

THE THRILLER

THE PAPER WITH A THOUSAND THRILLS

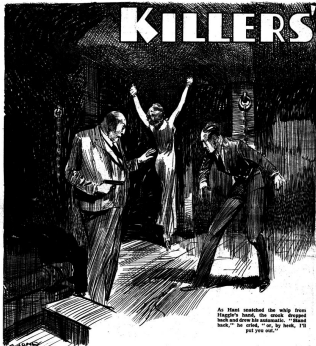
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A
POWERFUL
NEW
THRILLER
BY
*George
Dilnot*



KILLERS' CASTLE

KILLERS'



As Hunt snatched the whip from Haggie's hand, the crook dropped back and drew his automatic. "Stand back," he cried, "or, by heck, I'll put you out."

Chapter 5.

A LADY IN TROUBLE.

Mrs. HOMER ANDREWS KERRY stood before the glass and delicately adjusted the Old Public School tie which he wore—not that he had ever graced that excellent school of which these costumes were the pride and joy. He was a museum was of civility. Apart from his given name, which he could not help, they were his only vice. He collected neckties in other people collected stamps or butterflies. Away back in his New York apartment there were thousands of neckties, most of which he intended to wear but never did.

London was his happy hunting ground. Since every suit of English social life, from the Guards to the village bowling club, had its distinctive colors and patterns, he was always finding something new. He completed his toilet by dropping a stinky automatic in his hip pocket, and turned to the red-faced little man who served him as valet-secretary.

"That letter from a girl—what's her name?—Miss Magda Stinson. Write a note saying I'll be delighted to meet any friend of the Stinsons, and ask her if she'll do me the honor of lunching here with me

to-day. Send it along by special messenger."

He strolled down to the lobby of the hotel on his tall, gauging legs of a man—made an inquiry of the reception clerk, and scented himself down on a lounge with his eye on the door. An elderly man, an eye-glass dangling over his receding white coat, strolled casually to the same seat, nodded to Elver, and unfolded a paper. Presently he let it fall in his lap and, taking out a small notebook, made some calculations.

"Two thousand pounds—not bad for one day," he said, as if speaking to himself.

CASTLE



A NEW MYSTERY
NOVEL

by **George Dilnot**

Thrusting the notebook back in his pocket, he helped himself to a monogrammed cigarette from a thin gold cigarette-case. As if by an afterthought, he passed the case to his companion, who, with an absent word of thanks, took one in his long, delicate fingers and lit it ever and over.

"I think you'll like this," said the other. "They are specially made for me, and I have 'em sent over from Egypt a few thousands at a time. You can only be sure of getting them in the best condition that way."

Elzer nodded some non-committal reply. He was apparently lost in thought. The elderly man tored with his thin platinum moustache.

"I fancy we have eaten on the same floor. We both seem rather fondly in this hotel. . .

I noticed you at dinner last night. Perhaps, if it isn't impertinent, we might have our meals at the same table. My name's Belmore—Lord Belmore. You may have heard of me. I own a few lanes. Yes, I imagine, are an American."

Elzer thrust both hands in his trouser pockets, stretched out his long legs, and a slow smile spread over his face.

"Oh, yes, I've certainly heard of you," he drawled with closed eyes. "Your name is Brown, you were born in Australia, they call you Duke Joe, and your number in the Hugger's Gallery in New York is 21,007. Let me see. You invited a couple of million francs out of a British shipowner on the Riviera last year, grabbed three thousand pounds from a playboy in Paris a couple of months ago, and are wanted in the States

for a discretionary article that you worked with innocent Mike. If you—"

"Talking to yourself, Haines?" said a voice. "Your friend seemed in a hurry."

He opened his eyes and beheld the tall figure of Superintendent Harry Cartigan, of Scotland Yard. The elderly gentleman with the goggles was rushing hurriedly through the revolving door. Elzer stood up.

"Even when I was a curly-headed boy I used to think the habit of telling fairy tales was a revolting one. Our friend was about to introduce me to a new thing in racing swindles."

"Don't blame him," said Cartigan, as they passed out of the hotel together. "You look innocent enough to be a con man

"The pencil work. That was in a tracing company. You see, it was very tempting, Mr. Elver. I had practically agreed—indeed, I was about to sign the contract in writing—when I suddenly realized that I must sign it as Magda Beavril. He explained that there was another Stewart in the east and that I must provide a fresh stamp name. I don't know what possessed me except that I suddenly realized how odd the whole thing was, but I asked for a day or two to think it over. I meant to make some inquiries about Bronson and the Famous Film Company. Well, he tried to persuade me to make up my mind at once, even going so far as to offer to pay me a month's salary down if I would sign, but I was determined to know more. Then he suddenly seized me and putting a hand over my mouth, tried to force me to the door. My hat is on the ground floor quite close to the entrance. I let through his hand, and when he released my with a curse I screamed, and then I ran afraid I failed. When I came to there was the janitor and one or two other people around me, but Mr. Bronson had gone.

As she passed Horace took out a cigar, snapped the end, placed it in his mouth, and raised it sagittated from one corner to the other.

"That's very interesting," he commented. "This Bronson. Did he have side whiskers?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"Maybe. Let's leave the rest. I suppose the police were called in?"

"Oh, yes. They thought it was some kind of hold-up and that the man was after money. In fact I very rarely have more than a few pennies in the place. I made inquiries myself, and there's no such sign as the Famous Film Company, nor could I find anyone who had ever heard of a producer named Bronson."

"It didn't happen there?" said Horace, his eyes narrowing.

"No. The following morning I received a telephone message that a girl friend of mine had been seriously injured in a street accident, and that I was to go at once to her at some address near Oxford Circus. By the next chance I met the very person named as I was leaving the flat. She was coming to call on me, and had not been injured at all. I put the matter down to a silly hoax, and did not then connect it with the other business at all. For the next couple of days I got the impression that I was being followed wherever I went, but nothing more happened till I got this."

She passed him over an envelope, and after a meditative glance at its contents, he pulled out the sheet of paper it contained and read in scurrying black letters:

"This comes from a friend. Your life is in the utmost danger. You will be well advised to leave England at a moment's notice as quickly and as quietly as possible. Let me know where you go and use another name. And if you value your safety not a word to the police.—Oma Wilm Stewart. Ter Wilm."

"Mailed at the General Post Office at six-thirty p.m.," he observed. "A thick pen, but used by someone who has had some training in stenography. This begins to look more and more extraordinary. And then?"

"A little unpleasant for me," she related a little sheepishly. "I, of course, ignored the letter, although I confess it worried me a bit. The window of my maid's room overlooks the drive, which sweeps from the main road, and it was open at seven o'clock last night. I was reading by a shaded table-lamp when I saw a hand come through the curtains—a man's gloved hand. Before

I could move I caught a glimpse of something, a hand dashed by me and dropped against the opposite wall. It seemed me by an inch. I rushed out and there was no one there. It was odd of me, of course, but the warning in the letter came to my mind and I did not send for the police. Then I remembered having heard from Mrs. Brewster that you would be in London, and I decided to drop you a line. You'll forgive me. I didn't know where to turn for advice."

Bronson threw a neatly rolled cigar into an ash-tray. As well as being a detective he was a business man, and he had come to a conclusion which a pair of questioning hazel eyes made it time to render to Horace. He did not even ask to see the leaf which he was sure she had brought to show him.

"There's no apology called for, Miss Stewart. I certainly like to let you down, but I must and for the States in three days—and anyway this is a job for Nedward Tark. It wouldn't be fair for me to butt in. I'll introduce you to one of them, and I'll clear this up before you can wink. You've given me some ideas that I can put on to him."

A discreet tap at the door interrupted him, and he just admitted a bespectacled little man who looked curiously at the girl. That was when Frank Delaney—"Little Frank"—had some representa-

tion as a possible "cover" in certain circles in New York. At eighteen he would have gone to the chair for the shooting of "Red" Stearns, for he was undoubtedly present at the time, and it was undoubtedly he had threatened to "get" the gang leader, Gluckman, and not brought Elver to his notice. For another investigation in which Horace was engaged had fringed on this murder, and he had run into evidence which showed that Little Frank was being made the possessor of a bigger man. The little gangster's position, and at first been encouraging, for he had attached himself to the detective with the ability of a dog, until the latter had registered the association by taking him as a kind of body servant, to which in course of time he added some of the duties of a personal secretary. He had every qualities of a premier agent which made him useful, and although high police was not amongst them, this was more than made up for by a functional loyalty to his chief.

"Well," asked Horace, "the little man laid a gray hand-bag with a zip fastener on the table."

"She's some precious dame," he said in a deep bass voice that contrasted oddly with his frail appearance. "Let me quit a dance. First thing she 'ploaced from here to a guy named Warren at the Palladium Hotel,' left here and walked to Piccadilly Underground Station, got out at Trafalgar Square and went back to Oxford Circus. Walked along Oxford Street to Bond Street, where she took a bus for the Ritz. By this time she must have reckoned she'd shaken anyone off who was tailing her. Engaged her way to Jeremy Street. She's got a little more, which she calls herself Mrs. Honeyditch, but she's known to some people as Valerie Mowbray. She's not been in the game long or she she's been playing small stuff. I reckoned you'd be waiting for this, so I didn't stop to dig up any more about her."

A sinister hand came suddenly through the curtains, and the next moment a glittering knife flashed by close to the terrified girl's head.



"She wasn't wise to you?" asked Horace. Frank smiled feebly at this suggestion on his friend's part.

"She was expecting to be sniped, but I guess I fooled her. All these tricks have been tried on me before."

His employer snatched the bag open and began to sift the contents. A triangular white cloth stole over his face as he picked out an envelope which he displayed to his secretary.

"Looks as if she might have been on after all, Frank," he said anxiously. "The checks are on me. This is addressed to Mr. Horace Augustus Elmer." Having it open he read the envelope aloud. "Laf of the market, Horace, and get back to your knitting if you don't want to see a handful of checks. You'll be playing a lone hand in this here."

The lone finger in a steel line, and he met Frank's grin with a frown.

"I think you'll have to buy the drinks," said Frank.

"They think they can run me out of this town, on they? A handful of checks—that means a paralyser, Max Stewart. Frank, you can't get no satisfaction on the Benaganga. Cable New York that I'm taking a few weeks' pleasure vacation. And, before me, Miss Stewart, whether Scotland Yard thinks I'm a butterfly or not, it's going to be cool fun to me to see you through this little mix-up."

A SUCCESSFUL FRANK-UP.

GEAR Commerce had dropped in by invitation of his friend. He had found Horace Augustus Elmer with his long hair draped over the side of a divan chair while an built cigar hung limply from the north-west corner of his mouth. It was broad as the sheet of paper and the other held a pencil.

"—Clinking up a little, Gerry," he said. "Treat the bill if you'll like a drink. The corks are in front of you. How'd that little inquiry about our vacation friend, Walter Fortson, go?"

The Scotland Yard man pulled the cigar-box nearer.

"How is why you gave out your cigars instead of smoking them," he said as he made a careful selection. "No, there's nothing to it. Whatever was in the minds of Fortson and Fiance Charlie, they've checked it up. They came into this country a fortnight ago, and they've been staying at the Palatial Hotel. And if you check it right, they called the New York on hours ago. As far as I know the Bank of England's still doing business at the same old stand. We've had a lot of look round, and nobody's been hurt. Perhaps they've hit you—taking a little vacation."

Horace jerked himself to a fresh position, and his eyes were half-closed.

"The tobacco case is a little over compared with Walter Fortson," he observed. "It's a common fallacy that all crooks are lay, but you should know better. Walter may have mixed business with pleasure, but he never forgets like a working man. In fact, I happen to know that he was here to pull off a little effort. I've got a sort of a kind of a feeling that he's set up against a gang, and that explains this sudden evasion. The answer, my dear Watson, is murder. He was never much of a member. Don't blame him. Murder is the cruelest form of crime, and it's seldom a paying proposition."

"When you're through joshing me," said Gerry with unshaken composure, but trying his friend feebly, "perhaps you'll tell me what you know. Have you cut the trail of a member somewhere?"

"Set straight a murder. With a sudden movement Horace required a normal post-

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tion in his chair. "But something that might come to our notice or later. I had some idea of purchasing from Providence, with hand open and—"

"That it out," ordered Gerry promptly. "I thought you were hard-boiled!"

"It isn't that. I'm an artist," sighed Horace. "Fate made me a detective, but I love all the methods of the artist. I like something decorative, and there's a way about this bit, too— But you're too cold-blooded," he complained. "Listen, you ancient ink. This is what she told me." He repeated the story of Magda Stewart, that extraordinary memory of his making him to repeat it almost word for word. "Then,"

he added, "I put Frank on to this thing who was talking Miss Stewart. Fresh, before he returned, was the oldest man that ever hit Broadway. These accounts that can take a picture of a bullet in flight wouldn't get a trace of him when he's working. Yet this is what he keeps me saying: 'Franky took his head and neck into a fit of soft laughter as he read the message.'"

"Marrying orders," he checked. "Some-one's going to shoot you up. Well, if they do you've got the satisfaction of knowing that we'll hang them. You'll leave this with me when you go. I'll see Winton, the divisional detective-inspector, and we'll—"

Horace left his chair and dropped a hand on his friend's shoulder.

"Gerry, I'm not going home just yet. I come from a country where every man does his own work. I know this is criminal business and on your own ground, but I'm not going to be done under a challenge like that. Wouldn't be a good business for the agency if I got home. Besides, this girl is a friend of friends of mine, and I've a notion that she's in pretty deadly peril. I'll take all my hat to you and to Scotland Yard, but I know how tied up you are with rules and laws, and it looks to me as if there might be some short cuts it wouldn't be fair to ask you to take. I want to take a slip at this job."

The Scotland Yard man rallied his chin.

"You're going to jump in, whatever I say," he declared. "I'd as soon try to stop Niagara, but if you're insisting that I should be the goat and ask for official permission, there's nothing doing. Your methods might not meet with approval in this country. You start off with pinching a lady's handbag, and you'll probably end by bumping someone off. As between friends, however, as long as you don't expect us to back you that way we'll look on benevolently and come and gather up the fragments when you've done your worst."

"Christian all around," laughed Horace, who well understood that this implied that

he might rely on the Criminal Investigation Department, but they would not endorse all that he might choose to do. "I'll see that my handling will be entirely a private concern and doesn't annoy the public."

"As a matter of personal curiosity," went on Gerry, "I'd like to know what you think is behind Miss Stewart's story."

"No more personal!" asked Horace, shooting a quick, sidelong glance at the other. "I'm guessing quite a lot, but here's how I read it so far. The lad who first called on Miss Stewart was Walter Fortson. If I hadn't run into him here myself, I'd have made him out from descriptions. That shows there's big money somewhere in the game—Walter's no plow. He wanted her signature badly—not her ordinary signature, which he might have got in some such manner way than this take-some-construct—but as Magda Stewart. Why else had he to write it that way I don't know—yet. I've got a hunch that the body of the contract was written in vanishing ink, so that it could be filed in afterwards with anything they liked."

"Now the second point. Why should he try to shoot her? Why the fate telephone call? Why the letter trying to frighten her into leaving the country secretly? That rather suggests that they wanted to get her out of the way until they could act. If she remained at liberty she might obstruct their plans; might, perhaps, be approached and say that her signature was obtained by fraud. They would only be likely to make the charge if she was almost-temporarily or permanently. How is that line that Mr. Marlowe, Gerry?"

"Very shrewd," said the experienced, in a tone that left his friend in doubt whether he was being cynical or not. Horace looked at him anxiously, but his face was inscrutable.

"I don't know what to make of the three or four kids." "I've been a buff in explosive the British in the air, or it may have been a communication, or murder. I should have said it was a bluff but for one thing. Why has Walter Fortson left London? In his hand being recorded by others of the gang? Having failed to get her out of the way temporarily, have they determined to go the whole way and rub her out, and has he thrown it up rather than become involved in murder? As I said before, he's a craftsman. He doesn't like murder on principle, and Fiance Charlie, who was with him, is too much of a coward."

"Why not witness the Benaganga and ask them?" said Gerry. "Or ask the gentleman responsible for the anonymous note in the bag you pinched?"

Horace shook his head anxiously at this latter, and the Yard man went on: "Seriously, though, something ought to be done about this girl. I'll have a special man put on—"

"Right! But how is it I'll ask for one Frank is out as Magda? Why not, and I fancy they'd be much stronger with her there. There's nothing to be gained by having too many people around till we know more. I want to cope in this gang, not more than away!"

Gerry nodded approval.

"There's something to be said for that. If there really is the sinister conspiracy about this girl that you think it would spoil everything to go off at half-cock. The right people who so far have committed nothing like illegal acts for which we could make an arrest are Walter Fortson—and since he's heading for the States we can forget him—and the man who threw the knife. We might be able to trace him."

"No, let me try my way first." Horace

locked at his wrists. "I expected to have heard from Frank before this." The telephone rang.

"Things had been happening to that chief valdecoyner. For four hours he had kept an eye on the window of Magda Stewart's apartment, sitting in a chair, unobserved from each side of Maids' Walk. The night was becoming tedious, and he had joined to light a cigarette, when his wrist was gripped and a note thrust in his ear:

"Take a walk with me!" So swiftly and unexpectantly did Frank's free hand come into action that his captor had no chance to evade it. The light that followed was quiet. The little man had at his command every trick of street lighting, loomed in the East Side of New York, while nothing is barred. But he was up against a better man, who also knew something of girl's tactics, and who, moreover, was reinforced in a few minutes by a burly policeman, who, to Frank's fevered imagination, seemed at least ten feet high and four broad. The able were too good for him. He was released of an automatic strapped upon his left wrist, well, gently and disinterestedly, with two feet, a cut tie and a rapidly contracting eye, he was limited to the police station.

"Why didn't you tell me you were a bull," he protested. "I'm a private detective, and up here in—"

"And I'm the Queen of Sheba," returned the plain-clothes man, whose temper as well as whose power had also suffered some damage during the altercation. He jerked the prisoner forward. "You can do all your talking inside!"

To an incandescent station sergeant Frank repeated his protestations, when he found himself halted before the desk of a prison warden of business, who, after a moment of consulting a ledger, it was really only on a matter of form that the sergeant put through a card to Horace Elver to take the prisoner's statement. Then the whole story was plain.

Meanwhile, it appeared, had "blended" through to the police station that a man had been looking for hours in the neighborhood of Ellingham Court, and a plain-clothes man had been sent to pick him up. The message to Horace and the good offices of Harry Curigian furnished this comely of events as far as Frank was concerned, and, acting under instructions, he sped back to Ellingham Court as fast as a tail could take him.

Within thirty seconds of reaching there he again rang up Horace.

"No!" he gasped. "The whole job was framed. They tipped off the bulls to pull me out. They ran a cut-up on me. The dame who advised Miss Stewart to have a party with her tells me that a guy brought a note from you, and that after reading it the girl went off with him."

"I can't see," said Horace.

"You don't have to tell me that, boss. But that kid's gone?"

BENEATH THE BATTLE.

There was no objection in Magda Stewart's mind when she tore open the note that was presented to her by the sub-podex young man who had called at her flat. It was on the worn-headed paper of the delivery of Babel, and apparently hastily scribbled.

"Dear Miss Stewart,—Since seeing you I have come across information of great value on the subject about which you consulted me to-day. I want to follow this up immediately, and I think it would be wisest, as that is all we can help. I am reading

my ear for you with one of my London staff with whom you will be quite safe. He will take you back to your apartment within the hour.—Yours sincerely,

"HORACE AUGUSTUS ELVER."

She showed the note to Mary Hester, a friend of the Elver's, a proposition she had intended to stay with her at the little bachelor flat. The other girl, busy with preparations for dinner, handed it back.

"Be snug, dear, and see your detective friend. Don't fuss about me. I'm not afraid of being left alone for an hour."

A big woman with uniformed chauffeur at the wheel was waiting outside. The man who had delivered the note said a word to the driver, and, stepping in, adjusted a rug around her and took a seat by her side.

"My name's Conlyp," he explained, "and I act for the Elver Detective Agency as a scout. If I may say so, you are a little likely to have induced Mr. Horace to take up this affair of yours. You're a friend of his, aren't you?"

"Not exactly. I never met him before to-day. But I know some of his friends, and I can't see why I should not be helpful."

"Well, you went to the right shop. He's a wonder, is Horace Augustus. Are you quite comfortable? That rug seems to be slipping. Let me help you."

He half rose, so that he was partly standing over her as he adjusted the furnishings. Conlyp suddenly she crossed a rapidly fading color. A pad pressed heavily against her nose and mouth, and, with a few spasmodic struggles, she sank into a deep unconsciousness.

Frank air was blowing on her face when she awoke feeling later and sick. The motor at the car had been thrown a wrench. They appeared to be moving through a long, winding drive and across a smoothly sloping of wooded, unsheltered country, she caught a glimpse of the stark mass of a castle. Some words, she knew not what, fell from her lips, and instantly her companion checked her own mind.

"Don't do anything silly, miss. No one can help you. You're not going to be hurt. Just a few weeks' vacation, that's all!"

She made no reply. Her senses had not yet come fully back to her, and she was trying to adjust her thoughts. In spite of Horace Augustus Elver she had fallen into a trap. The thing seemed nightmare, impossible. Like most victims of drama, she felt dithering in realizing that this thing had not happened to her. Why had the placid current of a very ordinary life been interrupted in this way? What was going to happen to her? In spite of the reassurance of the man by her side, such a question was filled with forebodings.

The car thudded over a driveway that opened a double gate, and she heard the rattle of chains as the bridge was drawn up after they had passed. Moving through a park was apparently a gatehouse, they came to a big, apparently an arched driveway. She was assisted from the car and an immensely fat man walked forward.

"Welcome to Lomoxey Castle, Miss Stewart," he said in an earnest voice that gave her a creepy sensation about the spine.

"We have been hoping to see you for some days. Mr. Elver has a room for you. I am Julius Haggis, the owner of this place and your

host. Interesting the spot, this. I'm sure you'll enjoy your stay. Come right in!"

She drew back.

"Why have you brought me here?" she demanded.

"All is good time. You'll be tired after your journey. I have a little refreshment ready. After that we may talk."

Like one in a dream she went with him. They came to a lofty, well-painted room, it was built being with dresses and weapons of brass against a stonework of green, clinging to it, despite the fact that it was built twenty ft. At one end a table had been set with cold food, and she accepted the seat he pulled out for her.

"I am not hungry, thank you," she said coldly. "I want to know why you have brought me here. The police—"

"Don't you worry that pretty little head of yours about the police," he said. "Now about Mr. Horace Augustus Elver, either. They won't be looking any more for you." Putting out a glass of wine, he forced it into her hand. "Drink this," he insisted gently. "It will do you good."

She sipped at the wine mechanically and some of her vitality came back to her. A second glass brought the color to her cheeks and banished the listlessness from her eyes. Courage and wit were beginning to return to her. She knew, not only from her own experience, but from what Elver had told her, that she was in a situation of perilous and unknown danger, and she served herself to meet it. She sipped with some of the food that he had heaped on her plate. Without appearing to do so, she scrutinized the man opposite to her. Julius was looking kind and friendly and kind.

"That's better," he said. "Get something inside you and you'll feel a new woman."



The shabby, terrifying fumes gripped her senses, and Magda sank back but pliantly to the rambler, unconscious.

Some time I'll explain everything to you, and you'll be grateful to me."

"I'd be even more grateful if you'd explain now."

"Oh, no. Leave it, leave it! It's a long story. Just make yourself at home. I've always considered that I was born in the wrong age," he went on with his mouth full. "As a medieval baron I'd have been a success. I always had the notion, even when I was a boy in Chicago. That was why, when I heard this old place was going for a song, I picked it up. One of those days I'll show you round. Miss Stewart. There's the whole lot of tricks—dungeons, secret passages, torture chamber, hidden rooms. There's places here where you could hide a person for years and they'd never be found. Guess even now it could stand a siege. If they played fair and didn't use modern artillery. You may have noticed the drawbridge and portcullis as you come in. I had them put in order and modern machinery installed to work them. We've even got a plant all properly maintained—although I must confess I never saw her."

The girl smiled a laugh.

"I hope you've reserved a nice, comfortable dungeon for me. One not too damp and without any rats. I don't mind ghosts, but I hate rats."

He rubbed his face with a napkin and swallowed a glass of wine at a gulp.

"You're going to be an honored guest, my dear. That is if you are good. You behave like a lady and we'll treat you like a lady. I'd just hate to see you in one of those dog-holes. No light, damp, and unable to stand upright or lie down at full

length. It would surely be too bad to put a pretty girl in one of those."

She smiled an unbecoming of sinister manner beneath the femininity of his hair, but before she could reply a thin, penetrating snarl, as of some cat in an ecstasy of interest, rose and fell. She sat for a moment frozen. The fat man laughed and ruffled her glass.

"Guess your, doesn't it. That's one of my dogs baying loudly. It goes. We've got a few about the castle—half wolf, half dog. We usually let them have the run of the place at night."

A door opened and a thin, yellow-faced man looked in. All the good good nature faded from Julius Haggie's face, and he turned away from the intruder.

"What the blazes are you doing here?" he demanded angrily. "I told you we weren't to be disturbed!"

"I thought I was—"

"Come here!" interrupted the other sharply.

The serving advanced timidly, terror in every line of his thin face. He reminded Maggie of a cowering dog. Julius had got to his feet and, suddenly flinging out a hand, grasped the other by the thumb.

"Do you understand that when I give orders they are meant to be obeyed? If you're spying on me—"

"I wasn't," wailed the servant. "For heaven's sake, let me go!"

Julius packed the hand he held steadily away from him and the man quailed in agony.

"I'll not have you nosing around when I—ah, would you?"

He gave a quick jerk, and a knife clattered to the floor as the man himself fell, moaning hoarsely, and issuing a shuddering thank. She sprang agilely toward it as a man of his bulk heaved himself upon the prostrate figure, lifted him bodily, and, carrying him to the door, flung him violently from him. Maggie quivered as she heard the shuddering crash of the body.

"Just! Arrived!" called Julius. "Put the table in another three or four feet and set some back, and be seated till he heard first steps running, and then returned to the table, leaving his hands."

"I have my own ways of keeping discipline in this place, Miss Stewart. Behave as you wish, you see. I've always had my suspicions of that girl. He'll do us more mischief here!"

The revelation of the man's ruthless brutality had come to the girl as an unexpected shock. She stood gripping the back of her chair with one hand, her mind in a turmoil of rage and apprehension.

"You see how?" she asked. And then after a little pause: "What are you going to do with him?"

He quietly re-adjusted his napkin and smiled at her.

"That dog tried to murder me. You see the knife. If I handed him over to the police he'd probably get five years. Instead of that he'll spend a few weeks in those dungeons I told you of—all I've done with you—and his life! I'll introduce him to an abolitionist rate-activist that is among the visitors in the torture chamber tomorrow. That should tame him!"

She snatched back her chair so that he should not see her face as she shuddered.

"But the man did nothing until you nearly broke his thumb. It was self-defense."

"When a man's doing something outside the law, as I am, Miss Stewart, he has always one thing to remember. Never forgive an eye for an eye. My own dogs would do me as much, for example. But all this is mighty unpleasant for you. Let's talk of something else—yourself, for instance. You wanted to know why you were brought here?"

She smiled.

"It'll be perfectly frank with you," he went on with a large air of openness. "You resemble another person of some importance to me who is, unfortunately, dead. By quite a considerable chance you bear the same name and are about the same age. You are an actress, and actresses frequently assume a stage name. Now it is necessary for my purposes to get certain documents signed in the name of that other girl. At the same time, if you sign them, we don't wish you to be exposed to any questions till everything is settled. You will stay here for perhaps a month. For that little service and the inconvenience to which we put you we are willing to pay (in two hundred dollars—that's more than five hundred pounds in your money."

His blood curdled did not doubt her for a moment. She shrugged her shoulders.

"You don't seem to care either my intelligence or my honesty very highly, Mr. Maguire. It can scarcely be expected to excite such a preposterous string of lies as that. What particular value can my signature have more than that of anyone else? And five hundred pounds for keeping a dead girl's name does not tempt me in the least. I shall sign nothing—in my own name or otherwise."

"I see." He chuckled as if from deep down in his stomach, and, taking out a pipe, tapped it on the back of his head and slowly changed it, his eyes fixed on her face.

"You are going to be awkward. We were rather afraid that you might become stiff after your visit to your friend, Mr. Elvert.



The killer's knife dropped to the door, and with a sudden movement, Haggie sent him crashing to the floor.

But we can be very persuasive here—in a medical way—and you may change your mind. I really must show you some of the capital little devices in the torture chamber—tomorrow. Quite delicate, of course, but wonderfully ingenious. We might even demonstrate some of them on the gentleman who was so curious to see who you were just now. Meanwhile, if you are finished, I will show you to your rooms."

"I am not to be frightened," she declared, but though her voice was firm, her face was white and her heart was fluttering as she rose. He made a clumsily sweeping gesture, and in her surprise led her towards the big open fireplace instead of the door. Unscrewing a small knob that apparently formed part of the carving he revealed a tiny hole into which he pressed a key.

"An improvement on the old idea of having a concealed button," he said. "This could not be accidentally revealed. See?"

One side of the fireplace's massive stone of stone—was a thick backing disclosing a narrow flight of steps up which there was only room for one person to pass at a time. This had apparently been left up automatically. He motioned the girl forward, and followed close behind her as she climbed a dozen steps. Then there was an abrupt passage to the left, at the end of which other steps led downwards. These ultimately brought her to a mass of narrow stone-stepped passages along which he descended first.

"Regular staircase, this," he observed. "Easy to lose your way down here, even now that I have led it up. A person wandering round might starve to death before he or she was found. We are under the castle now and on a level with some of the dungeons. How do you get on?"

"Clicking a door he introduced her into a windowless, tapestry-lined room of some considerable size. It had been furnished, if not elaborately, yet with some care for comfort. Through an open door she there was a glimpse of a small bed-room."

"There is a bath-room beyond that," he explained. "And in my girl my bed and parlour. This was a hide-out in the old days, and kept many a man from losing his head, I reckon. It's now comfortable now, and you'll be quite safe here. It would take some finding, even by an expert a spy as Mr. Horace Augustus Elton. I'll see you in the morning. Pleasant dreams, Miss Stewart."

The massive door clanged, and she heard the click of the lock and the rustle of bolts as they were shot into their sockets. She sank into a chair, and as the sound of his footsteps died away an oppressive silence descended. How long this lasted she did not know. There came faintly then behind her again heard that impudently uncomfortable wail.

THEORIES

Thomas was disgusted in the mind of Horace Augustus Elton, the more so as he felt that beneath his mask of politeness the Scotland Yard man was concealing an implied delight in his description. Garry had pointed out that if he had had a hint of the other's intentions to put a watch on Magpie's do he would have informed the divisional police, and the whole tragedy of error would have been averted.

"Tut! But it is," said Horace. "The girl's been sheltered, and it's my fault. I'm not blaming Frank to the man who punished him. It should have occurred something like this and your eyes."

"No good crying over it," observed Garry philosophically. "She's gone, and that's that. One job is to find her."

"Do me a favour, now," said Horace. "Go home and get some rest and leave me to think it out. You've done all you can.

Maybe I'll have hit on something by the morning."

In fact much had been done since the news of Magpie's disappearance had reached them. All flying squad parties had been initiated by wireless, and descriptions of the girl had been telegraphed to every police station in England.

Horace had himself made inquiries at the Palais Hotel in regard to the "Warren" in whom Valérie Montre had telephoned. There all that was known was that a Mr. Hayden Warren, whose only language was a guttural, had arrived the night before and left immediately after lunch. He was a young American registered as Louis Horace, and his description as a well-dressed, clean-shaven man might have applied to hundreds of folks known to Horace. A fact over which Horace remained as he walked away was disclosed to him by a page from whom he made a casual inquiry. "Mr. Warren" had received a call from a fat man round about lunch time.

Nor had a visit to Valérie's quarters in Jersey Street been very helpful. She also had packed her things and gone, and although the landlady gave one of the keys of her room which Horace memorized for future reference, they offered him no further to an immediate solution of the mystery.

After Garry had left him the only conclusion that Horace made to the demands of nature through the night was to don pyjamas and a dressing-gown. He had the faculty of doing with a minimum of sleep for prolonged periods, and he had been known to boast that this sharpened his powers of concentration, sitting by the fire he observed innumerable signs, and as dawn was breaking, examined his thigh and went to examine the battered Frank, to whom he gave certain directions.

Garry found him at ten o'clock in unbroken mood, surrounded by ginseng and the Roman littered with telegrams. "Hail, brother!" he exploded cheerfully. "What of the night? Has the celebrated foot-long snout of Scotland Yard fastened on any trace of the missing dame?"

"The foot-long snout of Scotland Yard has brought in a lot of snout," retorted the other, and the Roman littered with telegrams women in care who might be Miss Magpie Stewart. Suspicious cars with women in them were seen last night in the neighbourhood of Northampton, Doncaster, Margate, Reading, Stafford, Southend, and Maidstone. You pass your money and you take your choice. She's following up everywhere, of course, but if you want my view they'll all wash out. They always do. There's not enough to go on."

"I know," agreed Horace. "As you say, they always do!"

"I've had a search made at Somerset House," went on Garry. "The idea of get-

Followed by the master cook, the frightened girl descended the stone steps which led on beneath the sinister canopy.



ting the girl's signature in another name—think me an amateur. Her birth is registered all right as Magpie Stewart, and there's no trace, as far as we can find, of a Magpie Davill."

"Something of the sort occurred to me," said Horace, but I don't know where to look. I was going to ask you about it. I've had other things on my mind."

"Ah!" Garry raised his eyebrows.

"Well, I'm not sure that this hasn't happened for the best. If this girl hadn't been kidnapped she might have been murdered. All the signs point to a determination to keep her alive for a while—if not in one way, then in another. Now they've got her they won't be likely to go to extremes—at my rate immediately. We shall have a chance to turn round."

"Though," he added reflectively, "not too much time for, whether their crops be, they obviously wish to have it off quickly. Which seems to me to suggest that someone will be turning up pretty soon to put Magpie Stewart wise and to beat up the game."

"They are we. What game?" interjected Garry.

"All I can be sure of is that it's a big game. I don't pretend to have found it out, but I'm getting nearer. And just in case anything should happen to me, I'll give you the result of my medical meditations. There's Walter Fortrose—he speaks big stuff! There's Pious Charlie—the girl's father. Now the big shots either of these men would be likely to work with one or counted on the fingers of two hands. But they can be still further limited in this way. Who would have the nerve to split with Fortune and insist on murder if there was no other way of reaching their ends. I could think of two. Then there was that note naming me not to interfere. Now that

was obviously written by this dame, Valerie Warner, or whatever her name is, but it was dictated by her secretary, whom she talked to "Warren," as the Editorial by someone who guessed what my first move would be. Either of those two men might keep thought as fast as that, but only one of them would have known me better than to try to trip and stampee me that way."

"His name? Warren?"

"Horse selected a French sign."

"Not on your life. I still don't know who 'Warren' is. But I did a little checking up. I found that he had a rather son after lunch-time yesterday—a gentleman tipping the scale of something like two hundred and eighty pounds. One of the hell dogs named him. You can doghouse a lot of things, but you can't doghouse weight."

The footed Tard man frowned thoughtfully.

"Can't see this," he said, shaking his head. "There's plenty of fat men in our country, but none of them are top-notchers."

"No, I guess you wouldn't have him on the list. We've not got him on our books the other side, but he's well enough known for all that. His name is Julian Haggie, and he was a shyster lawyer who had his fingers in every good thing in New York for twenty years. I wouldn't be far out calling him on the midnight man on earth. He got a radio-off on most every kind of discipline, from murder to petty larceny. But he got out on bail. He killed his approach over the Anti-Hellany case two years ago—you'll remember that was when, a, value-

poisoned his millionaire master and forged a will. Julian was up to the neck in that, and another trace of his work would have sent him to the smoky cell. As it was he got fifteen years, but was pardoned after doing five on grounds of health—he still had a put, even in prison. After he was released he dropped out of sight. There was a rumour that he had died in Mexico. I'd bet four dollars I've got this to be."

"Not best to go to the courts. You have to prove it. But I'll make a note of the name."

"Let me alone and I'll prove it all right. Don't forget he's my most." He lifted a warning forefinger. "I don't want another check like the French had at Malde Vale. So keep away, unless I disapprove or am picked up after being stopped on the land."

There was a slow understanding grin on Harry's face. It was plain enough to him as he had remained one before, that Horace proposed to keep himself free to use methods that might not be countenanced at Scotland Yard. Officially he was disappointed of them, but he would have given the papers from his right hand to have followed up a campaign, taking about cuts impossibly, without loss of the consequence. But Horace Augustus Elver was an outsider with a comfortable fortune; he was a cultured servant with a wife and family. The smile faded, and he sighed.

"I had thought of following this up in the obvious stage. We could likely had out something about the Mike Warren. And that girl Valerie is bound to have a trail.

Either or both of them would come as later have led us to the moon gap, and we'd have got on to the matter."

"You'd have had to come back to the Elver Detective Agency, anyway. I've got something more than a hunch that one of the legs to this stout line in the States. Haggie, Fortman, 'Gussies', Paine Castle—all the gang are American. They're always up something over there that's sent them back here. I've been burnt by the wire already, and our organization is on the job."

"There's something else up your sleeve," said Harry, regarding his friend sideways and indicating the letter on the floor. "Come along, Horace. Do you know where Magna Stewart is?"

"Father, I cannot tell a head do!" Horace picked up one of the guide-books and read:

"Lonsborough Castle is a fine example of a medieval fortress mansion. It constituted in a hollow square site and a large white outwork of Great Gable, the Village of Duns, on the border of Harb and Ferry, and is surrounded by a finely wooded park of some hundred acres. The castle was built in 1260 by Sir Gerard de Monro, one of the barons of Arbroath. His descendants bore the title of Lord Harve, and several of them played an important part in history. Thomas Lord Harve, a 'right warlike gentleman,' was executed on Tower Hill in 1540 for abducting one of the maids of honour to James of Clèves, who is said to have committed suicide in the castle rather than submit to his embrace. His ghost is still said to haunt the place in the evening and often passed through several hands by marriage, and in the early part of the eighteenth century was disposed of to Robert Fay. Under his successor the place was allowed to fall out of repair, and in 1800 was acquired by John Norton, who spent large sums in restoring it. Although little of the old masonry has been made since then, the castle is still interesting as a specimen of the architecture of its period. Round the buildings runs a moat, over which a drawbridge was replaced many years ago."

Garry ruminated deeply.

"I'll take it as read," he declared. "Life is short!"

"O.K. with me if you don't want to hear the rest," said Horace, closing the book. "There's a lot more worth still. All about doghouses and secret passages and the general layout. Fancy that place doing the right towards performance who abstracted the maid of honour."

"This is too quick for me," said Garry, passing a hand over his brow. "You mean to say that Magna Stewart has been taken to this castle?"

"That is the supposition that I was trying to convey."

"Well, it looks me. How'd you know? How'd you get on to it?"

Horace had enough ready to be tickled by the obvious punishment of the other.

"You'll recall that Walter Fortman spoke to Miss Stewart of an old castle in the country that was to be fitted up as a film studio. While I was thinking over things I remembered that. It looked odd to me that he should go out of his way to mention that. A studio just outside London would have seemed more convincing. So I thought it possible that they did have some sort of a cinema. On that basis I would really paid to every estate agent whom name I could by my hands on within fifty miles of London, asking if they had sold or rented anything of the sort within the last eighteen months. When among the replies I got one saying that Mr. Julius

EDMUND SNELL'S NEW THRILLER

HOW do you like George Elmer's new novel in this issue? A grand story, isn't it? Look out for another year from him very soon.

Well, what I am giving you another - Lethal and One story by the popular Edmund Snell. These two characters, which Mr. Snell created in the THRILLER some time ago, have become great favorites, and another story of their further adventures will, I know, be welcomed by everyone.

Well, this time they have certainly landed themselves in a bit of trouble. In the opening chapters of "The Death Ship," as this new novel of Mr. Snell's is called, we find the doctor Doc Howard and his unwary, straight-shoot partner, Lethal Soliter, well on the way from the unappreciated hands of the sea, to a point, and so badly panned that safety is not their only get so far away as Singapore. And they had already done their first breathers years ago. Lethal and Doc Howard found them out again, and kept them into the very last sort of adventure that they were attempting.

Within a short time of landing in Singapore, this splendid pair found themselves at sea again—this time in a boat that is a very old tramp, awaiting participants in a cruel set of buried treasure. And strange and terrible things happened on board that followed and this further land was sighted again. A grim, old tale seemed to haunt the Atoll. It was indeed "The Death Ship." Make sure of reading this thrilling new story, and make sure of the THRILLER. It is worth a reading, interesting entertainment to it for everybody.

By Jove, what a sensation our old friend Haggie has had! I am positively inundated with requests to have him and some copies of him and Horace, and everybody is lead in their praise of Harry Foreman's handling of his difficult task. You may be sure that Haggie has returned to sea. Follow his

THE THRILLER



adventures in THE THRILLER, and look out for the next story of him and his brand money in these pages in two or three weeks' time.

There is such a rush for THE THRILLER these days that nearly no reader is left unless he has a standing order. Have you placed yours? If not, don't hesitate to do so now and avoid disappointment.

Yours sincerely,

The Editor

Letters to the Editor should be addressed to: "The Thriller," Office, The Phoenix Press, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.A.

Haggie had bought Lemmon's Castle. I knew that I was on a winner. You, as they say in France."

"Then you didn't work down to this Haggie was out of your mere conscience," said Garry. "You were trying to get something done."

"No, honest, I'd get him worked out before I went the wires. This has costered me."

"We could get a search warrant," ventured the other.

"Digging into the game again, old wacker," laughed Hance. "No, search warrants don't go till I've tried something else. You don't know Julius Haggie. He'll have thought out that possibility and have his hooks away somewhere again—on quite likely he'd have a hotline. What I thought of doing was to take a run down to look things over quietly. Frank's packing now."

"Have it your own way," said Garry. "It's out of the Metropolitan Police district, that's one blessing, and if you get into mischief you can't be blamed. But keep in touch, and if you want us we'll come running."

Hance nodded.

"I'll remember that. One thing you can do for me. Ring me up at the Five Mounds at Deane about five o'clock. I may have something to tell you." A thought seemed to strike him. "If I'm not there I'll be at the castle. Put your call through three and ask for Julius Haggie, and then ask if you can speak with me."

"Am I to say who I am?"

"Sure! That's the whole point. You see, if I'm not back by that time it will be because I've become involved in an argument with some of the gang. And it might strengthen my hand if Julius knows that I can play you to a trump."

"It is?" Garry looked unaccountably serious. "If you're right this may not be likely to hasten at all, and you propose to act down there alone. Seems to me silly—making the trouble. Suppose you don't answer the call if I ring Lemmon's Castle. What then?"

"Why, then," said Hance, "they'll probably have kept me on the battlements, and it will be long time to have a ring of Julius."

IN THE LION'S DEN.

The little village of Deane offered many attractions to one who enjoyed the charms of rural England. It stood in what was, so to speak, a hotchpotch of the main north and several miles from a railway station amid swelling and wooded country. It seemed as no longer was there it got hosts of old men who were the vicar's hat and fringed bands of a disappearing traffic era. Visitors from the outer world came to the cottages, but they were not sufficiently numerous to attract attention and comment.

Thus the advent of an American "down-belt" had caused tongue to wag in the little bar parlour too. "They who did odd jobs in the home when he was not known as a plumber on a plumping on a small farm attached to the homestead, but carried Mr. Hance Augustus Ewer's trunk to a jam-packed bedroom."

Hance sat on the bed and gazed through the open casement windows through a haze to a point where the tarrows and bottlements of Lemmon's Castle were faintly discernible. For once he was carried up his very best plan, sure that he had made up his mind to see Julius Haggie. Much of his future action was on the lap of the gods. But in any event it was necessary to know who was inside the castle, and it could do no harm to make a personal reconnaissance of the ground.

The plump, well-checked landlady interrupted his reverie.

"It's plain and homely here, sir, but we'll try to make you comfortable. If there's ought you've wanted, you have only to open the door and shout. This bell doesn't ring. Might I ask if you'll be staying long?"

"I'm not sure. I'll pay for a week—but I may be staying longer, or I may go to Liverpool and drive back to London. I'm a creature of moods. Mrs. Haggie."

"I hope you'll be satisfied, sir. I'm sure, I could in kind be sure in the parlour, Haggie pie. If we'd ha' known you were coming earlier we'd have ordered butler's meat. But seeing it was all of a row I'll—"

"Haggie pie will do well," he mused for. "You don't get many people down here?"

"Not what you'd call a lot, sir. We need to get more before they know the castle is visitors. Frank would run out for the day and have lunch and tea; then sometimes we'd have an artist staying here."

"Castle closed, old I was hoping to get a look at it. Why's that?"

Mrs. Haggie's reply rubbed her hands on her apron and let her eyes go. The castle, it appeared, had been taken over by a foreigner—a Mr. Haggie—who had first spent the village by clearing out most of the old premises, then by having his man come in from London, by having his privileges and other requisites sent to him from a big London store or from Greenwich, and added to the sum of his inquiries by slating down the castle to visitors, thus doing the village—and particularly the Five Mounds—a lot of very profitable business trade. There were some grievances, too—the loss of the new proprietor and his servants, the snatching of certain privileges, such as taking about cats across the park.

"So you think there's no chance of my getting permission to view the castle?"

"Why, sir, I don't say that. You and he both being foreigners—loggers your position—might make a difference like. But he's mighty strict in the ordinary way. There's a one-eyed man as he put in of the lodge in place of old Hiram Boleby what had been there thirty years—a nasty piece of work he is, too—and he won't let nobody by without orders. Even the postman has to leave his letters at the lodge instead of taking them up to the castle. And they do say as he lets dogs loose in the grounds at night." She paused and sniffed suspiciously.



For some moments, Ewer and the eye-looking gate-keeper gazed each other in silence.

"'Lor! How you said, there's your lunch a-spoilin'!"

She scurried down the stairs like an alarmed hen, and the detective followed her more slowly. It looked as if it might be a little more difficult to get access to the castle than he had anticipated. He did fall back to the rabbit pie, and the apple tart, cream and cheese that followed it, and started to take his coffee in the bar parlour.

There, with the ease of a natural mixer, he had within ten minutes shattered the defence of the three or four villagers who had dropped in for their morning pint, and in some degree restored the prestige of the United States in Deane which was suffering from the unpopularity of Mr. Haggie. There was no trouble in turning the conversation on to the park and its proprietor. Scraps and detached details were asked to take the landlady had told him. The darkening was up at night; Mr. Haggie was a dandy pated short and practised at a target in the park; visitors had recently arrived—two men and a rather pretty girl who had been seen straggling through the village. Also, it seemed, belated wharfers had landed, and would from the direction of the castle at night,

and Horace heard the story of the ghost case more, not as the gatekeeper told it, but as tradition had handed it down from lip to lip.

The laborer of the afternoon called the frequenters of the inn away, and Horace himself, a cold cigar between his teeth, two deep, vertical lines imprinted on his forehead, and an automatic in his jacket pocket, strolled casually in the direction of the lake gate.

A dog-chested, blue-chinned man, with a shade over one eye, and moving with a spring-like carriage that betrayed him immediately to the detective as a horse, answered his ring and peered at the intruder through the bars of the tall iron gate. His survey was deliberate and incisive. From top to toe his gaze traveled slowly over the visitor.

"Guess you'll know me again," said Horace cheerfully. "Is Mr. Haggie about?"

The hedge-keeper opened a wicket gate.

"You'll be Elmer, the detective?" he said. "Staying at the Pine Bluffs under the name of Henry?"

"The castle's got a good intelligence department," commented the other. "But I never hoped to deceive Mr. Haggie—I gave a false name so that I might introduce myself to him as a surprise. How'd you come to lose that eye?"

"That's my business. Mr. Haggie told me you'd be likely to call, and he left a message for you. He hopes that it won't be necessary to send him news to your father in New York, but if you want to go on, the way's straight up the drive!"

"Thanks!" Horace was imperturbable as he received a couple of fingers. "Have a right-hand wicketment, please." "Have a cigar. Have another?" He forced his largesse upon the man, who grunted indistinctly. "Too bad about that eye. You might have won the middleweight championship if you had kept out of that trouble."

"What trouble? What do you know about me?"

The man faced him aggressively, his face contorted to a sneer.

"A lot of things," said Horace amiably. "I haven't time to talk now, and it would be painful to me to have to shoot out that other eye. Observe this little toy?" He displayed a pistol in the palm of his hand, and the gatekeeper fell back. "I'll go right up."

There was a gleam on his face, as with the air of a man at peace with the world he wandered along the drive. Haggie, he recalled, was not overworking, but he had heattered himself he had secured any shock of surprise at his reception. It was easy to guess how village gossip had carried the news of his arrival to the castle, although he had not expected it to be quite so swift. Although he had registered in another name he had made no attempt to disguise himself. He had had no wish to conceal his identity for long.

But his reception at the gates had been vastly different from his expectation. Haggie had made it plain that he would accept a visit to the castle on a declaration of war. Horace had known that, but had not against an adversary out of the ordinary, and in a way he felt rather pleased at the prospect. His first point had been gained more easily than he had hoped, and he would have the chance of a close look at the castle and its surroundings without trouble.

Fully he passed several rooms in his walk, photographing the life of the least on his memory. One never knew. As he drew near to the castle the sharp report of a firearm came to him. Several men followed in quick succession, and he passed to them.

"Field practice," he said to himself with

a nod, and, diverging from the drive, he passed through a belt of trees and crossed a stretch of turf which brought him at last to the front of a postulated stream. This he followed, and so came upon the castle from one side.

The stream itself had been artificially widened where it ran under the castle wall, and a abase which he had passed lower down explained how the level of the stream was maintained. He passed at the angle caused by the junction of the stream with the moat, and his eye ran calculatingly over the castle while his dry cigar rosed from one side of his mouth to the other.

A soft pad of feet, and a huge dog with lured fangs launched itself silently and swiftly at him, as a much as lastly, as though he were trying to get a better view of the castle. Horace, unstartled, and his hands flitted to meet the animal in mid-air. It snapped viciously and impatiently, and then, with a huffed snarl that became a growl, turned a complete somersault and dropped with a heavy splash into the moat.

Julius Haggie, his hands in his pockets, came waddling from behind a stump of brick.

"Next trick that, Mr. Elmer," he observed placidly. "I was almost afraid that you'd get here. You should have kept in line closer. The house dogs are not used to strangers wandering around here!"

Horace was watching the animal struggle in the perpendicular bank.

"Better help him up, hadn't you?" he said coolly. "and keep him away from me. He'll be a dead dog next time!"

Julius laughed as he stopped, and, gripping the dog by the collar, pulled him out. With a sharp yelp he sent him bounding away.

"You got my message?" he asked coolly.

"Both of 'em," said Horace in a tone equally serene. "The one through your lady friend and the one you left at the gate. Very complimentary of you."

"Not at all. Come along and see the domain. I knew your father in the old days. We did business together more than once. I've heard of you, and am glad to make your personal acquaintance."

As though there was nothing exceptional about the meeting, the two men walked side by side towards the drawbridge. Haggie, as

they went, pointing out features of historical and antiquarian interest, and the other occasionally interrupting question or comment. Each was trying to take the measure of the other.

A white square fastened to a tree was pointed out by the detective.

"Looks like a target," he remarked.

"Sure?" Julius detached the target and showed the ball-marks completely blotted out.

"I keep my hand to it."

"Rather dangerous just here," observed the other blandly. "Any bullet missing the



tree would carry over the drive and might hit someone walking along. If I hadn't taken the notice to walk round the other way there might have been an accident."

As if by chance the old man's eye caught his.

"I don't mind—generally," said Julius. "But the best of it are apt to become careless. It would have been just too bad if I had killed you." He raised his head upwards. "Look at that girlhouse. Notice how it is flanked by the towers? These are cross-hair telescopes arranged to command the entrance. Pretty tough work to have found a way into this place in the old days. Short of artillery, it would be tougher now. I've got a few modern improvements. If any heavy gun aimed to break into this place look what it would have to do. If it

got by the dogs in the grounds—and there's three of them home at night!—and managed to dodge some of the alarms that are dotted about, he would have to swim the moat, cut through the portcullis, sneak up to the castle itself, and, having forced his way into that, most of his real troubles would begin. I've got some little surprises there. Yes, sir, a moment's proposition when you add the risk of me standing about here. I can't see what I can do."

There was no mistaking his meaning. Horace began to understand why he had

been allowed to make this visit. Haggie wanted to show him that any attempt to remove Magie Stewart by force would be hopeless. It was a rough, but really about the best man, and he was pleased to display his cleverness in this indirect way.

"Must have something pretty valuable here to make all those precautions worth while," remarked Horace quietly.

The other grinned in appreciation of the remark.

"Nothing much. Just a little bit of stuff that I'm attaching some sentimental value to."

They crossed the drawbridge and, passing through the portcullis and following the driveway, which was intersected by a trim lawn, made their way to the main entrance of the castle itself. Carefully pointing his point out some of the features of the banquet hall, Julius led his visitor up a flight of stone steps, and, pushing open a door, bade him enter.

Except the general oval window, there was nothing about the room to suggest antiquity or to hint how formidable. All the artificial severity of a modern business office. Haggie pushed forward a chair for his visitor and sank into a seat himself behind a glass-topped desk.

"Now we can talk," he said abruptly.

"What brought you here?"

"Didn't think you quite so sure, perhaps," said Horace mildly. He seemed to be absorbed in a study of the tips of his fingers. "I don't think we meet here with each other any longer. I've come to take Magie Stewart back."

CHANGED MINDS.

"**R**emains it that so? And who might Magie Stewart be?"

Julius Haggie's voice was stiff and his fingers drummed an idle tattoo on the desk. His gaze as it bent on Horace was steadily impugning.

"So that's the kind you are going to take?" The detective laughed softly.

"Never about anything. Well, you were trained as a lawyer. But it's no use, Haggie. Get down to earth. Why do you think I'm here?" He contrived to infuse a note of contemptuous patronage into his voice, as though he had all the cards in his hand. "I came over specially on this job. The stunt was done out by Walter Fortman. Then you and the rest of the crowd split with Fines Charles and he. You were prepared to keep this girl out of the way, even if it meant murder, and Walter wouldn't stand for that. So you thought you'd go ahead on your own." He shook his head. "I've got all the dope. Right now I could have you in a British jail, and, believe me, there's no pull that would get you out before you'd finished your sentence in this country."

He had put all his goods into the shop window—his lies, his threats, his guesses. There was just a chance that he might bluff the other into believing that he knew much more than he did. And in fact his apparent confidence did have some effect, although Haggie's demeanor remained unchanged. The fat man had not even the occasional manifestations of awkwardness in New York (in so many years he noticed). His little yellow eyes narrowed as he shifted a little so that he could rest his chin in his cupped hands. He was very alert and wary so he shook his head.

"You don't fool me any," he said in measured tones. "I haven't seen Walter Fortman for years, and I know nothing about any girl."

"No fool like a clever fool," retorted the other. "You're getting old, Julius. There was a time when you knew when to cut your losses."

Haggie appeared to be looking right



girl watched in
eye as the two crossed
and their uncon-
and bowered
side from the scene.

through him with a thoughtful and profound scrutiny. He was wondering how much the other really did know. That it was enough to make him wonder was clear—but how else could it be? And he was on a sure thing he would scarcely have troubled to come to Doris except in company with the police to make arrests.

"What am I supposed to have done besides kidnapping?" he asked curiously.

The question was one that Horace would have given a great deal to answer. He now knew better than he had he had no legal proof even in the matter of abduction, and a definite conviction against Haggie of anything else would have been the wisest of gambles. He made his retreat as gracefully as he could.

"Gimme I wouldn't write it," he said. "If you're set on a few pages in a British prison, or maybe the cage, I can't stop you. Only think it over. Horie's my offer. I take that girl back with me to-night and you can get quietly out of the country or the balloon goes up as far as you're concerned."

"Don't go yet!" Haggie had not apparently moved, and yet a pistol lay on the desk within reach of his hand. "No one asked you to come here, young fellow, and you can't say you haven't had fair warning. Now you are here I wouldn't fill her in to press you to stay." His fingers closed round the butt of the pistol. "Has it started any more. I've shown you what I can do with a gun."

With his feet he pressed a bell-push in the floor beneath his desk. In a few moments the door opened and a girl came in. Her eyes swept suspiciously over the detective, an unrecognizable figure of a man as he sat gaping at the mouth of the automatic.

"You wanted me, Julia?"

"Yes. Let me introduce Mr. Horace Augustus Elver, a distinguished New York

detective. Mr. Elver seems to have an idea that we're a bunch of holy angels, and we've just been having a little argument in the case of accidents. You might like him for his name. I'm pretty sure he has one."

Horace was not quite sure whether Mr. Haggie would shoot or not, but he deemed it wiser not to take risks with that menacing mouth so near. He shrugged as he took his weapon from his pocket pocket. But the police's wild-goose chase of recognition as he passed in front of him to lay it on the desk.

"Why, bless my soul, if it isn't little Valerie! Mustn't she do they call you Mr. Hemmings down here?"

She fixed him with frowning eyes, her hands on her hips.

"Well?" she demanded defiantly. "And what about me?"

"Gry eyes, a neat smile, and looks a dear thing," commented Horace. "Nice hands, too. I wonder if it would spoil them to pick cotton—we have they give that up at once. I'm sure the country is making more to think of it, that women curries do washing nowadays, but it's all bad for the hands. Pity—a pity!" He waggled his head solemnly. "Willy of you to write that note which Julia dictated. Handwriting can be identified."

She flushed a dull red and took a step towards him. She had not the last word of self-control and he had succeeded in reaching her. In another second he would have been the mark of her nails on his face, when Julia intervened.

"You can cut that, Elver. It's my turn to be funny. I've been thinking this over, and I'm sure the conviction that a nasty accident is liable to happen to you!"

"Ha!" Horace's voice was mocking. "Decided to have an accident with your shooting practice after all?"

"No. I've got something better than that to go on to me. I'm showing you the pistol this morn'. There are a couple of people who can prove that you came for that paper, and I'd hate to be discomfited to a fellow countryman. One thing particularly I want to tell to your attention. The portulaca has got sharp ridges at the bottom, and multiple—five, five, gotten, but quite a lot. It's a beautiful thing if that fell on you while I was showing you how it worked, wouldn't it? Terrible to think of a promising life cut short by such an accident!"

"Either a noisy sort of death," observed the unmoved Horace, "but extremely well thought out and worthy of your best down, Julia. I can see you at the inquest telling how it all came about. You need to be pretty good at exact histories, if what they say is true. I hate to think you won't have the chance. You seem to have got rather a wrong impression about things, as do most of the little school-boys sitting at Madia Vale last night. I am not playing a lone hand, and I wouldn't help you to get rid of me!"

Perhaps it was something of the nature of his bearing under threat of death rather than the substance of his words that caused Julia Haggie to hesitate. The lawyer, too, remembered that the younger Elver had reputation for long-windedness. It was quite possible that he had something up his sleeve.

"I'm in a hurry," he asserted. "Tell me."

"O.K. All I ask is that you credit me with a little intelligence." It was in my mind when I can down here that you might stage an accident for my benefit. Have you ever heard of Harry Conroy? Well, he's an ex-vice superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department. I took the liberty of mentioning your name to him, and also

hinted at a little doubt about the worth of my opinion." He glanced at his watch. "Now I wouldn't wonder if it proved a little difficult to convince him about any accident to me."

"He's lying," broke in Valerie. "He's trying to frighten you. I know a liar when I see one."

"All right with me, cherie. You're English, and I reckon you know they don't believe in lying either, or let alone in this country. It'd be a shame to knock that pretty neck of yours. Now old Julia, he doesn't mind taking chances. He's had his life, but you're young and—"

"Shut up!" Haggie's voice was stern and peremptory. He had been quick to see the girl was pale, and he was able to make a good guess of the motive that had inspired Horace to try and play on her fears. Women, he knew, were nervous quantities, and his trust in Valerie's nerve was even less than in her loyalty if her personal interests were affected. "You can't scare me or this kid with your bluff about prison or anything else."

The telephone bells in with an insistent jangle, and he lifted the receiver with his free hand, still keeping Horace covered with the other.

"Yes, this is Lonsdown Castle. Julia Haggie speaking. Who did you say?"

"Mr. Conroy, here here. I'll be back."

"Conroy?" gasped the girl, her face the colour of dirty white paper.

Haggie let his pistol drop again to the desk and put a hand over the telephone microphone. He addressed Horace:

"Mr. Elver, you've got a little remedy, Mr. Elver. You were trying to scare me, and we were trying to scare you. We're quits. Do you want to talk to Conroy?"

Horace nodded and smiled apologetically as he took the proffered receiver.

"Hello, Harry. Yes, I'm quite enjoying myself. I'm in the country, and the hotel is worth a try. With your hand he lifted the pistol that Valerie had taken from him and replaced it in his pocket. "Mr. Haggie, you I have been discussing things—visiting order. He has some bright notions about homicide which would interest you as an expert. By the way, the portulaca is out of order. The portulaca—perhaps—the thing which slides up and down at the north entrance. Oh, well, I'll ring you up later."

Whistling softly, he turned to Julia, who had been listening with an appearance of placid indifference.

"My offer's still open. Let me have Haggie Stewart unharmed, and you can go to the devil you own way."

"Don't be foolish, Mr. Elver," retorted the other mildly. "I know nothing about Haggie Stewart."

"Haggie Stewart, that one I'll be going. Would you like to come with me to Madia Vale? She shook her head. "You're going to stick to the ship? Just as you say, that's damn me if it sticks—and I'm afraid it won't be a case of women and children that!"

GREEN SCUMMER.

Wrote a word to Valerie to remind her she was in Julia Haggie had himself seen Horace of the previous. When he returned he was accompanied by two men—one a young young fellow of something under thirty, with clear-cut face, raven eyes, and a somewhat weak chin; the other an older man, who moved with a suggestion of swagger, with shifty eyes and a wide, cynical smile.

There was something about other Troop Band or Jan. There was to mark them as professional crooks. There was a note in the older man's voice would go out of habit. Yet there too had led a poisonous life in many cities of the earth. As a lawyer, Devere was little inferior to Piuso Carlo himself, and she could and



Sensation and possibility are convincingly mixed in this yarn of village fist and Buffalo lynchings. Behind that outbreak was a pretty mystery for fiction Blake—and the muscular and mysterious Wally the Wonderman. Here's all the pleasure of a novel plot, good writing, and the appeal of two good characters, in a complete detective novel. My new on sale, price 3d. in

UNION JACK

THE TORTURE CHAMBER.

What was the lingering effect of the drug, or what was the state the had undergone had exhausted her, Magda, who had interrupted a slumbering night, had opened into unconsciousness almost as soon as her head touched the pillow. Her twelve loosest hair clips, and, when she awoke, she found a tray on the table by her bedside and coffee steaming over a small spirit-lamp. They were not going to starve her, at any rate.

She ate and drank with appetite, and was a little ashamed to find that her overnight depression had given place almost to a mood of exhilaration. The food had restored her and the left capsule of morning at Kensington, London, there was Herbert Evers. He would certainly be at work, and she felt an intense faith in him.

But as she lit a cigarette from the packet that had been thoughtfully placed on the breakfast-table, and revolved the situation in her mind, she had to confess herself baffled and undecided. She was in the middle of an adventure—that, she decided, was the way to regard it—would have to wait upon events. She felt, no more had come to her, and she felt a hard to realize that she was a prisoner in the hands of an unseen captor. Julia Haggie's conduct in the previous evening had not impressed her in the least. A man who had committed himself to the extent that he had, was but likely to haggie at some time or less. The offer of five hundred pounds for her signature pointed her.

How could it be worth that money? But then how could her attention have been so very much? Obviously enough, she decided whether it really would have been paid if she had agreed. His threats were a different thing. She had seen an instance of Haggie's rigour lately, and a little shiver ran through her at the recollection. Her graceful figure stiffened and her lips set in a firm line.

There must be some way of finding what sinister purpose was behind it all, and a determined woman who kept her nerve and made full use of her personal attractions—Magda was

standing before a mirror, and glanced approvingly at her own reflection—would be able to draw some lines of the secret. At any rate, she was nervous enough, and had not enough, to hold the omniscient hat man to play until help came. It was not so though she did not have friends outside. She thanked the lucky impulse that had sent her in Evers.

A sudden knock, as though someone had thrown himself against the door, started her. Although she had heard it looked the night before, she opened the handle. The door flew back, and the red-headed man who had interrupted her meal with Haggie fell at her feet. He was wearing neither coat nor waistcoat, and his shirt was torn and stained with crimson.

Stooping she tried to drag him into the room, and suddenly became aware that Julia Haggie was stroking quickly along the stone passage, a pipe between his teeth, his hands in his pockets. He came to a halt.

"Careless of somebody," he said, "Your door must have been left unlocked when they brought you your breakfast. I'll see that you're not disturbed like this again."

"The man's hairy!" she said.

"Is he now?" he asked with a shade of irony. "I wonder how that happened?"

She had followed him along the passage, and stopped over the crimson figure to allow them to get up at it, he looked her back into the room. He glanced curiously at them as they staggered away with their burden.

"Did you sleep well?" he asked quietly.

"Not disturbed by any ghosts. You're looking a bit better. Did you get a notice. Charming, if I may say so."

She thanked a smile at him, although her soul resented.

"Not too badly. This is what you might call a dangerous doings. Lovely place for a rest now, although I think it might become monotonous."

"I'm not changed your mind yet, I suppose?"

She had moved to a glass and was busy getting at her hair, turning her head from side to side to view it at different angles. Fashion-

ing her adjustments she shot an amused glance at him over her shoulder.

"I've been wondering ever in my mind. I don't want to spoil things. This is too deliciously romantic. I feel as if I'd stepped into the middle ages, that you're on hand of. The circumstantial details and the real power." She dropped her hair down and held out her hands unconsciously. "Oh, it's exquisite!"

"Pretty good," commented Haggie. "But don't let yourself that there'll be any laughs about. And don't forget that at least one lady at a party had more in the power. Because she wouldn't do as she was told. You keep her in mind. We want to be new to you."

She surveyed mockingly, and with an abrupt nod he left her. A few more hours of luncheon, he collected, might bring about a change. There was time enough to bring some active pressure to bear. He was something of a student of psychology.

There was a supply of books on a couple of shelves, and when he had gone she turned hastily to read. After turning a dozen pages she realized that she had been scanning the print mechanically, and had no sense idea of what she was reading. She turned again. They passed rapidly, and she welcomed the arrival of a light book.

This was brought by a red-footed young man who, with deferential "Good-morning, madam," arranged a couple of books with the dexterity of a professional waiter.

"You are French?" she asked in that language.

"I'm an autodidact. They call me Armand."

The name came back to her. It was one of those which Haggie had called the previous night. What she did not know was that he was one of a little band of men created by the Paris police for a mysterious assault on an old professor. He had definite hands, somewhat open, and a soft voice.

"I'm glad to see you," he said, looking his shrewd light eyes. "Remember if you have that I've been against my will."

"I regret, madam, that—"

"I am afraid this thing responsible for helping me back will get into your hands. The police are looking for me. I wonder if you really help?"

The man made a deprecating gesture.

"I am delighted for you, madam, but I am only a servant, and I'll have Haggie's agreement you call, successful. He would kill me. He shoots, sure men, so straight, so quick."

She pressed his arm.

"But he wouldn't harm Armand. It is only just to send a message to Mr. Evers at the Jefferson Hotel, London. Tell him where I am. That's all."

Armand shook his head and, picking up the tray, turned away. As he went she shrugged her shoulders. That attempt had failed. She had secretly hoped to succeed at the first attempt. But in ten minutes Armand was back again, rather in a chilly, hostile, and closed the door with care.

"I cannot see madam to be inside," he whispered. "I am not permitted to leave the door, but I have thought of a way. If madam would send a message to Mr. Evers, I might send a message to be mailed in the village."

Heid and exultation showed in Magda's face. She felt inclined to throw her arms round his neck and kiss him. With an exclamation of thanks she looked about for her writing materials, and a pen was in her hand when a change came showed her Armand's white teeth shining in a grin. His face stiffened instantly into a blank mask, but she had seen enough. He had been almost long enough to have seen Haggie and to have received instruction. It was not hard to guess what she had done, and now a little faint the example of her writing would fall. She dropped the pen and laughed as the masked man fell to the floor.

"Tell Mr. Evers, I think it's this time."

"I do not understand, madam."

"Oh, you see. There is no need to wait."

She meant he should at her, and then accepted his dismissal with a respectful bow. Magda wondered how Julia Haggie would

A Wood-stained, terrified figure fell through the doorway and collapsed at Magda's feet.



take the rebuff, and more than half-expected a world trying him to last. But the afternoon passed without any further trespass on her confidence. Albeit she did not then know it, the advent of Horace Evers had afforded other preoccupation to Magpie and his companions. It was after the conference according to the department that Victoria Hagan came to her. She introduced herself abruptly.

"Julius thought as we're the only two women in this old shack, we ought to have each other," she said, a man with amorous and crossed her shoulders. "Got a cigarette? I made sure that he and you meant. I know how it is myself. I've just written a paper."

"I remember you," said Magpie, covering the somewhat figure of the young girl with interest. "You shivered us to the Jefferson Hotel."

Victoria's white teeth gleamed in amusement at the recollection.

"Where you were lurching with your boy friend, Henry had, Horace. You wouldn't have known who I was there in a million years, but he had you spotted at once." She lit a cigarette, and the little fellow he set on his way to a window. Although it was expiring it, I never knew when my bag went. But happens were real. I'd like to have seen Horace's face when he read that note."

"You know Mr. Evers, then?"

"Never met him before, but I had heard of him. You mean any calling him Horace? I kind of feel tender with him. I like that boy—but not so much as I do." She lit another cigarette in the parlor and sat down to read a magazine—his father's dying—I've not sure that I'd have looked even Julius against him."

Magpie's heart seemed to stop beating. All her hopes had been set on Evers. If it was true that he had left the country she was left in a hopeless position. But as the first glances of the news passed she found herself repeating her belief. If it was true that Horace was on his way to the States, it was not of men to have abandoned her without a thought—He would have handed the man over to other people—probably in Scotland Yard, that was it now? Had the story been invented for Magpie? She tried to recall that that impression in her mind which it had done at last? That was at least as likely to any other supposition. In any event, it would be well enough to sign of Horace's name.

"I'm sorry about that," she said, with a show of casual interest. "I never liked him, but I wouldn't have him. That was the first time we met." She tapped with a string of beads around her neck. "Were you coming on his absence very much?"

"I thought it might make a difference to you to know that he'd gone." Victoria's little eyes smiled on the beach. "What a pretty touch-up."

"No, Mr. Evers means nothing to my young life," she dismissed the subject. "My I call you Victoria? It's a name I've always liked. I don't suppose it's any use asking you what's at the back of all this bother about me?"

The other girl took a leave between her hands and reached herself gently to sit and lie. "No, it's no use asking. I'm as much the black as you are. All I know is that I was in your place I'd do whatever Julius wants. He can be withered when he sets out to do. I wouldn't give much for your chances of getting out of here, since if you keep on treating him, she laid a hand on the other's knee. "Stay, Magpie, why do obstinate? Do you know what he did to Ralph Black, one of the servants, this morning—a man he supposed of having been a friend of Julius's on his last night, and then threw him in one of those cells where you can neither stand upright nor lie at all length. And he wouldn't be above doing it to you."

Magpie's heavily shadowed chin stuck out a little.

"I know," she smiled.

"Stupid, I'm not trying to put the wind up you," persisted Victoria, but her determination to lead you in the direction that I wish it begged him to let me come and see you first. And I don't believe I could stand it—to see the lady rolling into a woman." The thought seemed to intrude her. For the covered her

eyes with her hands and sobbed, convulsive sobs, convulsive sobs, convulsive sobs.

Magpie remained her with a face to which amusement struggled with longing. She broke into a curt laugh.

"That doesn't improve me a bit. Do you take me for a fool? I know why you came here."

Instantly the sobs stopped. Victor recovered her hands, and the only emotion that she now displayed was a baffled and stony indifference.

"There's gratitude," she started. "You think I'm meddling. Well, I've tried to say you. Now we'll see." She lit a cigarette, and she rose and raised her voice in a loud, casual call.

"Julius—oh, Julius!"

The fat man appeared so suddenly that Magpie could not catch the entrance, but he had long since. Julius was there and Helen, and in the latter she recognized the woman who had brought her to the Middle Vale in the car. Julius made no attempt to explain who the man was.

"Little Victoria doesn't come up to you at an auction," he observed quietly. "None to me we've been making time on you, Miss Evers." He went to the door. "Fishes here."

A certain time on her lip as the other two men advanced towards her. Like usual she felt Magpie the sensation of knowing her terrified the man. It could, she knew, do her no good to stand for him as there were no underground labyrinth which could help her! Now was she sure that this was anything more than another attempt to frighten her. In spite of all everything it was difficult for her to believe that there would really go to execution, she tried to shake off the grip of Helen's hand on her wrist.

"Leave me alone!" she cried. "I'll go with you!"

"I'll let you will," he retorted, without loosening his hold. "I'll hand it to you that you've got your nerve with you, girl."

Magpie stood rigidly aside as they moved the door and looked up the rear as the little procession fled along the narrow passage. She, Magpie, her heart fluttering, but her head held high, found herself led to what at first appeared a rather dim and gloomy cell. She could not see the man's face, and it did not need the mere explanation of Julius to tell her that they were in the torture chamber. She followed in a daze. It all seemed to her to be a dream. And even when she found her wrists freed and confined in lateral circles above her head in an old rubber post at one side of the room, and saw Magpie running his thick fingers through the strands of a reindeer's hair, she could scarcely believe that she was not the victim of some fantastic nightmare, and that in another moment she would wake up safe in bed at her home.

"By any Trevor Hagan, girl, as a ghost under the electric light, put up a hand to break into the prescription from his forehead, and heard Victoria's hysterical sobs.

"Don't be shy. Tell me where you've had enough," said Julius, and strove the last look.

Her lip tightened, and she flinched in dumb, self-antipathy. But the door never fell. With an oath Hagan sprang forward, and, wrenching the whip away, flung it in the ground.

Setting light to the papers, he let them drift down into the stove well.



"I'm damned if I'll stand it!" he cried in a high-pitched voice that revealed the anger he had undergone. "This has been carried far enough."

He quickly that the movement was already too late. He had reached the door, and he had pocketed and jammed his candle light against the younger man's back.

"Sit here, aren't you?" he snarled. "Stand back, or, by Jove, I'll put you out!" He had heard Julius' interposed the voice of Helen. "It's not altogether so on the way. Put that candle away."

For a moment more Julius Magpie hesitated. His finger had tightened on the trigger. Then, with a start of surprise, he retracted his gun. "What a pack of Chinas," he muttered. "If you'll leave to be the other way, then. The girl's got some and in her little finger than the lot of you."

As Helen moved to release Magpie, Trevor Hagan did a high-pitched cry, but he did not give ground of his nerve in any light place. His knees sagged and he dropped where he stood in a dead faint.

ELLEN FINDS A MAN.

ELLEN FINCH had appeared in Devonshire in a high-powered car, had left certain packages and correspondence and had disappeared again. In fact, he had gone no further than cover north country. The day after his arrival in Devon, back roads and farm land, in a wide circle about the domain of Linnocross Manor. He had opened up many new acquaintances among farmers, gamekeepers and laborers, and at the village stores he had acquired a bit with them; yet his half-sister, as a retentive background that was a unique addition to his wardrobe, and in itself worth the trouble of a visit to Devon.

Yesterday, he had accounted all the last day well, because and pieces of the park, and had unobtrusively studied a postcard and a map, which later he marked here and there with little pencil notes. Twice he returned to

of the top branches if you want me. And now all that's left is to climb down in average order listening."

From a big balcony that had been his bedroom from the car, he took out a small pointed case to which a pair of watchmen was attached, some tools and a coil of wire. Frank looked at each in the mirror of the lamp and looked out a packet of small wire-cutting pins. He then began steadily to pay out the wire, moving unerringly towards the boundary of Lonsomeau Park, which at this point was a heavy fence.

Before daylight had gone he had started a drainage ditch crossing the hedge at right angles, and at the end of a little run and a few seconds he was able to crawl his way under the hedge. The other man followed piling the wire at intervals to the bank.

Thus they proceeded for perhaps two hundred yards, and then arrived at a right angle across the open ground towards one of the posts that carried the telephone in the park. In ten minutes more the connection was made. From his post Frank would be able to overhear any messages that might be sent in or from the park. The only risk, as it was reckoned on their way back to the cars, was that the wire might be observed. But it had been cleverly jugged down where it crossed the open ground, and the distance was so great.

"What about the car?" asked Frank.

"I shall have to take a chance on that," said Horace, rubbing his chin. "I don't want Julius to know I've got a last-minute hand-pick. I can't leave it in the village, and we can't get it up to the cars over the salt ground without leaving tracks that would advertise you as here. There's a kind of despatch machine that I carried down all the time—a couple of hundred yards from where I am now. It runs through a lot of wood. The car would be safe enough there unless someone stumbled across it by accident—and even then it wouldn't link up to your car."

"If you're prepared to risk having a good one, how, how, it can't be too far off," agreed Frank.

"Something more than an hour," said Julius as he took the five-foot Moon, and after following in a hack linked into an extensive dinner with an apartment justed by his labours. He spent only an hour afterwards in the bar garden, and returned on the plea that the society air had exhausted him.

"At one o'clock in the morning he awoke, and, throwing back the curtain, let a flood of moonlight into the room. Lonsomeau squinted wearily, he fixed a glance to his parcel, and from his bag took a business-like flashlight and one or two other things which he slipped under his pillow. The country was clearly quiet as he stole out at the back door, but he preferred to avoid the village, and he made his way through the kitchen garden and over half a dozen fields, keeping close to the hedges.

He moved fast, and when he reached the road on the other side of which bounded the high wall which at this point was the boundary of Lonsomeau Park, cut on his heels for a little and waited. Presently a light on the white ribbon of the road glowed, and a man on an unlighted bicycle as it passed him.

"At I thought, Julius is overlooking no beds," he reflected, and when the patrol was out of sight retraced the road. Finding him well to the top of the hill wall, he dropped lightly to the other side and was within the park.

He moved now even more cautiously than before, with every step he took he had to take a dozen steps when he was aware of one of the great hounds bounding madly over the close-cropped turf towards him.

The wretched, shaggy dog barked and pined his teeth in the doorway. He advanced rather than to snarl, but which might have been less formidable in attack, but would certainly have raised no alarm. It was all over in a matter of seconds. There was the gleam of a knife in the air and the dog was killed. Another knife flash and the dog was dead.

"Oo," muttered Horace, and, dragging the body under a bank, contained his pantomime.

For a while his vision lay in a straight line, but after a while he straggled to and fro, and again dropping to all fours and lying flat on the earth and pushing tentatively with his hands. Then he came to within a few hundred yards of the castle, and with a pointed lance, remained at perfect compass and a roughly-drawn plan that he had made, raising the necessary flash of a torch.

With his eye he tried to estimate the distance from the greenhouse, but he did not care to approach too closely. Then he came thro' a narrow hole in the ground, and after nearly an hour he explained, and at last, controlled by a rough length of timber, he found what he sought. The hole of his hole protruding through a cluster of leaves and ferns with fresh morning dew.

Working with both hands, he tore away the debris and came across a loose stone slab, which, when he lifted it, disclosed the entrance

to move, and as he pushed with all his weight it swung open.

Horace crawled through and found himself in another passage running at right angles to the one he had negotiated. For a moment he hesitated, uncertain whether to turn to the right or the left. At last—there then was nothing to tell him which way best—he went straight to the left, past a door.

Then he found himself in a labyrinth of passages, and to make sure of being able to return his steps he placed a little plant mark on the wall at each turning. In a little he became aware of a quiet, subdued murmur, and following the sound he was led down a spiral flight of steps. At the bottom he came upon a series of meetings in the wall, each a hole larger than a moderately-sized dog kennel, and each, in place of a door, having a square iron grating. In one of these a half-dressed man sat, his hands thrust up under his chin, man-



How came on the man from behind, and his automatic swung with deadly effect.

to an apparently closed wall. Throwing the beam of the torch into its depths, he narrowly escaped the instant and a wave of scolding rage let into the brickwork showed at one side.

He took a couple of old letters from his pocket, and, applying a match, lit them with slow care. The flames held up, they reached the bottom corner, but he was not without further hesitation he began to descend.

About two-thirds of the way down, the path ended, and there was a gap in the wall of the wall a narrow passage which he had to stoop to enter. Its height increased as he advanced, and he was able presently to stand upright. He chuckled softly to himself as a glance at the compass showed that he was receding in the direction of the castle. Julius Huggle did not know everything about the place he had picked upon as a retreat.

He counted his paces as he moved—a hundred, two hundred, three hundred. Surely he had reached the castle by now. Once more the ground was broken and he was in his hands and knees. There straight he was brought to a full stop. There faced him a scowling soldier clad in smooth, shining steel. With a curse under his breath he put his hands to it. To his astonishment it seemed

long softly to himself. He blinked as the light from the torch fell on his eyes.

"Julius during the midnight hours in style," murmured Horace. "And who might you be, my friend?"

The man glowered and struck away. And then reaching the staircase placed with light, Horace and turned a switch at the top. Horace hung himself into the shelter of the wall adjoining that of the prisoner, and Armand descended leaving a jug of water and a bowl of soup. Horace allowed him to pass on the way with good reason. The Swiss never knew what struck him, but went down with a crash as if he had been poisoned. The prisoner shook the top of his cap and thrust with his nose upwards.

"Good! Sit him again! Kill him!"

"Shot up!" answered Horace so fervently that the wall was covered in silence.

Quickly and softly he searched the prisoner's hands. All that he found of any importance was a simple key which proved to fit the door of the cell. The captive, obeying a whispered injunction, crawled out, and Horace, throwing Armand into a chair, closed and locked the grating and pecked the key.

"Now listen to me," he said importantly, gripping the released man by the shoulders and giving him a slight shake. "Who are you?"

"I'm Ralph Black." The man was in tears. "Don't take me there again. You won't take me there again, will you?"

"Full confession, then," I've here to get you out of this place—to help you—do you understand. But, first of all, I want you to show me where to find the lady who was brought here, please. I mean, where she lives."

It took time and patience before Florence could disentangle enough from the confusion of Black to serve his immediate purpose. But at last he made himself understood, and the great man then told him the address he considered above all useful that the detective found himself running at times. They came to the door of the underground suite occupied by the girl. Within a few minutes Black was knocking loudly to himself. At his gentle knock the door opened.

"Miss Stewart. This is Elver here," he whispered.

There was a startled exclamation. He leaned her back across the room in the door.

"I know you would find where I live. Can you get the door open?"

A quick examination showed him the impossibility of forcing the massive outer door without tools. He searched under his coat.

"I am alone," he said, "and I am afraid the door is locked now. I was a bit too late to think that this might happen. I mean, where she lives."

He was ushered to her by the door, laugh, and, as the confined her way in, only to find a door open. He realized that her usual key had not worked for some time.

"Always over the door, you're a great hand, isn't it? Now every woman—or man for that matter—would have stood out against that banging bell. One of these days I'll have a word with Jakes about that."

"I feel sure for him. But what are you going to do now?"

His mind was working fast. Unless by some chance he could obtain the key, it was impossible immediately to release her. And every minute was passing. He saw a tiny door in the wall was little to be missed and a quick made his way. He had an objection to taking risks if there was even a remote possibility of profit by doing so, but now he was in a fix, and he had his conscience, in the interests of the world, might very well bring disaster not only upon himself, but upon Maggie. Thus there was the only man. It was almost certain that he could not get down below camp in the face of armed opposition.

"I'll tell you," he announced, and explained his difficulties. "A dead Florence Elver isn't going to help much. Now you've got the news. Miss Stewart has been taken away for another twenty-four hours! Maybe it might be worth while if you can get some one who's back of all this."

"Don't you worry, Mr. Elver. This perfectly comfortable. I'd like to know myself."

"Good girl!" he cried.

Five minutes later Elver was knocking Ralph Black out of the place. The woman came from somewhere, he had guessed, and her the extraordinary composure of shouting another hour as they were waiting near the parlour, she thanked him forthought in filling a witness—they reached the highest moment possible.

Little Fyankle went from his sleep in the shelter lane to find his chief shaking him.

"She's not asleep, get the car and run this kind up to London. He's pretty drunk, but if you can get any thing out of him you'll be sure to try. Ask Harry Currier to look after him, and get back before daylight if you can."

"Hello!" remarked Fyankle.

WORDS ON THE TABLE.

"I'll write you every time I hear your name," said Harry Currier. "I get to kind of forgetting you, so I'll see that you're remembered a man and want me to dispose of the body."

Elver grinned quickly into the telephone. He had a feeling of several good hours' sleep and was feeling happy.

"Come now, Garry, don't be foolish. Why, your police man couldn't have been more careful."

"Needful! You—you! (Elmer!) If what Frank told me was true—he was very shabby

—I'd not care that you stopped at murder. Anyway, you've tampered with his Majesty's telephone service; you've committed burglary by breaking into a policeman's house; you've killed a couple of dogs; you've assaulted and, for all I know, killed some little boy not in the parish, and (legally) imprisoned him; you've pinched a house; and, worst of all, you've pushed him up to me. So, here, posing as a man, you can't break a law wherever it happens to suit you."

"All these things I done, An'ty against the law. But, for the matter I've done, the underworld for the duration of the war. You've got the books. Now later, and I'll make a full confession. Write a note, and I'll sign it when I get up to the Yard."

"Just about what I thought," announced Garry when his friend had finished an account of his recent doings.

"Don't be tyroons, Garry. See here, why don't you take me down this evening? There's a nice lot at Greenbank, and perhaps you never see told—might introduce you to Jakes."

"Hating some sort of bed," observed the other. "I'll be along, and bring a lot of our bright young people from the Flying Squad. Now that the girl's definitely located, all that we want is a search-warrant, and we should night up to the main old dig for her."

"Back on that stuff again, do you? What do you think Jakes will be doing if we parade up to the main with loads playing and making things? It'll mean being along poor warrant at it will make you feel better. See, Garry, this is the dope. Tonight an crew was the gallant few lots of the police—the men, and perhaps Frank, sneak out was through the secret passage and make none of the girl. You and your merry men will be playing tag out in the grounds. If we're not out to hell in an hour, you can put some of your own ideas down."

"I'll give you assistance to that. I go down the tunnel with you."

"Fair enough. Only I might do something illegal, like pinching Mr. Black, and then you'll be on me. And you'll be in a bit of a fix when you get here. There's one or two things that you might do for me before you start. He became quiet and handsome-like, and at the other end of the wire Garry greeted him.

For the rest of the day, Elver was the air of an idle, slightly bored man. He took a few short strolls, but made no attempt to go over the lawn where Frank was an inmate daily. There was a probability, then, some of Maggie's people would be keeping an eye on him, and he wished them to be reassured that he was up to no mischief. After lunch he brightened up the small afternoon garden in the bar-parlour, by smoking out some leaves on an unoccupied place.

It was getting on in the afternoon when he applied out again. Some distance from the railway, at a point where the road took a bit of a rise, he was able to distinguish the

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that was Frank's signed post. Something white was fluttering in his branches, and he did the last part of his journey as a feat.

Before he could reach the barn he was met by Frank, who seemed himself in an incoherent hurry. He gripped his chief's arm. "He's wandering if I'd catch you," he growled. "Higgins's men, who are in the Albert Dock 2306. He's made sure. Tell Jerry something good." I was off to the gates.

Elver looked at his watch. It was ten past five. He crossed the gates. "That's interesting," he commented. "I wonder why Jerry is—though I've a sort of idea. Well, we've got time, but not too much. You get hold of the car and boot it out to Greenbank. Garry may have arrived. He's raised his crew thoroughly. If he's back, you'd better change the Yard and get 'em down. Leave a note for Garry, and put 'em back here and being around. Stay any our leaving room, if you have to work it with a collision. See that?"

"I understand. What are you going to do?" "Me! I'm going in by the back way to keep the car open."

He took up other's arguments and protests, and, bending him on to his original bent, he set out to his own project. A dull street had begun to feel, when was something in the front of the passage, and he started to bring round the car to turn the park in the entrance to the main, other by usual way, large or by way of Higgins's look-out was not to be mentioned. This was different from making a trip at the dead of night.

His back held, however, for he gained the wall without interruption, and now that he knew the way made, comparatively speaking, he had no need to the subsequent part of the route.

Once within its precincts he moved with very deliberate caution, feeling his way through the dense darkness, for he had his torch open, and he was not to be seen. He was not to be seen, he was not to be seen, he was not to be seen, and so on until he was almost at the door which he had spotted in the wall. He was not to be seen, and so on until he was almost at the door which he had spotted in the wall.

His heavy coat was as heavy to take for a reply. Was it possible that she had been moved already? He realized the beam of his torch on the lock, and he was not to be seen. He was not to be seen, he was not to be seen, and so on until he was almost at the door which he had spotted in the wall.

In a matter of seconds he had his foot and was rubbing her numb wrist. He smiled faintly up at him.

"Mr. Elver, I know you would come."

"Looks as if I was just in time," he said. "What have they been up to?"

"Hicks's men, Higgins, and one that you can't find," said, smiling, he held up a bunch of keys, he pointed to the lock in his hand, was standing by the open doorway.

Elver straightened himself, and eyed the man up and down.

"Why thank you, Julia?" he said quietly. "Kiss me as if you've been expecting me."

"We didn't know," returned the fat man, "but we thought you'd be back, and took precautions. There were some queer things going on last night. How'd you get on that night?"

"That—would I smoke?" Without waiting for an answer, he took a cigarette from his waistcoat pocket and drew it leisurely in his mouth. "That was from a kid I got in an old neighbourhood, very quiet, but I read up on all the dope I could lay my hands on about the old slams, and it wasn't hard to get two and two together. Might give us well you that you were Julia. You've washed up. In an hour or two you'll be as clean as a whistle and all."

Elver turned against the doorpost and laughed.

"You talk as if I was some vulgar criminal. In an hour you'll be dead, and Maggie and I'll be out of an mill to well out

(Continued on page 167.)

SENSATIONAL HAPPENINGS THIS WEEK IN—



WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Sylvia Harrison, private secretary to a famous K. I. M. Wilkinson, Peabody, is engaged to be married to John Blake, Esq. Returning with Maxine after dinner in the Moon End to her flat, where she lives alone, Sylvia finds that she is being followed, but sees nothing to her fears, thinking that she is merely returning from dinner. She has with her important papers, legal evidence against certain crooks, the case against Mrs. Peabody is progressing. Alone in her flat, she fears get the letter of last week, suspecting that someone is after the papers, she finds them upstairs to the flat above where lives a dead old lady named Mrs. Blake, and hides them in a wardrobe. She returns to bed.

During the night she is awakened in sudden alarm. A light comes, and a sudden rapping from her. She switches on the light and sees a shadow on the floor, the dead, pale-faced figure of her neighbor, Mrs. Peabody. In her startled horror she is aware of his clothes piled on a chair.

There is an telephone, and, panic-stricken, she rushes out of the house to seek a policeman. Instead of getting help, however, she falls into a trap and is kidnapped by one Fandello Kalkthor, the principal crook mentioned in those papers which she has hidden in Mrs. Blake's flat. Fandello tries to force her to tell him where she has hidden the papers, and, when she refuses, arranges a double witness by which he has her confined in the insane daughter of himself and his wife, Eliza.

Meanwhile, John Blake, in his effort to find Sylvia, visits the girl of a crook, John Truett, who had given Peabody information against Kalkthor. He has discovered that there is little doubt that it is the latter who leads that she has fallen, and so he plans to get in touch with him in the guise of a confidential man.

(See next col.)

NO HOPE!

"Mind you," the doctor said to Sylvia, "do not attach importance to that. It is a common epidemic. She will return to the house of her family, a happy, affectionate girl, and, moreover, probably, that she has ever told her you anything other than devotion." Although her eyes were dilated with terror, Sylvia made a strenuous effort to control her emotion, and insisted upon deciding in detail the observance of the dead body of Mr. Peabody in her room and her own arrival at Fandello's house. Nothing but looks of incredulity greeted the end of her protest.

On these medical men took leave of her, and, in response to Fandello's menacing look, Eliza asked Millet and Keith whether they were sure that her darling child would

recover. They answered in turn, vaguely and soothingly, and departed from the room.

Sylvia, so sharply shocked as though she had been on a battlefield, sobbed unconsciously, wildly.

"How could you let him do it?" she wept. "And what is he going to do with me now?" Eliza, with tears in her eyes, approached the bedside.

"You'll know soon enough," she said sadly.

Unconscious pain seized Sylvia, knocking down the barriers of self-control.

"Help," she screamed with all her might and main. "Help—help!"

In response to her shrieks, Dr. Procter entered the room. He was followed by the two physicians.

"Hypocrite!" muttered Millet. "It is always the best thing in these nervous cases." Dr. Procter asked Eliza to give him his bag, and when she returned with it, he opened it. "I have had to give it to the poor girl before," he remarked in an undertone. "When I heard she was having one of her attacks, I brought it with me in case of emergency."

"Very wise, very wise!" commented Millet. "Sleep is essential!"

Sylvia fought with all her strength when Procter seized her arm. But the other two men held her so that she had to desert. In another moment a burning sensation told her that she had been dragged—dragged openly and with the approval of two men that she knew, intimately, were honest and reputable physicians.

A strange language came over her. Her limbs felt limp, and she had the sensation of floating. The last words she heard were from Kalkthor, who said, with apparent sorrow:

"You consider it imperative that she should go!"

"But the doctors would try, she was to that deep sleep with which a drug induces the senses."

Sylvia awakened after many hours of torpidity, with only a hazy recollection of the events that had taken place immediately before she had been made to sleep. Therefore, when she saw her out-door clothes on a chair, and Eliza sitting by her side, sleep unimpaired here.

"Was Mrs. Kalkthor shocked in that way too?" she asked eagerly, as her eye fell on her hat and coat.

"Fandello never lets anyone go," replied

Eliza, "but you had better get up and dress."

She came to the bedside and slipped her arms under Sylvia's back. To the girl's own amazement, she was too weak to move by herself. "So on the bed and I will dress you," said Eliza, and Sylvia submitted obediently.

Her senses were still too weak to allow her to feel as acutely as when the doctors had been present, and although she wondered what lay in store for her, she did so only vaguely. The language induced by hypnosis takes some time to wear off.

When she was dressed she managed, by leaning on Eliza, to stand up. But she was dazed and felt generally ill. She noted, however, that a large trunk was in the middle of the room, and asked faintly what it was doing there.

"You things are in it," said Eliza. "Kalkthor made me give you enough of my clothes for a long time to come. There aren't any changes of fashion where—where you are going."

Before she could reply, Fandello entered the room.

"Good morning," he said to Sylvia. "Are you ready to start?"

"Where are you going to take me?" asked Sylvia very low.

"I thought that you had got on to my plans," said Kalkthor casually, mentioning Eliza to go out of the room. "I forget that we give you a big shot of dope. We are on route, my dear girl, for a lunatic asylum!"

Sylvia uttered a piercing shriek, and swooned as she stood. Kalkthor prevented her from falling, and swung her obediently around, pressing her to him.

"There is still time to change your mind," he said to Sylvia. "I had a word in your ear, I would forget and forgive." His slanting eyes, bright as yellow flames now, burned intensely. "We could be happy together," he said passionately. "Walk with me instead of against me, and you will be the happiest woman in the world. I, Fandello Kalkthor, swear it!"

Sylvia's eyes started.

"When do you start for the asylum?" was her unsteady reply.

Fandello, watching painfully, replied in a strained voice:

"Now!"

He led her up as though she had stung him, stooped to the door, and flung it open. She passed out of the room, and Fandello rejoined her, taking her arm and leading her downstairs.

Procter and Eliza were in the hall, in their outdoor wraps. In another moment Sylvia was in the automobile, seated next to Eliza. She had recognized the driver's face, however, as that of the man that had been at the wheel of the taxi on the night of the murder.

"So even the taxiway was arranged for on the night of Mr. Peabody's death!" she remarked.

"What I do, I do thoroughly," retorted Fandello, concealing a touch of bravado. "You would be the first to admit that, surely?"

"I admit that you are one of the most dangerous men that has ever lived," replied Sylvia, and remained silent during the rest of her long journey.

Eventually, concerning the stunted feeling that had taken possession of her, she observed these words, and noticed that they were passing through Southampton. She knew that it would be useless to question her captives as to the situation of the asylum, but later, when Kalkthor looked in through the grille of the car, she judged that she was not more than ten or twelve miles from that point.

The building, standing in large grounds, was surrounded by high walls, and soon they came to another gate, which had to be unlocked by a key-keeper. He and Fandella exchanged a few words, and then they drove up by a large, paved road, lined by flower-beds, to a thatched building like a small hotel. The door was opened by a trim maid, who ushered them straight into the doctor's room.

The doctor was a tall, rather pleasant-looking woman, who said to Sylvia:

"My name is Decker, and I am—well, as my friend Miss Kalkstein, to put you well as much as possible—"

"My name is not Kalkstein," said Sylvia quietly. "I am Sylvia Dunderwood, if that concerns anything to you."

"The doctor did not show any surprise.

"Very well, my dear," she said "bravely," "if you would rather think that for the time being, do so. But when you remember that you are Miss Kalkstein, be sure to tell me. Will you try to remember?"

Sylvia checked the burning words that rose in her lips.

Miss Decker conducted the doctor, the nurse, and the husband and the wife that she imagined were interested parents, to see the features of the institution—a neat room, a large chamber labelled social parlour, where sometimes the patients played cards, or performed on some musical instrument—and, lastly, Sylvia's bed-room, a light and well-arranged apartment, save for the fact that there was no handle inside the door, and that the windows were barred, showing Sylvia with distressing plainness that there was no chance for her to get away.

At last the time came for the patients' supper, and the departure of those not actually connected with the asylum. There were perfectly good tea-tables, a light and cosy parlour, and a garden. The doctor's husband was an admirable mixture of individualism and professionalism. Fandella, the last to leave, made his adieux somewhat dramatically, imploring her, in the doctor's presence, to try to forget her dislike for him.

During the time that Fandella Kalkstein had been with her a certain sense of companionship, respect and uncertainty had kept Sylvia's courage up.

Only when the door opened behind him did she realize the enormity of the disaster that had befallen her.

So this was what he had meant by saying that she was destined neither to live nor to die!

It was terrible, horribly true!

For a perfectly sane person to be incarcerated in an asylum was neither more nor less than a living death.

Fortunately Sylvia foresaw that it could be only a matter of time, if she were to remain in the life of a lunatic and associate with insane people, before she herself became mad. Horror such as she had never known—greater even than that which she had experienced when she awakened to find her room a morgue on the fatal night of the murder of Wilkins Parkins—now assailed her.

With an shudder thinking to behold, she gave way to a storm of sobs. Her body shook and shook.

The treated nurse that had been left with her sought in vain to pacify her. Sylvia could only moan and weep, a creature that, for the moment, was frenzied.

Miss Decker, kindly summoned, asked the nurse to leave the room. When she was alone with Sylvia she gently raised the girl's head-stained face, and said:

"That is not the way to get better, my dear. The best thing that you must do is to leave control."

Sylvia clenched her small fists in a physical effort to regain mastery of her

overwrought nerves. When she spoke her voice, rare for an occasional sob, was calm.

"You are very kind," she said reasonably. "I appreciate that you have been draped by a silver cord. You have every reason to be so. I am in trouble. (Delusional insanity, I think the doctors called it. But I am a perfectly normal being, Miss Decker.") She concentrated her gaze upon the matron in an effort to force truth into her, and concluded impressively: "I am Sylvia Dunderwood, the woman that you jokingly called the murder of Mr. Parkins' insanity."

"My dear child, you must forget all about that," said the good woman. "What you need is rest and building up, and these ideas will go right out of your mind!" She looked hard into Sylvia's eyes. "You look to me to be very intelligent," she said kindly, "and I am sure that you can reason. Now, I ask you, is it reasonable to suppose that two famous specialists would send you here for a cure if there were nothing the matter?"

Sylvia's misery was added to by this perfectly logical question, which proved so hereditary in instances of insanity as to believe her stable. Fandella had been so wily, too subtle for her. She was incarcerated—perhaps for the rest of her life. She must face the fate to which Fandella had doomed her—the strange fate of being neither dead nor alive!

Replying to the matron, she said quietly: "I think we are your point of view. That my story happens to be true is something that nobody could be expected to understand. I shall give you as little trouble as possible."

In the unexpectable awful days that followed Sylvia kept her word. She was less lively than a ghost—pale and wax, and pitifully silent.

The night of madnesses all round her took hold of her nerves, and there were white nights when, listening to the animal howls of some of the patients, or the shrieks of insane laughter, she never closed her eyes.

But when she knew in her moments of lucidity to be chained with these poor deranged creatures round her bedstead her spirit lit in depths.

Fandella, accompanied by Proctor, were her only visitors. They came once, and Proctor, when it "discuss the case with the matron," left them alone.

"Still prefer this—to me?" inquired Fandella earnestly.

"Much," said Sylvia, with a flash of temper.

Fandella approached her meaningly. "You can't lighten matters," said Sylvia, staring her and saying "You haven't done anything here, and you know it."

Fandella spoke in his softest and most dominating tone.

"Nonsense, I like you," he said. "Quit this present attitude and I'll tell you what will do."

"I'll give you another chance. What else, please, do you want? I mean it!"

Sylvia's soft, brown eyes emitted little sparks of rage.

"Listen to me," she said clearly. "I'm learning something of your tactics. And I'll make it hard for you to come here and make me suffer any more." With this she gave a playful shrug, and by the time that Miss Decker, Dr. Proctor, and a couple of nurses arrived to see what the trouble was, Sylvia was deliberately having a hysterical attack of hysterics.

"I am afraid that, without meaning to do so," said Miss Decker, when the patient had been carried to bed, "you have costed her. Evidently she is not well enough yet to see members of her family. I must ask you not to come for some time!"

Fandella's figure grew rigid, and his breath became noticeable. But he said, in his sweetest manner: "I agree, Miss Decker. I shall not come for some time."

This small triumph revived Sylvia's courage for a little while, but the dull, monotonous routine in time waned her again. More and more did the place seem to her like a tomb, more and more was illuminated by the fantastic ideas that she had when buried alone. Living among those to whom the abnormal had become a matter of course, it was inevitable that she should lose something of her grip, and that at times she wondered whether her reason was becoming affected. The very reason was suggested by the fact of night when she rose from her bed and beat wildly against the door in an effort, that she knew was fruitless to fail, to escape.

She yearned constantly for John—for the sight of him, for the sound of his voice. She knew the story mentioned that must be told. And she was powerless to do anything to ease his pain, powerless even to let him know that she was alive. Letters, sent to parents or guardians, were not posted.

JOHN ON THE TRAIL

When John presented himself and the letter to the inspector in charge of the G.I.L. the gentleman that could not get on with the British Police Force, to Fandella Kalkstein, he was politely welcomed.

Kalkstein poured drinks upon him, for he paid a himself upon entertaining royalty, as he called the principal criterion of the age. "Being your brother and stay right here, he said. "Any friend of G.I.L.'s is a friend of mine—and any friend of mine is welcome to my home."

John eagerly accepted the invitation.

When he had settled down in approved Fandella's study, he turned to the subject of advice, and asked him to make some sort of deal with him.

"You had the Smiths look me up," he suggested, "and I'll do the work. Any terms you think fit will suit me."

Fandella glanced at him.

"I have a deal of old-fashioned stuff, do you?" he continued. "You took the part all right. People would trust you at night—but then the majority of people are always damned fools. I must tell you that this kind of work is rather small for me. I prefer big, highly organized jobs. It's a shame G.I.L., however, I'll gladly give you a leg up!"

John verified that Fandella had reached him to say that what he most needed was information on "breaks" and "apprehensions," and that the right way to do so was to ask for "the book" on the procedure of the man. He said that he would, and Fandella seemed to accept his bargain as a matter of course, and, although occasionally he had difficulty in following his replies, he was clever enough not to let Fandella guess it.

To account for a certain absence in getting to work, John told Fandella that he had strained his ankle, and that he might not forget to him for a day or two lightly and unaccountably.

His next move was to bring to Fandella about his successful "breaks" and "apprehensions" and "prisoners" (John Fandella driving to him) in what he called Fandella's confidence in him grew, and he allowed John to see something of the power and fascination of his personality, so that the young man began to understand how he had gained an almost legendary fame in the underworld.

But not one word did Fandella breathe of Sylvia.

Only John Fandella's impetuous commands prevented John from questioning Fandella outright.

"Got to do it sooner than that," insisted John. "Flatter him so that eventually he tells you about it. Suppose you say that

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