

Spring Gales

"THE BRAIN"—NEW WALTER TYRER STORY—WITHIN

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WEEKLY



NOT WANTED IN U.S.A
POWERFUL, LONG, COMPLETE STORY
BY LADBROKE BLACK

NOT WANTED *in* U.S.A



And his life hung by a thread in England. There were men waiting to rub him out, so he became
A FILM STAR!

Chapter 1. DEPARTED!

"**A**CH now, be sly! Give me a break, brother! I want to feel what it's like to be drawing the air of freedom into my lungs after being inside there for four years."

The gates of the State Penitentiary had just closed behind Dan Murphy, gangster. He had pumped his offense for his share in kidnaping Mr. Silas F. Bellinger, the millionaire.

"Yep! But the air of freedom you've got to breathe, buddy, ain't what we supply in the States. You're for your country of origin—and you've got to make it snappy or we shall raise the heat!"

At the age of ten, in the fall of 1919, Dan Murphy had come with his parents from County Wicklow, in Ireland, to America. There his parents had promptly died in the influenza epidemic of that year, with disastrous consequences to Dan. The American Criminal Investigation Department in New York, having discovered that Dan had never become a naturalized citizen, had arranged for his deportation as an undesirable alien.

Two hard-looking detectives from New York were there to see him safely on board the Atlantic on route for his native land.

"But I'm expecting company to meet me!" Dan complained. "Have a look!"

"We didn't in the time the Atlantic sails," one of the detectives replied grimly.

"Wipe into it, Dan!"

Dan looked wildly round. Tall, with a dark, hard-bitten, not unkindness face, he scanned in the crowd to raise the attention of his guards. As if sensing what was passing through his mind, they each seized him by an arm and ran him toward the waiting car. In another moment they had taken their places, one on either side of him, and the signal had been given to the chauffeur to get moving.

But before the driver could slip in his clutch there was an interruption. The door on the far side was torn open and a woman with peevish hair had just time to fling herself into the car.

"Dan—darling!"

With the jerk the car had made in starting she had stumbled to her knees. In that position she held out her arms to the prisoner.

"What's the great idea?" one of the detectives exclaimed, reaching forward to grab the girl by the shoulder.

Before his fingers could touch her his wrist was seized in a powerful grip and his arm was twisted painfully behind his back.

"Let off her, or I'll smash that silly face of yours!"

Dan's eyes were glowing. As the detective on the other side reached for his gun the girl put a restraining hand on his arm.

"Take it easy! He and Dan are traveling by the same bus."

"We aren't going to give a free lift to any gunman's maid!" the detective roared angrily.

With a quick movement Dan slipped the gun from the hip pocket of the detective, whose wrist he was holding.

"Get out the rough stuff!" he exclaimed, pushing the barrel against the detective's ribs. "I'll be after booming you manners!"

Ain't the lady my wife, and ain't she coming back with me to the little farm we're going to buy in the Wicklow Mountains?"

"That'll do for you, Dan!" the girl

It is bad enough to be a "wanted" man, but sometimes worse to be "unwanted," as Dan Murphy found out. He had to rely solely on his wits—and Jenny.

A POWERFUL, LONG, COMPLETE STORY

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exclaimed firmly. "Give the dick his gob back or he'll begin to think it's a hold-up!"

Obviously Dan returned the gun and then scooping down, gathered his wife in his arms.

"It's sure swell to hold you again, Jenny, my darling. Not seeing you there when I came outside, I was beginning to think you'd forgotten me."

"You'd take a lot of forgetting, Dan!" she laughed, blessing him unthinkingly.

Across the heads of the unscrupulous levers the two detectives looked at one another in some bewilderment.

"But you can't do that!" one of them protested. "We ain't got no orders about the best and see you said."

Jenny struggled for a moment from Dan's arms and opening her handbag took something out of it.

"Look at that, Mr. Dick! Ain't it a tinker for a berth on board the Argentic? Just when do you think you can stop me travelling by any boat I like to select? You ain't got anything on me!"

The detective's face relaxed.

"So you're Jenny Murphy, are you? One of the Big Joe gang, likely, that we haven't got the low-down on. Supposing you tell us, sister, just what part you played in the kidnapping of Mr. Bottinger?"

"No, if you want to know. If I had, what sort of sucker would you take me for, to go spilling the beans?"

She looked challengingly at the two detectives.

"Get this, both of you, and pass it on. My Dan didn't have a square deal. Big Joe and the rest ran him into the business and then left him holding the baby while they went loafing in foreign parts. It was my Dan that let Mr. Bottinger go, and if that old moneybags hadn't been a dirty double-crossing, yellow-livered skunk, had he passed him a wad, instead of getting him put inside for a four-year stretch."

"Sure, that Bottinger was mighty mean!" Dan exclaimed cheerfully. "But forget it, Jenny! Haven't I always wanted to go back to old Ireland, and aren't I going to be sent now at the expense of the government?"

The two detectives gave up the unscrupulous contest. It was impossible to be officially correct with a prisoner holding his wife in his arms, kissing her, and whispering endearments.

After an hour's run the car pulled up at the docks alongside the Argentic. They

had just ten minutes to spare. With Jenny going on ahead, they boarded the liner.

"Well, good-bye, Dan, and don't come back!" one of them exclaimed.

"Is it coming back here when I've got a farm waiting for me in the Wackoo Mountains? Ach, now, talk sense!"

The two detectives shook him by the hand and then made their way back down the gangway. There on the quay they took up their positions, watching everybody who left the ship.

Five had disappeared. The minutes slipped by. The Argentic was getting ready for sea. The moorings were already being cast off and the last gangway that had been left in position was about to be removed, when there was an interruption.

A tall man came rushing across the quay. His eyes were glazed and he had lost his hat. About him hung the pines of a well-wet suit. Now and again he paused for a fraction of a second to gaze at the great liner. Every time he did so his dark, handsome, hard-bitten face was convulsed in an illogical grin.

"Bah! Bah! Bah!" he shouted suddenly, as if some odd cologne cry had floated up into his mind.

He appeared to be astonished at his own voice, for he looked round as if he were searching for the owner of it. A workman pushed past him. At that the man drew himself erect with drunken dignity.

"Bah! Trying to get fresh with me, eh? Say, do you know who I am?"

"Pipe down, buddy," the workman replied with a grin. "You sure ought to take more water with it."

"You—you can't know who I am!"

"Sure I know who you are! You're Dan Murphy! Wasn't I watching you get inside that ship by a couple of ticks? You're Dan Murphy, the gangster. Must have a mighty quick wad, Dan, to have snaked up all that lot since you were put aboard."

"Don't know what you're talking about. Don't like you, I'm Julian Manders. Kiss it, you! Scram!"

The workman, grinning good-naturedly, jerked his thumb in the direction of the two waiting detectives, who stood with their backs to them, closely watching the exit from the ship.

"You go and tell those boys all about it, Buddy. They'll sure be interested!"

The hopelessly intoxicated man seemed to accept the suggestion almost with enthusiasm.

"They'll know me! Can't think where

you was reared! Everybody knows me—I'm Julian Manders, little old Hollywood's most famous film star!"

He roared up against the backs of the two detectives.

"Man ever there said he didn't know who I was. Can you beat it? Biggest fan mail in Hollywood."

He snarled unsteadily on his feet and then grabbed at one of the detective's arms to prevent himself from falling. The detective turned angry. As he did so his jaw dropped and his eyes became stony with astonishment.

"What do you know about this?" he gasped.

Then, standing before him, soaked up to the eyebrows, was the very apt image of Dan Murphy, whom he had seen safely on board only a few minutes before!

The man who regarded him with glazed eyes, suddenly gratified by the other's astonishment.

"Of course you know me! Everybody knows me—Julian Manders! They wanted me over in England to do a picture. Was going to sail on that ship—but don't like her, Buddy. Stay in little New York."

His voice rose to a hoarse yell.

"To hell with England!" he shouted.

"Stay in the States—the land of the free!"

The two detectives, recovering from their trance of astonishment, came into action. Seizing him each by an arm they ran him towards where the foot of the gangway had been. But it was no longer there. The Argentic was slowly moving away from the quayside.

"You've played us for a couple of suckers, have you—you and that deal of yours?" one of the detectives exclaimed wrathfully. "We'll see you get another stretch for this!"

Their prisoner, with drunken dignity, drew himself up to his full height.

"Cut out the rough stuff or you'll be getting yourselves into trouble! I'm Julian Manders, the film star."

"You're telling us! Come on, you! I'd like to find the guy who got you all doped up in such a short time. We sure must trade some powerful kooch!"

Trotting him round, they pushed him violently towards the waiting police car. The man struggled desperately.

"You can't do this to me!" he cried. "I'm Julian Manders, I tell you! Where do you think you're taking me?"

"Back to the penitentiary we got you out of this morning, and there you'll stay for another couple of years at least."

Arriving alongside the car, they hurried him inside with such force that he collapsed on the floor. As they scrambled in after him his voice was heard for a moment protesting that he was Julian Manders. Then there was an abrupt silence.

Meanwhile, the Argentic was slowly moving her way out to the Atlantic. Dan Murphy was seated on the stern deck, oblivious of everything except the girl he held in his arms.

"Jenny, my darling, how have you been managing all the time I've been away? It was the hardest thing I had to bear, not knowing what had become of you."

"I'd have come to see you, Dan, but I guess it just wouldn't have done."

"There was a troubled look on her face.

"Why not, honey?"

"Somebody passed me the word Big Joe was looking for me. He wanted me to join him on his foreign trip. You were where you couldn't make any trouble for him. The way I got it, I was to take the next

boat across the pond or make a journey to a cemetery."

Dan sprang to his feet.

"Somebody ought to rub that dirty, double-crossing guy out! So he lets me go away for a stretch so he can have you all alone to himself!"

Jenny caught him by the arm and pulled him back on to the seat.

"Pipe down, you great big, dear, six-foot Irish boy!" she whispered. "Do you want everybody to know who you are? Do you want to tell you who I didn't go to the prison. I kinda calculated Big Joe would have someone there watching for me."

She squeezed his hand.

"So instead of seeing you, Dan, I landed a job for myself and tried to forget what four years was like."

He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

"What's all these yammerings starting at us for?" he inquired angrily, becoming suddenly aware of a small crowd of passengers whose numbers were increasing every moment, standing a few yards away.

"I should worry!" Jenny exclaimed, with an air of indifference. "I was telling you, Dan. I got eight hundred letters a week. How'll that do to start learning with?"

"Say, that's swell, Jenny!" Dan retorted enthusiastically, and then suddenly paused as a steward, showing him way through the knot of passengers, passed in front of him. "What's troubling you, son?"

"I wonder if you would like to see your wife, sir?"

"My sweet? Sure, I've got her here!"

His arm tightened about Jenny's waist. The steward smiled absently.

"Your secretary didn't inform us that— that Mrs. Manders would be accompanying you, sir. Arrangements, of course, will be made immediately."

Dan stared at him dumbly.

"What's the great idea, big boy? This is my wife. Any more of your fancy stuff and I'll push your silly face in!"

The steward reddened uncomfortably.

"I didn't mean any offence, sir. I only wished to show you your quarters, sir."

"Well, you're a mighty funny way of getting down to it! Come on, Jenny. I suppose we'll had see where we're going to stay."

As he made to lift Jenny's valise, which constituted the whole of her baggage, the steward hastily took it from his hand.

"Allow me, sir. This way, sir."

The crowd of passengers had divided into two lines, between which the steward led the way, followed by Jenny and Dan. Everybody was staring at Dan and who received their curious glances with cheerful indifference.

"How do you, Dan?" he exclaimed.

Now they were clear of the press, passing from the storeroom to the first class, where the steward passed in front of the door of a stateroom and taking a key from his pocket, opened it. Standing back, he gestured to Jenny and Dan to enter.

"I hope you will find everything at you would wish it, sir."

For a moment Dan was too astonished to utter a word. He found himself in a big, sumptuously furnished cabin that was apparently a stateroom. It was almost filled with flowers. Through open doorways he caught a glimpse of a bed-room and a bath-room.

"Your correspondence is on the table, Mr. Manders," the steward exclaimed.

Dan caught him by the arm.

"Say, buddy, do that bit over again and do it slow!"

But before the steward could make any

reply a plump, tubby man with a clean-shaven face pushed his way through the doorway from the dock.

"I wanted to be the first to welcome you, Mr. Manders. George Colman, of Marglar Film Corporation, is a personal friend of mine, and he told me you would be travelling on the Aquatic."

He passed abruptly with his hand held out. He was staring at Dan as if he had seen a ghost, and Dan was staring back at him with eyes in which the fire of resentment were slowly gathering.

"Mr. Silas P. Bottinger! Say, I've been waiting four years to have a show-down with you, and you blow in like this!"

Mr. Bottinger recoiled.

"Dan Murphy!" he gasped. "Dan Murphy, you unprincipled blackguard!"

"This is Mr. Manders, sir—sir, Julian Manders!"

It was the steward who spoke, in the voice of one who had just heard blasphemy committed.

"Mr. Manders? Mr. Julian Manders?"

Mr. Bottinger was gaping like a fish just taken out of the water.

"The likeness to someone I know is so remarkable," he went on.

As Dan made a movement towards him, his fists clenching, Jenny hastily interposed herself between her husband and the millionaire. She was smiling her sweetest.

"Mr. Bottinger, isn't it? My husband, Mr. Julian Manders, has heard so much about you that he's been longing to meet you."

Behind her back she frantically waved her hand. Dan, who had begun to mutter something about her having smothered a rebel, saw the signal and obediently, if with difficulty, kept silence.

"But you'll have to excuse him just now, Mr. Bottinger. He's all hot up and he's got to rest. We'll be seeing you."

Muttering apologies under his breath, Mr. Bottinger withdrew, Jenny glanced at the steward and then jerked her head in the direction of the door.

"Scram!" she said shortly.

The steward scrambled. Husband and wife found themselves alone in the most magnificent suite aboard the Aquatic. Dan stood there like one stunned.

"What's it all about, darling?" he exclaimed. " weren't we both after waiting for a chance to settle accounts with Mr. Bottinger? And what for did you want to hold me back from giving him what's coming to him? And say, what are we doing here in this swell joint?"

Jenny dropped on to a couch, her eyes full of laughter.

"Am I worrying?" she said. "This is swell! This is the universal salve! I always knew we had a break coming to us. They've handed it to us!"

"Dan, honey, it sure is a mistake! Those dicks told me I'd get a berth stowage. And anyway, they think I'm somebody called Manders. Who's Manders?"

"Search me!" Jenny retorted. "But if they think you're Mr. and Mrs. Julian Manders, we'll stay Mr. and Mrs. Julian Manders!"

She looked up at Dan.

"We got to stay Mr. and Mrs. Manders, too, Dan. Bottinger got wise to you. He does the dirty on you once and he might do it again. He might put the dicks wise as to who you are when we land at Southampton. They'd maybe not let me land. But if we stay Mr. and Mrs. Julian Manders everything's going to be hunky-dory!"

Dan drew in a deep breath.

"Yes. But honey, darling, how can we live up to that? We've gotta know something about Mr. Julian Manders."

Jenny rose to her feet and moved across to the table, which was piled with a heap of correspondence.

"Sure! I'm going to get the lay-down on him right now, Dan," she exclaimed, and began to open the letters and telegrams.

For nearly ten minutes there was dead silence, broken only by the rustling of papers and Dan's restless movements as he moved unobtrusively through the luxurious suite.

"Dan, I've got wise to who you are now. You're a Number One picture guy! This Julian Manders in the white-haired boy of the screen. You're under contract with the Marglar Film Corporation Company of London to make four pictures at ten thousand bucks a week!"

"Jenny, honey, we got to see that steward guy and tell him it's off. We'll just be asking for trouble if we try to stick around in this joint for the trip."

Jenny shook her golden head firmly.

"Not on your life, Dan! Bottinger'd make trouble if he knew. I can see myself being pushed back on board to make the return trip to the States, leaving you to go to Ireland alone."

Dan was obviously shaken.

"They haven't anything on you, honey!" "I'm Dan Murphy's wife. These big noses don't have to have anything more than that on me to keep me from setting foot in their country."

"But they've bound to find out, Jenny!"

"Find out who? You leave it to me, Dan. I know how to fix all these upstage guys. I've got 'em lapped. You can hang around here."

"What happens when we get to Southampton?"

"We land as Mr. and Mrs. Julian Manders, and then we'll fade out and Mr. and Mrs. Dan Murphy will light out for Ireland. You leave it to me, big boy!"

RECEPTION COMMITTEE.

MR. BOTTINGER was sore—with himself. He felt just as if he had bitten on a lead bullet.

Julian Manders was one of the world's big names. The passengers were all crazy to get next him. Mr. Bottinger, who always liked to be in the middle of the grandstand when the headlights were turned on, had rashly asserted that he knew him and could effect the necessary introductions.

On the strength of having had a business deal with George Colman, head of the Marglar Film Corporation, with whom Julian Manders had a contract, he had walked boldly into the imperial suite, supporting his courage by remembering the millions he possessed.

And then he had been gaffed by that quiet unparadise break! He had mistaken the great film star for the low-down gangster, Dan Murphy, whom he had taken care to put away for four years!

He had never thought of Dan Murphy since those days. He hadn't liked to think of him. Deep down in his heart he knew he had treated the man shabbily, and he always made a point of trying to forget unpleasant things.

When he had been kidnapped and held for ransom it was Dan and Big Joe who had stood between him and Big Joe and the rest of the gang.

Big Joe had decided to rub him out when he saw money materialized and the police got dangerously near to their hunt.

Dan, drinking cold-blooded murder, had first urged the prisoner to part with the necessary sum. Those persuasions failing, he had agreed to take a message to one of Mr. Bottinger's friends, refusing any payment for his services.

That was how the police had got wise to the gang's hide-out. Big Joe and the rest had slipped away long in time and Dan had been left behind.

It had been his conduct at this point that Mr. Bottinger particularly wanted to forget.

Janey had urged him to present to the world the picture of a rich man who was unflinchingly resolute and courageously audacious. To build up this character convincingly it was necessary for him to have run serious risks. Thanks to Dan's sturdy humanity—he had run none—but that didn't make any difference. Just to walk tamely back into the world of freedom was going to spoil the picture.

So he had sacrificed Dan, Big Joe and the rest of the gang not being available. He suppressed the part Dan had played in trying to better his lot, and pointed him as one of the minor villains of the piece, who refused to give away his confederates. As a result, Dan had got four years.

And now he had gone and mistaken Julian Manders for the man who had played such a prominent part in this unfortunate episode in his life. He had got to make amends somehow.

He hung about the dock, therefore, until Janey, leaving Dan straggling into Manders' dinner clothes, appeared.

"Mrs. Manders, I'm real sorry I said what I did to your husband. I want you to forget it."

Under Janey's long lashes her eyes were as hard as steel, but there was a smile on her pretty lips. This guy had put her Dan away for four years. She was laughing—nothing!

"You don't want to think about it ever again, Mr. Bottinger. Julian's always being mistaken for somebody else. He's got so used to taking somebody or other on the street that when people see him in real life they're ready to bet their bottom dollar that they've met him somewhere or other."

She gave a little laugh.

"Why, there was a guy that had done a long stretch in Sing-Sing who reckoned Julian had been in the same chain gang with him for years. Can you beat it?"

Mr. Bottinger couldn't beat it.

"Don't say you aren't going to dine in the saloon to-night, Mrs. Manders?"

Janey, who was determined to get outside all the free meals that were being distributed on the Augustic, took a fraction of a second to grasp his meaning.

"I get you! I ain't dressed! But I guess the folks will just have to put up with me as I am without my glad rags. You see, I only decided at the last moment to make the trip with Julian. I was just seeing him off when it came over the sudden that I couldn't leave him. So I stayed."

"You mean you've no baggage?"

"Not a stitch but what I'm standing up in. But I'm not worrying."

"Charming!" Mr. Bottinger gazed, thinking of what a sensation he would make when he related this gossip authoritatively to his fellow passengers. "What about a cocktail before dinner, Mrs. Manders?"

"Lead me to it!" Janey replied enthusiastically.

In the magnificent lounge all the men crowded about Mr. Bottinger and his com-

panion, eager for an introduction. Janey kept her head even when a young Boston duke declared that he had never heard Julian Manders was married.

"I guess there's a lot ain't any wiser than you are!" Janey answered. "Julian and I've been married for years—five years, but we didn't tell the world. All this publicity stuff gets us down."

Her sentence blazed. Julian Manders was perhaps the most publicized film star in the world.

"You and your husband must be mighty smart, Mrs. Manders!" somebody exclaimed. "I know that wickercock about marriages being made in heaven, but I should have thought the guy that runs Mr. Manders' publicity would have got a bit of news like that even from heaven!"



The Arrest of a Film Star!

"If he'd applied the beans he'd have been fired. Pulling down all the dollars he does for the job, he knows better than to talk."

It was easy to play her part when she was alone, but it was different when Dan, looking very unfamiliar in Julian Manders' tuxedo, which fitted him to perfection, appeared upon the scene. As everybody crowded about him, eager to shake his hand, Janey managed to catch his eye. The message she gave him was to keep his mouth shut as much as possible and leave her to do the talking.

She certainly did a lot of talking. Only at dinner was she able to slip him a word now and then about the right knives and forks to use and to give him her first instructions.

"As soon as you've finished the coffee, lead it! I'll bring them some more."

Her husband was fired, she explained afterwards. The strain of his act told severely upon his nerves and he had been instructed by his doctor to rest as much as possible. Presently she maneuvered matters so that she was alone with Mr. Bottinger, who was glowing with pride and satisfaction. Wasn't he the recognized familiar associate of the famous film star and his wife? Wasn't everybody on board jealous of him?

"Say, Mr. Bottinger, you're a wise guy.

Just tell me what I've got to do to get a word with the skipper."

"I'll make arrangements for you to see him at once, Mrs. Manders. But perhaps it's something I can do for you?"

Janey shook her head.

"I reckon I'll have to see him. I've got to raise some dough. You wouldn't believe it, would you, but Julian and me left New York in such a hasty hurry that we didn't bring more than eight hundred bucks with us. And that ain't going to last long."

With eager, trembling fingers Mr. Bottinger searched his wallet. From under her long lashes Janey looked at it hungrily.

"You must let me be banker for you and your husband, Mrs. Manders. Here's five thousand dollars."

"Now ain't that mighty kind of you, Mr. Bottinger? That ought about to see us through."

A hour later she joined Dan in their luxurious quarters. He had taken off his dinner jacket and removed his collar and tie and was stretched in a comfortable chair, with a cigar between his lips. He eyed her gloomily.

"Honey, darling, we've got to call it off. I couldn't go through with it. Every time I look at that old timer, Bottinger, that put me away for my stretch, I get a pain in my neck trying to keep my hands off him. And all this upstage stuff gets me down. It may come natural to you, honey, but it's poison to me."

She pricked herself on his knee.

"What's biting you, Dan? Ain't we got a swell time to live in? Ain't everybody wanting over themselves to know all? And the cats—say, that dinner we had must have knocked back somebody ten bucks."

"But what's going to pay for it all, honey? What's going to happen to us when there's a short-circuit? Besides, I want to be Dan Murphy, so's I can grab Bottinger by his fat neck and put my fat in his silly face. How am I going to square accounts with him while I stay this Manders guy?"

Janey opened her handbag and produced a wad of notes.

"What do you know about that, my Irish boy?"

"Holy smoke! Five thousand bucks, Janey! Where did you get it?"

"Fives old man Bottinger. I told him we'd left New York without any money having eight hundred bucks. He gave us that to see us through. Mind you, it ain't all he owes you, but it's something on account."

"Aren't you the most wonderful darling in all the world?" he exclaimed enthusiastically.

It little was seen of the famous Julian Manders during the voyage his wife was pronounced on all sides an immense success. She was friendly, she gave herself no airs, and her merry talk was voted delightful. When, on a spring morning, the Augustic crept up Southamport Water, everybody was sorry the voyage was over. So was Janey. Only Dan was relieved.

"I'll sure be glad to be out of this, honey," he exclaimed. "I'll not feel myself again until I set foot on the quay at Dublin."

Janey had all her plans made. The film

star's luggage should be dispatched to wherever he was expected to stay. One clear of Southampton dock they themselves would take early car and make for Dublin. But she had failed to foresee the demands of publicity.

A detachment of cameramen and a small platoon of Pressmen, together with all the leading figures of the Mayor Film Corporation had gathered on the quayside. From the moment the Antarctic berthed, Jenny knew that the fair-act she had planned was just an impossibility.

Their luxurious suite was invaded. Dan, with a wild light in his dark eyes, found himself shaking hands with all the most distinguished figures in the picture world. Her own identity having been established as the wife of the film star, armfuls of flowers were thrust into her hands.

"Is there anything you want, Mrs. Manders?" Delaney, the secretary of the film corporation inquired.

Jenny had a brain-wave.

"Settle up everything here for us. I guess Julian doesn't want to be worried handling our tips to all these guys. See they get paid well."

As she walked off the ship and posed for a moment on the gangway for the cameramen, she was making rapid calculations. The trip over hadn't cost her a penny. She had the wireless sets borrowed dollars she had saved for Dan intact. In addition, there was Mr. Bottinger's van of five thousand bucks.

They were in clover. She knew nothing about farms, but Dan had always wanted one. Now he would have a real swell one. From now onwards life for them was going to be just great!

"When do we make our break-away, honey?"

Dan's whisper brought her back to the stern realities of the present.

"We got to wait, Dan. The big idea's got all unstuck. We'll have to chivy on for a bit. If we run for it now we'd sure land ourselves in a proper mess."

They were in a Rolls Royce, driving to the station. They were in the main travelling up to London. Presently they were at Waterloo, where the police had to be called out in force to clear away the crowd, mostly girls, who had collected to welcome Julian Manders.

As they were hurried into a waiting car with Martin Leslie, the producer for Mayor Film Corporation, a big man, so tall that he stood head and shoulders above the crowd, stared at them as if he was about to have a fit.

"What's hitting you, boss?" one of the two men who stood on either side of him exclaimed.

"Didn't you see? What's the matter with your eyes? That was Dan Murphy, along with that swell girl of his!"

The man laughed.

"You're nuts, Joe. You've sure got that sense badly if you start seeing her after four years. Dan Murphy—ah! That was Julian Manders, the crown guy, what all these rubbernecks have come to see."

Big Joe glared down at him.

"Maybe I got Dan wrong. Maybe this Hollywood story is his twin brother. But if you tell me I don't know Jenny when I see her it's you who might be scheduled for a nuts house."

In the car, driving through the London streets, Martin Leslie was getting down to business. The publicity racket was necessary, of course—one had to put the leading member of the caste across big—but his job was to produce a picture.

"You know the general idea, of course, Mr. Manders? We're running a series of

pictures round a central character, the Monk—that's you. You're a mixture, if I may say so, of Raffles and the Saint and Bulldog Drummond, but with a personality all your own."

He fumbled excitedly with the attaché-case he carried.

"I've got the script for the first picture with me here. I want you to read it through to-night so that we can start on one of the series to-morrow. The story's big."

He had extracted from his attaché-case a bulky manuscript. On the outer cover were typed the words: **DIALOGUE AND CONTINUITY. "THE MONK COMES TO TOWN."** Dan looked at it with frantic dark eyes.

"Briefly the story is this: Bellamy, a millionaire, has ruined thousands of families by his financial operations. A nice girl whom the Monk meets has had to see her mother die and finds herself penniless. The Monk goes after Bellamy. You have to kidnap him, Mr. Manders."

Dan gave a violent start.

"What are you trying to pull on me?" he exclaimed angrily. "I tell you, I'm through with all that stuff."

Jenny took the manuscript from Martin Leslie's hand.

"Oh, boy! It sounds swell!" she exclaimed. "I'll see Julian reads it to-night and he'll tell you all about it in the morning."

An hour later husband and wife found themselves alone at last in the most magnificent suite that the Grand Olympic Hotel provided.

"Oh, Dan, my darling, but you give me some troubled moments. You're sure a bad hand at being seriously else."

"But listen to me, honey. I can't go through with it. When that guy talked about me kidnapping some millionaire it gave me the willies."

"It's just a screen story. You don't have to worry, Dan. I got an idea. Julian Manders is putting down five thousand bucks a week on this stunt. I mean to have some of that dough!"

As he was about to interrupt her, she put her hand over his mouth.

"Listen and don't talk. If you was asked to act you'd give the whole show away, Dan, so we got to hold up production. This Martin Leslie's given you a script. We're going to read it together and to-morrow we're going to tell him it's just bunk and point out to him why it falls down."

Behind her hand Dan murmured inaudibly.

"Hold it a moment longer, big boy. I want to tell you all about it. You know all about kidnaping millionaires. It's a gift. You can say show him where the man that wrote this broke down because he didn't know what he was talking about. This guy, Martin, will get the script re-written and that'll take time. If it only takes a week that's five thousand bucks more for the kitty."

Dan seized her hand and pulled it away from his mouth.

"But, honey, you won't listen to me. I saw Big Joe at the railway depot with his two trigger men."

Jenny gave a violent start, a little tinge of pallor creeping into her cheeks.

"Big Joe?" she stammered. "Sure you weren't seeing things, Dan?"

"Sure I was seeing things—Big Joe and a couple of the boys—and I hadn't got no heater with me, Jenny."

Jenny sat silent for a moment.

"I don't want to run up against Big Joe any more than you do, Dan."

Dan turned on her fiercely.

"What's after saying I don't want to run up against him? I'm going out right now to buy myself a rod. Then I'm going to look for him and rub him out!"

Jenny shook her head firmly.

"No, you snob, Dan! You're going down to the station and we're going to draw a week of Julian Manders' pay roll first. After that we'll beat it for Ireland, where you're going to have the sweetest farm in the country."

She picked up the manuscript.

"Now we'll read about how this guy thinks you would kidnap a millionaire, Dan."

AMAZING WEST END SCENE.

JENNY wasn't exactly skilled in the art of reading aloud. Perhaps that was why Dan, who had been through a trying day, found it difficult to keep awake.

"Can it, sweetheart! This stuff you're pumping out gets me down."

She looked up from the manuscript for a moment, her mouth very set, and shook her head grimly.

"Take a tack in that brain of yours, Dan! You got to know all about what's written here so's we can talk to Leslie and tell him what tank it is."

"Warn it's hard! This guy, the Monk, couldn't have kidnaped a member from a dead and dumb horse, let alone a millionaire who spends his time thinking out plans how to keep what he's got."

"What would you have done, Dan, darling?" she inquired innocently.

Dan gave her a vivid sketch of how he, had he been the Monk, would have acquired possession of Bellamy, the millionaire. His sketch might be said to have been planned according to the best kidnaping school of thought. He hadn't, as it were, set at Big Joe's feet for nothing, and as he talked Jenny made rapid notes.

"And that bit you read me when he'd got Bellamy. Say, the guy who wrote this stuff ain't never seen a millionaire when he's in a corner. Remember how that fool Bottinger went on?"

"You're forgetting, Dan, I wasn't in on that."

"No more you weren't, honey," Dan replied. "But I can tell you. In that bit you was reading Bellamy screams for mercy. Gosh what become millionaire ain't built like that. They've been in too many tough rackets themselves."

"What did Mr. Bottinger do, Dan?"

"He didn't start offering to hand over his bank roll. He was meant more to him than his life. He just held out on the boys. He was tough. I tell you, honey, tough. Remember Chinese Jim, proper?"

She made a grimace which suggested that the recollection wasn't a pleasant one.

"He wanted to ginger Bottinger up with some of them returns they have out East. Big Joe was all for it. I had a job to get it called off."

"And then he goes and gets you four years? He certainly has something coming to him. But you go on telling me how this Bellamy ought to have carried on."

Lying back in his chair Dan gave her a vivid picture of how Bottinger had behaved—his stammering, his refusal to settle his determination to die rather than part with a bean.

"That guy, Bottinger, was mean all through. He certainly had the boys settled. They got that; had that they wanted to give him the wack just to get rid of him, and, like a sucker, I tried to stop 'em."

Jenny looked up from her notes, her face beaming.

"Dan, that's swell. I've got it all down, just what you told me."

"How do you mean, you've got it down, honey?" he demanded.

"When you was in air I got myself taught shorthand. It's all here, everything you said. And it's just the dope to give Martin Leslie to-morrow. You see, we'll take that line. A Number One picture guy like you can't have anything to do with a bum play. It's got to be re-written, as you know it would be done."

There was an interruption at that moment. A tall young man, quivering with vitality and energy, strode into the room without knocking, as if he not only owned it, but the whole of the Grand Olympic.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed. "My, and Mrs. Julian Manders! I'm Stephen Marks, of the Mayfair Exhibition Department—that's another way of saying that I'm the publicity merchant."

After shaking hands with Dan and Jenny he stood for a moment regarding them with a beaming smile.

"Never knew you were married, Mr. Manders. We've got to give that story to the world. Film star hates his domestic life being given publicity. Little while in the background, I'm having a big write-up in to-morrow's papers, Mrs. Manders, of how you came to see him off in New York and just couldn't bear to leave him, as you stayed on board."

He scolded himself astride a chair.

"But we've got to keep it up. We got to get on to some big story—something that'll keep the public talking about you."

His wandering eye fell upon the script.

"What do you think of the Monk, Mr. Manders?"

"I'm not to think about it as little as I can. He's punk!"

Stephen Marks blinked. The comment was all wrong. The actor who featured the principal character in a picture that was going to cost the Mayfair Film Corporation close on a quarter of a million was expected to say the part was the most fascinating one he had ever tackled.

"Now, now, Mr. Manders!" he said soothingly.

Jenny hastily intervened.

"Mr. Manders has made a special study of the underworld, Mr. Marks. He's what you'd be calling an authority on the subject—that's the best phrase, isn't it?"

"I got you, Mrs. Manders. You've read the script and you think there's some technical errors which require adjusting?"

"Adjusting? You've sure adlobered a bitful! All this stuff's got to be rewritten. Mr. Manders has just been dictating to me here it ought to run. We're going to give the producer the low-down-to-morrow, so's he can get his best boys."

But Stephen Marks was losing interest. The script, after all, wasn't his department.

"Might be something in your experience of the underworld, Mr. Manders, which would make good copy? The Monk knows his subject. See the idea? The big scene in the script is the kidnaping of the millionaire, isn't it? What do you know about kidnaping millionaires, Mr. Manders, for example?"

"Their, boss!" Dan growled.

Marks whipped open a notebook.

"Well, let's have some of your first-hand experience. Marie this is going to be the big story. I'm looking for—" Julian Manders broadcasting the underworld's news to the world. Mr. Julian Manders

takes the colors for his art from the grim palace of life!"

He wrote excitedly in his notebook.

"That's good. I must remember that." The telephone buzzed. Marks reached forward a hand and picked up the receiver.

"There's a Mr. Joseph McCoy downstairs in the vestibule, Mrs. Manders, with two friends, wanting to know if he can see you?"

The next moment he was sitting back, dazed and gaping at the result produced by his announcement. Dan was on his feet, his dark face flushed and a wild light in his eyes. He was making for the door when Mrs. Manders caught him and flung her arms about his neck, anchoring him for a moment.

"Leave me alone, honey, can't you? Me and Big Joe's got to have a settlement." Jenny kicked at him with the pointed toes of her shoes.

"I'll not have you killed!" she exclaimed wildly. "He'll have the draw on you as you come out of the elevator. You ain't even got a rod!"

Stephen Marks listened, amazed.

"Excuse me, and all the rest of it, but what's all this about?" he gasped.

It was Jenny who first came to his senses. She managed to laugh.

"Say, Mr. Marks, you were wanting a big story about Julian, weren't you? Well, it's right here, down in the vestibule."

Stephen Marks was standing with his hand over the mouth of the telephone.

"Perhaps if you'd explain, Mr. Manders?"

Jenny took a deep breath.

"Well, it was this way. When my husband was getting the low-down on the underworld—that he was talking about just now—he gets mixed up proper with all sorts of funny guys. One of them was Big Joe—Joseph McCoy. These wasn't anything Big Joe hadn't got his fingers in. He's the biggest noise in racketdom. And he got a down on Julian. I'll tell you about that some other time. He's seem to give him the works. And he's right here in this hotel."

Stephen Marks glowed with excitement.

"That's magnificent, Mrs. Manders. But we've got to handle it properly. It might be a mistake to bring in the police at this juncture. After all, it might be difficult to prove anything against Mr. McCoy, and we don't want a flop."

He tapped his teeth with the end of his fountain pen.

"You aren't going to see him, I suppose, Mrs. Manders?"

"You better like I'm not!" Jenny retorted fervently.

"Was exactly do you think will be his reactions when he receives that message, Mrs. Manders? I mean, do you think he'll be likely to attempt to force his attention on you?"

"I'll just know Big Joe for you wouldn't ask silly questions!"

"Belov'd! You and your husband are making after your art-union journey, and you won't be in any condition to see anybody for half an hour."

He took his hand off the mouth of the telephone.

"I'm speaking on behalf of Mrs. Manders. Will you be so good as to tell Mr. McCoy that Mr. and Mrs. Manders are resting and cannot be disturbed for half an hour?"

There was an interval while Dan and Jenny stared at him breathlessly. Presently the microphone buzzed.

"Thank you!"

Stephen Marks hung up the receiver and then, taking out his pocket-book, searched for a number. The next moment he was talking into the telephone again.

"Is that the Imperial School of Art, Edgware Road? Is that Professor Baxter speaking? Oh, good-afternoon, professor. This is Stephen Marks. How many of your boys have you got in the gymnasium at the moment? Eighteen—including Jerry Dane."

He glanced at his watch.

"Well, boss here, I want you to do a stunt for me. Bring all your boys along to the Grand Olympic Hotel right away. I'll pay all o'r's. There'll be a grand for each of them and a four for you."

There was a pause for a moment while Marks listened.

"O.K. Now, listen, while I tell you just what I want you to do. There's three men in the vestibule waiting to see Mr. and Mrs. Julian Manders."

His whole face brightened.

"I'll be there to point them out to you. I want your boys to show them the way off the premises. No fun, and you—just what you might call a display of over-whelming force. Out there!"

The microphone buzzed.

"Oh, and I say, professor, just to make sure there's no difficulty about you and your crowd getting in, give the password 'Mayfair' to the commissioner on duty. New snap into those tuxis, because you've got to be here within the next half-hour."

Down in the vestibule of the Grand Olympic Big Joe waited with grim patience. In vain his two companions had pointed out that he had got it all wrong. To those protests he had always the same retort. Dan might have a twin brother who was Julian Manders, but he'd know the coil that was along with him anywhere.

"And I'm going to have a talk with her. I don't allow no dame to give me the air



"You're a fake!" cried the millionaire, revealing an accusing finger at Dan Marks's

the same as she's been doing these last four years."

His two trigger-men sighed. Big Joe had got the bit between his teeth and there was no holding him back, they knew.

"What's the programme, boss?" one of them inquired.

"We're waiting this half-hour while they're resting. Then we're going up Jerry's coming back with me. If this guy, Julian Manders, who is playing sugar daddy for her, makes any trouble, he's going to have all the rest he wants for ever. Now's the time, fellers!"

"Ten minutes to go, boss."

At that moment the doors of the Grand Olympic swung open and a procession of men filed into the vestibule. They were led by a tall figure with close-cropped grey hair, a few lines a smile, and a nose that had been knocked sideways at some period of his life.

This was Professor Baxter, the most celebrated instructor in the art of boxing in Great Britain. Behind him filed eighteen of his pupils, the majority of them professional pugilists who were undergoing a course of being thrashed up by Professor Baxter.

They were all quiet, patient-looking men, who wouldn't have hurt a fly outside the ring—even Jerry Lane, the fifteen-stone young giant that was the professor's latest heavyweight discovery. All, as they passed the commissioner on duty, muttered the word "Mayfair."

At the far end of the vestibule, leaning against the corner of the reception office, Stephen Marks was standing. He caught the professor's eye and glanced meaningfully towards the above on the opposite side of the large entrance hall, where Big Joe and his two companions were seated. Professor Baxter overrode to the left. With almost military precision the man behind him followed suit. Without a word, the professor concluded his contingent to the right of the table at which Big Joe was seated, swung left, and so came presently face to face with the gangster.

By this manoeuvre the three men were completely surrounded, with some eight men standing behind their chairs and the remainder grouped in front of them.

"Say, what's this? A newspaper parade?" Big Joe inquired.

Professor Baxter took the only seat vacant at the table.

"Hag! Best! He! Serano!" he exclaimed in a low, husky voice.

Big Joe's right hand moved like lightning to the holder under the left flap of his coat. Quite as quickly, however, the professor's big, broken-bracketed hand gripped his wrist in a steel-like vice.

"Better do your stuff, Jerry!"

The guests of the hotel, who were passing in and out of the vestibule, saw nothing of what happened, for the human screen hid everything from their view. Jerry Lane brought up a fat like a beam to the point of Big Joe's face. That tall figure collapsed in his chair, his head lurching forward.

The two trigger-men, who had tried to get to their feet, were held quietly but efficiently down.

"Give them the count!" the professor remarked in the same detached tone of voice.

Two of the detachment collapsed. The professor got to his feet.

"Take 'em out of here, boys, and make it snappy!"

The three unobscured men were jerked to their feet and surrounded by the detachment, propelled quickly out of the hotel

on to the pavement. There Stephen Marks was waiting with a taxi. The three victims were hastily thrust inside.

"Here's a five-pound note, driver. These gentlemen aren't very well and they want a breath of fresh air. Take them out along the Westford by-pass."

"But where to, governor?"

"They'll tell you when they want to stop." Marks replied with a grin. "Evo shove off."

Ten minutes later he was explaining to an astonished Dan and Jerry all that had happened.

"This is a great story. 'Mr. Julian Manders victim of a gangster's vendetta.' We won't mention Big Joe's name, because we don't want the police in on this, and the management won't let us mention the Grand Olympic Hotel. But that don't matter."

He walked up and down the room excitedly.

"We won't mention any names—but we've got them, of course, if necessary. 'Famous boxer h.a.s. American gangster meditating an assault on Mr. Julian Manders. Amazing West End scene.'"

He seized his hat, stick and gloves.

"Oh, boy, it's swell stuff! I must get back to the office and give the papers the dope while it's red hot."

The next moment he was gone. As the door banged behind him Jerry turned bewilderedly to her husband.

"Well, what do you know about that, Dan?"

TO BE SHOT ON THURSDAY.

In his beautifully furnished room in the vast studios of the Maxfilm Film Corporation at Fairbairn, Martin Leslie, the producer, sat in a state of violent nerves.

Everything had come unsmooth. The most highly paid film star in the world had been left from the clutches of Hollywood and, booted up to the skies, had been secured for the leading part in the first of the series of pictures bearing the brand. Production should have started with a bang.

Instead of that, here he was interviewing a girl with unutterably golden hair and a very determined face, who was telling him that her husband, Julian Manders, wouldn't have anything to do with a loan play like that.

"But your husband has a contract with the Maxfilm Film Corporation, Mrs. Manders. I wish you'd let me talk to him." Jerry shook her head.

"Reading that loan script has just upset him, Mr. Leslie. He'd maybe want to play you. He feels that had about it. But, see, about this contract you've been chattering up at me."

Jerry felt herself in clover. After all, it didn't matter to her what sort of contract the real Julian Manders had signed.

"It's not Mr. Manders twenty-five thousand pounds under the penal clause of the contract."

"What's twenty-five thousand pounds to Mr. Manders?" she retorted. "Ain't he got to think of his art? We'll pay up and call the deal off if you like."

Martin Leslie capitulated. For months the whole organization of the studios had been concentrated upon this production. If Julian Manders walked out on them now not even the payment of twenty-five thousand pounds was going to help.

"All right, all right, Mrs. Manders. I was only joking. Suppose you tell me what Mr. Manders objects to in the script? We had it written by one of our best experts."

"You're telling me? The trouble with your expert is that he doesn't know the

American underworld scene as Julian does. See, there ain't nothing in the producer's business over there that my husband ain't wise to. Ain't you read the papers this morning? They'll tell you! Why, Julian knows so much that this guy, Big Joe, as they call him, come over all the way from New York to rub him out!"

From her handbag she produced some sheets of paper.

"Here's what Julian says—"

She began to read the notes she had made of Dan's comments. For a while Martin Leslie listened with an air of worry and despair. But presently his manner changed.

Even in his comments, had not indulged merely in destructive criticism. Jerry had seen to that. From his experience in the kidnapping of Mr. Elias P. Battering he had provided a wealth of detail. And as he listened to these details the producer's imagination caught fire.

"By gad, he's right, Mrs. Manders! That stuff of his is just the goods. It's alive, it's real!"

He pressed buttons recklessly. Secretaries arrived and presently all the most prominent figures in the script department materialized.

"This script's all wrong, boys. Mr. Manders has pointed out where it's wrong. He knows what he's talking about, too. He's given us a new angle on the whole lay-out. Now, just listen to me."

He checked the alterations that had been suggested by Jerry.

"See the idea? Now get busy. The script has got to be entirely rewritten. Turn everybody you've got on to it. Never mind the expense."

An hour later he wiped his perspiring brow and looked across at Jerry.

"I'm afraid this means that your husband won't be able to begin work at once as he had hoped, Mrs. Manders. We can't have the script rewritten under a week."

"That's just too bad!" Jerry exclaimed.

"Julian just later being around doing nothing."

"With we could all be paid the same figure for doing nothing, as he will!" Martin Leslie retorted grimly, thinking with a pang of what his directors would say when he broke the news to them.

"Dough ain't everything, Mr. Leslie!"

Jerry retorted with a disappearing air, while her heart was singing cheerfully.

Everything was working out O.K. Big Joe had been given the air; there was going to be one week at least of Julian Manders' princely salary for the city; and Dan wouldn't be called upon to do any acting. As long as the real Julian Manders kept away—that was the only snag—everything in the garden was going to continue lively.

But Dan was depressed. When she brought him the news he refused to register any enthusiasm.

"But, honey, a break like this can't last. It ain't natural. What's troubling me is, what's going to happen when this guy, Julian Manders, turns up? He must be somewhere."

"Quit worrying, Dan. Julian Manders is likely a stiff. Come to think of it, he must be. If he was still hanging around he must have heard already about what's supposed to have been happening to him. He'd have slipped in with a table leg before this."

"You ain't reckoning on my playing the part of Julian Manders for the rest of my life, Jerry, are you? Darning. He's telling you, I reckon, he'll!"

"You've only got to sit tight for another

work and then draw your wad and we beat it."

Dan shed some of his air of misery. "Maybe, if I took a walk round this burg I might run into Big Joe, honey, and show him just where he got off. That'd be swell. I'll learn him to keep his eyes off you!"

"You aren't staying here, Dan, I don't want any contacts with Big Joe. We're moving down to Fairholm to be near the studio, and Mr. Leslie can consult you when he wants to."

"Ain't honey, give us a break!" Dan protested.

Jenny caught him by the collar of his coat, slapped and kissed him, and then made to drag him from his chair.

"Come on, you! Stop being a piker! Ain't I getting together the money to buy you the sweetest farm in all the county of Wicklow?"

It was while they were in their new quarters in the village of Fairholm, where Dan was kept discreetly in the background, that Stephen Marks appeared once more on the scene. He had secured miles of publicity for Julian Manders in the Press and now he was looking new material to keep the pot boiling. The rewriting of the script on Julian Manders' misadventure gave him just the new angle he wanted.

"Don't you see, Martin," he explained to the producer, "it all fits in. We casted Julian Manders as the only actor on the screen who has a first-hand knowledge of gangsterdom. Now we tell the story of the script—how he insisted upon having his first-hand knowledge put into the story you're screening."

"I've been looking through his suggestions, got them from the script-room. They're swell. Now, this is what I want to do."

He came to a halt in front of the producer, holding him with his glittering eyes.

"We'll give away the whole show. Nothing like telling the public into your confidence to make them bite. We'll tell them what the script was like originally; then we'll show the alterations Manders insisted on. We'll give the world his picture of the kidnaped millionaire and all those wonderful details he supplied about the kidnaping. We'll show how he made the Monk somebody who knew what he was doing."

"And make my script department eat dirt!" Martin Leslie grumbled.

"That won't do us any harm. They're used to it! I got to keep the public interested, and this is the sweetest notion I've ever had. I'll get down to it at once."

The story of how Julian Manders had rewritten the script of the new expedition featuring the Monk, infusing into it the real blood of reality, appeared in the Press in due course. It was almost a front-page story, for Stephen Marks had done his job well. Proud of his success, he stormed into the producer's office.

"Well, what do you think of that, Martin? Put it across big, haven't I? Everybody's talking of the Monk and Julian Manders."

Leslie Martin scowled at him.

"What's biting you, Martin?" Marks inquired.

"You've put it across so big that the company's likely to be served with an injunction forbidding the showing of the film before we've even shot one single scene. Ever heard of Mr. Silas P. Nottingham?"

Stephen Marks shook his head.

"Well, he's an American millionaire. And he's read. It seems he was once kidnaped and held up to ransom, but got away. He says that in the dope you've

put out about Bellamy in the story we've painted him. Says there can't be any mistake. He's spitting blood. He says that if we produce the picture he'll sue us in every court in the country."

"That'd be a first-class piece of publicity!" Marks exclaimed. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing. I've written him a soothing letter, telling him that nobody ever has known anything about his having been kidnaped—that all the characters in the picture are pure fiction and have no connection with any person living or dead."

"I hope your lawyer's choked him off. He wouldn't stand a dog's chance. And think of the publicity!"

"All I'm thinking of is that I wish I'd never started to handle this picture. There's nothing but trouble. Now, on the top of it all, somebody over in America who's crackers has started sending me cables. That's the last."

He pushed a telegram across the desk. "Repeat unavoidable delay. Arrive

It's all there, every detail. There can't be no mistake. Manders has handed it on to these picture merchants."

He rose from his chair and began to pace the floor. His vanity had received a severe blow from his experiences at the Grand Olympic Hotel. He had been knocked out and sent for a ride in a taxi like any sucker. And now, on the top of it all, somebody had given him away to this film company.

"What are you going to do about it, boss?"

"What am I going to do about it?" Big Joe roared. "You watch! I'm not going to have my fancy Hollywood snuff figuring he can make fun of me on the screen. I'm going to rub this Julian Manders out. And you can start getting busy right now, boys!"

He spread the paper out on the table. "Fairholm. That's the place where they're doing the shooting. Say, there's going to be some other sort of shooting. Get down to this place and find out what's



The old gentleman was playing a part. Big Joe and his pals didn't know it, but they were due to be thrown out on their necks.

Queen Mary Thursday.—Julian Manders."

Stephen Marks screwed up his face.

"Might be something in this. Gosh, I've just remembered. I've got a pal coming over on the Queen Mary. I'll get him to interview that loney. Might make quite a good story."

The next morning Marks again burst into Martin Leslie's office.

"That loney story was a flop. My friend welcomed me that a man calling himself Julian Manders hasn't been seen since the Queen Mary left New York. He reckons he's ill or something. Maybe I'll see him when he gets to Southampton, unless I can find some better angle before then."

But there was one interested reader of Stephen Marks' publicity copy who didn't bother to write to the Mayfair Film Corporation or to threaten an action for libel. That was Big Joe.

"What do you know about that?" he exclaimed, passing the paper over to one of his henchmen. "Who's been spilling the beans?"

"Didn't they teach you any reading at school? Somebody's put Julian Manders just like how we kidnaped Nottingham.

doing. I want to know where I can get this guy Manders so's I can plug him. Find out all about the place."

"O.K., boss! We'll start right away on it. Only remember they're not old-fashioned ideas about plugging a guy over the side."

Big Joe placed at him.

"Think I'm going to let this Julian Manders make fun of me and get away with it? Scram!"

Twenty-four hours later Big Joe heard the report for which he was waiting.

"It ought to be easy, boss. They're taking on extras for some of the scenes they're shooting. Want American actors with experience. Me and Bill get right into the studio, reckoning we were applying for a job."

"How anything about Julian Manders?" "Yep. They reckon they start shooting him on Thursday."

"Sure he's going to be shot on Thursday, but it's me that's going to do the shooting." Big Joe replied grimly.

"It ought to be easy, boss. The place is so big that you can lose yourself in it. There's a big road outside with three other roads leading out of it. If we have a

car waiting there so can make our getaway easy."

"What time do these extras you were telling me about have to turn up?"

"Nine o'clock, boss."

"Right! We'll be along there in eight m."

The two trigger-men looked at each other as if uncertain whether they should say any more. Big Joe interrupted the glance.

"You're holding out on me about something. Go on, spill it!"

"We saw that doll of yours, Jenny Murphy, boss. She was waiting around, same as if she owned the place."

Big Joe dropped the match as he was about to light his cigar.

"So that's where Julian Manders got his big bite of making a fool of me from, was it? Dan Murphy tells her just how we kidnaped her and she hands it on to Julian Manders! And say, why didn't you bring the dame back with you?"

The two trigger-men shook their heads.

"We didn't, thank you'd want any trouble started at the studio before you'd given this the star the works."

Big Joe nodded gravely.

"Maybe you were right! After all, when I've rubbed out this Julian Manders she'll maybe be glad to have me for a cup of coffee. Anyway, she won't spend for writing."

THE ACTOR WROO COULDN'T ACT.

THE re-writing of the script had taken more than a week. Jerry had drafted Julian Manders' salary for that week. Now they were launched, still with nothing to do, into the second week, and Jerry

saw the prospect of another fat cheque coming her way.

"We've certainly got to stay until the next pay-out, Dan. It'd be a sin not to take the money."

"But supposing, honey, they want me to do something for it?"

"You should worry! What's in this acting stuff, anyway? You've only got to carry on some as if it was real life."

She made a rapid calculation.

"To-morrow's Thursday, Dan. We're only got to hold out until Saturday. Then we'll draw a second week's dough and do our fair bit."

The telephone bell rang. Marie Ledit was on the wire.

"Nine o'clock to-morrow, Mr. Manders, if you please. We start shooting the scene in Bellamy's house, and we've got to make up for lost time."

"O.K., big top!" Jerry, who had answered the phone, replied.

"Who was that talking, honey?" Dan inquired.

Jerry peered herself on the edge of his chair and put her arm about his neck.

"I was thinking, Dan, we could do with another five thousand bucks. We might go in for brooding richesses, since as you're always talking about."

Dan took fire. He had all the first-class passenger's love of horses. He had built a most magnificent stable and bred the Derby winner when Jerry brought him to earth.

"Well, all you've got to do, Dan, is to go through with this shooting. It starts to-morrow at nine. I've made a point of getting a line on what you've got to do. First you go to the make-up room."

gets an inkling of the truth concerning the disappearance of Boris Probyn.

And, of course, **THE SHADOW** will be with you again in further chapters of that powerful story of the Thames, "RIVER OF DEATH."

The Editor

Letters to The Editor should be addressed to: "The Thriller" Office, The Fleming House, Faringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



To My Readers

WHAT was the matter with the champion? Practically as the eve of the big fight, Bob Ziggs went off form. He couldn't keep awake. He couldn't fight. He was raising mad one moment and plunged in deep depression the next.

"Somebody's got at him," decided his manager Harry.

But who and how was a mystery. So Val Ersky, the girl detective and chief of the V.I. Investigation Service, was hired to find out what it was all about, and she wasn't on the job long before she had a visitor. What he said was brief and to the point.

"Easy out of this, sister, or things may happen!"

Val Ersky took up the challenge. Girls aren't exactly welcome at or home in the big fight business, but she dived into the mystery surrounding Bob Ziggs, determined to uncover the truth.

If Bob Ziggs failed to enter the ring at the appointed time, the championship fight would go to his opponent by default. And Bob wasn't fit to enter the ring, and if Val succeeded in the business she was hired to do, she would find out what it was all about.

So she readied! Things certainly happened—things that will thrill you in next week's amazing long, complete story, "KNOCK-OUT," by George Dunnet. And did Val clear up the case? Well, make sure of next week's **THRILLER** Library and find out for yourself. This grand yarn of sport and mystery will hold you from start to finish. Don't miss it.

In the same issue you will have another long installment of Walter Tyrer's out-of-the-ordinary, brilliant story, "THE BRAIN," in which Professor Oscar Probyn

lost his arm firmly from about his neck.

"What are you trying to pull on me, honey? I can't do so acting."

"Haven't I been telling you that you've just got to behave as you would behave in real life—it's only three days of it. Have a heart and think of those stables. Think of the Derby winner!"

"I'd do anything for you, honey. You know that. But if I start this play-acting they'll get wise to it that I ain't Julian Manders."

"Aw, shucks! Look what you've got to do. Marie Ledit's just told me."

She picked up a copy of the revised script that had been sent over to them that morning.

"Here you see! Bellamy's in bed. You don't have to say anything. You're outside in the grounds. You climb a ladder same as you did when you got Bellamy. You put a plaster on the window. Hey, Dan, you know how to put a plaster on, don't you?"

"Sure I do!"

"Well, then you cut out the glass, put in your hand, and push back the match, same as you told them. Then you open the window and you're in the room. Anybody could do that, Dan. It isn't as if you hadn't done it already."

Dan sighed wearily.

"What do I have to do next, honey?"

"You've got a gun. You're in Bellamy's bedroom now. He's sleeping in a wall bed, dreaming of his wife. You know what you did best."

"I come across the floor and shove my heater against his head. That wakes him up. He didn't let me even a squint. I had him out of bed without saying a word, all I've got to do was just to make a motion with my little finger. I passed him out of the window to Big Joe, who was waiting for him. It was too easy."

Jerry shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, what are you worrying about then, Dan? Just think you're back in those days collecting bottles. Forget everything's phony and behave as if it was real, and you'll sure be the goods."

Dan looked at her a little wilyly.

"I'll try and hold out until Saturday, but not a day longer, honey. You make it sound simple, but I bet there's a catch somewhere. Anyway, I'll be sure glad when we're through here."

With her eye on that extra week's salary, Jerry had Dan at the studio right on time the following morning. She would have liked to have followed him to the make-up room, being more than a little uneasy as to how he would behave himself when he was no longer under her eye. But remembering that the real Julian Manders was an experienced actor who would stand in no need of a nurse, she refrained.

"Bear everything, see everything, my writing! That's a wisecrack I came across once. You live on it, Dan, and you'll be O.K."

As she whispered those last words of advice Dan looked at her with something of the air of a trapped wild animal.

"You're telling me!" he exclaimed.

He didn't mind putting on the clothes he had to wear for the part, but when it came to the business of make-up he had difficulty in stifling his resentment. Only his wife's instructions to keep his mouth shut prevented him from uttering a protest when his face was covered with yellow paint.

"Is it quite satisfactory, Mr. Manders?" the make-up man inquired.

Dan glared at his reflection in the looking-glass. He looked as if he'd got a bad attack of jaundice. What was the great idea of painting him up like that?

"Yep!" he growled. "Where do I go now?"

"They're shooting on Stage 4 this morning, sir. I'll send someone to show you the way."

Dan walked out into the brilliant sunshine, hating himself, hating the studio, hating most especially Julian Manders, whom he had never seen. He was in a world which was absolutely new to him and he felt like a fish out of water.

Stage 4, when he reached it, seemed filled with a crazy mob—technicians, cameramen, the producer's staff, and a mob of actors with faces as blank as his own. Not even the fact that he was treated with the greatest deference soothed his wildly jumping nerves.

What made it worse was that there seemed nothing doing. All that crowd just hung about waiting. At first several of the other actors tried to engage him in conversation, but as his only reply was a grunt, they presently left him alone.

An hour went by—and still nothing happened. Dan could no longer contain his impatience. He stepped up to a prop man, who was laying a target.

"Say, what's the big idea keeping us hanging around like that?"

The man looked at him in surprise.

"Mr. Leslie hasn't come along yet, sir."

Martin Leslie had answered that morning with the determination to make up for lost time. He was all keyed up to begin the business of production. It was compensating, therefore, when he looked in at his office on his way to Stage 4 to find Mr. Silas P. Bottinger waiting for him.

"Why didn't you tell him that I'd gone ahead?" he exclaimed wrathfully to his secretary.

"I did, sir. I told him everything I could think of, but he just didn't seem to mind. He said he'd wait where he was until you came back, if he had to camp out there for a month."

"Show him in," Martin Leslie exclaimed resignedly.

Mr. Bottinger was shown in—or rather when the door was opened he burst in like a hurricane.

"Are you the Mr. Martin Leslie that is proposing to hold me up to the contempt and ridicule of the whole world? Because if you are, you get this straight. If you produce this picture I'll smash the Mayor Film Corporation."

Mr. Bottinger glared at Martin Leslie. He was clearly very angry. The producer smiled sanely.

"My dear sir, as I explained in our correspondence, the attitude you are adopting is quite ridiculous. No character in the picture we are producing is associated with any real person living or dead."

"Where did you get all the dope about me from then? Mr. Julian Manders, according to what you put in the papers, has rewritten the script. You give a description of his rewrite. He has to kidnap somebody called Bellamy. Ain't that right?"

"Quite right, my dear sir, but this imaginary Mr. Bellamy is not interested. I assure you, for a picture of yours!"

"He ain't, isn't he? Yet he's caught the same way as I was caught, and he talks the same as I talk, and he's kept prisoner just the same way as I was kept."

He looked at Martin Leslie meaningly.

"If you produce this picture it will cost you a million bucks in damages. I'm not



"March, buddy," growled Big Joe. "Take me to this Julian Manders!"

going to let Julian Manders make a guy of me. His dame made a sucker of me coming across—caught me for five thousand dollars—and I've got to have that back as well."

Martin Leslie smiled.

"Any private business you may have had with Miss Julian Manders is nothing to do with me, my dear sir. It's absurd to imagine that the wife of Mr. Julian Manders would not be good for such a trifling sum as five thousand dollars. Not as for the other matter, I propose to put your mind at rest once and for all."

He glanced at his watch.

"We are shooting the scene to which you take objection on Stage 4 this morning. If you will be good enough to stay here I will send for you when the scene is about to be shot, and then you can see for yourself that your suspicions are quite unjustified."

Having persuaded Mr. Bottinger to accept his suggestion, Martin Leslie hurried from his office. But he was not in charge in his duties so easily. His secretary intercepted him.

"This telegram has just come from Southampton, sir. I thought you ought to see it."

Martin Leslie snatched the telegram from her. As he read it he gave a mouthless laugh.

"Why do I have to be bothered by all these kidnapers? There's that Bottinger in there, completely tame. And now there's this American guy, who thinks he's Julian Manders, wiring me that he's landed from the Queen Mary all right, o'clock this morning. He's coming straight here by car."

"What would you wish me to do, sir?"

"Put him in a padded room and keep him there until we can get him certified. And if we can run Bottinger in there along with him so much the better. I'm a film producer, not an alienist."

With a furious gesture he rushed out of

his office and began to walk boldly in the direction of Stage 4.

A car stopped about fifty yards away from the entrance gate to the studio. A tall man got slowly out and surveyed the scene. A second man joined him.

"O.K., boss, ain't it?" the second man exclaimed a little anxiously. "But we'd better make it snappy. We're an hour late as it is."

Big Joe swung round on the driver of the car.

"Turn the flavor the other way, Bill. We might be in a hurry when we make our getaway from this joint."

Bill obediently swung the car round before joining his two companions. Together they made their way towards the studio gate, when they were stopped by the porter on duty.

"What's your business?" he inquired.

It was Bill who answered.

"Somebody gave us the big buddy, that the big noise in this racket was taking an extra for a gangster scene. We've got an appointment with Mr. Martin Leslie."

The porter hesitated a moment. Nearly every minute of every day he was turning away snoring extras. But the confident mention of Mr. Martin Leslie's name impressed him. He was not quite clear whether the roll of extras required for the gangster scenes in the new picture was completed or not.

"You ought to have been here an hour ago. Know the way to Mr. Leslie's office? Half a minute, and I'll send somebody with you."

A small boy took Big Joe and his two companions under his wing.

"What's the big idea?" Joe whispered hoarsely. "Why have we got to worry about this Martin Leslie bloke?"

"He's nobody worries as afterwards, boss, or wants to give us the air. If we see this guy and kid him we want to be taken on an extra, when he turns us down, we wishes him good-morning and come out. There ain't no no worrying about us then, so we just sleep round until we can find this Julian Manders."

Big Joe nodded approvingly.

"I got you, Bill!"

The boy ushered them into an office where he announced to an underling that these three gentlemen had an appointment with Mr. Leslie. When he had taken his departure, Big Joe and his companions were inspected, questioned and finally ushered into a waiting-room.

"Mr. Leslie's on the set and you'll have to wait until he comes back."

The door closed behind the three men. Big Joe was about to make some violent protest when his eye lighted upon the other occupant of the room.

He was a tubby man with a poker face, from which a cigar protruded. And he was wearing a fur coat.

Big Joe stared at him with the air of one who sees a phantom. Presently, under that concentrated gaze, the man behind the cigar looked up. As his eyes met those of Big Joe his lips fell apart, so that the cigar dropped on to the floor.

"What do you know about that, boy?" Big Joe demanded. "Hold that door."

Like lightning his hand slipped under his coat. When it reappeared again his fingers were grasping a gun.

"Bottinger? Why ain't you just a sight for sore eyes! It must be you lucky day. You gave me the slip once, didn't you? But oh, boy, what a hope you've got now. Put 'em up!"

Mr. Silas P. Bottinger had risen from his chair.

"Let me tell you—" he began. "You're talking me nothing," Big Joe interrupted. "Search for the ceiling, or I'll blow the liver out of you."

The barrel of his revolver jolted at the proformance under Mr. Bottinger's waistcoat. His hands went wavering reluctantly above his head.

"You can't get away with this," he growled. "You're aimed for the electric chair. You've missed it before, but you've caught this time."

Big Joe ignored his threats. "What you doing in this joint?" he demanded. "Talk or maybe you'll never have a chance to talk again."

"They're putting on a picture showing how you and your gang kidnaped me, Martin Leslie reckoned I was crazy. Now I know I was dead right. I suppose he's got you to play the part that you rehearsed?"

A half-lit light came into Big Joe's eyes. "So you got wise, too, did you, in this stunt they're trying to play on us? But don't you worry! We've here to take care of Mr. Julian Manders. We're going to have no original Hollywood boys making fun of us before me, where no Julian Manders!"

A little relief crept into Mr. Bottinger's face.

"Now you're talking! We want to get together on this."

Big Joe eyed him cryptically.

"Sure! Where did you say he was?"

"He's doing his stuff on Stage 4. This Mr. Leslie told me to wait here and he'll send for me so I could see what he was doing. But I reckon that he was just side-tracking me."

Big Joe reflected thoughtfully for a few moments.

"Well better go and give him the look over. You come along with us."

He glanced for a moment at the two men at the door, who promptly stopped aside.

"Get a move on," he exclaimed. "Keep your hands in your pockets and don't talk."

To the producer's secretary, who interrupted them, Big Joe was inarticulate.

"You don't have to worry, sister! Mr. Bottinger and me are old chums. We're just going to gangle something, and then we'll be right back."

Once outside Mr. Bottinger walked on ahead with Big Joe, while the two trigger-men kept close at their heels. From the swarm of human beings who crowded the long streets between the rows of steel and concrete buildings there was no difficulty in getting the necessary directions to Stage 4. After waiting the better part of half a mile, they came to the place where the first series of scenes for "The Monk" were being shot.

Dan Murphy had already done, to the complete satisfaction of Mr. Leslie Martin, the first piece of action demanded of him. Thanks to Jerry's coaching he had climbed a ladder, stuck a plunger in a hole of glass, cut away the glass with a diamond-cutting, put his hand through the gap made, and pushed back the catch of the window sash.

That had been easy. He had been doing something he had done a hundred times before. He had just to do it quietly and efficiently, registering no emotion.

But it was a different matter when he found himself in that section of the stage that was made up to look like a millionaire's bedroom. There was Bellamy, whom he had to kidnap, lying asleep. Dan walked straight across to him and

put the muzzle of the phony gun against his head—only to be pulled up by the rasping voice of Mr. Martin Leslie speaking through a megaphone.

"Cut! Mr. Manders, what do you think you're doing? Poking a toilet at a railway station? The man lying in that bed has driven the father of the girl you love to suicide and her mother to an early grave. You've got to register the emotions the Monk would feel!"

Dan went back to the window and again made his approach to the bed.

Twenty times he had to repeat this apparently simple action, only to be pulled up by Mr. Martin Leslie, who on each occasion showed more advanced signs of an approaching apoplexy.

The composition was standing out on his forehead. The phony gun felt as if it were red hot. He was a prey to the mixed emotions of anger and terror—anger against Mr. Martin Leslie, who was talking to him as he had never been talked to before in his life, and terror lest he should betray the fact that he wasn't Julian Manders.

"Rotten! Go back and do it again."

Something seemed to break in Dan's brain.

"What are you trying to pull on me?" he roared. "What sort of sucker do you take me for? Think I don't know how I'd get that guy and take him for a walk?"

He stopped speaking abruptly. His glowing eyes had wandered past the chair in which the producer was seated to the men in the street beyond the stage. Four men were standing there. One of them was Big Joe and another was Mr. Elias P. Bottinger.

"All right, all right, Mr. Manders! We'll give you a rest. The next call will be for two o'clock this afternoon."

Martin Leslie had just ascertained to the fact that Mr. Julian Manders was a star in receipt of a phenomenal salary. Madly and miserably as his performance had been, he was not an extra who could be sacked for incompetence. He had got to be treated leniently.

But the supposed Julian Manders was no longer there. He had disappeared through the open window of the set and was sliding down the ladder outside. There was only one thought in his mind now. To find Jerry and to get away from the studio before he ran into Big Joe and Mr. Bottinger.

THE SHOOTING BEGINS.

MR. BOTTINGER'S face, as he watched Dan's twentieth attempt to satisfy Mr. Martin Leslie, had become crimson. In his wrath and indignation he forgot all about Big Joe.

"It's an outrage!" he gasped.

He was looking at his own bedroom in his palatial residence in New York. The furniture might not be quite the same, but the pieces were arranged in exactly the same order. And the actor who was poking the part of the kidnapper was behaving just how Dan Murphy had behaved on that never-to-be-forgotten night when he had been yanked out of his bed for a ride. Martin Leslie might not like the way he did it, but that was the way he had done it.

Big Joe's objections to the scene were very similar to Mr. Bottinger's. He, too, recognized the accuracy of the setting. Julian Manders was done up to the life to look like Dan Murphy and was behaving with the same detached efficiency as Dan Murphy—the most reliable of his gang for a job of this kind—had behaved.

"Hell!" he muttered.

Only the fact that, between him and the actor who was betraying the methods and operations of his gang, were some society human beings and a barrier of lights and cameras, prevented him from using his gun.

"What are you going to do about it?" Mr. Bottinger inquired.

"I'm going to show you. Come right along. Nobody pulls anything like that on Big Joe and gets away with it."

Continued that the gangster was interesting to witness a scene with Julian Manders on behalf of both of them. Mr. Bottinger allowed himself to be led away from Stage 4. A hundred yards farther on, the long straight road proved out in a wide stretch of grassland littered with laths and plaster sets of forgotten films.

Here were medieval palaces, sections of modern London streets, blocks of flats and



"Don't try any tricks!" said Big J

Colonial buildings. Against the background of the blue spring sky they looked like the crazy reflections of somebody's thoughts during a nightmare.

Big Joe surveyed the scene with ambivalence. Presently his gaze swung round to a castellated building, which was, in fact, a life-like representation of the Chateau d'Ill on one of which the Count of Monte Cristo escaped in a sack.

"That looks a swell preliminary! It ought to be just what we're wanting. Whop into it, boys, before any trick comes along and tells us to keep off the grass!"

Through a mass of junk they headed for the Chateau. A few moments later they were inside. If the exterior was perfect the interior was a mere sham. Instead of vaulted passages and prison cells there was nothing.

"Somebody must have known we were

coming when they built this lot," Big Joe remarked.

"You'd better give me the low-down now on what you're going to do," Mr. Bottinger exclaimed. "I'm in on this with you, remember. I don't allow any film star to pay me on the screen."

"I'm going to have this Julian Manders where I want him. I'm counting on the moment when I have him face to face and watch the yellow come right up."

Mr. Bottinger gloved. Martin Leslie had tried to side-track him, had he—thought he could play him for a sucker?

"What are you going to do?"

"To begin with, you're going to get out of those clothes. Start right now on the undressing act. I'm in a hurry."

Big Joe was toying with his gun. The color faded from Mr. Bottinger's cheeks.

"What do you mean?" he stammered.

"Nepal. Somebody might hear. When I see my heater it's Julian Manders I want to collect the lead. Trust him up and shove something in his mouth, so he can't squeal."

With the aid of his own parents Mr. Bottinger was trussed up and gagged. Big Joe looked down at his helpless victim with a grin.

"This will maybe learn you to stay put next time I kidnap you, buddy."

Without another word he led the way out of the lobby and plaster castle into the spring sunshine. Unhindered by anybody, they reached the roadway.

"Now we've got to find Julian Manders," Big Joe remarked.

"We could wait outside that stage, boss, and he'd be finished doing his funny stuff. Then we could follow him. It ought to be easy."

men in a lot of trouble if we started looking round beforehand."

Though Big Joe was burning for action the wisdom of this suggestion was obvious.

"Maybe you're right," he remarked suddenly. "We'd best stay around here, so's we can catch him before he starts his play-acting stunt. What about that, John over there?"

The building opposite Stage 4 was unoccupied at the moment. Seating themselves on the steps that led up to the main entrance Big Joe and his companions passed as extra waiting for the call. Though hundreds of the employees of the Mayor Film Corporation passed and re-passed, no one thought of questioning their right to be in the studio.

Meanwhile Martin Leslie had returned to his office in a state of jangled nerves. His temper was not improved by finding Stephen Marks waiting for him.

"This film is going to be all publicity and no picture," he snapped. "Don't come telling me of any old box ideas for paying it across the board. I just couldn't stand it."

Used to these temperamental displays on the part of producers, Marks merely smiled.

"What's biting you, Martin?"

"What's biting me?" Martin Leslie stoned screamed. "You're asking me! Julian Manders can't act—there's the trouble. He doesn't know how to move or look, or register anything. He's dumb!"

Stephen Marks was startled.

"You must have got it all wrong, Martin. Julian is a swell actor. You don't think I would have been telling the world he was, if he wasn't?"

"You'd tell the world anything in the hope of making them believe it. Don't try any of your publicity conches on me! I'm telling you! I've been watching him all this morning. And he's dumb. I tell you. He's a wash-out. He couldn't pick up a paper from the table without falling over his feet. The picture is bound to be a flop. And think of all the money we're paying him!"

He chuckled despairingly at his lack.

"Why, what happened, Martin?"

"I had to call the rehearsal off. He started to get merry. We're going to start again this afternoon."

"Maybe you're handling him wrong, Martin."

"I know how I'd like to handle him! If I didn't know he was Julian Manders, I'd say he'd never been in the picture business before."

Stephen Marks was alarmed. Something was seriously wrong. It wasn't much good boosting Julian Manders if he was an complete a flop as the producer said he was.

"Let me go and have a talk with him, Martin. Maybe I could find out what's come over him. Guy in Hollywood they think him the cat's whisker."

"I wish Hollywood had kept him! See him, if you like."

"Where'd he be?"

"How do I know? Like's he's in the bar, trying to get canned. Won't there some other about his weakness for brand groening? Maybe he can act if he's tight."

Stephen Marks drew closer to him, sending his voice to a confidential tone.

"As a matter of fact, Martin—this, of course, had to go any further—he was selected to have the biggest swell in Hollywood and then some. But he didn't stop at smothering whiskey if all the stars are his friends. He mixed it with dope."

"Why didn't you tell me that before? Maybe he was doped this morning."

"I don't spread slanders of this kind.



They're looking for Julian Manders, and when we find him you won't have to do any more shooting!"

"You heard me the first time. Take those clothes off. Ain't you the guy that walked out on me and put the dice on my trail? Did you, think you could get away with it? Give him a hand, boys."

His two companions seized Mr. Bottinger and began to strip him of his clothing, throwing him on the ground for the purpose. In less than a minute he was standing there, a ridiculous figure in his pants and vest, while Big Joe went through the pockets of his discarded garments.

"Call yourself a millionaire," he growled, as he inspected Mr. Bottinger's wallet, "and you only go round with five hundred bucks?"

He thrust the contents of the wallet into his pocket.

"What shall we do with him now, boss?" Big Joe inquired. "Give him the works?"

Big Joe shook his head.

Unfortunately for this plan, when they reached Stage 4 it was only to find that it was deserted. At the abrupt closing down of the rehearsal, the whole of the cast had hurried off to lunch, chunched for the unexpected respite.

"Where do we start looking now?" Big Joe growled. "The trouble with these studios is that they're too darn big. They don't give a guy a chance. Where would he likely go?"

The two trigger-men scratched their heads, but had no suggestions to offer. Big Joe scowled at them.

"Think up something," he demanded.

"Didn't I send you here before I came to get the low-down on the place?"

"Maybe he'd go to his dressing-room, boss. But I don't know where that is. He'd be certain sure to come back here again, though, and we might land our-

To tell you the truth, Martin, I was pretty surprised when I met him. I watched him closely and I wouldn't mind betting he's on the water-wagon as much as matters and has given up 'snore' as a hobby. I kind of got it into my head that Mrs. Manders had come over with him to keep him straight."

"Well, he can't act when he's sober and not doped, so maybe if you would persuade him to take to his vice again you'll be doing something useful for once. And, oh, hell, I've just forgotten! I've got an American millionaire chewing the rag and wanting to use the company for donations."

He pressed a button, and his secretary materialized.

"You'd better tell that phony American with the million dollars that I'll see him now."

"Mr. Bottlinger went out with the three gentlemen who had an appointment with you, Mr. Leslie, and he hasn't come back yet. I understood that they were old friends and were going to celebrate their meeting."

Martin Leslie lay back in his chair. "That's the first bit of bright news I've had today. I don't know who I was supposed to have an appointment with, and I don't care. As long as those three men are looking after Bottlinger I don't worry. I hope they poison him!"

Realizing that Martin Leslie was in no mood to talk business, Marks slipped quickly out of the office. He had to find Julian Manders and talk to him. But he wasn't in his dressing-room, and he wasn't in the studio restaurant. Nobody had seen him either—not even his dresser.

"Never came back from the set. No navy, ain't he, Mr. Marks?"

"Did you ever come across a star who wasn't? But I've got to find him somehow."

"Maybe he's gone back to the village, sir. He's got rooms there with his wife, hasn't he?"

"That's an idea. I'll run along down."

As he made for the gates he saw them open and a big touring car glide smoothly into the studio grounds. Stephen Marks stood quite still. There, seated next to the driver, was Julian Manders!

With an exclamation of delight Marks sprang forward and jumping on the running-board pulled open the door. The driver stepped the car.

"Mr. Manders!" he exclaimed. "We were all beginning to wonder where you'd got to."

Julian Manders stepped out of the car, looked about a little nervously, and then squared his shoulders, as if to give himself an air of confidence.

"It really wasn't my fault," he stammered, "but I'm mighty sorry it turned out as it did. Mr. Leslie must be feeling pretty sore with me."

Stephen Marks was delighted. A concrete film star was something new in the constellation of the screen.

"You don't have to worry, Mr. Manders. Everybody has their off days. You'll find you'll be able to work fine with Mr. Martin Leslie this afternoon. What about a spot of lunch?"

"I don't want to eat anything. I'd better see Mr. Leslie now."

"Take my tip and give him a rest! You'll see plenty of him this afternoon."

He glanced at his watch. It was already half-past one.

"Better get ready for the rehearsal, hadn't you? I'll walk round with you."

What had happened to Julian Manders' make-up? The dresser had declared that he hadn't gone back to his dressing-room from the set. Perhaps he had changed at the village. But it would be a mistake, Marks reflected, to get too curious and start asking questions. Julian Manders suddenly recognized now that he hadn't been the goods that morning and was full of acidic reactions.

They fell into step side by side, Marks doing all the talking and discreetly keeping off painful subjects. He had just told Manders a couple of funny stories, when in their progress they came alongside Stage 4.

"I've got to explain that it wasn't my fault," Julian Manders suddenly blarneyed out. "You see, it was this way..."

Stephen Marks laid his hand on the other's arm.

"Why worry Mr. Manders? The best actors in the world fall down sometimes. Everything after this is going to go smoothly. There won't be a cloud on the horizon, France—perfect peace will reign."

As he uttered the confusion of faith in the future his soft black hat was whipped from his head, and at the same moment there was the roar of an explosion.

Stephen Marks halted and swung round,

Now he was facing the big steel and concrete building on the opposite side of the broad thoroughfare to Stage 4.

He had a vision of three men coming swiftly towards him from the steps of the building. The man in the middle, who was very tall, was moving in a crouching attitude. He had a smoking revolver in his hand. His two companions kept close behind him—and they were also carrying guns.

"What is thunder do you think you're doing?" he roared. "Look at my hat! Think this is a rifle range at a fair?"

"Close yourself the air! I want that guy Manders. Stand out of the way or I'll plug you as well!"

There was another ear-splitting explosion. Marks heard something like an angry wago go past his ear. At that he flung himself face forward on the ground. As he did so out of the corner of his eye he saw Julian Manders heading all track records round the corner of Stage 4.

"Like all them film actors, that guy's yellow. I know he couldn't take it. Whip it up, boys, and turn him back!"

Big Joe's two trigger-men leapt forward to give chase. But even as they did so a charge came over the scene.

From every quarter of the vast studios poured a stream of excited men, attracted to the spot by the sound of the shots. Prop men, technicians, cameramen, actors, came rushing. Comic artists in their paint-daubed overalls peered the human torrent, and even the script department provided its quota.

Big Joe lost a quick look round. Like a good general, he realized that the odds against him were too great. It was time to retreat.

"Let him go, boys! He'll keep, I guess. We've got to get out of this joint and make it snappy. Use your hesters and keep him in a dizziness."

With his two trigger-men covering his rear, looking slowly after him, Big Joe advanced on the human food that was rushing down on them.

Moving his revolver as if it had been a machine-gun, he sprayed the press with lead. The effect was instantaneous. Suddenly that motley crowd halted. Even as he slipped some more shells into his magazine they broke, rubbing pell-mell for the cover of the adjoining buildings.

"Hold it, boys," Big Joe grunted. "Take it steady."

A small block of concrete hurled by a prop man struck the ground just in front of Big Joe. He replied with five more shots distributed with discretion among the crowd. The panic became more pronounced.

The broad roadway was now clear. Away to the distance lay the entrance gates for which they were making. Carefully preserving the formation of his bodyguard, Big Joe stalked slowly forward.

Now they were clear of the crowds that had taken cover in the buildings on either side of the road. Now they were less than a hundred yards from the gate. Nobody was to be seen there. Big Joe turned so that his back was to the gateway. There must be, he realized, quite a thousand human beings watching him at that moment, and he was taking no risks. The gun at the gate he would deal with when he got there.

"There ain't going to be no more shooting, boys," he exclaimed contentedly. "We've got this bunch tamed. But keep your eyes skinned in case anyone starts any funny business."

Slowly they backed towards the gates. Now they had only twenty more yards to cover.

A hell-ship, if ever there was one . . .



was that dirty, rooking tramp, the S.S. GILGAI, but so on her bridge Captain Fleck grinned dangerously. Snapping into a wooden man's shoes, was he? Well, maybe Sexton Blake was right: maybe there was some secret, treacherous game being played. But if those crooks thought Skipper Fleck was the man they could use and then look in the back-wall, they'd find out! Think, mystery, full-blinded action on the high sea—share them with Sexton Blake and his new ally in solving long complete runs, "OIL PIRATES!" Easy enough just ask for this week's!

DETECTIVE
WEEKLY EVERY THURSDAY 2d

MR. BOTTINGER SEES RED.

DAN MURPHY, when he made his hurried exit from Stage 4, had only one thought in his mind—to get away from the studio while he still had a chance.

The whole programme had come as a shock, as he always knew it would. Martin Leslie had got wise to the fact that he couldn't do the job staff he wanted him to do. Maybe Julian Manders could—

Well, they could get the real Julian Manders to do it—if they could find him. It had been needed any further proof that the game was up, he had it in the presence of Big Joe and Mr. Miles P. Bottinger. They had rumbled him all right—though how they had got there Dan was in no mental state to think out.

He was caught. If Martin Leslie didn't give him the air for not being able to do what he wanted him to do, Bottinger and Big Joe would split the beans. He had certainly got to make his get-away.

But he had got to find Jenny. She would likely be somewhere in the studios waiting for him. She would want to hear how he had got on—and he sure had some story to tell her, he reflected miserably!

His instinct was to escape from the studios as quickly as he could, but as he stalked from building to building, avoiding everybody he could, his brain began to work.

Big Joe was in the studio. If he left without Jenny his old gang boss might get her. Hadn't he been after her all these years?

He couldn't let that happen. He looked at the gun he still held in his hand. It only it wasn't a show-off! He'd have waited for Big Joe—shown him that he could do some fancy shooting as well!

That unfortunately being out of the question he had got to find Jenny first. He stumbled into an office where an astonished clerk was on the point of taking him off, suddenly recognized him as the famous Julian Manders, and promptly changed his tone.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Manders?"

Dan looked at him with dark, bloodshot eyes. He was thinking desperately.

"You ain't seen my wife around, have you?"

"No, sir. But, if you like, I could go and make inquiries."

Dan waved him back from the door for which he was waiting.

"I ain't healthy out there," he explained.

The clerk looked at him in surprise.

"Why, what has happened, sir?"

Dan realized that he had said too much.

"I don't want no one trailing my wife. I reckon I can find her myself, can't I?"

As he spoke his eye fell on the telephone. An inspiration came to him. Nobody knew where he was. He could start in the back-water of the office and use the telephone to discover whether or no Jenny was in the studios. If she wasn't she must be back at her quarters in the village, where he would join her without wasting a moment.

"You can keep something under your hat, can't you, buddy?" he exclaimed, looking across at the clerk.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Manders."

"That's swell. Keep this under your hat, then. Nobody is to know I'm here for certain particular reasons. Mr. Martin Leslie's orders. He wants me to take things quietly until I'm dar back on the set. I don't want no crowds of rubber-necks following me around and gawping at me. Got that?"

"I quite understand, Mr. Manders," the

clerk exclaimed delightedly, feeling that he was being let into the thrilling secrets of the anatomy of the film world.

"So I'm going to stay put here, and you're going to stay along with me. I don't want to see nobody, you understand. Now I'm going to get on the wire."

He picked up the receiver and began to talk in succession for every part of the studios where Jenny was likely to be. She wasn't in the restaurant—though she had been there, he was informed, less than half an hour ago. She wasn't at the club. Eventually, in despair, he rang up the porter's lodge.

"This is Mr. Manders speaking. I say, have you seen my wife around anywhere?"

"No, sir."

"Well, get this. If she shows up tell her to speak to me here. And, say, tell her if I ain't here she's to wait at the gates until I come along."

"Very good, Mr. Manders."

Dan gloomily shook his head.

"What'd I be doing with blanks? They're no use to me. I want a shell with a dose of lead in it. But I'll have to keep on waiting by the locks of it."

He sank into a gloomy reverie. Slowly the minutes ticked away. Though it was long past the hour for the clerk's lunch he never dreamed of leaving the office. To be alone with such an international celebrity as Mr. Julian Manders was a privilege which made the thought of lunch of no account.

It had already gone half-past one when the attention of the office was broken by the ringing of the telephone bell. Dan grabbed at the receiver like a drowning man at a lifeline. Across the wire came the voice he had been waiting so impatiently to hear.

"Honey, I'm sure glad to hear you speaking. Listen, sweetheart, I'm in a jam."



Jenny rased for the car where Dan awaited her. The game was up, but they had won through. All that remained was the getaway.

Dan hung up the receiver and sank into a chair. He'd established one fact, anyway. Jenny was somewhere in the studios, otherwise the porter who must have seen her go out would have notified the fact. He'd just have to wait.

For the first time, because there was nothing else to do, he began to toy with the gun he had brought with him from the set. To his surprise he discovered it wasn't phoney. It was a genuine Browning automatic, lacking only ammunition.

"Buddy, you ain't got any slaps on you, have you?"

The clerk gave a violent start. "Slaps?" he stammered, and then, deciding that the famous film star must have made a joke, he laughed.

"Well, why don't you answer?" Dan growled.

"I—I thought it was a joke, Mr. Manders. Stage? I've got a lot in my garden at home, of course—"

"You've got me all wrong. Sheila—cart-rigids—what you put in brackets like that."

He flourished the receiver in the clerk's face.

"I see what you mean, sir. I'm afraid I haven't. But they're sure to have some blanks in the store. If you wish it, I could go round and draw some for you."

"Yes, I've been getting the low-down from Mr. Leslie a few minutes back. He said there was something wrong with you. I've been looking round to find you."

"But it's worse than that, Jenny. Bertie and Big Joe, with a couple of his legs, were around at the set. They both saw me. So I'll cut. Then I remembered you were somewhere around in the studios. I couldn't leave without you, so I was waiting until I could contact with you."

"Are you sure about Big Joe, Dan?"

"Am I sure? Would I be likely to make a mistake like that? We've got to quit."

"I'll meet you at the gates," Jenny replied. "Step on it. I don't want to run into no Big Joe."

Dan banged down the receiver and turned to the clerk.

"Thanks, buddy."

The next moment he was outside the office, and doubling round the corner of the building to reach the main thoroughfare leading to the entrance gates. As he came out on to the broad, smooth ribbon of tarmac an astonishing score met his startled eyes.

A hush seemed to have fallen upon the Mayfair Film Corporation's vast studios. The ceaseless hum of human activities had

died down. Silence reigned—a silence like that of a cemetery.

A hundred yards away he glimpsed hundreds of human beings. Most of them were living but on their faces by the side of the road. Others were visible, unmarked in angles of the adjoining buildings.

So much Dan saw before his gaze became concentrated upon three figures who were backing slowly towards the gates. He took one look at them—and he knew the worst.

They were Big Joe and his two hangers-on. And they were obviously in action. Although he could not see their guns, he knew from the crouch they had assumed and the quick movement of their heads as they scanned the scene about them for any sign of resistance that they were engaged in the last episode of a hold-up.

Dan forgot everything at that moment except his dislike of Big Joe. There was the man who had left him in the lurch and allowed him to sit those four years in jail as if that he could make his love to Jenny. He was forgetting nothing in the account he had had with Big Joe.

And now his chance to wipe the slate clean. Without a thought of the danger he ran he sprang into the roadway, coming up behind the three men before they were aware of his presence.

"Drop those bastards or I'll blow the guts out of you! I've got you, Big Joe. Where I've wanted you a long time. Make it snappy or I'll rub you out!"

He jabbed the muzzle of his useless revolver into Big Joe's back. There was a clatter as the three guns fell on the tarmac.

"Reach for the sky! Up with them, boys!"

The hands of Big Joe and his companions went waving upward. Dan stooped down and collected the fallen guns.

"Fancy Big Joe falling for a phoney!" he jeered. "That's right you, Dan! It? Always thought yourself such an amazingly smart guy, too! You left me alone to face the dicks with Scudder's while you sneaked away to save your neck. Now I've got a real and I've half a mind to give you the works."

But, however much he might have been tempted, he was allowed no opportunity to carry out his threat. All those recurrent figures in the roadway were on their feet now; all the men huddled together in what gangs they had been able to find had started to move. Shouting and yelling, they were rushing towards the spot where the three prisoners stood.

Right in front was Stephen Marks, leaving Big Joe and his two companions to the tender mercies of the crowd, who showed an inclination to lynch them, he caught Dan by the arm.

"This is going to be a first-class front-

page story, Mr. Manders! It was the most brilliant thing I've ever seen, you tackling those three ruffians single-handed."

He stopped speaking abruptly. He was staring at Dan.

"Am I going badly or am I not?" he exclaimed. "Remember when Big Joe started shooting?"

Dan said nothing.

"You weren't dressed for the act; you hadn't got any make up on."

"Just a minute, buddy." Dan broke in hurriedly. "I've got to find my wife. She'll be anxious. I'll be seeing you."

He turned and moved towards the porter's lodge. Jenny was waiting for him there, her face rather pale and set. Without a word she stepped out into the road. Side by side they hurried through the gateway. A car was waiting there some twenty yards away, parked by the side of the road.

"This driver's just asking to be taken, Dan," she exclaimed.

"You never speak a truer word, honey," Dan replied as he stepped into the seat at the wheel.

Meanwhile in the studios all was confusion. Big Joe and his two companions had almost had their clothes torn off them by the outraged mob. Bruised and bleeding, they looked pitiable objects before order was restored by the sudden appearance of authority in the person of Mr. Martin Laidie.

"What in the hell's all this about?" he demanded.

Stephen Marks hastened to give him the necessary information. The producer's face registered more and more astonishment as he listened.

"American gangster trying to get Mr. Manders?"

"Yes, they're the same lot that tried to make trouble for him at the Olympic Hotel. Remember that swell story of mine, don't you?"

"I don't want your stories, Marks—I want facts! These men have been shooting with intent to kill—in our studios. Does anybody here know who those men are?"

"Aren't I telling you that the big fellow is known as Big Joe? Manders knew all about them."

"They use the three men who called at your office and said they had an appointment with you, Mr. Laidie," the producer's secretary, who had joined the group, exclaimed. "They went out with Mr. Scudder."

"Great Scott, is old man Scudder a gangster as well? I thought he was nothing worse than a red-to-greenish millionaire. Where's Scudder?"

"The tall man said he, and Mr. Scudder were great friends, sir, and that they were going out to have a drink to celebrate their unsuspected meeting in your office."

As his secretary rendered that piece of information Martin Laidie chuckled wildly at his hair.

"I'm not a producer! I'm a keeper in a run house! Where's Scudder, anyway? He's got to be found. We're insured against mob risks in this company, but not against losing millions."

He plunged forward, showing his way through the crowd to where Big Joe, looking very much the worse for wear, was standing.

"Now, you—Big Joe, whatever your name is—what have you done with Mr. Scudder?"

Big Joe was a broken man. Up to now, throughout his adventurous life, he had always been able to get away with it. This

failure was disastrous. The hating resentment of the crowd by which he was surrounded had had its effect upon his nerves.

"He's in the phoney castle away up there, boss," he replied in a tremulous voice. "We didn't rob him out—only just took the clothes off him and tied him up."

Martin Laidie drew a deep breath.

"The successful man is merciful to his best," he remarked ironically. "Come on, some of you, and help me to find Mr. Scudder. Have these men locked up until the police arrive."

A few minutes later, having extracted the almost suffocated millionaire from his bonds he was taking desperately, Mayfair Film Corporation must be served, if possible, from any claim for damages.

"I wouldn't have had his happen, Mr. Scudder, not for twenty thousand pounds."

Exactly why he selected that sum he hadn't the vaguest idea. Perhaps because he had a dim remembrance that that was the amount of damage Mr. Scudder had threatened to claim.

"You must remember, however, that I asked you to remain in my office until I sent for you to come to the set. In those circumstances the Mayfair Film Corporation, I'm afraid, can accept no responsibility. After all, you went out in the company of those men of your own free will."

"Free will!" Mr. Scudder, who was scrambling into his disordered clothes, exclaimed in a tone of exasperation. "You're telling me! I went along with that big guy because he'd got the draw on me."

Martin Laidie edged away from danger. The company might be held responsible for the action of the men who had been introduced into his office. The law on the subject of agency was a subject bristling with pitfalls, and Scudder looked the kind of man who wouldn't mind the expense of taking the matter to the House of Lords.

"Quite—oh, quite! You will be delighted to hear, Mr. Scudder, that these three men have been arrested. They will in due course be deported and handed over to the police in your own country, where you will have the satisfaction of seeing them put where they belong."

The look of almost childish satisfaction on Mr. Scudder's face gave him an inspiration.

"You will be interested to hear that it was entirely due to the courage and resource of Mr. Julian Manders that these three men were arrested. He captured them single-handed. One of the bravest acts I ever witnessed."

He hadn't witnessed it—but a little thing like that didn't matter.

"I am sure you would like to have an opportunity of thanking him, Mr. Scudder. If Mr. Manders hadn't intervened these three headquarters would certainly have escaped, and goodness only knows how long you might have been left here."

He glanced at his watch.

"I'm afraid I'm due on the set now, Mr. Scudder, and Mr. Manders will be busy all the afternoon. But what about a spot of dinner-to-night? I shall be delighted if you will be my guest—and then you could have the opportunity of thanking Mr. Manders."

He was writing the way of escape. He would give the tip to Stephen Marks to put the story into the Press. In that story Julian Manders would figure as the man who had rescued Mr. Scudder from the clutches of those American thugs. He could even speak in the story of Mr. Scudder's gratitude. And after that how

660 WON BY READERS!

In the second of our "Best" "Best and Best" contests, the best solution of the puzzle was found to be that given below, and submitted by the following distinguished contributor who has equally won THE FIRST PRIZE OF £20. These winners are:

- F. J. Babin, 28, Reginald Road, Basingstoke.
- E. Scott, Basingstoke Hill, Basingstoke, Hants.
- E. Sandford, 10, Mary Grove, Gosport, Portsmouth.
- E. L. Head, 104, City Road, Edmonton.
- J. Linnell, 4, Cornhill Terrace, Newcastle.
- S. R. Millard, 25, Main Street, Farnborough.
- C. Marshall, 110, Denmark Street, W.C.2.
- J. Wilson, 11, Alford Road, Glasgow.

THE SECOND PRIZE OF £10 has been divided equally amongst the sixteen two-points solutions which were considered to be correct. The winners of this prize are: We are unable to print the names of so many winners here, but the full list may be seen at our office.

The Winning Solution: 1. A. (Bait, A. J. Street), 2. B. (Mandars), 3. C. (Mandars), 4. D. (Mandars), 5. E. (Mandars), 6. F. (Mandars), 7. G. (Mandars), 8. H. (Mandars), 9. I. (Mandars), 10. J. (Mandars), 11. K. (Mandars), 12. L. (Mandars).

would Mr. Bottinger have the heart to bring an action for libel against Julian Manders or the company who were employing him?

"That's settled, then. Eight o'clock at the Grand Olympic Restaurant, Mr. Bottinger. I'll arrange about Manders. I must be getting along now. Anything you want, just ask for—"

THE BETTER WAY.

MRANVILLE Stephen Marks, but on the trail of a first-class story which would make the name of Julian Manders a household word, was looking everywhere for the film star.

Nobody had seen him. With a modesty rare in film stars he had faded away from the scene of his triumph. More than a little puzzled, Marks made his way to the star's dressing-room.

"Yes, Mr. Manders was here only a few minutes ago," the dresser exclaimed. "I had to fit him out with a new costume. He didn't seem to know what he'd done with the clothes he'd been wearing on the set this morning. Luckily we had a duplicate."

Stephen Marks saw it all—or thought he did. Julian Manders hadn't been feeling in pain when the shooting began. He had been merely making for his dressing-room. Hadn't he, he remembered. Just pointed it out to him at the time? There he had placed himself in the hands of his dresser, and when ready had passed out into the grounds. So he had arrived on the scene, all made-up, in time to effect the capture of Big Joe and his two companions single-handed.

"Where is he now?" he demanded.

"Probably gone to Stage 4, sir."

As Marks headed for the set he almost bumped into Julian Manders, who was walking thoughtfully about, smoking a cigarette.

"Oh, boy!" he exclaimed enthusiastically, clatching the film star by the arm. "You've given me the biggest break I've ever had! The story's great! Mr. Julian Manders, who is playing the part of the Monk in Mayhew's new super film, catches single-handed three gangsters engaged in holding up the stadium!"

He beamed into the star's dazed face.

"Don't worry. I've got all the dope, remember, about you and Big Joe, and I saw everything that happened. You don't have to spill anything. Mr. Manders, just concentrate on the job for this afternoon."

He gave the star's arm a friendly squeeze.

"Well, had it'll be all right. Martin Leslie will have looked down. He had a hanger-up this morning."

He glanced at his watch.

"Time for you to be on the set, Mr. Manders. You watch out for the papers. It's going to be the biggest story ever."

Julian Manders looked bewilderedly after his retreating figure. What on earth was happening? It had been bad enough to be locked up for all those miserable days in a penitentiary as somebody called Dan Murphy charged with an attempt to avoid the order for his deportation. But he had got out, troubled. It is true, as to his mind, but very much better physically for having been compelled to lay off his passion for drags. Now he felt completely lost.

Nobody he had met so far in these British studios had complained about his failure to keep his contract to time. They seemed to know all about it. Well, he wasn't going to make a song about that unpleasant episode.

And this yarn about his having captured three men. Better let it go. No use con-

tradicting it. Some newfangled publicity stunt. Martin got on the set.

Five minutes later, the centre of all eyes, he was standing with his back to an open window. There, across the space of carpeted floor, was a magnificent had on which a man was lying. He had forgotten all about those nightmare days in the penitentiary—his journey across in the Queen Mary, where he had purposely hid—steamed from public view—the route up from Southampton by car with his nerves all on edge as to what his reception was likely to be.

He was an actor now. He had shed the personality of Julian Manders and assumed that of the Monk. He heard Mr. Martin Leslie's voice:

"Now, Mr. Manders. Remember that lying in that bed in the man whose ruthless financial operations have driven the father of the girl you love to suicide, her mother to an early grave, and herself to the sanctuary of the streets. All this is in your mind as you advance towards the bed to make him your prisoner and take him away to hold him for a ransom until he has disgorged his misappropriated gains. Now—"

Martin Leslie gasped. It was a perfect portrayal of the part. The man creeping across the floor revisited the coast situations that he wanted. The suspense he was able to produce thrilled even Leslie's toughened nerves.

"Splendid, Mr. Manders! Couldn't be better! Just what I wanted. No need to rehearse it again."

He glanced at his assistant director, who immediately came into action.

The camera-boy snapped the bench together as Leslie Martin said:

"Camera action!"

Julian Manders went through his part again with even more intense intensity while the camera made their record.

"Can you beat it?" Martin Leslie muttered, and then added aloud: "Now we'll get on to the next scene."

By six o'clock the whole of the series had been shot without a hitch. Martin Leslie was in the seventh heaven of delight.

Before he could express his feelings Stephen Marks, his hands full of papers, appeared upon the set.

"Look at this—didn't I tell you I'd put it across big? And there are only the evening papers. It will be a front-page story in all the dailies to-morrow. I've got a detachment of the Fleet Street boys now at my office waiting to see you."

Julian Manders took a deep breath. He'd obviously got to get the low-down on what was happening—and what better way than reading the papers Marks was holding out to him?

"It's half an hour," he exclaimed. "I must rest for a little."

Grabbing the sheet of papers from Stephen Marks, he bolted for his dressing-room. There, undisturbed, he read all about what he was supposed to have done. It was all reasonable, but what did that matter? In the sacred cause of publicity he was quite prepared to be the national hero who had held up and taken prisoner three desperate armed gangsters. As long as nobody started asking him awkward questions as to where he had spent those dreadful days when he ought to have been at the stadium—

When he faced the assembled Pressmen he played his part to perfection. He was modest, simple, retiring, showing an inclination to under-rate his courage and address.

Stephen Marks nearly spelt it all by his

passion for getting new human angles on every story.

"What does Mrs. Manders say about it all?" he inquired of Julian Manders.

Julian Manders gave a violent start. What new pitfall was that?

"If you don't mind, Mr. Marks, we won't drag Mrs. Manders into this," he exclaimed desperately.

"Right, Mr. Manders! I quite understand. Just as you wish—though it would have been a good stage. After all, something like seventy per cent of the picture fans are women, and they'd like to know what another woman feels. But I quite understand your point of view."

As Julian Manders had no point of view and no wife, this didn't help him much.

But it was a different matter when he found himself at the Grand Olympic store with Martin Leslie and Mr. Bottinger, who was still thinking about his five thousand dollars.

"I was kind of hoping Mrs. Manders would have been here, Mr. Manders," he explained.

Julian Manders smiled.

"There isn't any Mrs. Manders," he explained readily.

Mr. Bottinger looked at him blankly. "But the lady I met with you, Mr. Manders?" he insisted.

Julian Manders sat up with a start. He had never seen Mr. Bottinger before that evening. Something had got to be done about it.

"Not Mrs. Manders!" he said in a confidential tone. "I don't want this to go any further; but, as a matter of fact, the lady has left me."

Martin Leslie looked hastily down into the bottom of his glass. Awfulward attention, this! Why couldn't film stars keep their untidy love affairs to themselves?

But Mr. Bottinger's reactions to this scandalous story were different. He had acquired great kudos on the journey across the Atlantic by his intimacy with the supposed Mrs. Manders. Was he now to tell his friends that these was no Mrs. Manders? Better to say good-bye to that five thousand bucks for ever rather than to be made to look a fool in the eyes of the world!

"You can count on me bringing it under my hat, Mr. Manders," he explained.

The sunlight was fading from the eastern slopes of the Windsor mountains. In the big grey stone farmhouse peace reigned. Horses stamped and stamped at their halloas in the stable. Pigs grunted in the sty, hens clucked in the yard.

Jenny, in a blue linen overall, stopped out into the honey-suckle-covered porch.

A gate clicked. Dan Murphy, in riding-boots and wearing a green waistcoat under his coat, came swinging out of the yard.

She put her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"Dan darling, we'll have to be running up to Dublin. They're showing that picture, 'The Monk Exits to Town,' featuring Mr. Julian Manders."

Dan shook his head determinedly.

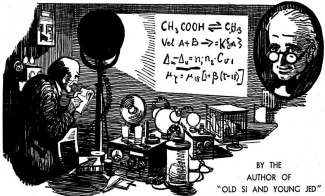
"I saw all of that picture I ever wanted to see, honey, and only you just mentioning Julian Manders gives me a pain in my neck!"

Jenny laughed.

"Even after we see all this to him, Dan? Oh, ain't you getting mighty hard-hearted and ungrateful?"

THE END.
 (Write to The Editor, THE THRILLER Office, The Firebrigade House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and let him have your opinion of this story. Full details of next week's story are on Page 534.)

The BRAIN!



BY THE
AUTHOR OF
"OLD SI AND YOUNG JED"

JUST TO REMIND YOU

PROFESSOR OSCAR PRONG was one of the cleverest scientists of his day. There was only one brain greater than his—the brain of his brother, **FREDERICK ROSEN PRONG**, who lived the life of a hermit in a laboratory of Berlin. Heric Prong promised help to **FORRESTLE WILD**, the daughter of a woman he had jilted in his youth. But strange things happened before that could begin.

A queer, bombarded woman, named **BANISTER BRAND**, who worked for Oscar Prong, created the anger of Heric Prong and the power and wealth it would bring. He suspected the means of having a brain done and functioning after the body was dead.

There were also others who were anxious to obtain Heric Prong's scientific secrets. **MARSHALL**, Oscar Prong's former assistant, was actually a spy agent for the Bulgarian Government, and with his lover, **KARL**, planned to steal certain inventions and taking Heric Prong. They were too late, however. They found the body of Oscar Prong, but his brain had been stolen.

Penelope noticed the aid of **GEORGE HARRIS**, a private detective, in order the recovery of Heric Prong's disappearance. Meanwhile, Brand found the stolen brain to develop certain scientific secrets to him. He tried to tell them to the Bulgarian Embassy, saying he came from Heric Prong. But Karl was there, and he knew that Heric Prong was dead. Brand was finally detained in the Embassy.

Heric and Penelope had traced Brand to an old, deserted place. Heric climbed up on the building by way of the tall forest, but when he failed to appear, Penelope sought the help of Oscar Prong. They found an entry and found Heric's possessions, and led to the body of a dead German.

(See next page)

TO SCOTTLAND YARD.

FOR a moment they all stood dumb, like a statue in the middle of a round dance. It was Penny who cried out, and then she twitched her arm away from the Professor's and darted forward, and before anyone else could move she tugged down the gag that had been viciously tied round George's mouth, so that it hung in a loop around his neck. He stirred, stirred, raised his head and opened his eyes.

"Wait a minute!"

Pringle jumped forward, his white hand lifted like that of a traffic policeman, his eyes wide with horror.

"Don't," he gasped, "touch anything until we get the police! Finger-prints!"

The cry of warning seemed to bring George back to full consciousness. He started as Pringle as though he wondered if he were human.

"Why, you blank fool!" he stormed. "Do you think you are going to leave me tied up here until Scotland Yard has crawled all over me and measured me and fingerprinted me? Get those darn ropes off me before I beat loose and hand you one!"

"At least," the Professor said mildly, "our young friend seems to be well and vigorous. I think he's right, Pringle. This is not an occasion for you to read your detective reading. We ought to set him loose."

Penny was already doing it. Her small hands flashed along the knots she tugged at the strong ropes. They yielded, and presently the dead Christman swayed, rocked, and quietly slipped sideways to the ground. George stood up stiffly, shook himself free from a tangle of ropes. He gave Pringle a look of suspicion as he brushed his wrists.

"Who did it, George? Penny asked him.

"I don't remember much about it," George said bitterly. "I haven't seen that before."

He tugged down towards the big square with the closed eyes in the relief face.

"After I left you I went poking around

this place, and then—then I found a trap-door."

"A trapdoor!" Penny echoed excitedly.

"To the ceiling," George went on doggedly. "White-washed rafters, I went nosing down, and I met a Jap—"

"A Jap?"

"In a blue suit. Well, he was all right at first, very polite and all that, but when I started poking around some more he tried to slash me, so I went for him."

"Yes?"

A deep flush stained George's face.

"He was just about as big as the average jockey, and he picked me up and slammed me at the wall as though I was a baby. And that—that's all I remember. Until you came."

"You had listened to him respectfully, but Pringle was making slinking noises with his lips to register horror, and Professor Prong was looking mildly puzzled.

"I don't quite understand," he said. "What made you come here in the first place?"

They told him, between them. Penny and George. He heard all over again their suspicions about Heric, and how they had decided to catch Brand. It was George who told him how he had seen Brand slip into the very chapel, and he had decided that this was something which must be investigated.

"Brand!" said the Professor. "The worthy Brand! I can scarcely believe that Brand is up to anything criminal. A reserved man, rather odd in appearance, but an excellent scientist. Isn't he, Pringle?"

"What we students of psychology call

A GREAT STORY OF A RUTHLESS MAN AND HIS BID FOR 'UNLIMITED POWER

By WALTER TYRER

an introvert, sir," Fringle said judiciously. "But no doubt he's got a heart of gold."

"Heart of gold, or not," Penny said fervently. "What's he doing poking around in Professor Boris' bungalow in the middle of the night?"

"I hardly like to suggest you might have been mistaken, my dear. But Brandt is a small man, and my brother is also small, and the light may have been deceptive. And if Mr.—Mr. Boris actually saw Brandt slip into this place, he may have had a decent legitimate reason."

"What about the body?"

Professor Oscar blinched down at the body, and his face was distressed.

"I had forgotten the body," he admitted.

They decided to see if Brandt was at the laboratory. They would have to report the finding of the body to the police, but Professor Probyn was a long way from being convinced that Maximilian Brandt was a criminal, although a vague uneasiness stirred in him about his brother. That he couldn't help remembering that Boris had gone away without a word before, and there had been that message, the message that had certainly come from Boris.

Brandt was not at the laboratory. His colleagues reported that he hadn't appeared all day, and he had sent no message.

"There you are!"

"There may be a legitimate explanation."

They went round to Brandt's private address, the tall and narrow building house with the respectable lace curtains. A maid summoned Mrs. Slater, and there was some delay, for the maid's description of the visitors had made the landlady decide to change into her black. She showed some annoyance when she heard that they had only come to inquire about one of her lodgers.

"Mr. Brandt?" she said. "Oh, yes, Mr. Brandt. He has the whole of the top floor. A nice gentleman, very respectable indeed. I haven't seen him since he came here last night with his friend."

"His friend?"

"A gentleman who spoke a bit foreign, sir," the landlady said. "He came here with Mr. Brandt last night. I was a bit surprised, because I've never known Mr. Brandt bring a friend here before. He wasn't what you'd call one of those jolly fellows. But this must have been a very close friend of Mr. Brandt's—the foreign gentleman. They went upstairs afterwards. But they didn't stay long. They came downstairs again in about half an hour, carrying a suitcase. The suitcase might have looked a bit funny with some gentlemen, but not with Mr. Brandt. I knew he wouldn't try anything funny on, so I didn't interfere. Mr. Brandt never liked anyone to interfere."

"A suitcase?" Penny breathed.

"It sounds a little odd," the Professor agreed.

"We ought to go up and have a look round, sir," George urged him.

"Excuse me, sir," Fringle said wightily. "But the correct procedure would be to

go to the nearest police station, explain the whole circumstances to the man in charge, and apply for a warrant signed by a Justice of the Peace."

"That might be the correct procedure, Fringle," Professor Probyn said, "but it seems a little elaborate to me."

The conversation had been hurried and whispered, and the landlady had stood on the top step regarding them with curiosity. Now Professor Probyn stepped forward and, raising his large-brimmed black hat, addressed Mrs. Slater with great courtesy. Mr. Brandt, he said, had been taken ill, and he, Professor Probyn, was his employer. It was necessary to look round Mr. Brandt's quarters, and no doubt the good lady would wish to assist in every way. A pound note crinkled in the Professor's fingers, and Mrs. Slater hastened and was lost, as much to the Professor's chagrin as to the crackle of the pound note.

"Well, if you're the gentleman as Mr. Brandt works for, I can't see any objection," she said. "I'll pop downstairs and get my key."

She showed some inclination to lead them on upstairs and round Brandt's room, but the Professor, suddenly decisive and practical, took the key from her unresisting finger.

"I know the curse of a housewife," he said. "I am sure you want to hurry away."

They went upstairs, the four of them, close together up the narrow carpeted stairs, and they shared a feeling of esteem as the Professor fished the key in Brandt's door. They stepped inside into Brandt's study and sitting room, rooms that revealed nothing of the personality of the occupant, unless a hint was given by the portrait of Napoleon planned up on a cream-washed wall.

"A power complex," muttered Fringle.

They passed through the bare bedroom with the camp bed. They went into what appeared to have been a small laboratory, and there the Professor stopped on the threshold. The shelves showed signs of having been hurriedly cleared, drawers had been dragged open and emptied, cupboards doors snappily open.

"Someone's collared everything that could have been any help to us," George Harris said.

"That suitcase!" Penny said.

They peered around uncertainly. They all felt anxious and inexperienced, but knowing precisely what they were looking for. Scotland Yard men, they felt, would have instantly quartered the room and gone over it with a fine tooth comb, crawling about the floor, peering at the walls and ceiling. They seemed to wander round like a bored party dressed into a museum on a wet afternoon. The Professor opened the doors of the antislatic stove and peered inside it.

"He seems to have used the stove a great deal," he murmured, "judging from the condition of the mica in front."

They none of them saw anything significant in that, although Brandt's bedroom next door was cold and dreary. It

was Penny who gave a little cry and swooped down on a bookshelf.

"What's that?"

It was a volume, quite new. "Brush Up Your Moldavian," it was called, one of a series of European languages. "Moldavian!" cried George suddenly. "I see!"

"They stared at him hopefully.

"There was a little gadget I picked up on the floor of Professor Boris' bungalow," he said. "I showed it to Mr. Washington, my boss, and he said it was part of a Moldavian order. He said if Moldavia was upset up in this it was pretty grim. He said the Moldavians would give a lot to buy over Professor Boris and to get the help of his scientific knowledge and his wonderful brain. He said something the same about you, too, Professor."

The Professor frowned. It was a large little book, the sort of book that might be found on the shelves of anyone who was planning a Continental holiday. But still—Moldavian. And a Moldavian order, or part of it, had been found on the floor of Boris' bungalow? Or had it? This was a very nice young man of Penny's, and he looked rugged and reliable, but he wasn't outstandingly intelligent. He might, of course, have been mistaken.

But the name Moldavia was significant to Professor Oscar. There was the case of the youngest young man from Moldavia who had come to work in the laboratory, and a fortnight later was found at midnight in a part of the building where he had no right to be, so that he had been instantly discharged. And then there was that curious and instinctively tactful approach that had been made to Oscar himself by some very important Moldavians indeed. It wasn't news to Professor Oscar that Moldavia was very interested in his researches. He knew well enough he could have earned a great deal of money if he had responded to the friendly advances of Moldavia, but the very thought of doing anything of the sort made him feel slightly uneasy.

"But—Boris! Had they been in Boris' Those soft-spoken and friendly, paying foreigners? There was much that Boris knew, much that Boris could do, that would have been beyond price to Moldavia, that aggressive and threatening nation that was known to be piling up arm, battle-ships, long-distance bombers far, as they explained, purely defensive reasons. Not that Boris would have any truck with them, he thought.

His face was distressed. The worry in his eyes alarmed the others as they watched his anxious face.

Boris, thought the Professor, was a queer, disgruntled old stick, permanently embittered. Oscar had known him, in argument, say some very bitter things about England, about the Empire, about democracy. But would Boris sell out to a potential enemy? Was that the explanation of all this—Oscar his disappearing, then Brandt? Had Moldavia bought them both over?

Not Boris, he told himself angrily. Boris' tongue might lash England, but his hands wouldn't serve her enemies. It was the measure of Oscar's faith in his brother when he made his decision.

"I think we must go to office to Scotland Yard," he said.

THE GARDENS OF PUBLICITY.

THEY left Penny sitting at the wheel of the car outside the Yard, looking like a resentful child shut out from a

pancinate. The three of them, George, Penny, and the Professor were shown—in the strength of the Professor's name—in to a very important official with a hearty manner. He wasted a little time on greeting Professor Probyn and making a list of Penny, but no time at all on approving the frayed baggage to George's trousers, and giving him a curt nod. Then they got down to business.

Penny started the story, and later on George took it up. Penny hadn't got far before the Police Commissioner summoned a shorthand writer and asked her to begin all over again. His name, the Commissioner's name, was Major Shand, and his face had been baked brick-red by the sun of India. He mumbled a little towards George when he discovered that he spoke with the accent of the governing class.

"The first job the major got was when he heard about the dead Chinaman."

"Dead!" he said. "You should have reported that straight away, before you —"

"Touched a thing," murmured Penny. "But Mr. Harris was unaccountable. And we were worried about Mr. Brandt. And Professor Boris Probyn."

Major Shand said his telephone considerably before he let George go on with his story. The body of the Chinaman would be duly "discovered." Investigations would be put in hand—the police machine was beginning to grind, briskly, but efficiently. And meanwhile Major Shand wanted to know more, a lot more, about the case of Professor Probyn and Hanseter Brandt.

"I think," Major Shand decided, "that I should like to know more about that fragment of a Moldavia order that was found at the bungalow of Professor Probyn. You say it is in the possession of Mr. Waddington, Mr. Edmund Waddington? I'll have Mr. Waddington invited here."

He telephoned again, and sanctioned a respectful advertisement. George had time to reflect that an invitation to Scotland Yard was going to cause Mr. Waddington some uneasiness. Not that Mr. Waddington had done anything against the law, but he was the sort of person who always feels that something against the law may be necessary in a day or so.

"All right," said Major Shand. "Please go on with your story, Mr. Harris."

It struck George that the major wasn't a remarkable figure, but he was efficient, and he attended to things as he went along. The Yard was in this case new, in it up to the neck, and not likely to stop out until it was settled somehow. George told what he knew very carefully, prompted by Penny, and every word either of them said was recorded by the shorthand writer. When George had done the girl closed her notebook, rose, and went silently out of the room. Major Shand rose, and paced thoughtfully up and down.

"It may, of course, be just nothing at all," Professor Probyn offered tentatively. "As I've said to my young friends, everything may have a perfectly reasonable explanation. Even the dead Chinaman—"

"I'm not worrying about him," the major said. "Probyn, there is something about this case that makes me think it may be very important indeed. In confidence, I will tell you that here at the Yard, and elsewhere, we sit up and take notice when the name of Moldavia is mentioned. Would it interest you to know that Moldavia has nearly eight thousand active agents in this country?

Your brother's name is known to me. His great gifts would be very useful to Moldavia, just as your own are no doubt of great use in our own country. If Professor Boris Probyn has been persuaded to go to Malabar, or to place his services at the disposal of the Moldavian government—"

Clear Probyn jumped up. "Nothing of the sort is even faintly possible, Major Shand!" he said. "If that is the conclusion intelligence people are going to reach because of my brother's absence, I demand you to shed him at once. I don't want to talk like an Empire Day speaker in a school hall, but I know my brother is quite incapable of helping the potential enemies of our own country!"

Penny echoed him excitedly. "He couldn't! He wouldn't! Professor Boris had his funny ways, but he was nice really!"

George Harris looked with half-closed eyes at her flushed and earnest and pretty face.

"Rather not!" he said gruffly. Major Shand paced up and down thoughtfully.

"This seems to be a case where the newspapers might help us," he said. "I suggest we report Professor Boris' disappearance to them, and then if the Professor is staying away voluntarily someone is sure to see him and report it, or perhaps the Professor would come forward himself."

"He'll be furious," Oscar said thoughtfully. "If it's all a man's nest and he's gone away of his own accord he'll never forgive me. But still, if all these dreadful things are being said—"

He broke off. Penny had leaped forward, trembling with eagerness to speak.

"Excuse me," she said breathlessly.

"But I've been thinking, if you just tell the newspapers that Oscar Probyn has gone away and you want to find him they'll just give you a little bit of space on one of the middle pages. But if you go to them and told them all about the dead Chinaman and Mr. Brandt, and about thinking Moldavia may be mixed up in it, that would be big news and you'd get on the front page with big black headlines, and everybody would see it. And, of course, that's what you want."

Major Shand looked at her with the affection for her prettiness and courage for her intelligence that distinguishes a certain type of Englishman talking to young women.

"My dear young lady," he said. "Do you suppose Scotland Yard could associate itself with a sensational and possibly unfounded announcement like that?"

"No," Penny said. "I suppose you couldn't. But Mr. Harris here could go along to the 'Daily Flare' and tell them he had a scoop, and tell them the whole thing as strictly unofficial. And then they'd make a big fuss about it and perhaps put in a cartoon showing Moldavia's all an octopus and they'd have a powerful leader demanding to know what the Yard were doing about it, and they'd offer a reward and—and everything."

Penny turned to the dumbfounded George, who was regarding her with his mouth open.

"And then," she said, "you could ask them for a job."

Major Shand beamed at her. He thought it was a very good idea. It enabled him to do something he had decided he wanted to do, and if any signs or

embarrassments arose he could wash his hands of the whole affair.

It all worked out more or less to plan. Penny and George went along to the offices of the "Daily Flare," leaving Professor Probyn with the high officials of Scotland Yard. Penny walked in a Fleet Street milk bar while George went along to the newspaper office. After a slight delay occasioned by George trying to pour out his whole story to the commissionaire, George passed inside.

He was flushed and happy when at last he came back to Penny. She had slumped down on a high stool, contemplating her third mailed milk with distaste, but she brightened when she saw George.

"Come on," he said. "Let's celebrate. I've got a job."

He told her all about it over a chop. He'd finally persuaded to the news editor, and he seemed to have repeated his story about a dozen times before his listeners were galvanised into activity. He remembered back young men standing round him firing questions at him, while in the background there was a lot of frantic telephoning. There was no doubt that the story was big, very big indeed, and the "Daily Flare" had managed to verify everything that could be verified.

Penny George had been able to button-hole a kindly man with a Scotch accent and ask him about a job.

"And he engaged me!" George said triumphantly. "On space. I asked him about salary, but he told me privately that the way to make the big money was on space, then your scope was unlimited. You just ferret out the news for yourself and telephone it in."

They went out in the streets, now brightly lit and crowded, both of them looking about uneasily, alert for the big news story that was going to be the foundation of George's income. A new edition of the evening papers was on sale, the boys were dodging through the crowds shouting headlines, snatching at coppers and twitching off papers to thrust at customers. George found a penny.

"Flare," he said.

It was a satisfactory experience. George's story had certainly hit the headlines. It seemed all over the front page. "Daily Flare" exclusive," it said, and there was a paragraph about the "Flare" was always being first with the news and was most popular with advertisers because ninety-seven per cent of its readers owned motor-cars, according to an impartial investigation they'd conducted the week before.

Then it went on about Boris Probyn. "Wonder Mild of the Age," it said. It didn't say anything about Moldavia, but it referred to a certain foreign power, and the "Flare" wanted to know what the Government was doing about it. Had Boris Probyn been kidnapped? The "Flare" asked. If the Government couldn't find him the "Daily Flare" and it's patriotic readers would.

George went back to the office of the "Daily Flare" when he and Penny were tired of walking about the streets. He found a white-faced news-editor, trembling all over, shaking a copy of the rival paper, the "Evening Tuppert." In his clutched fist, he twiddled all the more and scoured voraciously when he saw George.

"You—you double-crossing, screw-mongering bug!" he snarled. "Read that and get out of my sight!"

George took the crumpled paper. On the front page, neatly enlarged, was the reproduction of a postcard. It was scribbled in a crumpled handwriting that

the "Target" expert said was undoubtedly the handwriting of Boris Probyn.

"I have not," said the postcard, "been kidnapped by a mysterious foreign power; nor have I embarked on a mysterious flight to the moon. Nor, so far as I know, am I dead. I am on holiday, seeking privacy."

"Boris Probyn."

George stared at it bewilderedly.

"What does it mean?" he stammered.

"Mean?" raged the newspaper man. "It means you've made the 'Pier' the laughing stock of the country. Get out of my sight before I kill you!"

FRAMED!

THE story of Professor Probyn's disappearance had been sensational for a few hours only. Now everyone was laughing about it, and the "Daily Press" was certainly humiliated. So was George. At Scotland Yard they were bewildered, inclined to suspect a hoax, to hold off while Major Stann was very, very glad indeed he hadn't made the announcement to the newspaper official, Professor Geary was bewildered but happy, because it seemed to him certain that no harm could have come to Boris. He had examined the postcard received by the "Daily Target," and he had pronounced it genuine. The papers were printing stories about the eccentricity of Professor Boris and the absent-mindedness of Professor Geary, and Geary was embarrassed and grieved that Boris would be forgiven.

George was baffled, as was his employer, Mr. Edmund Waddington. But since the police took an interest in the case, Mr. Waddington had lost some enthusiasm. Besides, his more normal business was booming. There was a slight lull movement in innateness that made things better for private detectives. George, clinging to the job he had until he could get another, found himself standing in chilly streets watching the cozy windows of Boris. But he was comforted by frequent meetings with Perry.

"I don't care what they all say," George said passionately. "There's something funny about it. What was Brando doing under that chapel? And why did that Jap go for me? What killed the Chinaman, too? You can't explain that now."

"We'll have to wait for the inquest," Penny said. "Something might come out then. But—but I'm beginning to think Boris Probyn wasn't as nice as I thought. Perhaps, after all, he has been taking money from Mikhalov and using Brando as a go-between. But no—I won't believe that about him!"

George was summoned to the inquest on the Chinaman. Penny wanted to take a day off from the music shop and go with him, but George wouldn't allow it. He went alone by himself, and found himself received very cordially by the police and shown into a front seat. Presently there was a stir, and George looked round and saw Professor Probyn and Pringle coming into the room. The little coroner's court was crowded now, there seemed an unusual number of policemen.

The coroner came briskly in and nodded to his jury as though they were old friends, and took his seat at a kitchen table littered with papers. He whispered with the police superintendent, looked sharply, and then beckoned over a little, short-sighted man whom George guessed to be a doctor. Then, with very little ceremony, the business started. They were inquiring into the death of Hans Pa, Chinese dock labourer.

A police officer gave evidence. Acting on information received, he went to the Broad Street Chapel and discovered the body of a Chinaman. Pursuing certain inquiries, he discovered the body to be that of Hans Pa, a Chinaman who worked intermittently at the docks, and lived in the Marlow Road district. His wife had been brought here to identify him.

A little yellow-faced woman with a blind smile and bright eyes came forward and bent her knee to the magistrate. Yes, she said, she was the wife of Hans Pa. She had seen the body of her husband and identified it.

Was he different in any way, the coroner asked, from when she last saw him?

"Yes," she admitted. "His head." The police doctor gave evidence. He had conducted a post mortem on the remains. The deceased, he said, had died as the result of a fractured skull. He rattled off some Latin words very rapidly. The injuries, he said, might have been caused by some blunt instrument. Death had taken place between eight and thirty-six hours of his examining the body.

They called for George. He went forward with a certain reluctance. Better, he decided, to say as little as possible. But he found very soon that the whole story was being drawn out of him. The coroner asked him about Brandt, about Professor Probyn, about his business in the deserted chapel at all, about his encounter with the unknown Japanese.

"I mean," the coroner said drearily, "to have read something like this before."

The police officers checked. George realized he was being mocked and his face went very red. They thought he was making it up very badly, and they thought he had made it up very badly. They told him to stand aside, and then called for the

dead man's wife again. Slowly, so that she would understand, the coroner questioned her.

"How did your husband earn his living recently?"

She looked unhappy and disturbed. "My husband made very big profits," she admitted. "Hans had every day work, he started to sell the little packets of powder. Very dangerous, but easy money. The gentleman gave him money, lots of money. More money than he had ever had before. But by and by he died."

"Afraid?" stammered the coroner. "What was he afraid of?"

George was leaning forward tensely. They'd got something here, he felt. They were going to learn something in a minute. He watched the worried, tanned face of the little Chinese woman who was talking to the coroner.

"Afraid of white men," she admitted. "A man who bring his powder, give him money. One day, he said, him kill!"

"He'd threatened your husband, this man behind?" said the coroner. "Your husband went in fear of his life? But you needn't be afraid, Mrs. Pa. The police will look after you. Tell me, did you ever see this Englishman who employed your husband? Could you identify him?"

The woman nodded briskly.

"Oh, yes!" she said. "His there!" She pointed. Every head in the court turned, every head saw George's forehead her pointing finger. George didn't because it couldn't—because he realized with horror that the wife of Hans Pa was pointing at him!

(Mrs. Pa has been paid to create this false accusation against George Morris. She cannot prove her statement. Neither can she disprove it. Will the police arrest him? Don't miss next week's long (continued of this gripping story.)

THE LAW OF THE FORGOTTEN MEN



A young boy driver is kidnapped in the next by mistake now. The compact he makes with these men is even stranger—by agreement to take the place of another and drive the fastest racing car in the world. This is his mission, but the rest of the story is what he has to do to succeed. **THE LAW OF THE FORGOTTEN MEN** is a packed with thrills all the way!

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RIVER OF DEATH

A POWERFUL STORY OF THE SHADOW—THE WORLD'S SLICKEST CRIME FIGHTER By MAXWELL GRANT

lead Blue Chip Deegan for the murder of
Phil Wiley.



THE STORY SO FAR

DAVY JONES" was the name by which the man who controlled the largest area of river piracy was known. His lieutenant, named PAUL, took a party to raid the *ss. SLEDGE*.

LIMBERT CHRISTOFF, otherwise known as *THE SLEDGE*, the world's slowest crime fighter, got on the trail. Close he picked up involved a girl, EDITH TURNER, who was engaged to *RED MULLIN*, a diamond broker. Christoff, knowing that Edith Turner's father, who ran a cabinet shop on a boat named in the Thames, is afraid of a crook named BLUE CHIP DEEGAN, decided to investigate at the Turner's home. There he discovered a mysterious connection between Phil and Ned Turner. Phil brought Turner a boat that had on the Bristol the address of JOHN BROWN, a bookie. As Phil could not read, this second address and words of letter inspired.

ANTHONY SASSON, a theatrical producer, called at Brody's bookshop. Brody used to be a street cop, and these Turner men had landed him a nice bank bundle which were stolen jewels. But they knew himself in an elaborate disguise, advised on the scene, landed Brody down and swapped with the jewels. George and PHIL WILEY, a girl dancer, were implicated in the affair.

Christoff visited the Florida Police. Turner's story was set, and learned what had happened at Brody's. The Blue was murdered that same night. Christoff was to let it move him. He got busy frantically a card by Phil on another vessel.

Now read on!

THE DIAMOND.

THE newspapers had plenty to say and to surmise about the mysterious happenings the night before at the berth of the *ss. Silver Knife*.

The body of a crew member had been found, shot through the heart, in the cargo hold of the raided vessel. Near the rail of the ship, the body of the steward had been discovered.

Two dead things of the Davy Jones gang had been found.

The papers noted the finding of the mangled body of Phil Wiley floating in the river. The identification had been made by Ned Turner!

Turner said he had been about to discharge Phil Wiley because of his involvement for a crooked gambler named Blue Chip Deegan. He told about Deegan's effort to install a crooked roulette wheel aboard the *stowboat*.

A police search for Deegan disclosed that he was no longer in his usual haunts. He had apparently fled town. A warning was flashed all over the country to apprehend

Anthony Sasson was angry.

He had just received a disturbing telephone call from John Brody. Brody had calmly informed him that the magnificent antique diamond for which he had paid a deposit of one thousand pounds, was missing! Worse, he refused to return Sasson's money. He assured Sasson that the debt would be adjusted satisfactorily later.

Sasson's reaction was grimly well. He called up his bank and asked them to stop payment on the checks he had given Brody. To his dismay, he learned that it had already been cashed.

Again he got through a call for Brody's bookshop. He threatened to appeal to the police concerning the nature of Brody's undercover business in jewels, unless his money was promptly refunded.

"Don't get tough," Brody said curtly. "No one is trying to gyp you. I expect to receive very shortly another interesting consignment of—ahem—rare objects. I'll merely transfer your one-thousand-pound deposit to something else that—"

"You will like hell!" Sasson barked. "You'll give me the what I bought, or my money back! If you don't, I'll lay the whole matter before the police. I believe those gems were stolen!"

Brody's voice on the wire became instantly icy.

"Listen! If you try to rat on me to the cops, your body will be flung from the river like a lot of other fools! Think it over!"

The bookie's hang up with a bang. But there was a deep crease of worry between his eyes. He got to telephone touch with Ned Turner and told him the imminent peril that threatened both of them.

Turner's face flushed. Then it paled. He was sitting in the ornate library of his expensive luxury flat.

"Put a couple of men on Sasson's tail. Follow him wherever he goes. No—wait a minute! Don't do that! Go over to Sasson's flat yourself. Kid him that you've changed your mind, that you'll return his money. Anything to keep him quiet for a short time."

"But suppose he won't listen?"

"I'll give him some real private treatment. I'll make the fool walk the plank! Before I get through with—"

Turner's voice choked off suddenly. He added blankly:

"That's fine, Mr. Sasson. I think the act will go over big. I'm counting on you to handle the stage production. See you soon."

He hung up and turned to face his

daughter. Edith Turner had not entered the room.

She was completely fooled. Her father left the room to get his hat and coat. He told Edith he was going to have a talk with Sasson. That was the grim truth.

He had scarcely left the library for another room of the flat, when a servant announced a visitor for Miss Edith.

It was Ray Holliver.

There was a mysterious smile on Holliver's lips. He drew Edith into a quick embrace and kissed her. He whispered something into her ear that brought a delighted sparkle to her blue eyes.

"A surprise? For me? What is it?"

The sight of the girl, so young the girl into instant silence. Holliver had laid in her palm the largest and most gorgeously perfect diamond antique ring she had ever beheld.

"Do you like it, sweetheart?" he asked earnestly.

"Oh, Ray! It's marvelous! Come on, let's show it to dad!"

Holliver's face smiled.

"Is he here? Darling—wait! I—I'd rather keep the surprise a secret until I can change this old-fashioned setting for something more modern. Let me have it, please!"

He dashed for it as he heard a heavy step approaching the library door. He was too late to slip it out of sight into his pocket. Ned Turner had seen the sparkle of the gorgeous stone. He stopped short, staring at it. For an instant, there was a dreadful rigidity on his face. On Holliver's, too. Then both men managed to smile and shake heads.

Turner examined the ring with polite interest. Actually, Turner was fully aware that the sparkling stone in Holliver's possession was part of the lost stolen from the bookshop by the figure of Davy Jones! It was the same gem over which Anthony Sasson was making such trouble.

Edith was tremendously excited. She wanted Ray to take her out and celebrate. A quick glance at a rigid grin of Turner's made the young man shake his head. Surely, he explained that he had only dropped in for a minute. He was terribly busy. He'll see Edith later, probably that evening!

Before the girl rightly understood what was going on, Holliver bowed and took his departure. He went straight to the bookshop of John Brody, having made grimly sure that he was not followed.

He creered, after noting that the shop was empty except for Brody's staid-looking female clerk. To Holliver's astonishment, Pauline informed him that Mr. Brody was away on business connected with a new shipment of books.

This pleased Holliver. Brody was the last man he wanted to see at the particular moment. He told Pauline his call was not important, and not to bother informing Brody if he returned soon.

Holliver rounded the corner and walked quietly up the side street towards a dark and rather dingy-looking brown stone house.

This was the house which contained no treasure and which was always "for sale." Holliver returned coldly as he passed along on the other side of the street. His gaze was not directed towards the house.

Clyde watched through his binoculars. The boat altered its course in midstream. Then, without warning, the speedboat vanished!

Clyde uttered a gasp of awe. The thing snatched at watercraft! Moving his high-powered glasses in wider circles along the black water, he was unable to detect any sign of the vanished boat.

He did a possible thing, under the circumstances—tapping his line of vision, he examined the further shore above the spot where he had last seen the craft.

A scar in the ground showed where something resembling an earth slide had occurred. Clyde used this barely visible gash as a mark to ensure the correctness of his memory. Then he obeyed the orders of the Shadow and hurried up the shore close to the river.

Cranshaw, meanwhile, had devoted his attention to a large boathouse he had observed before he left Clyde. The boathouse was dark and seemingly deserted, but Cranshaw was taking no chances on checking his presence to a possible watchman inside.

A diamond cutter removed a pane of glass from a window. Cranshaw entered the dark interior without sound.

He could see vaguely the grand shapes of canoes, piled neatly on rows of timbered racks. But his glance was a brief one. He heard the quick patter of investigating feet. Through an open door he saw the approaching glimmer of a lantern.

The wind blowing in through the hole left by the removed pane of glass had created a strong, cold draught of air. This had excited the suspicion of the watchman. He came hurrying in his lantern held high, a gun in his left hand.

Drugging close to the floor behind the curved shape of a canoe, Cranshaw slipped a silver coin from his pocket. He tossed it lightly through the air, heard it strike against a noise on the opposite side of the chamber.

The watchman whirled with an oath and peered his gun. Cranshaw darted silently behind him. There was a thump as the lantern fell. A gasp came from the watchman, then silence.

When Cranshaw moved again, the watchman was dead and helpless in a corner. The attack had been quick and sure, the capture an almost painless one. Jealous had strangled Cranshaw in put out of the way temporarily a man innocent of any wrongdoing.

Failure to solve him might have spelled a well-planned campaign against a dangerous criminal smart enough to baffle the entire police force.

Cranshaw went back to the open window. A moment later the hurrying figure of Clyde Barker joined him inside the boathouse. Clyde reported what he had seen through the binoculars. Cranshaw did not seem surprised at the singular disappearance of the speedboat across the river.

Hurrying through the boathouse, he

reopened the flat wooden boat that floated the Thames. His gloved finger pointed silently to a rowlock tied up at the edge. Clyde took a pair of men from a rack near the runway leading to the boat, shoved himself and Cranshaw out into the black river.

It was a slow method of crossing the river, but stealth and secrecy were more precious to Cranshaw than the time lost. Frequently the rowers approached the spot which Clyde had noticed through his binoculars.

It was not a natural path in the hillsides. The scar along the steep slope had been caused by workers sweeping out rock and gravel. The quarry, however, had been long since abandoned.

Floating the river was a warehouse and a wharf, where barges formerly had tied up at the water's edge to receive their loads of material. The warehouse rested on a concrete foundation that rose solidly out of the water. It had been built there to make it easier for barges to approach the adjoining wharf.

A sign was painted on the ancient concrete wall close to the water:

Cable Crossing,
Do Not Anchor!

Cranshaw was crying a single letter in that faded sign when there was a strange tapping a few yards back of the rowlocks. It seemed like a subconscious disturbance on the bed of the river. A patch of foam on the surface indicated that a current of water was bubbling upward from below.

At a quick order from Cranshaw, Clyde removed most of his clothing. Glad only in socks and underwear, he dived expertly near the spot where water was still bubbling upward. He was gone almost a full minute.

When he appeared finally, gasping for breath, the muscular grasp of Cranshaw hoisted him swiftly back into the boat.

While he dressed, Clyde gave an alarming report. He had located a horizontal pipe lying on the bottom of the river. The pipe was of a large diameter, and it apparently came from the concrete warehouse at the water's edge. The bubbling had been caused by a stream of water emerging from the pipe under terrific pressure!

The information confirmed something Cranshaw had already divined. The sign about the cable crossing was a device to keep boats from dropping anchor too near the warehouse and discovering the presence of the hidden pipe. The water, which was now slowly ceasing to bubble upward, must come from the interior of this abandoned warehouse.

Rowing the boat close to the concrete wall fronting the river, Cranshaw examined more closely the letter of the painted sign which had first attracted his attention. It was the letter "A" in "Anchor." It had been very recently repainted. The extra blackness of the letter was a device

to hide alterations in the concrete that had been made under the shape of the letter.

Cranshaw found, after a painstaking examination, that the short bar between the two vertical strokes of the "A" was a lever. It slid upward and down when he pulled it. Instantly a whole section of the concrete wall began to move aside. A dark opening at the surface of the river was disclosed.

Clyde pushed the rowlock through with an oar. Cranshaw's electric torch glowed brightly. The chamber within seemed to be a basin for mooring boats under the eaves of the old grand warehouse. It was empty. There was no sign of the black speedboat.

Had the criminals sunk their craft? Cranshaw thought not. He had a spare during theory to account for the speedboat's disappearance.

He ordered Clyde to row toward the inner concrete wall of the hidden basin. As the boat swung along the length of the wall, Cranshaw examined every inch of its stained and mossy surface. He found, as he had expected, a duplicate of the lever device he had uncovered on the outer wall. He jerked it outward and down with a steady pull.

Nothing seemed to happen to the wall in front of him. But a cry from Clyde brought his head turning quickly. The outer wall, the one behind them, was closing. Scarcely the exit to the river remained. They were trapped inside.

Clyde was amazed. But a sudden whisper of laughter suddenly came from Cranshaw. Torch in hand, he was watching the inner wall. The wall continued unharmed—but something was happening to the water. Its level was dropping rapidly! The stain from the ink mark on the wall was already a foot higher than the surface.

The nature of the chamber was now apparent. It was a water lock. Mechanism had closed the lock and was busily pumping water out through the exit pipe concealed on the bed of the river. The rowlock began to drop lower.

When it had sunk nearly ten feet, a lock gate was exposed in the inner wall. Showing the hole through, Cranshaw found himself in a smaller chamber, ten feet under the actual surface of the River Thames!

The Shadow had found Davy Jones' locker!

Meanwhile, the automatic action of the lever had closed the lock of the basin. A strange rushing noise was audible through the thickness of the concrete wall. Water was now filling the outside chamber up to the level of the tide mark. Ten feet under the surface of the river, Cranshaw's rowlock floated, cunningly hidden.

Alongside it was another craft, the black speedboat.

Cranshaw Cranshaw is inside the hole of Davy Jones. If it is necessary the true identity of the crew? Don't enter mind such a masterpiece of this marvelous story.



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