that we did make a mistake in that case. I didn’t know it until long afterward, but Gillooly wasn’t guilty of the particular crime of which we convicted him, though he was guilty of a hundred others as bad or worse. And now this revenge and crook who signs himself "The Killer" and defies me to take him takes up a ten-year-old past and asks for a personal fight—cunning against cunning, wit against wit, hand against hand—with me, Martin, my boy, he’s going to get what he wants."

Michael Moran sprang to his feet.

"I am going back to the past, too," he announced from between his clenched teeth. "I’m going to disguise myself as a crook just out of prison, as I used to do in the old days, and I’m going down into crookdom’s East-side strongholds and set, sleep and live there as one of them until I find the man who killed Freckles."

"If another red rose should come! What shall I do? How shall I let you know?" the secretary questioned.

"Run an ‘ad’ in the personal column of the Evening Star saying, ‘Say it with flowers.’ I’ll watch the paper."

The Commissioner laid a friendly arm about the younger man’s shoulders.

"Martin," he said almost huckily, "there is something else you must do. Take care of my daughter, Dorothy. This fand might try to strike at me through my girl and, boy—"

"Oh, sir, I will," Martin interrupted. "You know, you must have seen—"

"That you love her, eh, boy?" Moran supplied with a smile of understanding. "I’d be blind if I hadn’t. Perhaps I’ve seen, too, that she loves you. Some day, I hope—but never mind that now. I say just this to you. Take care of her."

"Trust me," Davies cried as they clasped hands. The Commissioner of Police drove directly to his home, one of those severely old-fashioned houses which face Washington Square with rear entrances upon quiet and Bohemianly desirable Washington Mews. He dismissed his chauffeur, hurried into the house and then, with his foot upon the stairway that led to his own upstairs apartments, he turned back and softly opened the door of the breakfast room.

The girl at the table did not see him in the intensity of her interest in the morning paper—a girl whose dark loveliness so perfectly duplicated the Irish beauty of the mother she had never known that Michael Moran sometimes wondered whether a bride of a year he had lost twenty winters before did not still live, body and soul, to comfort him in the daughter for whom she had given her life, Dorothy—the Commissioner whispered more to himself than to the girl for that had been her mother’s name, also. At the sound of his voice the girl turned, saw him, and sprang into his arms.

"Oh, daddy, I’m so glad you’re back," she cried. "I’ve been reading about that awful murder and daddy, for the first time in my life I’m frightened."

Moran felt the slender form in his arms shudder convulsively.

"Frightened!" ejaculated the man immensely, for never before had he heard such a confession from his girl. "You are my brave little girl, Dorothy!" he questioned with an underlyng trace of uneasiness. The girl raised her head and looked into his face. She didn’t know, he thought but I am sure it is terribly silly, daddy," she added after a pause, "but somehow I know—something I can’t explain tells me—that this murder means suffering to you and to me. It’s going to hurt me here," she clasped trembling hands across her heart.

The cold, practical police official who never in his life had known a tremor of fear, felt a prescient chill of foreboding at his daughter’s words. The same intuitive warning had swept over him the previous night when he was told "The Killer" had kept his threat and left his red rose of death upon the breast of an innocent newspaper boy. "Gillooly commanded him to do it," he had written and Gillooly was ten years dead. Could a dead man think, hate, plot? Moran shook off this superstitious thought of those dreary days when he’ll be behind bars on his way to The Chair before the week’s out. I’m going out alone to get him."

"A h, no, no, father, please don’t," Dorothy cried in a frenzy of alarm. "There is some ill omen for about this miserable creature and his roses which mean death. Don’t go yourself."

"Whish! be quiet, me girl," pleaded Moran, dropping unconsciously into the Irish idiom of his youth. "Many’s a time you’ve cost me—God rest her—kissed me with never a bit of fear in eye or lip, and sent me out on worse duty than this."

Something of his new intrepidness overshadowed the girlish dread that had been in the eyes which burned up at Michael Moran.

"You’re right, daddy," she agreed with a last, half-stifled sigh. "Go out and get him. You can do it."

"I can and I will," Moran exclaimed with conviction. "And, little one, until I do get him, remember this. This is a personal fight between a mad killer and myself. If I alive kill, I’ll do my God’s work to drive out of the Commission when he killed that poor lad last night. The scheming maniac might think to strike at me. I’ll strike him first. If it’s a matter of any sort of a message or phone or anything else that might be suspicious. I’ve told Marty to keep an eye on him and—"

"I can take care of myself without his aid," the girl interrupted with a half-angry shake of her head. "I suppose he’s going to stick safe indoors at his desk."

"Because I told him to," her father interjected. "Don’t think that he’s safe anywhere where he’s told to and to do what he’s told. If anything ever should happen to me, remember you can trust Marty Davies."

"But nothing is going to happen to my dad," the girl protested almost relapsing into her former alarm. "Of course not. And, when I’m going to change myself into a crook and wander down among the dives where the man I want is most likely to be hiding. You’ll stick close to the nerve, Dorothy?"

"Yes, daddy," the girl answered as she kissed him and let him go.

A half hour later a man dressed in a suit of prison-made clothes and whose face bore the stamp of everything that the police attribute to incorrigible criminals, let himself out of the commissioner’s home and wandered listerionly through the Mews in the direction of the secret plans of Congregal. During the six days which followed, Commissioner of Police Moran lived with and in the underworld against which he warred. In dress, appearance and manner of speech he was perfectly what he wished to seem—a discharged convict hiding himself away from police surveillance while he reticently laid his plans for new depredation. Night after night behind barred doors and closely shuttered windows, he drank solatary glasses of illicit "hootch" in crook-world gathering places and listened for a chance remark, a stray word, an unguarded comment on the murder of Freckles, the newsboy, which would betray the speaker’s interest in, or special knowledge of, the crime. And each night he was disappointed. Not once did he hear the murderer mentioned.

If there had been a bank robbery in New York, a big jewel burglary, any important crime in which the underworld and its denizens were interested, Moran knew with surety he would have heard guarded whispers of laudation, comment, speculation. But as far as the murder was concerned it might never have happened for all the interest it evinced.

ONE by one, Moran checked up the list of the known pals and intimates of the dead Blacky Gillooly. Most of them were either dead or in prison. Of the few who were judicially brainwashed, the elimination, the crook world seemed to have lost sight. Gillooly belonged to a dead past; the names of the few who were practically living in doors where once their names were synonyms of celebrity. Moran tried the drug dens, from the first he realized that the murderer he sought must be a man deranged by hatred or something more ter-}

(Continued on Page 30)
The Missing Button
By Addison Lewis

PART II

PRESTON laughed. "Thought I was planning hari-kari, did you? Well, hardly. Do you think we've got a notion we aren't so far from clearing up this tangle?" He came back to the chair.

"We'll push on to that first house," he said to the driver, pointing to a tiny light several hundred yards beyond the further end of the bridge. The car started and in a moment stopped in the dooryard of a small bungalow. Preston struck a match and glanced in. "You won't step in," he said.

"It's eighty-three now," he said. "We've a full hour till my friend Besser returns. Let's go on to the old chateau, Ian, a road house about a mile down this road, and get some supper." The meal was eaten in silence, for there was a tenseness in the air unconsciously reflected in all three. Something momentous seemed about to happen. Joan and the detective felt it, and Joan was convinced Preston was quietly sure of it. They ate hurriedly, and as soon as the check was brought, Joan and Gray were anxious to start back. But Preston insisted on waiting until it was after nine-thirty, the appointed time for Besser's return. It was about nine-thirty-five when the driver, at Preston's order, stopped the cab a full half block from the house. They got out and walked the remainder of the distance.

THERE appeared to be more lights about the house than when they had first seen it—lights and movement. Several people were sitting in the front window or "parlor," and a young girl was playing the piano.

Preston rang the bell. A woman with gray hair and a pleasant face, and about sixty, answered. "Is Mr. Besser here?" he asked.

"You mean George. Yes, he just got back," she answered.

The three entered the tiny hall. There was some confusion in the "parlor," as its occupants vacated the back part of the house, scuttling "company." "Oh, George, some folks to see you," called the woman to her grandmother.

A slim young man with light, thin hair, a large nose and a receding chin, stepped from the inner room and recognized him. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and without his uniform, but he was unmistakably the starter at Layton's.

Preston extended his hand. "Perhaps you don't remember me, Mr. Besser?"

The other hesitated. "Suddenly he burst out, "You're the guy they jpged for Thorne's murder."

"Correct," said Preston. "Detective Smith, Besser," and myself came out this evening to have a little talk with you."

"That's right," said the starter.

"And you don't know my brother and sister. They won't spill anything.""

"All right," said Preston. "It doesn't matter much anyhow." He sat down deliberately, and there was a moment of silence.

"The first thing we 've to establish," Preston began, "is this. They tell us that when your operator on No. Three car, Tony Luigo, disappeared, he ran away with your uniform coat. Is that true, Mr. Besser?"

"Who said so?" exclaimed the starter. "It's a lie. I've got the coat right here in the house."

"Exactly," said Preston. The starter went to the hall and brought back a neatly pressed and freshly dry-cleaned blue uniform coat. Preston took from him and examined it critically. He sniffed. "Freshly dry-cleaned, eh?"

"Yes, the store is full of dirt and dust, I have to send it to the cleaners two or three weeks."

"That's easy—so he wouldn't tell. Luigo was the biggest man I ever had work on a car. He'd try to talk to every woman who rode with him."

"There were two or three others besides Besser on this memorable journey to-night, but I think we'll have to go faster to make them quite clear to you. Now I must go to bed, as it is past midnight. Please don't tell Jimmie, as he thinks I'm wonderfully lucky and all that, but I'm going to have a good old-fashioned cry."
The Face With the
By Paul

Three crosses on his forehead!

Why?
The Spanish girl tells you why,
Smiling, as she talks.

name is Guthrie—Bob Guthrie. And your name is what?
I told him that my name was what it is—and that is not the name I give to you—Pepita Ortiz—though it is a great deal like it. He came closer, grasped my arm softly.
"You're a beauty," he said again. And he kissed me.
I fought him. My clawing fingers left a blazing trail down one of his cheeks. He staggered back.
"You little tiger cat!" he burst out. "But wait. I'll show you!"

He grabbed my arm again. He forced me out into the middle of the corridor.
"Now," he mock-d, pointing toward a big policeman who stood under the green glare just beyond the corridor, "you may see the law.
All I have to do is to call him—and then—"
"And then," I panted, "then I will kill myself!"
I meant it. It was the Spanish blood boiling to desperate heat. The man looked at me. He seemed thoughtful. A queer expression flitted across his face.
"Poor kid," he said at last, his voice gentle and persuasive. "You're no common thief. I want to apologize. Poor kid! You're in trouble. What is it?"
He led me over to a darkened bench in the corner.
His words came softly, gently. I felt myself being bewitched by his tone, his words, his manner. No, I told myself, gratefully, he was not a beast. He would only try to help me.
And I told him about myself. I told him how in my native Southwest I had been born of the pure, sparkling, warm Spanish blood. I told him how I had learned to dance when I was a little girl, while music from the violin and the accordion and the twelve-stringed Mexican guitar led me on. It was the Spanish dances I danced, with the castanets clicking with the motion of my body, of my flying feet. I told him how my friends had applauded.
Ah, it is the New Mexican people who love dancing. You should go to the towns about Albuquerque if you would see them dance. You should go to that old Spanish town in a canyon nearby, where sheep and goats move and flutter in a monotonous mass, where low houses of adobe cluster into a cool settlement—brown earth and a deep arroyo and huge green cottonwoods and always the blue of sky above... It is here that I danced, and sometimes at the beaux Felix and Juan and Ambrosio would fight each other, so jealous were they of my favor. Never had anyone danced as I did, they vowed, and I believed them.
I told this Guthrie all of this. I told him about...
[Page 13 is missing]
[Page 14 is missing]
Washington Square, and thus, fortunately not far from where I was.

When I reached the old-fashioned, brown-stone front in which he dwelt, I was relieved to find no external evidences of tragedy. Evidently the police had not been summoned. There was no crowd.

The quiet-faced, middle-aged woman with a dirty child tugging at her skirts, who answered the door bell betrayed no agitation. Plainly she had seen or heard nothing alarming. Whatever had been done had been done swiftly and silently.

**First of a Great Series of the DR. BLITZ MYSTERIES Told by Greer, Master Detective Written by a Master of Mystery Fiction**

"Then he wasn't dead?"
"Dead? Dead? What's all this talk about dead? Come inside here, before my landlady, who listens to everything, gets the idea that you are an undertaker!"

I walked in, thoroughly angry, and faced Doctor Blitz as he closed the door.

"Didn't you inform me over the telephone fifteen minutes ago that Barnard had been killed?"

Doctor Blitz looked at me as if he seriously doubted my sanity.

"I did nothing of the kind!" he denied stoutly.

"Didn't you tell me that a shadow was coming through that window after you?"

"I didn't tell you anything after I left your office this morning. And I am beginning to be sorry that I told you anything then!"

"I sat down on a chair and looked at Doctor Blitz in a foggy haze of perplexity. The whole matter had suddenly become much more intricate than I had imagined it to be."

"Why did you send Barnard home?" I asked him. "I told you to guard yourself every instant. You are taking desperate chances with your life!"

"POOH! POOH!" he cried, his characteristic little squeak creeping into his voice. "Nothing of the kind. You can't imagine how foolish I felt, sitting here with that big ox standing guard over me. I regretted the whole arrangement. I am a man, I will not be an infant, I will not be made an infant of, Mr. Greer. When I got to thinking this matter over, I decided to chase him away and I did chase him away. I'll take my chances with God, man or devil, without a priss-fighter to protect me!"

"I admire your courage," I replied, "but not your common sense!"

"Humph!" was his reply.

I was beginning to believe that Lesser was right in his conviction that Doctor Blitz was mentally unbalanced. Perhaps the old investigator had deceived me after all. He had seemed so sane that I had been completely taken in. But he had told (Continued on Page 27)
AROUND the disappearance of half a dozen murders, and a whole troupe of apparitions and phantoms, D. W. Griffith brings to the screen a new motion picture: One Exciting Night, which is now being given at the Apollo Theatre.

One is asked on the program not to tell the story. It is not divulging too much, however, to say that a young man named Fairfax who owns an old house that has been unoccupied for years and, incidentally, to fall in love with a young woman betrothed to a rather disreputable rake of a man. The young man, tempt his fate, once tried his hand and was observed and detected by the rakish young man. He invites the girl in love with young Fairfax. He invites her to come to his estate to spend some time there. Two murders are committed: one murder is due to the illegal proceeds from bootlegging, which has been going on there for quite some time. The other is due to the fact that the house has been deserted for nearly a century, and spirits, demons, and demons haunt the place. The earnest young men and women who come to the estate are driven out and punished by the fiends. The long series of plots and counterplots, the mainsprings of the story, come to a climax in the last few minutes of the picture. The story is well told, the acting is good, and the picture is exciting, even for those who have seen it before.
a million dollars, two mysterious 
haunting and vanishing spectres, appar-
itions, and an eerie atmosphere. The 
producer has built his latest moving picture, 
which has been given its Broadway presentation at the 
Palace Theatre, New York, and the secret of the plot 
will be told in the following sketch. The story 
concerns itself with a large Southern estate with a fine 
manor house and gardens. A man returns home to open up his 
estate and falls in love with a very beautiful girl who is already 
moved by the charm of the place and the man with a lot of money. The girl's 
father had disappeared under mysterious circumstances and left her in the care of a 
man with a lot of money. The girl's 
teacher, a mysterious stranger named Svengali, 
seizes the opportunity to win her heart. 

The girl's father, a mysterious stranger named Svengali, 
seizes the opportunity to win her heart. 

Svengali, a man with a mysterious past, 
returns to the estate to claim his inheritance. 
He is a master of illusion and manipulation, 
and his presence creates a sense of 
unease among the inhabitants of the estate. 

The plot thickens as Svengali 
manipulates the young girl into 
believing he is her true father, 
and she falls deeply in love with him. 

The bookcase 
opens like a 
bookcase in a 
room with 
secrets hidden within. 

The bookcase opens like a 
bookcase in a 
room with 
secrets hidden within. 

Svengali reveals himself as a 
sorcerer and begins to manipulate 
the girl's emotions, causing her 
to doubt her own sanity. 

The climax of the story 
follows as Svengali 
uses his powers 
to control the 
manor house 
and its inhabitants. 

The story ends with a 
thrilling escape, 
where the girl 
recognizes the 
true nature 
of Svengali 
and manages 
to free herself 
from his control. 

The story is a surprise. It will come to your 
every night, to be thrilled, to be shocked, to 
be amazed. It is a truly exciting and 
scary experience.
TWENTY years before the opening of the story, Bob Somers, a captain in the American army on duty at Peking, during the Boxer uprising, had tried to rescue a jewel casket from a Lama priest who had been attacked and wounded by a German soldier. A precious jewel, "The Dragon's Eye," had been abstracted from the casket and the priest was commissioned to devote his life to its recovery. Somers' son was now assistant to George W. Black, a Wall Street magnate. He and Black's secretary, Miss Carter, had discovered and reported a forgery which Black knew was committed by his daughter, Gertrude. She has been plugging at roulette under the guidance of a false friend, Susie Walcott, in league with Andreas Whitmore, to whose account the forged check was drawn. Gertrude is rescued from a guilty tribunal to find a burglar prowling near her bed. She has drawn an automatic from beneath her pillow, but the intruder turns her for her trembling hands and adds to her terror by reminding her of the $80,000 forged check. In the morning she is discovered chloroformed and her jewels missing. An envelope addressed to George Wolfgang Schwitters is pinned to her coverlet. Mr. Black reads the letter: "Is the address on the envelope correct? Or is your name really George Washington Black? What I want to say to you is that I came here to look for certain jewels. I didn't find them, particularly a beautiful star ruby. What have you done with it? You know the one I mean. The day following Black is the victim of a financial coup, involving a huge loss, and all he is able to learn is that a wealthy Chinaman is at the bottom of it.

BLACK stood for a few moments in the middle of the room after the departure of the secretary to usher in the caller. There was a vague feeling of its being more dignified to be at his desk, he seated himself there and waited. Presently the door opened, and a tall Chinese was ushered in by Miss Carter. He was dressed in full Chinese costume. He bowed ceremoniously as he entered, and the magnate in a hoarse voice bade him be seated. He took the indicated chair and sat there in silence till Black's nerves could endure it no longer and forced him to cry out. "Well?"
"Yes sir," responded the visitor suavely in good English. "I was told you were a collector of porcelains. I have a magnificent vase of the early Ming period, and..."
"What!" almost screamed the tortured financier. "You want to sell me something? That's what you came for?"
"If you please sir."
"And that's all?" in a roar of increasing volume as if a weight had been lifted from his chest. "This is a wonderful specimen, sir," expostulated the visitor earnestly. "It was offered to me..."
"Get out, you fool!" broke in Black, at once relieved and furious. "Get out! Go, I tell you!"
That visitor was not surprised, and backed away, bowing in his courteous way. "I am very sorry," he said; "I was told..."
"No, no, nothing of the kind were told! Get out!"
"Yes sir, yes sir. But there is my card, sir, if you should reconsider about the vase."
He threw his card on the desk, and walked with dignity to the door. Opening it he faced Black. "This vase,"
he began when Black roared out, "Go! go!"
"What's the matter," the Chinaman went on importunately, "was found in the Summer Palace near Peking when the Germans looted it.
He said he had left it, but that he said this, leaving the financier in a stupor of surprise. He knew the reference of the looting of Peking was not accidental. He leaned forward and picked up the card. It was perfectly blank, but it was redolent of sandalwood. "Gott!" he cried; "it was one of them."

He hesitated, went to the door, opened it, and looked out at his secretary.

He rang for his secretary, and when she came, he told her to go after the Chinaman and bring him back. She returned before many minutes and told him that the man had refused to return, but had sent the message that if he wished to communicate with him, his address was Peking, China. The street Mr. Black would know.

He let his secretary go without a word. It was quite certain now that his feet were Chinese, and that they knew of the occurrence back in Peking on that hot day of June, 1900.

Again he took to pacing the floor, going over and over the circumstances surrounding his obtaining the jewels. He couldn't see how it was possible for them to know anything. Or even if they knew what could they prove? But, after all, the reasoning didn't satisfy them. They did know and they were carrying on a successful, secret campaign right up until the war wouldn't do him any good. But here a new thought came: how long would his enemies be content with private notes for his eyes alone? How long would it be before they were spreading rumors about him?

S UDDENLY he flung himself into his chair and caught up his telephone. He asked for his lawyer and soon had him on the wire. "See here, Charlie," he said, "I need a good, reliable detective for an important piece of work. Do you know one?"
"Why, yes, I happen to know a particularly clever one. The only thing is he's a German or an Austrian—somebody of that sort. Perhaps you have a prejudice against—"
"Sure! If you don't want to send him, do you?"
"Right away."

So it happened that in about an hour a heavily built man in a broad hat and broad shoulders was ushered into the private office. He had grey hair and wore a pair of thick glasses over his prominent eyes.

"Your name is Sheffel, a detective?" queried Black.

The man studied him carefully for several seconds before responding, "Yes, I am Sheffel and a detective, and I warn you that my prices are high and that you will not pay me unless it is an important case." He spoke with a faint German accent.

"It is important, and I am willing to pay a good price for your services. Here are the facts."

"One moment! Do you retain me?"

"My retaining fee is five thousand dollars, if you please.

Certainly George W. Black would have been angry at the interruption, but there was something in the imperturbability and the brusqueness of this man that impressed him. And that was at his wit's end. So without a word he drew his own private check book from his pocket and made out the check for the required amount.

The other took it, scanned it carefully and put it in his wallet. "Now," he said, "go on!"

"As he is as possible the facts are these: I have an enemy who in some way acquaints himself with my plans and then swarms them. He has made me lose large sums of money in this way. I have reason to believe it is a Chinaman who is at the bottom of it. I want you to discover who the man is so that I can fight back."

"A Chinaman?" repeated Sheffel. "It doesn't seem like the kind of thing a Chinaman would do. Do you speak of operations on the Street?"

"Yes."

"Why do you suspect a Chinaman?"

"Because every note smells of sandalwood."

Sheffel leaned back in his chair and studied the other for a few seconds. "Mr. Black," he said finally, "you are not telling me everything. Of course, I can guess a good deal from what you tell me, but believe me, if you want good service you'd better tell me everything without reserve. You don't want me to know the whole story, naturally, but before I have gone far I shall know it anyhow, so..."
“How will you know it?” demanded the startled man.

“I shall put two and two together. For instance, I know already that once in the past you injured a Chinaman and you made out that you have reason to fear his efforts at revenge.”

“Why do you say so?” demanded Black, disturbed.

“It is childishly simple. No Chinaman would act in the way you describe unless he had a very strong motive. I am sure it is Black. I know of no Chinaman in a position to do what you tell me has been done. If affairs are as you describe, then you have a powerful organization to fight and not one man. You’d better trust me or not use me. I always tell my employers that.”

“But—but,” stammered Black, “I don’t see why you need to know.”

“You mean,” broke in Sheffel quietly, “you don’t want to reveal to me the wrong you did. You are foolish. I shall know everything in a very little while, anyhow. Why already I know that you are German and that you have been in China. Probably at the time of the Boxer uprising, when you were in the ranks.”

“Good God!” ejaculated Black.

SHEFFEL was watching him keenly, and went on. “At the bottom of the affair is some loot. You brought away something of religious significance—jewelry, probably?”

Sweat broke out all over the terrified man. He felt as one might who had evoked a spirit he could not control. And yet he could not dismiss him now. He knew too much.

“I will tell you everything,” he said despairingly. “It will be better if you want me to help you.”

“Remember,” insisted Black, “I did only what everybody was doing. He studied the other. “I can see you are clever. I believe you can help me. You will keep your own counsel?”

“Certainly. Why should I do anything else? How would I profit by telling your secrets to anyone?”

“Of course. But your story, please.”

Even though he was sure it was the wisest thing for him to do, the ex-private in the German army was reluctant to reveal that chapter in his life. He hesitated, he went to the door and opened it and looked as if he was basely engaged at her desk; he closed the door and tried to feel sure it was tightly closed. He returned to his desk and began rocking his brow.

And all the while Sheffel, with a faint smile, compound of contempt and amusement on his thick lips, followed his movements.

Finally Black spoke, and gathering confidence as he went on, though with many interjections exculpatory of himself, told the story of that June day in Beijing. Everything he knew but one, and that his listener drew from him.

“This officer that you brained—”

“I stunned him with a ball.”

“Well, stunned then. You leave the impression that he was a German officer. Was he?”

“No,” the other stammered, “he was an American. But he had no business looting; the American soldiers were forbidden to loot.”

Sheffel laughed. “Yes, I remember that. They were very proud of it. Was he looting? Oh, you’d better tell the truth about it. It makes no difference to me, but it may to you. Was he looting?”

“No,” was the sudden response, “he had just driven off two American soldiers who were robbing the priest; and he was helping the priest when I came up.”

Sheffel shrugged his heavy shoulders. “You see! you did not tell me before that it was a priest. Now describe the jewels.”

“There were many diamonds and one big star ruby, the finest I ever saw.”

“And where is that now?”

“Is my box in the safety deposit.”

Sheffel nodded his head slowly. “It is all quite plain now. That ruby is wanted for its religious significance, and you have been terrorised for the purpose of getting it from you.”

“Yes, yes! Do you advise me to give it up?”

“To those damned yellow heathens? No,” answered Sheffel, contemptuously. “Now that we understand the meaning of the attack on you, we can beat them. It may cost you, much, much money.”

“I don’t care how much it costs.”

“You will have to pay me much money, also.”

“You shall make your own price.”

“Then we understand each other. Pay no attention to these notes, and undertake no deals. Just mark time until you hear from me.”

VIII

I was a week later that Black was holding another interview with Sheffel, only this time it was in his library at the special request of the detective.

Black was haggard and nervous. In spite of any confidence he had had in Sheffel he had been affected by the daily notes he had been receiving from his enemies. “Have you made any progress?” he demanded hoarsely.

“Much. But before I begin my story tell me if that beautiful secretary of yours is your daughter.”

“Gott! no! My daughter is—”

“I am not speaking of your legitimate daughter. Is that girl an illegitimate child of yours?”

“Certainly not. I have no such child. Why do you ask such a preposterous question?”

“Have you wronged her in any way? Have you wronged her mother?”

“I have wronged no woman. Why do you ask?”

“I ask because that girl resembles you and because she has German blood in her. I am not ceasing about such things. Go back in your memory. It is important.”

“Naturally she knows much, but nothing of great importance. At any rate nothing much until it is an accomplished fact.”

“But if she were to tell all she knows from day to day, it might help your enemies in their attack on you?”

“Does she tell? Damn her! I’ll soon settle her.”

“Every night she has been going to Chinatown, probably to make a report. She has undoubtedly been spying on you.”

Black fairly panted in his fury. The girl he had bullied and brow-beaten, a spay! “I’ll—!” he began.

“You’ll do nothing until I give the word and we will beat those yellow devils. Now listen! But first tell me two things: When did your secretary first come into your employ? And why have you never made a public display of the ruby?”

“She came to me about a year ago. As for the ruby, I never needed to sell it and I have done nothing with it because it is so magnificent that I knew I would have to account for it in some way.”

“Good! That means that it was not known until about a year ago that you had the ruby. Now for what I have learned. That ruby, which is one of the finest in the world, belongs in the head of a god in the form of a dragon, and is known as the dragon’s eye. It is the most precious symbol of the lamas, a powerful priesthood with headquarters in Tibet. So it has a religious significance. But also it is a symbol of temporal power and is held in the highest reverence by a great, secret political society, whose aim it is to rule all the yellow men of Asia.”

“Gott!” gasped Black. “I’ll give it up.”

“You will be a fool if you do. It has enormous value as a jewel, alone, and still more in its religious and political aspects. They must be made to pay millions for it. Besides there is more.”

“What more?” He moistened his lips with the tip of his tongue.

(Continued on Page 28)
The Mystery of the Ten Mummies
by Fulton Oursler

When Jeremiah Buffum came back to Hopkinsville, after a trip in foreign parts, he brought with him ten mummies. There were astute citizens of Hopkinsville who regarded these anhydrous, arsencite relics with deep suspicion. They knew Jeremiah’s business and they knew Jeremiah. Jeremiah was in the ukulele business. His factory was in Hopkinsville; the wood from which the brown little thrum-to-tum were turned grew in the forests of that grand old State of New Hampshire, and the wires were made in Pittsburgh. Jeremiah took the rough elements of strings and wood and in his one-story factory evolved the ukuleles. Then, to secure local color, he shipped them to Hawaii, where the natives on Waikiki beach wondered what on earth they were. In another month or so they came back to Jeremiah with a hula hula flavor that sold them up and down this sophisticated land.

Not many people knew this, but certain astute citizens of Hopkinsville were fully informed. In consequence, they were abysmally mistrustful when they learned, after some sharp detective work on their part of the curious station agent, that there were mummies in the big crates on the red-painted railroad platform. Jeremiah only looked soulful and mysterious when questioned about it. The inhabitants of Hopkinsville were certain of one of two things—either there were not genuine mummies in the packing cases, or else Jeremiah had some deep money-making design upon them.

But that was as far as the inhabitants ever got to knowing the amazing truth. The days and months went on; the ten mummies, baking and weltering in the hot New England sun and being drenched in the soulless down-East rain, were finally removed. They were shipped to Bangor. From that time on, nobody in Hopkinsville ever heard of them again.

Now, I was with Jeremiah Buffum in Egypt. I know all about those ten mummies, and I purpose to tell all that I know, here and now. The silence so often and so earnestly enjoined on me by Jeremiah Buffum from that never-to-be-forgotten morning on the desert east of Cairo, until our parting at the New York dock, is now to be broken. Believing his protestations about abominating publicity and the limelight of notoriety, I held back the story. But no more.

Irrefutable evidence has driven me to this step. When I learned absolutely that Jeremiah Buffum had, in spite of all that we had learned from the old man with the two noses, violated the sanctity of those vitrified “tenements of clay”—then, without more ado, I resolved to out with it.

I met Jeremiah in Cairo—in the Musky, in old Cairo, to be exact, where there are the real bazaars and the real rug merchants, and where story-men still relate the Arabian Nights to fascinated natives, gathered in wide circles in the cafes. One glance at Jeremiah’s pudgy figure, his round owlish eyes and puffy red face told me much. I saw him wave a fat, red hand at a veiled creature, and I understood much more.

“Blight fellow,” I told myself confidently; “is a New England deacon, who thinks he’s having a devil of a time. At some reckless period in his career, I’ll bet he was at a carnival show and paid ten cents to go in the ‘Streets of Cairo’ tent. He’s never gotten over the hoochie-koochie women he saw there. He’s over here now, looking for the real thing!”

Which, as you shall see, was only half the truth. Jeremiah was flirting—but that was not the great urge which sent him from Hopkinsville to Cairo. That purpose I myself did not fully understand until this morning. As delicately as I could, now, I hailed him and explained some of the rudimentary ideas of barbaric chivalry. He smiled a little pathetically, agreed to desist and proposed walking back to the hotel with me.

“Do you know where I can buy, steal or beg any mummies?” he asked me abruptly, on the way.

I told him they were now very difficult to secure; he assured me he had already found that out—
"but, gosh, I’ve got to get ‘em!" he wound up. But when I asked him gently what he would do with the fat once he had got hold of it, he set his fat, red little head to one side, cocked his eye knowingly, winked, and chuckled, and said it was a nifty day if it didn’t rain.

Our acquaintance, thus begun, continued through various trips to famous spots, and came to the advantageous, dazzling climax of the gymnastics a few days before I had planned to leave Cairo. Some of the old-timers at our hotel had been telling us of the Temple of the City of Burnished Gold—a mythological metropolis, believed by many superstitious natives to exist out on the desert—an ancient, maddening storehouse of gold that glitters so much that it can be seen for miles in the glow of the evening sun.

An Englishman in the party volunteered the information that on the desert to the east of us there was an ancient Sun Temple which could be seen for miles in the sun, and which some people believed had given rise to the legend.

"It is rarely visited by tourists, you see," he concluded. "We Englishmen have never been surprised; it wouldn’t be at all surprising if there were: it was seldom visited, and mummies were often found in such places."

"Really?" said one of the Englishmen. "We wouldn’t be at all surprised if there were: it was seldom visited, and mummies were often found in such places."

"You are remarkable," the Englishman said. "I am not hard to persuade. My own interest in the place sprang entirely from my love of history and my passion for the old and the picturesque."

On the seventeenth of September, Jeremiah Buffum and I mounted camels. We were accompanied by no one except a surlly, sullen guide, who had been induced to go with us only by enormous bribes. Our destination lay three hours' jogging from Cairo, a wearying prospect, which the evident timidity of our guide did little to soothe. He was afraid of its length, and cut off his head and eat it.

But we encountered no thieves throughout those dreadful, hot three hours. On the horizon, long before we reached it, we could see the temple, magnificently preserved, its pillars gleaming against the desert sand. It was like a hymn of praise to the Sun God raised by the wilderness. As we approached near to it, I made out that it was built much after the style of the Temple of Ceres at Paestum, except that its columns were not so tall, and the front approach was wider and much more magnificent. Of course, the roof had fallen in long before. It was simply a shell of marble shafts, with a portion of the front of the roof raised perilously over the entrance. Piled about it in picturesque profusion were great blocks that once were part of the roof and wall. It looked as if children of the giants had torn down the house and tossed the blocks like toys.

"Crash! It looks like the Bangor bank broke up!" ejaculated Jeremiah.

Our guide would not mount the steps, so securing the camels close by, we made our way cautiously up the "because it is a wearying, and for all my weariness, I enjoyed the place. My own love for this glorious land with its marvelous history made this a place very appealing. What priests, I asked myself, had swung their smoking censers over these stones where now with big and profane feet tred Jeremiah Buffum? His feet were big, I was sure of it. I turned to confirm my belief—and he had disappeared.

If one of those mighty monoliths had opened itself, and had had its doors and closed again, he could not have gone more utterly, more completely. Jeremiah Buffum had vanished. He was gone. Then I heard the voice, nay, the roar, against my camel. There was the temple, the stones, the sky, and the desert—but Jeremiah Buffum had vanished.

"I am as strange, as rigid, as silent as one of those pillars of stone. It was his door that was closed, and I could hear the echo. And to my ears, came a slight, distant sound—like a wall. It was Jeremiah; I was sure of it. It was Jeremiah! I was in distress, but where? Repeatedly I heard him calling to me for help.

"Get me out! Help! This is an awful place! Quick! Help! Get me out!"

BUFFUM, wherever he was, and meanwhile I was trying to find him. And presently I came upon a court.

Jeremiah had put his foot on some hinge, or spring bolt, or some sort of mechanical contrivance of ancient cleverness, that held in place one of the flagstones, which wasn’t a flagstone at all, but a trapdoor. As was natural under the circumstances, Jeremiah had gone down. He was at the bottom of a big black hole, immediately behind one of the big marble shafts.

I ventured as near the hole in the floor as I dared and peered over.

Beneath me was darkness, with a mussy, cellular-like smell fuming up at my nose insatiably. Mingle with this smell was another—an aroma, dimly reminiscent of museums and that brought back into my head stories of the days before the Jewish captivity, of Potomelis and Pharaohs and of many legends of the Nile.

"Are you hurt, Buffum?" I inquired.

"I don’t know, but my God I’m scared!" he groaned back.

"Get me out of here; please get me out of here!"

I assured him I would do my best and my voice must have expressed my confidence for a plan had already entered my mind. Going back to our camels, I jerked the nose reins from them, quickly knotted them together and carried the line back to the hole in the floor.

"I am going to drop these reins down to you, Buffum," I called. "Catch hold, and don’t let go, and I’ll pull you out."

My strength was quite equal to the task. Buffum, who had passed a good deal of time as a gentleman, and I started to pull him up. Of a sudden, however, there was a sudden and unaccountable jerk as if I had caught something. I grew into a steady pull I could not resist. I slipped to the brink; I tried to catch myself, I missed, I went over and pitched forward into the gloom.

I fell on top of Jeremiah Buffum, eleven feet under the floor of the Sun Temple.

Between grunts and groans Jeremiah cursed me for seven kinds of a fool as we got straight on our feet again. He threw the reins repeatedly up against the circle of light, high over our heads, with some hazy idea, I suppose, of lassowing a monolith and climbing out that way.

For myself, I did not appreciate the real danger of our situation in the keen pleasure, the romance, the adventure of our predicament. Undoubtedly we were in one of the secret corridors of the Heliopolis; no one could tell what new marvel might confront us at any moment.

"Look here, Buffum!" I exclaimed. "There’s some other way out of here. There must be. Let’s go exploring and see what we can find."

Jeremiah had no time to answer.

"That is quite unnecessary, gentlemen. I will conduct you.

Out of the black shadows behind us had come the sudden, sepulchral voice. It was a voice with a ghost-like melancholy and gloom about it I disliked at once. Buffum’s insinuating sort of smile.

"Who in the world are you?" I managed to quaver.

My eyes were searching the darkness, and now, having grown more acute to the place, they made out a singular figure standing close to us. It was an old man, with long and tangled beard. He was attired in long shrouds, and short, short-waisted, exceedingly old-fashioned coat, a flowing tie and a hat the like of which I had seen my father wear when I was a boy. He carried a walking stick.

"I have waited so long for someone to come!" he croaked giddily. "I’m so glad to have company now!"

Determined to make the best of the fantastic situation in which I found myself, I turned up to the patriarchal stranger, prepared to offer my hand, but he raised his staff and halted me with a surprise.

The old fellow had two marks on his face: one long, one short, and one turned to each cheek.

He saw and understood my expression.

"From the fall," he explained dizzily. "Thirty years ago I fell down that hole. I’ve never been able to get out. I am a Yale graduate; I am from Illinois. I broke my nose when I fell down that hole. It must look pretty bad, the way you look at it. I’ve never seen it. No, I’m from Illinois. I’ve found lots of things down in this place, but no mirror yet."

I couldn’t talk to him then. I wandered if Jeremiah and I were doomed to keep him company for another thirty years. It made me dizzy just to look at him.

"Say!" stuttered Jeremiah fearfully. "What do you get to eat down here?"

"Lizards! Lizards and snakes, and a few frogs on Sundays. I’ve kept track of the time since I’ve been down here—every day. This is the seventh of October, and a Wednesday, isn’t it? Rh?"

Buffum gulped, and I groaned inwardly, but my nerves were not yet broken.

"I was a Yale graduate and a tourist, I tell you. I’m from Illinois. I fell down that hole. There’s no way to get out of here."

"No way at all. I spent twenty years looking. The last ten years I’ve got some kind of respite to it. You gentlemen will have to stay. There’s lizards and snakes enough down here to feed an army, but the frogs are mine. I’m going to show you around in a minute. I certainly was glad when I saw you fall through there like I did.

When the thin fellow tried to pull you out, I pulled you both down again. Come on, now, and let me show you around!"

(Continued on Page 30)
SHANGCHADED

by
Paul Hervey
Fox

It was a couple of months after that that my mother died, and meanwhile I was hunting every-where in a wild sort of way to find my sister. All I could find was that she'd left town. I knew what she'd done, and kid that I was, I wanted to tear the throat out of the man that had started her. She'd gotten that oxygen at the price of her body and her life.

It was a year later I found her—in Albany, and the Gut. She was painted and a wreck. I broke down and sobbed like a baby when I saw her. I got her up to the place where I was staying. But it was too late. She didn't say anything much, just looked at me with her big sad eyes. And in a couple of months, like my mother, she was dead.

That was the beginning. I hadn't stolen since that first night, but now I hadn't anyone or anything to stop me. I hated the whole world, and there wasn't a thing I wouldn't do to show it. I drifted along to New York, got into a gang, and pretty soon had earned my place.

I played the game right, I'll say that for myself. I didn't get my fool neck in trouble by trying to work without protection. I made connections with politicians who could help me as much as I helped them. Then I did their dirty work, and I saw a lot. I gloried in it, too, for most of the time I was yegging swells or taking away money from the kind of people I hated—people who had always had money, never knew what it meant to be without it, people who had killed my mother and my sister.

It was around my fortieth birthday when I woke up one morning in a hangout called Benny's. I went downstairs to the bar and had a drink. I was doing some tall thinking. That morning a letter had reached me from my Uncle Bill in Nevada. He was my father's brother, and had never attempted to keep in touch with the family when we were kids. But now he had written to me, and somehow that letter had been forwarded around until it reached me.

What he wanted was for me to come out and work his ranch with him. He was getting to be an old man, he said. I knew he was a bachelor, and I figured he was pretty lonely. He hinted it would be worth while if I'd come out.

I was forty years old and I hadn't a nickel. Right at that moment I was in one of my busted spells, waiting for a job to break for me. This is all right when you're young under thirty, say, but after thirty you grouch harder when you see nothing ahead of you in the way of security.

I told myself that though my life had satisfied all the bitterness in me, it hadn't paid very well. I knew what would be the end of me, when I wasn't serving society any more. I decided not to chance. The people that used me were as hard as nails.

It sounded mighty tempting, that offer of my uncle's. But I figured I'd led an exciting life too long to settle down among a bunch of cattle with a lot of open space to look at, and your only amusement being to roll your own cigarettes. Still I weighed the chance, and then the chance was de-cided for me. A young fellow I knew, a peo, came into Benny's:

"Hello, Jimmy O'Brien," said he. "I'm looking for you. The big boss sent me."

"Burke?" I asked.

He nodded. "Wants to see you right away."

That was enough. That meant a job for me, and a black one if I knew Boss Burke. He had paid real iron men, and as I said, I needed money.

The man I call Burke here was boss of a down-town ward that had to be handled with gloves. He was big chalk-faced man, very fat and soft-voiced. He wore high collars, and his fat neck seemed to ooze around them. I can still hear that parring voice of his—it was like oil—and see his greenish looking eyes. He did pretty much as he wanted. He wasn't well-known in the newspaper of the world. He liked to play his cards. But Steve Burke had a political pull as big as any man in New York. I was safe, all right, in working for him. There wasn't a cop that would dare touch me, or a judge for that matter.

I FOUND Burke in his office on a side street. It was a dingy looking affair. A second story suite with Real Estate printed on a dirty plate glass window. You'd never think that the man who worked there was pretty near a millionaire. You wouldn't think it anyway when you went in past a swing gate and found yourself in a room with a lot of tired-looking stenographers and clerks working away in a sort of dreamy and hopeless spirit. The place looked as if it hadn't been cleaned for a year. It was dusty, like a business that is run badly.

But when you got inside in the private room where I went, what a change! There was a big soft Turkey-red carpet, and a big mahogany desk, with soft chairs like an old club, and there was Burke, sitting behind his desk, with his bands folded across his stomach, looking at me gently.

"Morning, Jimmy," he said. "Sit down. Help yourself to a cigar. Now then! You need any money, Jimmy?"

I grinned for answer.

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you how you can get it." He pulled out a drawer, and took out a long yellow envelope, neatly fastened with a rubber band.

"There's two hundred and fifty inside of this. This
is advance payment. You get the other two hundred and fifty when the job's done.'

"That suits me, Mr. Burke," I answered. "All I want to know is what you want done."

He looked at me with those greenish eyes of his, and his fat neck seemed almost to swell.

"I don't know what you're looking for. This business is a delicate one. That's why I picked you. There's a boy I want shipped away, a fresh, newly kid."

"'Shameless!' said I," said Steve Burke quietly.

"Where does he hang out?" I asked.

He gave me the address, a place way over on Sixteenth Street in a block of apartments that he owned, and added: "He doesn't live there, but he'll be there most of the time. He hangs around a girl. Her name's Jean Davis. The boy's is Arthur."

I got the information straight, and Boss Burke leaned back and nodded at me to back off. "Now, Jimmy," he said in the same soft voice of his, "work fast. I want results by Thursday night."

"Well, I went to Sixteenth Street the same day. It was falling dark when I got there, but nevertheless I could get a look at Arthur and make a rough plan to go on ahead. The boss's business didn't interest me much, that is, I wasn't curious. When I got there I couldn't for the life of me figure out that he was after someone who had double-crossed him. Certainly no one who lived in a tumble-down place like that could be a political enemy or anything like that.

I pushed open the door and climbed up a dirty stairway. There was a kid on about seven staring at me in the hallway. I chucked him a dime.

"Where's Miss Jean Davis live?" I asked.

He didn't even know, but he pointed to a door. I knocked a couple of times, and presently it was opened. You could have knocked me over with a feather. The girl was the prettiest girl I ever saw in my life looked out at me. She was in a sailor blouse and it was all white, and she was clean and sweet looking. She had big, soft eyes—they seemed to glow in the dimness—and a mouth you'd like to kiss.

It was so astonishing coming upon someone like that, all of a sudden, in that broke-down apartment house, that for about a minute I guess I just stared at her while my mouth opened like a yap. It took me nearly that long anyway before I saw her lip was actually trembling a little, and her eyes almost welling up. She was in trouble, I could see that.

"What is it?" she said at last, in a very gentle, low voice.

"I want to see a man by the name of Dow. Can I find him here?"

"You want to see him?" she said. "But he's sick. He's here now. I—I've been trying to nurse him. You're a friend of his?"

The door was wide, and I stepped in. I was curious now, and I wondered where the girl came in. All of a sudden there was a suspicion. Boss Burke liked women. He'd had his pick, too. It came over me, like a hunch, that I was playing a sort of cat's paw for the boss in some way that concerned this girl.

Well, I gave her a fast look, and left the door, the hall, and opened the door of a room in the rear of the apartment. It was clean inside, but bare as a box. There was a cot in one corner, and a young fellow lying there. He was dead white, and I could see he was a pretty sick man.

He had big, white eyes, and moistened his lips and tried to speak. But he couldn't say anything. I wanted the facts of the case, so I decided to get them bluntly.

"I come from Mr. Burke," I said coolly.

The girl, Jean Davis, turned on me like a little whirlwind, and I knew in a second I had guessed right about things.

"How dare you come inside," she said. "I haven't got the rent, and he knows it. I haven't anything. I told him so. But you can't put me out—not like this! Arthur would die. We haven't any place we could go."

"Yes?" I said in a hard voice.

She put out her hands in a pleading kind of way.

"Oh, I love Mr. Burke. I love Mr. Burke. I can't live without him. He's the only one I can go to, and we haven't any money of any kind we can go to."

"That's your lookout," I said. I was staring at her, and it seemed to me somehow she looked like someone I knew once. Then I guessed who it was. She was a little like my sister. I felt a lump in my throat. I knew I had to get out of there, and get the girl away from this sick fool of myself. I'd been hard in my life, and always used my head. The people I'd been set against were the kind I didn't care about. But this Jean Davis was different. All of a sudden I thought of Steve Burke, and his greenish eyes, with his pudgy arms pawing her, and I felt mad clear through.

I let out a sort of curse, and beat it down the hallway, the girl just behind me. I went outside and shut the door. I felt confused. All at once the door opened and Jean Davis came out.

"Don't go," she said softly, in a queer, muffled sort of voice. "I want to speak to you."

I turned around, and she came up to me slowly. Then she moved nearer, and slowly lifted those big, dark eyes.

"Do you think I'm pretty?" she asked, awfully low.

"Pretty?" I said. "What do you mean?"

She was closer to me now, almost touching me. I was so surprised, I nearly fell over. But I didn't touch her. I just told myself I'd be a fool. The girl was a bad one, all right, and I let myself think she was an angel!

"Maybe, you'd like to love me," she said after that, in something that was almost a whisper. While I was looking at her, all at once she began to sob, and I heard her trying to speak through her sobs. "Oh, God, forgive me, but he'll die. I've got to get money for food and medicines—we haven't anything to eat. And I don't care what happens to me, if he'll only live."

"What are you talking about?" I asked. But I didn't need to ask. I saw it all in a flash. The poor kid was on her uppers. This boy she liked was next to dying in the other room. And she had decided to save him at the price of her own goodness.

It hurt me so I couldn't move. I thought of my sister, and I saw red. And then for the first time in my life I fell down on a job. "How much money do you want?" I asked. "I suppose there's grub and doctors to begin with. And then there's this rent. How long do you owe on that?"

"Three months," she faltered.

I whistled. "I guess you'd like to pay Burke, too."

I looked at her again. She seemed so weak and frightened standing there in the darkness, that I'd have hurt a baby quicker. I put my hand in my pocket, and pulled out the wad Boss Burke had given to me. I split it in half, and handed one of the halves to her. She took it from me in a sort of dazed way, and held it, whimpering as it were. Her head was bent over it, just looking at it as if she was something that was almost a whisper. I turned like a shot. I didn't want any thanks—" from her. And now Arthur was sick, and we haven't any money of any kind we can go to."

However, I won't say I didn't feel cheap the next morning at Benny's. It looked to me then like a dream. Here I was on a job to get rid of this boy, Arthur Drew, and what must I do but go and see that he gets the best of everything in the way of foods and medicines and treatment. I thought of what Boss Burke would do if he ever heard what happened, and I felt uncomfortable. I knew I'd have to stall on this job, and I couldn't figure out what to tell him. Then the next morning I had a message from Burke's office, telling me to report there, and I went around wondering what had happened.

The boss was sitting at his desk just as quiet as ever with his smile not the least changed. He felt easy then. He couldn't have learned anything any way, as I'd told myself fifty times. But his first words shook me up.

"Jimmy O'Brien," he said in his purring voice, "you dirty scut, you! So you double-crossed me the other night, did you?"

He slapped open a drawer, whipped out an envelope with some bills inside of it, and shoved it across towards me. I looked at it, and realized what a blunder I had made. It was the envelope containing the money I'd slipped to Jean Davis a couple of nights before. It was also the envelope that Boss Burke had given me my advance in! Without thinking I'd turned it over to the girl, and it had turned up like a witness against me. I knew there was no use denying anything.

BURKE continued smiling at me. You'd have thought I was his best friend.

"I'm going to send you up, Jimmy," he said. "I can't fix that, I guess. And I'll get someone with real guts to finish this job for me. But before I
put the cops on you, I thought I'd call you over, just out of curiosity, and find out what you mean by it."

I felt pretty down in the mouth. I knew he meant what he said. "I never sent Burke to the hall," I said. "If I hadn't, she'd have gone on the streets for it. And I'd do it again, too."

Burke frowned. He looked surprised. "I didn't know about that," he said. "What happened?"

"I told him about her, and how I had come to do the thing, and when I was through I realized I had saved myself by speaking."

"Jenny gave the money a turn without knowing it. I want her just as she is, and I'm going to let you off. However, I want proof that you're on the level for nearly two months. I'll give you another chance at the same job. You can keep away from the girl. Just get rid of Drew. I'll take care of her."

He smiled at me more than ever. I did some quick thinking. After all, I couldn't fight Boss Burke. If he had his eye on this Davis girl, she was done. I might as well give up trying. Last time he had been hurt she could probably take care of herself. I'd get rid of Arthur Drew just as I'd promised. You see, I hadn't been with Boss Burke long enough, and I'd lived too long for me to start any new scrapes.

Burke had had a long talk, and I mapped out a kind of plan that struck him as all right. That afternoon I went down to West Street and looked up a longshoreman I knew. I told him what I wanted.

Half an hour later I was talking in the cabin of a tugboat in a trap. Captain Burke, he was, and he was a hard-bitten old man with a scar down his cheek, and ugly eyes. He was a rough customer, I could see. I think he asked me for the pleasure of doing it. When in addition I showed him the roll that Burke had given me for the purpose, he went blanked down part of it, his face lit up with greed.

He was sailing that night with the out tide, and was to be at sea for nearly two months before he made port again. And that was in Africa."

"All right, Captain," I said, "I'll be here at nine o'clock tonight. The rest of the money will arrive with me too."

"I'll wait for you," he said, and poured out a couple of bottles of brandy and tobacco.

Then I called up the boss, and told him what I'd done. Meanwhile I'd got a taxicab driver, who was a friend of mine, and we got through as easy as I could. Burke was pleased.

"Jiminy, you've done a good job," he said.

"Africa will hold him, I guess. I'll bring the rest of your pay with me when I come around. Also I'll call up headquarters and have the cops fixed all along your route so you won't have any trouble."

WHEN I'd finished I didn't feel cheerful somehow. I was gloomy the rest of the afternoon, and I was half hoping that the evening wouldn't come. For I'd settled, you see, to shanghaie this sick boy, Arthur Drew, on that trap schooner and get several thousand dollars. With Burke gone, I'd kid gone, Jean Davis wouldn't have a chance. Sick as he was, he kept up his courage. The boss had told me, "It's a good job. I'll give you the money in a few hour and I could see why he wanted to get rid of him so badly. Burke had hounded him in his jobs, put all sorts of obstacles in his way, and without any money or any kind of pull, the kid just kept bobbing up every time like a India-rubber. He had spank all right.

That was about nine o'clock that I met the boss at his club. We got into a cab and went down to Sixteenth Street. We had in a general humor, though he didn't say much. He just chewed on his cigar, and kept looking out of the window as if he couldn't see it.

The plan we'd hit upon was so simple it didn't deserve to be called one. I was to go into the apartment and carry the body downstairs to the taxi I had waiting. The next he knew he would be on board the trap, nosing out into the bay, and I would have my money and the boss his girl. Burke had told me he wanted to come along, and I supposed he had some private idea to realize how weak he was physically. He couldn't have fought a cat. He was rotten with soft living.

BEFORE I knew it, we had arrived at the docks. The dredge had been backed up, and the tender was being straight down to the pier where the tram schooner was lying. There wasn't a cop in sight, everything had been fixed. Burke was sent over by a man in the pay of my pay, Mr. Burke," I said; "you know, the half you promised me when the job was done. I'll take it now, thank you." I felt him squat. But that was all he could do. Presently there were voices aboard the tram, and the skipper and a couple of men came out and walked down the gang-plank. The skipper saw who I was.

"I was just waiting for you," he said. "We sail right away. Is this the man you want me to take care of for a while?"

"Right, Captain," I said. "And look out for him. Lock him up till you're out well and proper. And don't pay any attention to his ravings. He'd tell you he was Napoleon, if you let him. Don't let him try to send any messages or anything."

The skipper shoved his mug forward, and the light of a lantern he was carrying fell upon it.

"Yes," he said in a nasty voice, "and do you think he'll get much chance to back talk with me?"

I knew the answer to that, and I paid him what I'd agreed to, and watched him have Burke carried aboard. I carried the body of the hes, and the head and shoulders disappearing down a hatchway, carried in a sailor's arms. I stuck around a little, and pretty sure I heard the rattle of the gang plank being shoved aboard. Then a tug came alongside, and gently pushed the schooner down stream. I stood watching it go down the harbor. I waited until it disappeared in a bunch of little lights of water traffic.

I thought of the talk his disappearance would stir up, and grinned. I felt satisfied with everything.

Then I turned, found my pal, the cab driver, and went back to the apartment on Sixteenth Street.

I went inside, and saw Jean Davis and the sick boy. They looked at me as if for an explanation. I said:

"The boss wanted me to shanghai you, Drew," I said, "but I shanghaied him instead. He won't be back for a long while. You're got time enough to get well, get a new job, and get married. If I were you, I'd beat it out of the city with your girl. Burke will be back from Afrika or anywhere, and though he can't do much if you're all fixed up, he might show a little grudge.

Jean Davis looked at me with her dark eyes.

"But you," she said, "what's going to become of you? Won't he try to pay you off, after all you've done for Arthurs and me? It's twice you saved us now! Aren't you in danger?"

"Me?" I repeated. "Not much! I'm bound for my Uncle Bill's ranch in Nevada!"

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The Best Bunch of Mystery Tales You ever read will be found in Next week's issue of Midnight Mystery Stories
CHAPTER XVI
What Kit Really Wanted

A HURRIED search revealed the fact that they had taken the motor-car; Leinster said he supposed this was their means of escape. Olive Moberley. But certainly it didn't move Olive to laughter, nor help along the case of Gina Sevener. Once embroidery to Olive that they had wanted to get rid of her and Kit, and the moment they had gone for a breath of air, Mabel, with an unbreakable <m>meat</m> at once. A second later, however, she was ashamed of this thought, and certainly cold reason pointed to little impatience on the runaways' part to be 

"Why, we weren't gone any time!" she kept saying, as she waited with Leinster for the star-burner to get under head. "That's right, 'cuss 'em out—I don't blame you for being mad," Kit said, standing with his hand on the back of the chair. "I'm not exactly mad, but—" 

"But they've ruined the evening, quivered the parting light. "They haven't ruined my evening."

"Do you want to look them up at the theatre?"

"No. they don't deserve it," Olive declared. "If they think we're going to follow them half over New York; if that's their idea of a practical joke, well, it isn't mine. You're not keen for the play; neither am I, now."

"We'll chuck it?" Leinster proposed, as they went toward the cab. "Yes."

"Good. He handed her into the cab, and spoke to the chauffeur. Then, seated beside Olive, he said, "I've told him around the Park. Would you like to come to my rooms later on, and look 'em over? I've brought half of France home with me, and set it up there," he added shyly. "What say?"

"Another time, Kit—and I'm awfully interested in your souvenirs, of course.

The words were lightly spoken, but Olive kept her eyes steadily ahead, and through the pane in front she could see the narrow ribbon of Broadway, then Columbia Circle, and to the right the cool darkness of the Park. Probably he sensed that she was waiting, almost impatiently, for his next words, and a full moment elapsed before he found the ones he wanted. "There's something— or maybe it was a feeling which you and Gina would go mad about, I guess."

"You must remember to let us see it."

He nodded, with an easing of nerves. The cab cut through the Circle, and entered the Park, disappearing down a winding roadway where the mauve light from the arc lamps overhead came glancing through the leafless branches. There was a chill to the air which made the alleys nearly deserted tonight, but Leinster always loved the briskness, while Olive was unconscious of the cold. Indeed, in that moment Olive was insensible to everything but the presence of the man beside her, and as a child waits in the dark, so she waited, impassive as to what, and knowing only that she waited. She had been alone with Leinster before; she had come in from the club that evening with him, and without the chaperonage of a third person, a chauffeur. But that was different—or tonight was. Now she was conscious of Kit beside her every single second. That for a while they said nothing, scarcely moved in the cab, had nothing to do with it. He was here, and she was here, and man and girl scarcely breathed.

WHEN his hand sought and found hers, the act wasn't unexpected, and for a little Olive made no attempt to withdraw it. His words, too, found their pathetic; or perhaps she waited further, with dulled senses.

"This can't go on, dear. His voice was hot and hoarse. "I've got to say these things or choke. I look around, and I don't know what... some people are made of—not flesh and blood, but—"

"It's a farce they're playing. I can't pretend a friendliness which I don't feel; I love you, and want you."

The words were spoken; she drew her cool fingers from his warm, damp clasp.

"Is that fair, Kit?"

"Fair?" he burst forth, "It's fair to ourselves, to the best in us! I love you—surely you care a little in return! And if you care, what else have we to consider? Olive, I want you so, dear!"

She sat very still and straight, and her very attitude seemed to erect a barrier between them.

"How can that be?"

"'You asked at last from dry lips. "Kit, you missus. There's someone—"

"Someone?"

"The girl you are going to marry, yes."

"She—"

"'It—you're friendship or nothing, Kit, I guess, for us."

He laughed loudly, unpleasantly. "Friendship! I tell you, I can't—I won't—play that white lived game. Good heavens, dear, be reasonable! What octogenarian are you quoting anyway? If you will only trust me, Olive—"

"I've always trusted you, Kit," she told him. "I trust you now more. You say you love me. Then, what of Miss Bellwood?"

"What has she got to do with us?" he demanded.

"You mean you aren't engaged to her? Kit, you either are or aren't, and if you are—"

She stopped significantly; in the violet glare of an arc-lamp their glances met.

"Good Lord, Olive, you don't mean to say you're as old-fashioned as all that?" he growled. "Listen, dear; there are some things which a man in my position just has to do. It isn't what we want, always; but what we've got to do. And that means Miss Bellwood."

"Yes, I—I and not Miss Bellwood. Is that what you mean, Kit?"

He muttered savagely. "I wish you'd leave her name out of it, Olive. What has she got to do with us?"

"If you're going to marry her—"

"I expect to marry her, yes. Lord, a man's got to marry sometime or other. But what's that's got to do with us—"

"Everything."

"Olive!"

"I mean it, Kit. I shouldn't have come with you tonight, for I saw the announcement in the papers of your engagement to Miss Bellwood. But it seemed as if... friendship—"

"Friendship?—bah!"

"You don't want me just for a friend, Kit?"

"Olive! What rot you're talking, dear. Good Lord! As if there can ever be friendship between a man and woman! You don't love me—that it."

"Probably it is. I think I'll go home, please."

He leaned forward and caught her by the wrist, indifferent to the fact that he was hurting her, bruising the delicate flesh.

"You can't leave me like this—you shan't do it! Do you take me for a paper-mache man? How can you be so heartless!"

"What is it you want me to do?" she asked quietly.

"Love me, Olive, if you'll only trust me—"

He hesitated, and then, "I swear! You'll never regret it, I swear! There's nothing you can't have. Don't turn away; listen—You care, you must care a lot.

She sat quietly, looking straight ahead of her. "I deserve it; I deserve it all, of course."

Leinster flared up angrily. "What do you mean? I don't understand that high and mighty air at all. I tell you I'm mad about you—noblest thing you don't do, and nothing you can't have! Why, you'd think I was poison! Of course I can't pound out stuff for the newspapers—"

"What?"

"I know all about the flat in the hundreds, where the Johnsons live!" he told her with a short, ugly laugh. "I've been a fool, and let you pull the wool over my eyes long enough, my dear. In the beginning Forrest Moberley
told me you girls were different—on the level; but anybody can put it over on that poor chap. And, by God! a writing-fellow put it over on me! I had been watching, and said you come out of the Johnson's flat with that fellow down in Thirty-fourth Street. I had had an anonymous communication. I was told to go there and watch and I'd find out something to my interest. I went, and I saw with my own eyes, by George! While I sat across the street in a taxicab I got just about ready to show me which way the wind was blowing. I recognized this 'Johnson' immediately—I had seen you with him at the theatre, I knew. Leister, and—and I knew the signs. The man is wild about you! It was in his eyes, in his voice, in his touch. I knew, given the opportunity, you would either come home his affianced wife.

"Or what?"

"Or completely cured," Gina said gently.

"There seemed to me to be a chance that he cared so very much that position, money, Miss Bellwood counted for nothing beside you. I hoped for that, Olive. But failing that, then complete disillusion is best. My dear, I believe—"

OLIVE heard him through to the end without interruption, and then it seemed as if the words weren't meant for her. They didn't touch her; they were less real actually than a scene from a play. It was strange, but she was neither very angry, nor very hurt—that would come later. It is true that her lips formed mechanically the words, "I deserve it all," but even then she was outside of the picture.

The car had circled the reservoir, and was coming back down-town; Olive could see the huge apartment-buildings on Central Park West. She began to count the lights in the windows, the windows in a row; it kept her fairly well occupied. By the time they had reached Forty-ninth Street it seemed to her that she must have counted thousands.

Leister stirred uneasily.

"I suppose you'll be wanting to go home now?"

"Yes, I think I'd like to go home, thanks," Olive answered.

"If you only be reasonable—"

She didn't reply to this, and he added.

"I'm sorry if it hurt your feelings. Only ... it's ridiculous to pretend when I know—when I saw—Olive turned aside, impatiently.

"I wish you'd keep quiet—just say nothing more, please. I'm trying to forget you're there beside me. I shall be gone in a minute and now I don't want to hear anything else.

CHAPTER XVII
Cured At Last!

GINA was waiting for Olive when she got home, although it was only ten o'clock. That meant there had been no party. Olive unlocked her door and Gina followed her into her room without invitation or ceremony. For the next moment or two there was a poignant silence. Olive moved about, deliberately divesting herself of her street clothes, and Gina sat on the side of the bed, watching her. It was quite evident that something had happened, and while Gina Sevening was anxious to hear the details, she had learned the wisdom of patience, and so it was Olive who had to speak first.

"You and Mr. Moberley ran away and left us?"

"It was all a poignantly silent one with Olive.

Gina nodded. "Yes. I made the excuse that I didn't care to go to the theatre, and neither did he, of course. So while you were star-gazing, we paid the check and ran. I've been home for nearly an hour."

"You deliberately ran away, Gina."

"Probably I did."

"Why?"

Gina shifted her position, so that she could see Olive's face.

"Something has happened," she said, on the spur of the moment.

"Yes. The usual thing, I suppose." Olive's words were slightly cryptic. "Why didn't you tell me you were going home? Then this wouldn't have happened. Why, Gina?"

"Because it had to happen," cried Miss Sevening, impatiently. "It had to be settled, Olive. All evening I had been watching Kit Leister, and—and I knew the signs. The man is wild about you! It was in his eyes, in his voice, in his touch. I knew, given the opportunity, you would either come home his affianced wife."

"Or what?"

"Or completely cured," Gina said gently.

"There seemed to me to be a chance that he cared so very much that position, money, Miss Bellwood counted for nothing beside you. I hoped for that, Olive. But failing that, then complete disillusion is best. My dear, I believe—I'm

afraid—He's hurt you! Don't cry! He's not worth it—"

"I deserve it all."

"I told you, Olive—thoroughly selfish! You were just a toy, something for his amusement. I suppose he asked you to go with him to the 'blue Mediterranea' or the 'golden Pacific.' Now you know the breed."

"Your wonderful Faun Man!"

"I didn't think of him! Gina, it was terrible! And you—"

"It's a wonder I didn't kill him, only—"

"Only what?"

"I don't want to talk about it. I blame myself. He knows about the Johnson's flat."

"What?"

"Only I think I am Mrs. Johnson. Gina, he watched. Someone sent him word that he'd learn something to his advantage by going there, and he went, and he saw me—and Dick."

"You and Dick? But what—?"

"He thinks Dick is the—the other half of the household. He saw him go in and then saw us come out together. That gave him the right to say the things he said to me. I can't begin to repeat the awful things, but Dick—I can't believe it yet, that kit would say such things! It's like a dream, or a book. I can't just realize that it has happened to me!"

"I know; it's like old age and death." Gina Sevening nodded grimly. "I'm sorry, Olive, that I let you in for this, but it's better—better that you understood perfectly. I'm not surprised, nor surprised. I'm saying to myself: How can any man resist Olive? Well, I'm answered. Let me get you some warm milk, dear, and then go to bed."

"Yes, I think I'll go to bed," Olive answered. And then, "Who do you think could have sent him to watch the Johnson flat?"

"Heavens knows. And Thurston! Thurston would kill him, if he knew what Leister did."

OLIVE turned from the mirror and regarded Gina with round, wonderful eyes.

"I guess I'm very wicked," she ventured; "but, Gina, do you know I don't hate him? Why? I don't hate Kit; I'm just sorry and ashamed."

In spite of what had happened Olive spent a comfortable night, sleeping clear through until a resounding rap on her door made her open her eyes, at nine o'clock. Then, expecting Minnie, she called "Come!" but instead of the maid, Gina Sevening walked in. Gina was dressed for the office, even to hat and coat, and she had come straight from the table, where she had been perusing the paper, to Olive's room. Striking the paper significantly with her forefinger, Gina said, "Well, she's done it."

Olive struggled to a sitting posture.

"I'm not good at riddles so early in the morning. What has happened, Gina?"

"The Johnsons have disappeared."

"What?"

"Emily and Edward went to Connecticut last night and were married. It's all in the paper this morning. I didn't think she could bring him to it; I suppose it's another instance of where a woman winks, eh? I've got to run along but I thought you'd be interested. An revolting story. She was away, and Olive sat there staring after her, with the newspaper clutched in her hands.

(Continued next week)}
The Man with the Indigo Eyes
(Continued from Page 15)

me those things which he now denied. He was either a liar, or he had forgotten that he said them to me.

"Where were you during the last half hour?" I asked.

"I took a walk through the Square, and fed the pigeons," he answered. "And that's my own business. Those pigeons would miss me, if I didn't show up."

A great relief came to me with his words. I was beginning to see more clearly. Without a word, I got up and left the Doctor's presence.
The cord had been severed; a sharp knife or scissors.

"Did you know the telephone wire was cut?" I asked him.

"No!" he cried angrily. "What the devil—"

"Steady!" I counselled him. "You see, there is something behind all this, after all. Why were you out in the park at this time?"

Dr. Blitz consulted his watch.

"Yes, Estelle—er—that is Miss Jackson will not be leaving this hotel until ten o'clock. In fact, it is likely that both she and Lester will be there.

"Telephone them," I said, "but first let me ask you a question. Do you know that you have employed me in this matter?"

"Are you trying to implicate Miss Jackson?" he asked me sharply.

"By no means," I replied, "but she may be an innocent tool. At all events, does she know?"

"Yes," he admitted reluctantly. It is, in fact, it is unlikely that both the determinist and the moving spirit are far away from the telephone. It should have been a man or a woman, Doctor Blitz. But it had to be someone who could slip up here unnoticed—who had a key to fit your door. You see?"

"Yes," he agreed haggardly. "It's a bad business. A bad business."

"If you do just what I tell you to do, we can settle this matter within two hours. Is there anyone in your office at this time?"

Dr. Blitz consulted his watch.

"Yes, Estelle—er—that is Miss Jackson will not be leaving the hotel until ten o'clock."

I telephoned her this morning and told her that I was going to see you. Later I telephoned her again and explained to her that I was acting on your advice.

"You are a damned old fool," was my mental comment, but outwardly I merely smiled.

"Yes," I said, and said to her that you had dismissed me. Say that you are tired of the whole business and intend to take no more action. She would casually add that you are going to take a long walk in Central Park this evening after dark. Tell her that you are going to walk, and that you are going to take a walk in the park. I will explain to the police that you are on their way to do it. That is to create a general suspicion that you are insane.

"Don't shout. I mean exactly what I said. This whole grotesque practical joke that has been played upon you has been done with a devilish desire. The person who is responsible for it did it to make you tell your friends about it, with the certain hope that your friends would disillusion you and think you crazy. That is the reason behind this whole business, Doctor. I am surprised that you did not see it in the first instance."

"But why, why should anyone resort to such mad folly, such elaborate preparation for the sake of this?" asked one of the chiefs of police.

Dr. Blitz exclaimed. "After all, the presidency of the office is not such a knotty dignity! With all you were after you had such a chance?"

Don't shout. I mean exactly what I said. This whole grotesque practical joke that has been played upon you has been done with a devilish desire. The person who is responsible for it did it to make you tell your friends about it, with the certain hope that your friends would disillusion you and think you crazy. That is the reason behind this whole business, Doctor. I am surprised that you did not see it in the first instance.

"But why, why should anyone resort to such mad folly, such elaborate preparation for the sake of this?" asked one of the chiefs of police.

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THE five women, Captain Corkran and his "best man," Channing and Case and the thin man in the skullcap were pushed to the doors. The sleeveless undershirts, their faces and sturdy arms besmeared with a brown dust that perspiration had turned to mud. They were grimly declaring to the tall, gray man:

"Striped bare, Chief. Not a thing overlooked. Some of your women get busy and pour a few drinks—will you?"

Bottles and glasses there were aplenty standing amid the jewels and on the trestle—very few for the sand-haired rowdies. Finally they were all filled and they glanced to the prettiest of three young women and called:

"Say—I think it's in order to drink to the bride! She's a lucky one, Daisey! Why I chose you for this occasion."

To the bride, then! said Channing. And when the classes were set aside, there was, now, to the racking of the bride's bags. No use delaying your getaway another second. Besides it won't look right for the caterer's wagons to come for the caterer's stuff until after the happy couple have departed."

Channing stepped to the wall, picked up a large, flexible pig skin bag, returned to the table, and for an instant finally gazing over the flaming brilliance that the opulent collection of jewels flashed back at him. He tooled the purse quickly and through the.Flags of the bag and with the cupped palm of his hand began sweeping into it the flashing treasure as if it were sand. He crossed him and then turned up at the fascinated eyes of the others and said:

"Feels great, handling this stuff as if I was filling a bag of beans."

But once in a while he would pause to lift one of the largest ornaments and stare at its rich cluster of shining stones. The table was about half

bared of jewels, he turned abruptly to Case.

"Bill, you and Maguire beat it upstairs now and give Big Mary a hand to prepare time to leave for these wretched lassies. I'll leave them here yelling their heads off to start a chase of us before the train cools."

To this Bill nodded full and prompt assent and he and Maguire departed. Channing snapped the mouth of the bag together and the table was bare of jewels.

The crowd, without you, my children, to start you on life's journey, he grinned. "Get your bride, there, Bertie. Come on, all the rest. I've got plenty of other ducks in the men's hall. I'll throw the shoes. No let down—line right up the wedding idea to the finish. Now—what's the best route we can take there in the car? He's getting pretty nervous."

FOR the horn of the automobile outside had sounded a curious series of spasmodic, shrill blasts as if the hand directing them were in a panic. The driver and the passengers, taking it for nothing, of it, immediately following, came the ponderous, crashing descent on the stairs outside, accompanied by a guttural, half-stifled cry. "Jim!"

Channing leaped for the doorway. He came to an abrupt stand there for he faced the big man of the pink face and black moustach. But his countenance was no longer pink, it was a sickly green, and the thick lips under the heavy moustach were livid.

"My God, Jim! he gasped. "Somebody's—squealed—the bull—in a—gang."

He had chance to say no more. The front door was forced in with so violent an impact that its glass was shattered and one after another the bulky bodies of blue uniformed men hurled within.

"The back windows," said the big man, and made a sharp movement with one hand as if to exceed the other. The other whipped about to follow but found in the dining room a group huddled in despair. A single glance was enough to explain it all. A bullet had pierced Raine's Rambler. In further and consummate effort to make the wedding appear genuine the crooks had the nerve to ask headquarters to send a squad, to hold the line.

On this stood a telephone. He removed the receiver with his teeth, got Central, called police headquarters and ten minutes later a reserve force of thirty men from the Fourteenth precinct station had surrounded the Tellenbury house and the daring gang of criminals was be, found entangled. The best led something like a young clergyman unconscious from the loss of blood, but he was soon revived.

"These" reader may find interest in an incident which occurred during the wedding of Olga Tellenbury, when the stately old trees that ornament it had taken on their vivid dress of scarlet and amber.

"The guest of honor, when asked to guard them, the gifts were costly and numerous. The last of these was the most valuable of all. It was from Mrs. Reginald Logan. Some weeks back, she had summoned Miss Elam and ordered her to pose as the 'dowager queen of the Four Hundred' then said, with her famous wry smile:

"Of course, I owe Johnny Crane something. At my age and with my wealth the value of the jewels does not figure so much but the memories they arouse are precious. And I thought perhaps one of an old woman like me without her memory's? So I owe Johnny Crane something, but most of all I am sick about seeing his face in the looking glass. The shining moonless, moon eyes at each other in church and everywhere I come upon them. So that as soon as their time had passed, for the best for fifty thousand dollars. I've been wanting to do it all along—they are both lovable children—but I can't excuse it. But Johnny Crane went to work and cut his throat all up and saved my jewels and it gives me just the excuse I've been wanting. Elinor Tellenbury."

"I shall depend on you to arrange matters."

The "queen" having spoken, that settled it.

The Cup of Vengeance

There was something strange in the man's manner. He was putting off, hiding his shadings. The fingers were restless—curiously restless.

"I have come from the clif—down the Hauntom road," Paul said. "I have seen Reece. No, say nothing, you needn't—what would you have me say to you—say it for me. I congratulate you on—on You and she are to be married. The—hates you. He has got the—told me. I told you of my hopes; you shared them. You were my friend, Jacobs—my very good friend. You are very, very bright of night. I was there when I was—when I was worked upon. Well, well . . . and you made her love you. How very effective it was. . . . spoken of it, it's all right. And where the strangeness comes. My friend . . . No, say nothing, there is nothing for you to say. I talked to many—choosing them justly. I have been busy, very busy, Jacobs, my friend. I have a little news to—how I am."

"Fears me," cried Jacobs, half rising.

"Sit down!" shouted Paul, and gulped at his coffee. The sudden shout, the sudden fury started Jacobs. He turned, waving his arm across the table with growing horror in his eyes.

"Sit down! . . . My fear of you, Jacobs. I said that you had something to—from your friend. And that you knew I had made a will in favor of Reece."

"Mon Dieu!" cried Jacques. "Oh, I made that very clear. . . . I said that I had read murder in your eyes."

"It is all a lie,Jacques replied.

"It is a lie . . . I knew it, I acknowledged it. . . . I have no fear of you. But that is what I told you. I will leave the world, the will there would be no temptation. . . . I burnt it tonight just before I came to you, Jacques. . . . I told them all that I should go to Renee tomorrow and tell her that
IX

THE financier stared helplessly at the detective who had revealed to him the wretched situation he was in. "What am I to do?" Give me some advice. I am worth millions and with them I could fight any ordinary combination of enemies, but these men are richer than I; and I suppose Bob Somers is directing their campaign against me."

"Frankly, you are in a terrible mess. The law can do nothing for you. You must extricate yourself." "I have tried to do that. But I want a made-up plan. I say..."

"I must have it before I move a step."

"But how can I be sure—"

"You can if you..."

"I have no way of making the police work for me."

"My wife has very little part in my life. My daughter will look after the social end of the affair. She will be delighted with the thought of the ruby."

"How shall the ruby be set? I was thinking of a plain gold band about the forehead, with the stone in the center. It will be very effective that way."

"That was the dull assim. 'Anyhow it doesn't matter.'"

"Let us go at once to see this ruby. I suppose you will leave the details of the band to me?"

"Yes."

An hour later Black and Sheffle were in the safety deposit vault. Black removed the box in which he kept the jewel from its place, and together they went into one of the steel cages. Looking to see that they were not observed, Black took out the ruby, unwrapped it, and handed it to Sheffl.

"Gott in Himmel!" gasped Sheffl. "What a ruby! What a ruby! It is a shame to let those yellow devils have it."

"But we must, we must," cried Black in a sort of panic.

"Yes, yes, we must," sighed Sheffl, deftly and rapidly making a bit of a prepared wax to the exact shape and size of the stone. "It is a pity, though."

The cleaner brushed back his hair, glanced over the ruby, then with a hoarse cry, Black snatched it from him and thrust it into the box. Sheffl looked up in surprise to see Black, ghastly and trembling like a leaf. "What is the matter?"

"I am not a sandalwood," Black panted. Sheffl sniffed the air. "So do I, and leaped to the barred door."

To be continued...
The mystery of the ten mummies (Continued from Page 21)

...the patriarchal stranger, prepared to offer my hand, but one look at his face halted me with a surprise. He was tall and stout, soft of feature, and one turned to each cheek. He saw and understood my expression.

"From the fall," he explained dismally, "Thirty years ago I fell down that hole. I've never been able to get out. I am a Yale graduate; I am from Illinois. I broke my nose when I fell down, and it is quite a scar on the face, but you quite understand that—but he desired one to be noted for this, another for that, and so on, that a living being would carry on the work of those dead and sun-worshippers would be before the minds of the people. To their own agreement—awake man—he left the hole by the Iliad.

"The ten nobles went into conference, a conference which lasted long. At the end of the time they emerged to the royal council chamber, where they had been locked up like a jury, with happy, but sleepy faces. Osopilous the Stout was the first to speak. He had a short speech. It had all been agreed upon. He—Osopilous the Stout—had elected to be the most chaste of all men. He was to remain chaste for ten years. He would see in him a constant exhortation against the wild women. Osopilous the Lean announced he had taken for his wife a young woman, of slight build, who would see in him a magnificent household for his parents as his purse would permit. Muhah, the Morose, promised never to go to the theatre, nor to wear clothes which would exceed the limits of the finest of the Satrattes. Herlockus he sent forth to find out what was wrong."

"How Herlockus was efficient. In a day he was back with a strange light in his beady little eyes and triumph in his nostrils. The charge that I had accepted of the ten nobles of Saratattes is that all the hieroglyphics report him as remarking."

"Arranged in a line, just as you see their mummies now before you, they stood in front of the throne. Herlockus was there as the director of the ceremony. He waited impatiently to hear what fell from the lips of Herlockus.

"He did not wait long. "Behold a clique of hypocrites!" announced the stealth in a low, accusing tone. Let me be brief, O King! These men have committed no offense against the letter of your law. Their scheme has the diabolical ingenuity of the tribes beyond the desert, O King! Behold them; survey them with your eye. You see that they are men. You heard him swear he would never gamble! Not he, O King! He is the worst miser in the whole tribe; his wealth comes to his fingers. Gamble? Ho! Ho! O King!

"And gaze upon the tall, angular person beside him. He is the wealthiest man. He beheld them, and you heard him, to exemplify the law which requires children to care for the welfare of their parents. They are deaders than the Dead Sea, O King!"

"And focus, now, O King, on the short oleaginous noble, Osopilous the Stout! His was a brave, worthy choice. He would be so chaste, so pure—no lascivious lassies should draw him from virtue."

"We were never to learn the extent of the deception of the remaining seven mummies. At this interesting point, the King, which was a large, green creature on the floor and looked up inquiringly at the opening.

"And there, looking down at us, was our guide, squawking out a welcome stream of unintelligible Cairo gibberish. He had missed us; he had found us, and now he had found, of all impossible things, a dead man with a live mouth. He opened it wide and lowered it down, and when it reached the bottom of his mouth he gave a push that almost sent me to the mill. I felt I could not be left up at the ladder.

LOOKED back. Our host—always I think of him as the man with the two noses and the old-fashioned clothes—was at the bottom of the ladder. He shook his head mysteriously.

"If you wouldn’t mind the ladder—leaving it there—I would appreciate it," he croaked. "But just now—I couldn’t leave just now.""

Glad enough to be free, I stepped out. But no sooner was I out than Jeremiah beseeching me not to go away, that we couldn’t warm our knees; he was deep in conversation with the old man for five minutes or more. Then I came running up to me and burst out in a whisper:

"I’ve arranged to get those mummies from him. Kindly do not mention it to him. His pants are worn in the back and he was ashamed to come out. Yep! Walked clear across the desert in the cold!"

In All America Drinking the distilled perfidy of the land of Saratattes—it was too much! I had to tell it.

Red Roses of Death (Continued from Page 10)

...slumber in 'joints' where past-faith men and agnostics wedged into the 'drawers' and 'cocks' that loosened their tongues went round and round the circle. He dozed in 'hop joints' heavy with the swaying perfume of a come-on and a jest in the curses against himself and his men which were his companions' tribute to a successful raid upon another such resort. But no one spoke the name of Preckles, the murdered news lad; no one rejoiced that Blacky Gilhoolsey was being revenged; no one spoke the name of Stump Morgan, whose finish was in sight.

As bitterly disappointing days followed equally disappointing nights, the enemy doggedly maintained the original defeat lurking ever more insistently in his mind. In his sleep he saw "The Killer" grinning mockingly at the shade that was his, and never, to the last dogged defense against each of the curses against himself and his men which were his companions' tribute to a successful raid upon another such resort. But no one spoke the name of Preckles, the murdered news lad; no one rejoiced that Blacky Gilhoolsey was being revenged; no one spoke the name of Stump Morgan, whose finish was in sight.

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Midnight Mystery Stories

All Star Cast

The illustrations in these were posed by the following cast:

Miss Alice Weaver of "The Greenwich Village Follies"

Miss Bobby Breslaw and Miss Bernice Goesling of "The Gingham Girl"

Miss Florence Brooks

Miss Dorothy Knapp

Miss Madelaine Starhill

Mr. Charles A. Hancock

Mr. Ralph Moreau

Mr. Allan Simpson

Mr. Reginald Simpson

Mr. Louis DeKlade

Mr. Arthur Gownin
to whom grateful acknowledge ment is made.

Note: Miss Knapp, who posed for the illustration on Page 3, was adjudged the winner in the American Venus Contest recently held at the Physical Culture Show, Madison Square Garden, New York.

He was chilled to the bone and shivered as if from an ague.

"I'll slip in and change my clothes after a hot bath and then I'll bathe my hair in this side as well. I'll slump around to the dark and quiet Mews and let myself in to his home through the rear door. He looks at his watch. It was just midnight. He heard a knock on the door."

He saw no one as he went through the dimly lighted house to his rooms. He hurried through his bath and they were just ready when he stepped into his living room where he dumping down upon a chair, an unlighted cigar between his clenched teeth, and once again lost all recognition of time and space. He grappled ceaselessly with its problem. He drew out a large note from his pocket:

"The Killer's" letter and re-read it.

"There is a clew if only I can hit on it," he muttered.

"No good who ever lived, killed without leaving a clew. This man didn't—if he's human."

He felt a creeping, shuddery sensation flow up his spine as he wondered again if the man he saw in the mirror was human. There was a step behind him and Michael Moran sprang to his feet. In the doorway stood a young woman, dark-haired with eyes dully petty. In her hand was a package.

"Daddy! Oh, I'm so glad," she cried and spread into his arms with a sob of relief.

"What's wrong, little one?" queried Moran anxiously. "What has gone to self and slender again?"

"This," she answered laying the package in his hands. "It may be nothing. I hope it isn't but, oh, daddy dear, there's something...mysteries about it. Last night I sat here at your table reading after Mar,.—Mr. Davies left me. I couldn't sleep. I was oppressed by the same thought that what I am going to endanger I felt on the day you left. I seemed to feel someone or something watching me. At last when I couldn't sleep I switched off the lights and ran upstairs to bed."

The girl's eyes grew very wide and very grave as she paused and told him this story. "Daddy, when I went to bed there was NOTHING on your table. I know. I am absolutely sure. This morning the maid found this package there. No one in the house knows how it got there. Oh, daddy, tell me what all this means? What is this thing that is threatening us. There is something. I can feel it NOW."

Michael Moran did not make any reply. With hands clasped over his eyes he had been in his lifetime he carefully untied the string that held brown paper covering the package. Just as carefully he unfolded the wrappings. Inside was a card pinned to a blood-red rose, and on the card in the same odd, crumpled chiraphomy in which "The Killer's" letter was written, was inscribed:

"For Spud" Moran from Blackly Gilholley.

Commissioner of Police Moran ripped out a furious oath and threw the returned package to the floor. "This is Commissioner Moran speaking," Moran informed the voice on the wire. "Yes, Boylan. Another. Good God. Where?—When? Within an hour, you say? Who is it? Do you know?—Not Rita La Verne, the Broadway star. Great God, Boylan, if this is a red rose murder I'll have to get "The Killer" or resign. Yes, I'll be over in three minutes."

Michael Moran's eyes were deep-sunken and his usually robust face was a pesty gray as he turned to his daughter.

"There has been another murder—a girl, Rita La Verne, an actress, was found last night in two blocks of this house and within the last hour. I'm going over and after receiving this, he mouthed to the crumpled red rose on his desk, "I know, I'll find a rose pinned on her breast."

Moran caught up his coat and hat but Dorothy clutched frantically at his arm.

"Father, father, I can't leave me in this house. The murderer—one, something—here was in this room to leave that rose last night."

Moran's face was close by now, too close for her lips. "No, my boy, never has been a killed girl. Daddy, I'm afraid to be in the house. Let me go with you. I must be quick," Moran agreed.

Rita La Verne, dansante Parisienne, as she was styled in Broadway circles, was to find in the reign of eternity the renaissance of New York's theatrical season. She lived in a studio apartment on Ninth Street just off of Fifth Avenue—scarcely two blocks from Moran's home. As he and Dorothy hurried into

Ninth Street from the Avenue they saw first a curious, gaping crowd awed by what, slant and motionless, on the sidewalk under their eyes. ACross the street from one of the buildings, the man with the long, black head, a bandage on the left eye, as if he had been injured and disfigured in a fight, suddenly in the broad daylight. A rough thug wafted out of the crowd and took the head of the man with the bandaged eye and carried it over to the mouth of the man. The body of the girl, beautiful even in death, lying in the street, was covered with blood almost on the threshold of her home. Two slender hands were clutched upon the hill of the thin-bladed dagger, and with a gesture of the hand the girl was strangled on its hill as, even in death, she was striving to drive out the cruel steel which had ended her life. Pinned to her lovely form the bandage brightly crimson against her white breast, was a red rose.

(To Be Continued)

Ask Madame Pythagoras

(Continued from Page 14)

have intelligence and ability but not much imagination or versatility. Your judgment is good and your executive ability excellent.

Sara Rose, Pittsburgh—Individuality is your dominant trait. You have a keen sense of humor and are not afraid of being laughed at. You are not given to moods but on the whole make the best of every situation.

Barbara M. Louis—Your greatest lack is application, order, practical ideas. You are romantic and impressionable, lack ambition and are not directed to do. Cultivate a practical sense—order and system.

Jack L., Phil.—Your dominant trait is breadth of mind. You can be very useful, especially those that affect humanity. Your need is a sense of caution, and frugality—otherwise you would be your father's heir.

Edward J., St. Louis—You have a combination that makes you a sort of 'happy-go-lucky' person. You like to enjoy life and you especially love this artistic and temperamental. You have sufficient desire for ease and luxury to urge you to attainment, if you cultivate business ability.

Mabley, Chicago.—You are artistic and temperamental; intuitive and thoughtful. You have not, however, enough practical business ability to urge you to very great stress in the artistic field. I would, therefore, suggest that you cultivate the practical side of life—otherwise you cannot "cash in" on your artistic ability.

Nella, Chicago.—Capable, ambitious, and plenty of stick-to-itiveness characterizes your vibrations. You have tenacity and hate to give up so that you turn defeat into victory. A good executive.

Harry B., Detroit.—You are not much more than you can finish. You could not work for others. You must plan and think for yourself in all ways. If you have someone to carry out your ideas you would succeed best.

Margaretta.—No matter how you spell it, Moran is all right in the seven. You are very intuitive, romantic, loving, thoughtful and sensitive to a fault. In your case, there is a love of a laugh, that you always come back smiling with Paine, which you think rules you—you gives you a blow. Just stick, you have good vibrations.

John Fraser.—The sum of all your vibrations is eight—which is a good number for you as you have cheerfulness and initiative and are practical. A bit of a hound in a business way.

Jean D., Minn.—You have versatility, and originality. Have an agreeable magnetic personality and they succeed whatevers you undertake, within your development.

Anita Flood.—You are cheerful, intellectual and reliable. You are strong in what is, and have no use for all or nothing. Your need is more balance—more stability and application, and concentration.

C. C. M.—Your Path of Life shows the romantic, idealistic type. Your name vibration is that of the dependable, business-like, rather peddling type, and you must always keep the practical rules your life. You will do better working for others.

J. C., Oklahoma City.—Your motto is "Try anything once." You like new faces, new scenes and new experiences. You are romantic, and sentimental and fond of the theatre and of activity in all directions. Still, you are not dissipated or over-gay, as your dominant six vibrations to good judgment, those to always use when you have a certain application, and determination to stick to the practical—too roving in disposition to succeed unless you bring your judgment to your aid and make up your min.
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Chief Draftsmen Dobe, of the Engineers’ Equipment Company, is making this offer to interest ambitious men who would like to better themselves at bigger salaries, doing work which brings big pay and at the same time leading to greater advancement. There will be thousands of positions open this year paying from $3,000 to $3,600 a year. The great building boom all over the country is causing this great demand, and industrial activity in the mechanical line makes it worth your while to give this opportunity your immediate attention.

$250 to $300 a Month

Positions paying $250 to $300 per month, which ought to be filled by skilled draftsmen are vacant everywhere. There are in every part of this country ambitious men, who with practical training and personal assistance, will be qualified to fill these positions.

Mr. Dobe is very much interested in finding these men and calling to their attention the great future in draftsmanship—how when a man enters into this profession, he is in an uncrowded field and how with surprisingly little effort he may rise to the salary of from $3,000 to $3,600 a year.

Ambitious boys and men, between the ages of 16 and 50, are wanted by great business concerns, and the man who is ready when opportunity calls him, gets the high grade positions and highest pay.

No man can hope to share a part in the great coming prosperity in manufacturing and building, unless he is properly trained and able to do first class, practical work and is ready when he is called.

Mr. Dobe knows now is the time to get ready and he knows that few men realize this so well as he. So in order to interest men everywhere he wants to see if your copy of the drawing shown above indicates you might have drafting ability.

If then, Dobe believes that you do possess this ability he will tell you how he will train you personally. This training is given by mail and he guarantees to train a limited number of students under this agreement to give practical drafting room training UNTIL placed in a permanent position at a salary of $250 to $300 per month.

To any student that Mr. Dobe accepts for his personal training, he will furnish a complete draftsmen’s working outfit absolutely free. This outfit consists of all instruments and tools required by any first class draftsmen, and Mr. Dobe believes it cannot be duplicated for less than $25.

Considering that Mr. Dobe selects and limits the number of students for training, it is very important that you act promptly and send in your reply either with your sketch or without a sketch at once, asking for full particulars.

He will send you at once a free book entitled “Successful Draftsmanship” in addition to all other information, telling you how you may learn drafting at home.

Mail Your Drawing At Once—and Get Ivorine Pocket Ruler Absolutely FREE!

Ambitious men, interested in drafting, hurry! Don’t wait! This is your opportunity in this great profession. Accept this offer which Mr. Dobe makes. Send in your sketch or request for FREE Book and Ivorine Pocket Rule. Address: