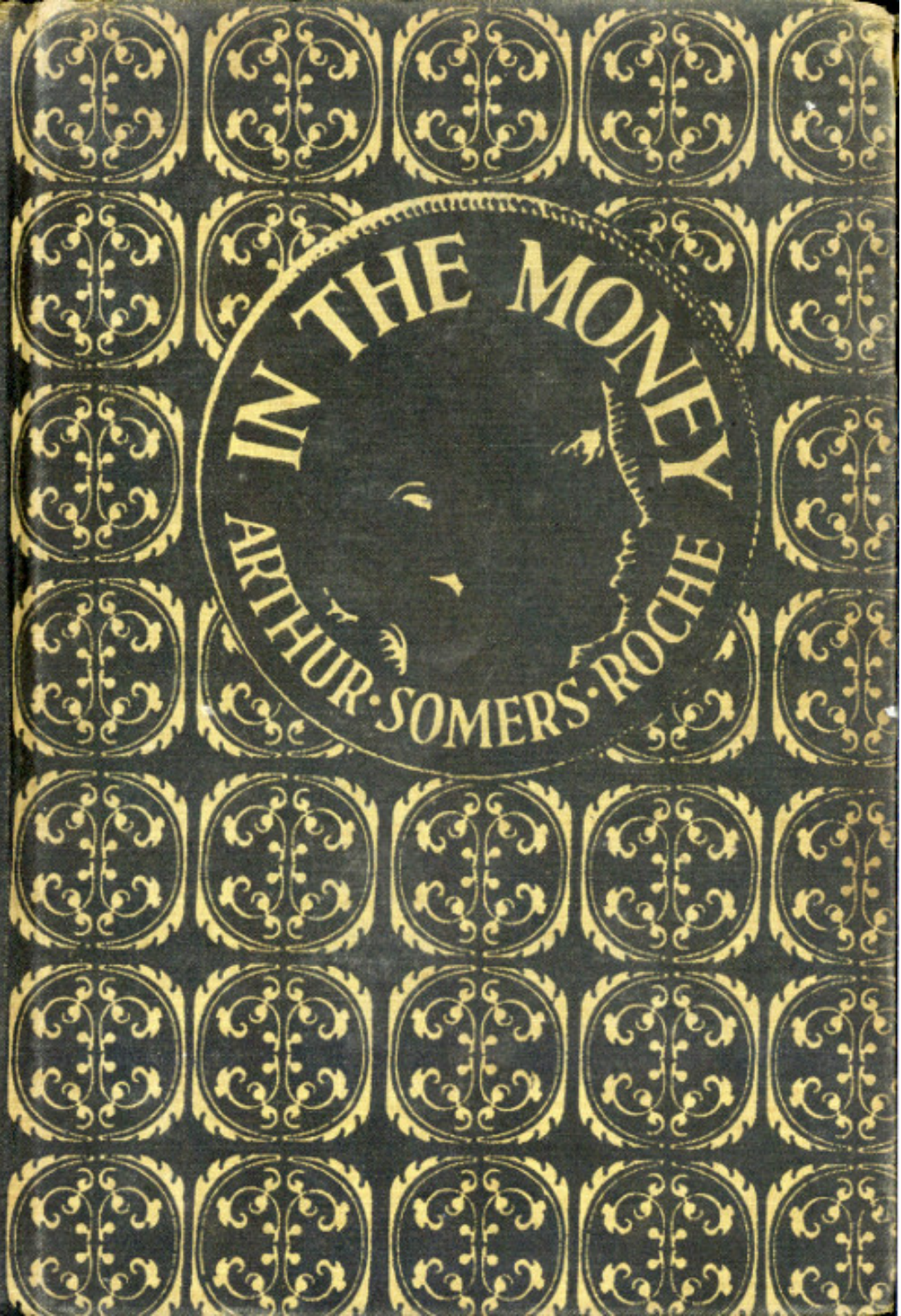


IN THE MONEY  
ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE



## \* A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook \*

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please check with a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. **If the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file.**

*Title:* In the Money

*Date of first publication:* 1936

*Author:* Arthur Somers Roche

*Date first posted:* June 8, 2020

*Date last updated:* June 8, 2020

Faded Page eBook #20200610

This eBook was produced by: Stephen Hutcheson & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>



---

*Arthur Somers Roche*

---

**IN THE  
MONEY**



*Dodd, Mead and Company*  
*New York* *1936*

---

---

*Arthur Somers Roche*

# IN THE MONEY

*Dodd, Mead and Company*  
*New York 1936*

---

COPYRIGHT, 1935, 1936, BY DODD, MEAD & COMPANY

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be used in any form without permission in writing from the publisher.

Manufactured in the United States of America  
By Chas. H. Bohn & Co., Inc., New York

# *In the Money*

## *Chapter One*

The girl pouted. Granard grinned at her.

“Do it some more, Peggy,” he said.

Blue eyes looked wonderingly into his cynical face.

“Do what?” she asked.

“The pout. I think it’s swell. It’s almost as good as the baby stare you’re giving me now.”

The blue eyes hardened. They would have been mean, but for a glint in their depths that could have been self-mockery.

“Bill Granard, do you know what?” Her voice was lazy, as insolent as the poise of her perfect body, as the carriage of her head, as the expression—now that the pout had vanished—of her full and lovely lips.

“Sure I do; but a debutante shouldn’t use such words.”

“I wasn’t going to. I knew you knew. I was going to tell you something else about yourself. I was just going to say that you can provide a girl with as tiresome an evening as she could find.”



Granard stared at her. There was a gleam of hard humor in his green eyes that matched the expression in hers.

“Hoity-toity and hi-de-hi! The kind of a girl that wants a second-act curtain every minute of the evening.”

“And goes out with you and gets a prologue,” she scoffed.

Granard surveyed her blonde beauty; the habitual air of insolence which she wore could not detract from that beauty.

“I get paid for my words. You can’t expect me to give them away, Peggy. If I use up my vocabulary telling you how gorgeous you are, what will I do for phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs when it comes time to write my next story for the *Globe*?”

She fumbled in her vanity-bag. She produced a quarter, and laid it on the table.

“That ought to buy about a thousand words,” she said.

Granard smiled.

“So you’ve been asking your father how much he pays me, eh?”

She nodded.

“I think he ought to be ashamed of himself. I told him so, and he replied that you were overpaid. He said he could hire a dozen men to replace you at half your salary.”

“And you laid the blonde curls against his chest and pleaded with him not to fire poor Bill Granard, because you needed him in your study of how the other half live. That was certainly sweet of you, Peggy. It helps a man, when he feels himself slipping, to know that the boss’s daughter will speak a word for him.”

“I think you’re the most hateful, impertinent——”

“I knew we’d get that second-act curtain pretty soon,” chuckled Granard. ““Boss’s daughter denounces poor scribbler! Scribbler, crushed’—what the hell does he do? I guess he orders another drink.”

He lifted his hand, spoke to a waiter. As the man departed, the girl settled back in her chair.

“Bill, you’re the strangest man I ever met.”

“Because I don’t go crazy over you, and tell you you’re a Norse goddess? The trouble with you, Peggy-my-love, is that you’re spoiled. You want every man you meet to fall in love with you. And it’s tough, but I don’t care for blondes. I like cozy brunettes; you know, the kind you can sit with on a couch on a bitter winter evening, and never realize that the furnace has gone out.”

“And I suppose she’d be all lighted up at sight of a freckled face and a snub nose and a gawky figure!” said the girl.

He shook a monitory finger at her.

“You forget my charm, Peggy.”

Petulance left the girl's countenance. She smiled cheerfully at him.

“How did I overlook that? Remind me, always, when I forget it. But thank heaven, I've stirred you into speech at last. For a man who's about to start a vacation, you're the glummost person!”

“Maybe it's leaving you, sweetheart,” he jeered. “Maybe those winter sports in Canada won't be so gay without you in the offing.”

“If I weep tears of gratitude for these kind words, will the waiters put me out?” she mocked. She placed her elbows on the table, cupped her lovely firm chin in her hands, and stared at him.

“Bill, what's on your mind? You know, I go out with you because you're the gayest, most delightful, most irresponsible man I've ever known.”

“Much obliged. I take you out because your father owns the *Globe* and maybe——”

“Of course. Everyone knows that.” Insolence had completely gone from her now. She was, for a moment, not the hard-boiled child of her generation, but a nice girl who was supping with a nice boy. “You aren't yourself tonight, Bill. You grouched through dinner; you were sullen through the play—and it couldn't have been funnier. But you didn't even smile once. And now, for the last half-hour,

you've sat and glowered. What's it all about? You promised me an exciting evening."

His eyes narrowed.

"Don't I always keep my word?"

"You haven't kept it tonight. Don't tell me that you're nervous and *distract* because you're afraid of me. It can't be that behind your dour silence is a flood, a tide, a perfect torrent of words. You aren't mustering up courage to ask me to marry you?"

He shook his head.

"If I ever get feeling that way about you, I won't ask you—I'll tell you."

"Masterful man," she jeered. "Well, where's the excitement that you promised?"

"Turn casually. To the left."

The girl's vanity slipped from the table. As she retrieved it, she glanced at the group coming through the main entrance to the night club. The headwaiter was greeting a short, stocky, olive-skinned man. Other waiters were fluttering about, contributing to that confusion which always reigns in a Broadway resort when a celebrity of the moment puts in an appearance.

Peggy Cartwain turned back to Granard.

“What’s exciting about them?” she asked.

“That’s Islip Mackleton,” he told her. “The short little man.”

“What a funny name!” she commented.

“He likes it better than Isidor Mackelbaum. Maybe it is better.”

The girl frowned.

“I’ve heard his name.”

Granard sighed.

“Yes, darling; and Lindbergh is an aviator, and Roosevelt is President of these United States. *Izzy Mackleton.*”

“Forgive me. I’m stupid. Of course. A criminal lawyer.”

“*The* criminal lawyer! He’s tried two hundred murder cases—more than that—and one client has gone to the chair.”

“And today his latest client—is the name Abbott?”

Granard nodded.

“Got him an acquittal this afternoon. And as usual, he’s making the rounds of the night clubs. He’s Broadway’s hero, and he wants his garlands of flowers. He’s getting them. I guess each club has contributed one posy. The tall dark girl is Greta Waring; she sings at the Bijou. The plump blonde is

May Kelly from the Weathervane. And the redhead is the dancer at the Abyss. This place will contribute its star performer.”

“Interesting, but I wouldn’t call it exciting,” she said.

“It will be,” he assured her. “Of course, debutantes are too busy to read much of anything except Cholly Knickerbocker, but you might have happened to hear the name of the man for whose murder Abbott was tried.”

“Try being my equal instead of my superior,” she smiled. “You’ll be surprised at the fun we’ll have. I’ll react so sweetly. I know the name. Kelly Panta—what *is* his outrageous name?”

“Pantadosi. And his brother’s name is Murphy Pantadosi. The harp-wop twins. As tough a pair as ever terrorized a news dealer or a dry-cleaning establishment. And I happen to know that Murphy is going to try and kill Izzy Mackleton tonight.”

The faint hint of color on the girl’s smooth cheeks drained from her veins. White-faced, she stared at him. Then the red came back as she laughed at him.

“So that’s your idea of excitement? Trying to scare me——”

He interrupted her with the sort of gesture he might have used to brush away an annoying insect. She felt suddenly inconsiderable, small, something at which Bill Granard would glance but never stare. She wasn’t used to this feeling. Only Granard, of all the men she had ever

known, could give her this feeling of unimportance. She hated it, and yet was fascinated by it. The daughter of the proprietor of the *Globe* was no more important to the *Globe*'s best reporter than any one of a dozen girls. Perhaps not more important than any one of a hundred girls. For she had sensed Granard's extraordinary popularity along Broadway. And not merely along that thoroughfare. She had thought to introduce him to Park Avenue, and had found that he was better acquainted there than herself. Men slapped him on the back, and girls tried to steer him into secluded corners. He wasn't handsome, not even good-looking. He played no games. But his mind functioned like a steel trap set with jewels, and his smile was incredibly sweet. From the moment she met him, she had wanted him to fall in love with her. She had used upon him every trick of her considerable repertory; she had given him smiles and glances and meaning whispers that had reduced other men to abject servitude; but Granard jeered and derided her efforts. But he liked her; this slight consolation was hers.

"I'm doing nothing of the sort. I'm giving you a ringside seat at an attempted murder. Murphy Pantadosi is going to come in here and kill Mackleton if he can."

"How do you know?" she gasped. Again the color had left her cheeks. Granard was in deadly earnest; she was certain of that.

"Don't ask me how I know things. Murphy hates Mackleton almost as much as he hates Abbott. He'll get Abbott later, but he wants Mackleton tonight."

“Does Mackleton know?” she asked in a whisper.

Granard shook his head.

“I wouldn’t think so. He wouldn’t be parading around Broadway without a bodyguard if he knew.”

Into the girl’s blue eyes came incredulous horror.

“And you haven’t told him? You’re going to sit here and let him be murdered?”

He grinned at her derisively.

“Can’t take it, eh? The kind of a girl that’s always weeping because nothing ever happens; but the minute something is about to happen, you want to duck. Shall I put you in a cab, sweetheart?”

“I think I hate you,” she told him. “You’re the most dreadful callous man I ever knew.” She rose from her chair and looked down at him with blazing eyes. “I’m going to tell Mr. Mackleton——”

His lean hand reached out and caught her wrist. She was amazed at the strength in his thin fingers. She sat down again with an undignified thump.

“Don’t be a fool,” he whispered. “I’m not going to let Izzy be killed. But I owe that little shyster something. He crossed me on two stories last fall. Izzy needs a scare. But four men are trailing Murphy. They’ll jump him in plenty of time to save Izzy from everything but hysterics. You’ve never seen a man



in hysteria, have you? Well, Izzy can sob and scream before a jury, but it's an act. Watching him do the real thing ought to be something to remember. Drink your highball and compose the pretty little nerves, darling."

"But suppose the men don't stop him?" she whispered.

Granard chuckled.

"That will be tough on Izzy, but a swell thing for the New York bar."

"You wouldn't care," breathed the girl.

"Why should I? Mackleton is a disgrace to his profession. He's kept more bloody-handed killers out of the chair than any other lawyer in America. I think it would be retribution."

"And you would be willing to play God! Bill Granard, you're the——"

"I know. You said it all a minute ago. Scotch will bring the roses back to the lovely cheeks. Better try some," he advised.

She lifted her glass; at the strange expression that suddenly appeared in his eyes, she put the glass down. She followed the direction of his look. Their table was beside the dance floor at one corner. At an opposite corner, thirty feet away, sat Mackleton and his companions. On the dance floor, three yards from Granard's chair, stood a swarthy man. He was looking at Mackleton; his hand was in his right-hand jacket

pocket. As she looked, horror in her eyes, Mackleton screamed.

His shriek was as reedily thin as the cry of a woman. And as his voice shocked waiters, dancers and diners into rigidity, the hand of the man on the dance floor came from its pocket. She saw a gleam of metal. Then something dark went by her in a long diving tackle. Granard's shoulder struck the swarthy man at the hips. They went down with a crash. As she stared, she was oddly reminded of an ocelot kitten she had owned two years before. For Granard's movements were as swift and sure as those of the little leopard. The would-be murderer never had a chance. Granard was astride him, pulling his right hand up across his back to his shoulder-blades, until sheer agony forced his victim to drop his revolver. Then Granard, securing the weapon, leaped to his feet, dragging his prisoner upright. He shook a finger in the convulsed face of the swarthy man.

“If you killed Izzy, what lawyer would be left to save you from the chair, Murphy?” he asked. “You be a good boy and run along home to bed.”

“Bed!” Mackleton was beside Granard now. In his voice lingered traces of the agonizing terror that had possessed him a moment ago. “Jail, you mean.”

Granard smiled at him.

“Then I'll have to write the story for the *Globe*, Izzy. And I don't want to. Vacation has begun for me. But if I write it, I'll have to tell how Izzy Mackleton screamed like

a girl, and hid behind a girl. Murphy's a hot-headed boy. He won't try it again. That right, Murphy?"

Pantadosi shook. Ankles and knees struck together. His teeth chattered.

"I'm through," he muttered.

Granard pushed apart two waiters. Ten feet away, Peggy Cartwain wondered at the ease with which he sent the waiters reeling away. He didn't look strong. He pushed the now terrified Pantadosi, in whose heart was no longer vengeful hatred but only terror, through the opening in the little crowd. He turned to Mackleton.

"Put him in prison, and his cousins will go to bat. If you're smart, you'll let it ride, Izzy."

Mackleton stared at him. He nodded slowly.

"I guess you're right. Thanks a lot, Bill. You couldn't drop in to see me tomorrow morning, could you?"

"Leaving for a vacation in the morning. Sorry," said Granard.

"South?" asked the lawyer.

"Montreal."

"Better go South," said Mackleton. "I mean it. Thanks again." He turned away, and Granard looked after him a moment, puzzlement in his green eyes. Then, with a shrug, he returned to the table where Peggy sat.

“You let the man go. He wasn’t arrested,” she said. Her hands trembled as they rested on the table.

Granard lifted his drink and drained it.

“Sure. Just a temperamental Irish-Italian. He made a gesture, and he’s satisfied. So is Mackleton. For if Mackleton makes a gesture, then Murphy’s relations will feel they’ll have to make some, and one of them might be successful. The Broadway code. Honor is now satisfied.”

“But I should think——”

He interrupted her.

“You wouldn’t think like Broadway,” he laughed. “Don’t try. Minds work differently over here. Gangsters are gone, but thugs remain. Good second-act curtain?”

“The men you said were following Pantadosi—where are they?” she asked.

“He must have given them the slip. What difference did it make? I was here, wasn’t I?”

“But suppose you hadn’t managed to seize him?”

“That’s the woman of it. Never satisfied with results, but always putting in *ifs* and *buts*. I did manage. Tired? Worn out with our dull evening?”

“I want you to take me home,” she said evenly.

He summoned the waiter, paid the check and they walked from the night club. Women stared and men pointed. The man heard people mention his name. But if she noticed or heard, she gave no sign. In utter silence they rode to her home on East Sixty-fifth Street.

“Going to ask me in for a nightcap?” he inquired as the cab stopped.

“I’m not. And when you come back from Montreal, please don’t telephone me.”

“So?” His lips pursed as he stared at her in the semi-gloom of the cab. “I’m too tough for you, eh?”

“Much,” she responded.

He leaned suddenly forward, and his lips found hers. For a moment she forgot that tonight she had learned to hate him. She was conscious only that his kiss was as sweet as his smile. Then she pushed him from her.

“To remember me by,” he said.

“I didn’t need it,” she said. “I won’t forget you. You’re——”

“Not again,” he pleaded. “After all, you expected a prologue.”

“You flatter yourself. It’s the end.”

He alighted from the cab and assisted her to the sidewalk. He stood at the door of her home until a

servant opened it. Then he bowed and reentered his taxi. Ten minutes later he entered his own apartment on Central Park South. On chairs in his comfortable living-room were two huge suitcases. Against a wall stood a pair of skis. He picked up the latter, carried them into his bedroom and put them in a closet. From the same place he took golf-clubs and tennis-rackets and stood them against the living-room wall. Then he opened the suitcases, and from them abstracted all garments suitable to winter wear. He hung them in the bedroom closet, replacing them with flannels and lightweight sport clothes and white shoes. Then, swearing softly, he climbed into bed. He was asleep almost instantly.

At eight the following morning he pushed away the hand that had shaken him into wakefulness. He sat up and yawned at his servant.

“Hated to do it, Mr. Granard, but you wanted to catch that Montreal train.”

Granard knuckled his eyes. He yawned again.

“You’ll find my ticket in my pocketbook on the dresser. Breakfast ready?”

The man murmured assent.

“I’ll serve myself. Dash down to the Grand Central and exchange this ticket. Run over to the Pennsylvania and get me a compartment on the afternoon train to Florida.”

“Florida?” The cadaverous face of the servant didn’t change its habitual expression of melancholy.

“Miami. That ought to be far enough South. My bags are packed. The train leaves at two-thirty. You be at the station with my transportation. And Martin, my changing my trip from Montreal to Miami makes no difference to you. You’re to leave my Scotch alone. The rye is bad. I don’t care what you do with it. But remember—you be sober when I return. I’ll send a telegram, and you’ll have thirty-six hours in which to straighten up. Am I clear?”

“Very, sir,” replied the man.

Granard grinned.

“Another thing: No chorus girls.”

“Some day, Mr. Granard, I’m going to try wine and women. You’ve warned me so much against them that I’m getting curious.” Something that was a remote cousin to a smile appeared on Martin’s thin lips.

“That is the subtle idea that lies behind my warnings,” chuckled Granard. “Hustle along.”

He bathed and shaved and breakfasted leisurely. He smiled as he read, in his own paper, the account of Mackleton’s histrionic address to the Abbott jury yesterday. Izzy was a swell lawyer, but it was too bad the jury couldn’t have witnessed Mackleton’s act last night. Tired jurymen deserved an occasional laugh.

At ten o’clock Granard stepped out onto Fifty-ninth Street. March was making a leonine entrance. Snow was falling, and a north wind swept across Central Park so savagely that the

flakes stung the skin. He picked up a taxi at the Plaza and gave Mackleton's office address on Times Square. He shivered as he settled back in the cold cab.

Mackleton had said to go South. Mackleton wanted to make return for the life that Granard had saved last night. Mackleton was a coward: he was a dishonest shyster. But he never forgot a favor. If he suggested a vacation in the South, he had a reason.

Suddenly Granard didn't care what the reason might prove to be. The raging blizzard that had descended upon New York made him wonder why he had ever thought of going to Canada. In the south there would be golf and tennis and swimming and fishing, and dancing at night beneath the tropic moon.

There might be, too, a girl down there who could make him forget that he had stupidly fallen in love with Sam Cartwain's daughter. And wasn't that a smart thing to do! To let himself go overboard for a debutante who hadn't a thought beyond the moment. For a girl who would want always to drag him from his career.

Then he grinned gayly. He was getting a little ahead of himself. She wouldn't want to drag him away from his career. Her only interest in him was the fact that she didn't think he had fallen in love with her. Conceited little kitten! Then he laughed at his description of the tall blonde Peggy. Then he frowned. Damn her, he wouldn't think of her again.



## *Chapter Two*

A pretty blonde secretary greeted Granard with a warm smile.

“Go in and get kissed,” she said.

“I’d rather stay here,” grinned Granard. “Izzy wouldn’t delegate the task to you, would he?”

“I’m not sure it would be a task.” Her smile was warmer.

“Let’s go into that sometime,” suggested Granard.

“I’m a working girl; I’m only free from five in the afternoon until nine in the morning.”

“Then I’d have to work fast,” said Granard. “Izzy feels mellow?”

“You saved his life. You’ll have a tough time explaining that to Saint Peter.”

“Maybe a long life of penitence will atone,” said Granard. “You don’t like your boss?”

“I always say that newspaper men are quick-witted,” said the girl. “Go in, hero, and modestly accept Izzy’s thanks.”

She threw open the door of an inner office, and Granard entered the room. Mackleton was seated behind a large flat desk on which were two telephones, memorandum-pads and briefs. The stocky lawyer pushed back his chair and advanced toward his visitor.

“Bill!”

“Save it for your next jury,” said Granard. He dropped into a chair beside the desk. Mackleton’s hand, that had been reaching for Granard’s, dropped futilely at his side. He sat down opposite Granard.

“Bill, you saved my life last night.”

“Well, I’m still a nice chap,” said Granard.

Mackleton shook his head almost sorrowfully.

“You don’t fool me, Bill. You pretend to be——”

“Hard. But underneath my tough exterior, I’m even harder. What did you want to see me about this morning?”

“Well, shouldn’t a man want to say something to a man that saved——”

“Put it in a letter,” said Granard. “Izzy, you said something about taking a vacation in the South.”

“Sure I did.” The lawyer beamed. “And when Izzy Mackleton makes suggestions, he backs them up. I got ten grand for clearing Abbott. Well, if it hadn’t been for you, I wouldn’t be here to spend it. So here’s something for you.”

Across the desk he pushed a piece of paper. Granard noted the amount of the check payable to himself. Ten thousand dollars. He made no move to touch the check.

“What made you think I’d be here this morning?” he asked.

“You’re a newspaper man. A good newspaper man. You’d know that when Izzy Mackleton drops a hint, it’s a good one.”

“I was badly fooled on a couple of your hints last fall,” said Granard.

Mackleton smirked at him.

“But you hadn’t saved my life then.”

Granard nodded.

“You think a lot of that life, don’t you, Izzy? I’d never have valued it at ten thousand. A dime would be closer.”

Mackleton laughed.

“Always the same. Just a kidder. Well, aren’t you going to take it? Don’t you want it?”

“You know I don’t, Izzy,” said Granard. “Izzy, you didn’t even enter this check on the stub. That’s how safe you felt.”

Mackleton colored. His eyes were guilty. Then he laughed.

“Well,” he said, “if you’d taken it, I would have entered it.” Into his eyes crept admiration. “Bill, you never get fooled, do you?”

“I just told you—twice by you. But not again. Izzy, I canceled my reservation to Montreal. My man is getting me a room on the afternoon train to Miami.”

Mackleton clicked his teeth.

“Extravagant! You should have come to see me before you sent him for the ticket. I didn’t say Miami. Palm Beach is the place. Now, maybe you won’t get a refund.”

“And I want to cry,” said Granard. “And why do you want me to go to Palm Beach?”

Mackleton shrugged.

“You’re a funny man, Bill. You like reporting. Twice you have refused to become an editor. Half a dozen times you have turned down good jobs outside your profession. The money doesn’t mean anything to you. You get a hundred and fifty a week from the *Globe*, and your private income is about eight thousand a year.”

“You didn’t know about the mole under my left shoulder-blade, did you?” asked Granard.

“I could have found out,” said the lawyer.

“Why the interest?” Granard asked.

“I see a lot of you around Broadway. It’s always good to know things.”

“I’m flattered,” said Granard. “You’re right. If I hadn’t known about Murphy Pantadosi last night——”

“You knew that he was going to try to kill me?”

Granard laughed.

“And you didn’t tip me off?” Mackleton’s face grew white. For a moment Granard thought the little lawyer would be ill. But he managed to recover himself.

“Why should I? You lied to me last fall. You needed a little scare. Fool me again, Izzy, and I won’t be there when the next man decides to give you the works.”

Mackleton stared at him.

“And if you hadn’t happened to be quick——”

Granard smiled amiably.

“You get it, Izzy. I wouldn’t be here asking you why you think I ought to go South. And you haven’t told me yet.”

Slowly Mackleton shook his head. He seemed to be debating something with himself.

“Still, you did save my life,” he said reluctantly.

“Maybe, under the circumstances, you’d better tear up that check quickly,” said Granard. “Write another for five thousand, and your sense of proportion will be satisfied. I won’t take that one, either, but you’ll feel better.”

“Bill, you’ve got no use for me at all?”

“Not the slightest,” Granard assented cheerily.

“That’s what I like about you. I wish I could afford to be as honest as you are.”

“You wouldn’t like it, Izzy. You’ll do better the way you are. And time is passing. Why do I go to Palm Beach?”

Mackleton surveyed his visitor wonderingly.

“Last night I was filled with gratitude. You got me right. I was just showing off when I wrote that check. But I did want to do something for you. And I knew, whether it was vacation or not, you’d rather get a line on a story than anything else. You know, Bill, you’re a lot like the newspaper men I used to know twenty-five years ago. Like Frank O’Malley and Lindsay Dennison. You can write, and you know news. And you love your work.”

“So you want me to go to Florida. Get on with it, Izzy.”

“You were in the Cypress Club last night. Anything there strike you as funny?”

“Only your yelp when Murphy drew that gun on you. Izzy, that made us square for your lies last fall.”

“But nothing else?” The lawyer ignored Granard’s derision.

“Nothing particular. Except, maybe, that Jimmy Trimp seems to be in the money again.”

“What made you think that?”

“His wife wore a sable coat that must have cost in the neighborhood of ten thousand dollars. All his friends seem prosperous lately. I’ve noticed them around here and there. Like the good old days of prohibition. Big tips to headwaiters. All that sort of thing. Heavy spending.”

“You notice things, don’t you?”

“Anyone with his eyes open would notice things like that. But what happened at the Cypress Club last night that I should have noticed?”

“Only what you’ve just told me. Now, if you go down to Palm Beach and sort of breeze around, maybe you’ll get a line on where the money comes from that buys sable coats for the wives of the men like Jimmy Trimp.”

Granard lighted a cigarette. He leaned back in his chair and studied the olive face of the criminal lawyer.

“That wouldn’t be much of a story. I’m afraid the *Globe* wouldn’t pay the telegraph charges. I’m a reporter, Izzy, not a gossip-writer. Make it clearer.”

“I wouldn’t know how,” said Mackleton.

“You’d make it clearer to a jury,” objected Granard.

“Then there’d be some facts; there’d be a case; there’d be a crime and a defendant.”

“And just now there’s only the fact that Jimmy Trimp’s wife wears a sable coat. Not much of a story in that.”

“No? Well, if you can’t see the lead, I can’t show it to you.”

Granard ground his cigarette in an ash tray on the desk.

“What’s the idea, Izzy? Do you want to be coaxed? You surely don’t expect me to change my plans, go to Florida instead of Canada, on this sort of a tip?”

Mackleton’s thick lips parted in a smile.

“You’d cancel a trip to Africa and go to the North Pole on less than this. Bill, there’s a story in Palm Beach.”

“Of course there is. There’s a story in Belfast, Maine, and another in Peoria. There’s a story everywhere, news everywhere. But that doesn’t mean that I’d sit six months in Maine or Illinois waiting for something to break.”

“You won’t have to wait very long in Palm Beach,” Mackleton assured him.

“Is Jimmy Trimp going down there?”



“I wouldn’t know,” replied the lawyer.

Granard stood up; irritation was in his eyes and voice.

“I hope Murphy Pantadosi gets brooding and takes another try at you, Izzy.”

He drew his coat closer about him and started for the door.

“Don’t get sore,” cried Mackleton. “If I could tell you any more, you know that I would.”

“I don’t know anything of the sort.” Granard paused and looked back at the lawyer. “You don’t know, you say. But you must have an idea. What kind of a story do you *think* is going to break down there?”

“I wouldn’t make a guess. And something else, Bill; we never had this talk; I never tipped you off to go South.”

Granard’s keen eyes studied Mackleton. Something in the lawyer’s voice puzzled him.

“Izzy, are you afraid of something?”

Mackleton attempted bluster.

“Who? Me? What would I be afraid of?”

“Practically anything,” jeered Granard. Speculation appeared in his eyes now. Izzy Mackleton had given him the vaguest, most nebulous reason for going to Florida. But Izzy had made the suggestion out of gratitude. That meant that the

lawyer knew definitely that something was going to happen in Palm Beach. Mackleton was afraid to say more than the little he had said. Mackleton wanted assurance that this little would never be repeated by Granard.

“Okay, Izzy. If you’ve been playing games with me, you’ll be terribly sorry. Because I know games myself. I’m just mean enough to play one on a little shyster that did things to me.”

“The things you say when you’re kidding,” said Mackleton. “I’m not playing a game, Bill.”

Granard nodded curtly. He completed buttoning his coat across his chest and walked through the door. He didn’t offer to say good-by.

“There’s no lipstick on you. Didn’t Izzy give you a nice big kiss?” The pretty blonde secretary grinned impudently at him.

“The terrible way you talk about a kind employer,” said Granard.

“It’s the mean side of me,” said the girl. “You wouldn’t believe how gentle the other side is.”

“I’m a modest man. I wouldn’t dare look,” said Granard. He walked toward the outer door. The girl followed him. Izzy Mackleton had an enormous practice, but he had no partners, no clerks, no office staff, nothing but an office-boy. On another floor of the building was a firm of lawyers who attended to details for Mackleton. But the

blonde secretary was the only person, with the exception of Mackleton himself, who worked in this suite of offices. There was no one to overhear the girl as she spoke.

“When I went to school, I read about a monkey and a cat and a fire and some chestnuts,” she said.

Granard stopped short.

“Izzy doesn’t look like a monkey,” he said. “Give your boss a break.”

“You don’t look like a cat,” she retorted.

Granard looked at the door of Mackleton’s private office. It was still closed.

“Tell me all, sweetheart. Withhold no confidences from your Uncle Bill.”

The girl shrugged. She turned away, and Granard was given opportunity to stare at her rather lovely back. The office dress she wore hid little of a most delightful figure.

“That’s all—and sweetheart, to you,” she said.

It was Granard’s turn to shrug, and he did so. Then he opened the outer door and went into the hall. He descended in the elevator to the lobby and pushed his way through the revolving door to the street. The wind blew harder here in Times Square than it had blown on Central Park South. Pedestrians, bent over, sought to protect their faces from the biting crystals. A traffic policeman beat

gloved hands together and stamped his heavily shod feet upon the ground. Granard, standing on the curb, held up a futile hand to a dozen taxis. But cabs, usually plentiful, were occupied today. In despair Granard started for the subway. He leaped back to the sidewalk just in time to avoid a taxi that skidded perilously close to him. It stopped and a man alighted. As he paid the driver, Granard recognized him. It was Jimmy Trimp. If he recognized Granard he gave no sign. He pulled his hat over his eyes and pushed through the gale toward the revolving doors through which Granard had just come.

“Where to?” asked the driver as Granard stepped into the cab.

Granard glanced at his wrist-watch. It was eleven-thirty. He gave the man the address of his own apartment. Up Seventh Avenue and across Fifty-ninth Street the car proceeded. The traffic, Granard decided, had never been more impeded than on this early March day. It was ten minutes before twelve when he entered his apartment. Martin was there.

“The *Globe* called five minutes ago,” said the man. “I didn’t expect you back here. It was the city editor. He told me to be sure and have you call him from the station. I said I didn’t expect to see you until I met you at the train. I have the tickets and I’ll have your bags in your compartment. The train leaves at two-five. Shall I prepare lunch for you?”

Granard shook his head.

“I’ll get a bite somewhere; perhaps on the train.”

He gave Martin his coat and sat down by the telephone, dialing the number of the *Globe*. In a moment he was connected with the city editor.

“Bill Granard speaking. Is this Carewe?”

“You’re a hell of a newspaper man,” growled Carewe. “You stop a killing in a night club and don’t give it to your own paper. How come?”

“Vacation began at six yesterday,” laughed Granard. “Anyway, that one was off the record. How did you hear it?”

“The *Globe* doesn’t cease to function just because you’re on a vacation,” said Carewe. “You wouldn’t care to be interviewed by a reporter from our paper, would you, Mr. Granard? We have some of the nicest young men who’d like to question you. Or if your tastes run that way, we could send up a girl reporter.”

“You couldn’t be kinder, Mr. Carewe. But my mother told me that only common people liked publicity. Let it go, Sam.”

“But the other papers may carry it,” protested the city editor.

“Isn’t that too bad?” commiserated Granard. “Wouldn’t it be awful if the *Globe* was beaten on such a tremendous story? What can they print? Pantadosi got rough, and I changed his mind. Forget it.”

“You’ve changed your mind about Montreal, your man told me. You’re too swell, anyway. A manservant, and trips to Palm Beach. Who’s been slipping you money for keeping things out of the *Globe*?”

“All the big people,” laughed Granard.

“Why Florida?” insisted Carewe.

“I don’t know. Call it a hunch. Maybe I need more freckles. Sam, what do you know about Jimmy Trimp?”

“I hear he’s in the money,” said the city editor. “Why?”

“I just wondered what you knew. I hang around Broadway, but I haven’t heard any talk. Have you?”

“Nothing, except that he went broke after prohibition. He opened up a place on the Jersey side and lost a mint. He tried to run a wheel somewhere in the Fifties——”

Granard chuckled.

“I know about that. I went in there one night. You stumbled over the wires that control the wheel. It was too raw. He didn’t make anything there. Haven’t heard what his racket is?”

“Funny you should ask,” said Carewe. “Only last week I suggested a Sunday special. What’s happened to the bootleg millionaires? I thought it was a swell idea.”

“It was and it is,” agreed Granard. “But you don’t know where Trimp is getting it?”

“Haven’t an idea. A lad that knows his Broadway and his Park Avenue the way you do ought to be able to get the answer.”

“When I come back from my vacation I’ll look into it,” promised Granard.

“You will not,” said Carewe. “The Rennsler breach-of-promise trial begins two weeks from Monday. You’ll be sitting in that courtroom for three weeks. Well, have a swell time and if you run into anything that’s young and rich and lovely and wants a husband, don’t write—telegraph. Even if it’s just rich, let me know.”

“Send your photograph to the train. Maybe I can have the wedding all arranged before you leave New York,” said Granard.

He hung up the receiver. Funny, but when one was all packed and ready to go somewhere, the brief time of waiting for train or boat was always a bore. He looked at his watch. Nearly two hours before the train left. Of course, he’d better allow plenty of time for the trip to the Pennsylvania Station. The blizzard was getting worse. But even such time allowance left him with well over an hour to kill. Well, he might as well go over to the Colony and eat luncheon. He had breakfasted several hours earlier than usual and felt hungry.

“I’ll meet you at the train, Martin,” he said. He let the man help him on with his overcoat. As he descended to the street and as he rode in a taxi the short distance to the Colony Restaurant, his forehead wrinkled in concentration. What was Izzy Mackleton driving at? Why did the fact that Jimmy Trimp, ex-bootlegger, was in the money cause Izzy Mackleton to suggest a trip to Palm Beach to Granard?

The lawyer hadn’t been talking idly, either. Something was going to happen in the Florida resort that would be of tremendous interest to the half million readers of the *Morning Globe*. But what could that happening have to do with a man like Jimmy Trimp? Why did Mrs. Trimp’s possession of a sable coat cause Mackleton to tell Granard to go South?

There was something else, too, that was puzzling. Ruth Tyman, Mackleton’s pretty blonde secretary, was notoriously close-mouthed. Newspaper men had cross-questioned that pretty girl scores of times, trying to get from her information concerning cases in which Mackleton was engaged. But they had always failed. But this morning she had gratuitously mentioned the fable of the monkey and the chestnut. What chestnuts did Mackleton want Granard to pull from the fire?



## *Chapter Three*

Granard entered the Colony and gave his hat and coat to the attendant and walked down to the bar. At this hour, barely half-past twelve, the restaurant was deserted. An hour from now it would be crowded, but Granard had the bar to himself.

He lunched here infrequently and dined not very often. His hours prevented him from making engagements. But on his day off, which was Wednesday, he tried to eat two meals here. He was favorably known to the management. A waiter spoke to him.

“Would you care to order now, sir?”

Granard studied the menu presented to him. He chose oysters, egg benedictine and a mixed green salad.

“And a pint of white wine,” he added. Then he turned his attention to the cocktail being shaken for him. He sipped it leisurely, lighted a cigarette and strolled into the dining-room. He sat down at a table near the door and attacked his oysters. He was about ready for his eggs when a gay group entered the restaurant. They stopped short at his table.

“For the love of Mike,” cried a young man. “I thought you never got up until one o’clock, Bill.”

Granard looked up at the merry face of Shane Kilday. He rose as he recognized the two girls. Peggy Cartwain gave him the coolest nod, but Helen Gorlande, as dark as Peggy was fair, beamed on him.

“You must lunch with us, Bill,” she declared.

Granard hesitated, but the expression on Peggy Cartwain’s face decided him. She didn’t want him, eh?

“I’d love it,” he said. “But I’ll have to hurry through my meal. I’m catching a train.”

“Same here,” said Kilday. “We’re all catching a quick bite.”

Granard spoke to his waiter and followed the trio to a table evidently reserved in advance. A fourth chair was placed for him and he sat down between the two girls.

“Where are you going, Bill?” asked Kilday.

“Palm Beach,” Granard replied.

“On the two-five? Well, is that swell! Now we can get some bridge. What a foursome,” said Kilday.

Peggy Cartwain looked at Granard. Into her face had come color, and there was anger in her blue eyes.

“I thought you were leaving for Montreal this morning?” she said.

“Changed my mind,” smiled Granard.

“The best decision you ever made in all your life,” said Kilday. “Here are these two girls going down there, and only one cavalier. Of course, the world knows that one Kilday is worth ten other men, but even Kilday seeks occasionally a moment when he isn’t making two or three girls happy. The big heart of Kilday sometimes likes to pour itself out for just one girl.”

“I hear,” said Helen Gorlande quietly, “that there really are a few men in Palm Beach.”

“But not Kildays. And not, when one stops to think about it, Granards. Men, yes, masculine bipeds. But lacking in the debonair grace of Kilday and the gay charm of Granard. Girls, I congratulate you. The break of the century, I call it. Where are you staying, Bill?”

“Haven’t an idea. Only decided to go South this morning. Some hotel, I suppose.”

“You suppose! When I’ve been given an apartment for the next two weeks! You are staying with me and nowhere else. Bill, can you picture us? Tomorrow night we’ll be at the Cabot, the loveliest night club in the world. We’ll be gentlemen. A Kilday and a Granard can be nothing less than gents. We’ll take these two lovely creatures to dinner at the Patio. Afterwards we’ll take them to Bradley’s and perhaps

we'll present them with a green chip or two. Then we'll take them to the Colony. Ernie Holst will recognize me as I enter. He'll slip into a dreamy waltz and will Helen know bliss! Half swooning from ecstasy, I'll lead her back to our table. Arthur Brown will sing a love song. Helen, you're going to feel so give-inny that you won't know yourself. Later, I'll drive you along the ocean to the Rexters'. Maybe the moon will be turned on in their patio and someone will bring us a farewell drink. We'll sip that libation to the stars and the moon and to Eros. And then—oh, then, Helen——”

“I'll yawn as prettily as I can, slap your naughty hands and say good night,” laughed the Gorlande girl.

“I suppose you will. And then Kilday will go scouting around the next morning. Kilday will drop in at the Layton pool. Kilday will display his lithe form at the Benson pool. Somewhere Kilday will find a girl who knows why patios were built and the moon created.”

“I didn't know you were leaving town,” said Granard to Peggy.

“Didn't you?” The girl turned her shoulder and addressed Kilday. Granard pursed his lips, and for the brief time that luncheon consumed, he devoted himself to Helen Gorlande. At the conclusion of the meal, for which Kilday insisted on paying, the two girls went to the dressing room. In the lobby Kilday stared at Granard.

“Thought you and Peggy were buddies,” he said curiously.

“Aren’t we?” Granard evaded.

“Far be it from Kilday to comment on a matter that a friend doesn’t wish to discuss. But if the lovely Peggy didn’t bring a large chunk of the blizzard that’s raging outside right into this restaurant, and wrap it tenderly around your neck, then Kilday’s perspicacity is on the wane. What knife has cut your love in two?”

“Make an effort, Shane. Try to be less of a damned fool than usual.”

Kilday nodded.

“Consider the effort made. But I hope you two will fix it up, whatever it is. Both the girls are staying with the Rexters. It would be nice if the four of us—pshaw, the Florida moon is healing.”

The girls emerged from the dressing room. Their bags were already in their rooms on the train. They went through the door and stood a moment under the *porte-cochere*. The blizzard had increased in ferocity. Granard shivered as they waited for a taxi. In a moment one arrived. Kilday, with a malicious grin at Granard, hustled the Gorlande girl into the machine and slammed the door. The starter summoned another taxi.

“Mind if I take you to the train?” asked Granard.

“I certainly do mind. And I think you’re being too impertinent. I told you I didn’t want to see you again. So you force yourself upon us at luncheon——”

“Don’t be a silly little girl. How did I know you were lunching at the Colony?”

“How did you know I decided very early this morning to go to Florida? I suppose Shane Kilday told you. You probably told him that I didn’t like you and you two got together and decided it would be humorous to annoy me. I don’t want you in Palm Beach.”

“Now isn’t that too bad? If I told you that I had no idea until I met you inside that you were going to Florida——”

“I’d think you were lying. Exactly as you were lying last night when you said that four men were watching that murderous wretch who tried to kill Mackleton.”

“Harsh words, my Norse goddess.”

“I don’t want you to call me that. I don’t want you to speak to me. I don’t want you to ride to the train with me. I don’t want to know you.”

“In other words, you don’t want me. Is that it? Well, let it go at that.”

A taxi drew up at the curb. He assisted her into it, and told the driver to take her to the Pennsylvania Station. Then he secured another machine and drove alone to the same place. Martin was waiting for him at the train gate.

“Some friends of yours just went down the steps,” he said. “Miss Cartwain, Miss Gorlande and Mr. Kilday. They all have rooms in the same car as you.”

“I know,” said Granard. He shook hands with his man and descended the steps. As he stood on the platform waiting to ask the conductor where his car was, a woman in sables brushed by him. Behind her followed the tall, wiry figure of Jimmy Trimp. The ex-bootlegger nodded to Granard. Granard returned the nod. He looked thoughtfully after Trimp.

Mackleton had spoken of Trimp this morning. Trimp had entered the building where Mackleton maintained his office. Ruth Tyman had made a strange remark that might well have been a cryptic warning. Granard shrugged his broad shoulders, spoke to the conductor and entered his car.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kilday walked to the window and looked out.

“It’s like some Spanish town,” he said. “That alley, the little restaurant, the shops. And this is just one beauty spot. Bill, we’re going to love this place.”

“I do love it already. The ride across the lake was enough to win me. It’s swell of you to put me up, Shane.”

“It’s swell of you to stay with me,” said Kilday. “Nice diggings.” He eyed Granard soberly. “You told me not to make a damned fool of myself yesterday and I went right ahead and tried to put you and Peggy in the same cab. But you’ll admit that I behaved myself since. I didn’t try to bring you together all the way down here, did I?”

“You certainly didn’t,” conceded Granard.

“But Peggy needs a beau down here. You two ought to make it up.”

“We haven’t quarreled. Peggy doesn’t like the kind of man I am, Shane. She’ll find plenty of beaux.”

The ebullient Kilday sighed.

“I suppose she will. And I’ll have to make up foursomes with her and Helen and some other man. When I’d much rather have you along. Why don’t you ignore her?”

“I’ve done pretty well the last day and a half,” chuckled Granard. “I stuck close enough to my room, didn’t I?”

“And left us to play three-handed bridge. At that, it was good practice. They call it Towie and it’s the rage down here. But what I mean is why don’t you dine with me at the Rexters’ tonight? Peggy’s had plenty of time to get over her grouch. She’ll want to step tonight.”

Granard shook his head.

“Sorry, old man, but I’ll wander around by myself. Thanks just the same. And thank Mrs. Rexter for me. Tell her that I hope she’ll ask me another time.”

“Don’t think she won’t,” said Kilday. “We’ve been in Palm Beach one hour and we have ten invitations. Men are rare down here. It’s the happy hunting ground for the bachelor with a dinner coat.”



“Then I think I’ll go hunting,” laughed Granard.

Fred Ainsley, the friend who had given his apartment to Kilday while he was absent in California, had left a colored man to look after his guests’ needs. Granard left Kilday to dress and in his own room found that evening clothes had been laid out and a bath drawn. The colored man had also prepared a highball. Granard drank it as he waited for the water in the bath to cool. He was half dressed when Kilday paused in his room to say good-by.

“Dine at the Patio, drop in at Bradley’s for a while and then go on to the Cabot. Those are my suggestions for a perfect evening. You’ll see people you know at each place and you’ll have a swell time. I’ll probably run into you and if Peggy is still in a pet we’ll find another girl. So long.”

Granard finished dressing leisurely. Abe, the very efficient colored man, had procured a small car for him. He instructed Granard how to reach the Patio restaurant and Granard sallied forth into the balmiest night he had ever known. The moon was full and the stars were brilliant and the air was perfumed. He drove to the ocean and stopped a moment to watch the lazy swells break into creamy surf. And he arrived at the Patio restaurant about eight-thirty. The headwaiter greeted him warmly. Granard had seen him fulfilling the same function at the Colony Restaurant in New York; as he was conducted to a table half a dozen people called to him. He stopped and shook hands but refused invitations to dine. Tomorrow he would be eager to become part of the gayeties of Palm Beach, but tonight he wanted to be a spectator. He wanted no distraction that would prevent

him from seeing the place as an outsider. Some day he might even write about Palm Beach and he wanted his first impressions to be printed indelibly upon his memory.

He responded amiably to the headwaiter's suggestion. He found the stone crab delicious, the lamb perfect, and even conceded that banana ice cream was not without charm. And as he ate he watched couples on the dance floor, noted the people at the tables. There was Eddie Cantor. There was Edna Ferber. There was Herbert Swope; discussing racing with him was young Alfred Vanderbilt. Names known all over the country were here tonight. But finally he paid his check, and the starter outside directed him to Bradley's Beach Club. The statement that he was staying with Shane Kilday brought him admission. He watched the play for half an hour then wandered outside, got into his car and was directed to the Cabot Club. He was proceeding through the arcade that led to the restaurant when a girl greeted him.

"Bill Granard! Whatever are you doing down here?"

Granard stopped and shook hands with the charming brunette who had accosted him.

"The same question to you, Milly Welton. I thought you were in the Frivols."

"So I was. But I decided I needed a rest. And here I am."

"But not alone," said Granard.

The girl smiled invitingly.

“I am tonight. And you?”

“I’m alone. But don’t tell me that you’re in this place all by yourself. I’ve seen a dozen lovely women tonight, but still a girl like you wouldn’t find the competition too strong.”

“Honestly, I just dropped in here thinking I’d see some party I wanted to join, but I didn’t. I was on my way back home. But if you’re alone and can dance half as well as you used to——”

With exaggerated courtesy he offered her his arm.

“When Milly Welton condescends, what man’s pulse could remain at seventy-two?”

He led her to a table by the dance floor. As they sat down he drank in the beauty, the indescribable charm of the place. At this comparatively early hour—it was only half after ten—the tables were only half occupied, but the spirit of those present, a gay spirit that responded to the charm of their surroundings, lent the place a feeling of not too crowded intimacy.

“Not champagne,” cried the girl. “Bill, you’re the most extravagant newspaper man I ever knew. Last time we were out together you bought me champagne. Remember?”

“Don’t remind me. I felt sentimental. You were very lovely that night.”

“It was the opening of last year’s Frivols. It was a hit and I had a line. I felt like a real actress. I surely was

high that night. But you—you didn't respond."

"You're a nice girl, Milly," he said embarrassedly.

"You mean I was. Jimmy Trimp didn't feel the way you did. What a fool I was. You gave me good advice. Gee, you were swell. But I thought I knew it all. So now I leave shows in the middle of a run and take trips to Florida. But not with Trimp."

"No? With whom? Don't answer. I don't care and neither do you. Why talk about things that have passed?"

"I didn't mean to, Bill. But I often think of you. I've never forgotten that you could have been—well, you know what I mean. And you were too fine. I just want you to know, have always wanted you to know, that I think you're the tops."

"The same to you, Milly. Shall we dance?"

"I'd love it," cried the girl.

Granard danced excellently and the girl was competent. They moved about the floor rhythmically. But as they approached their table, the hand on Granard's arm tightened until the girl's nails bit almost painfully through his sleeve into the flesh.

"Do you see what I see?" she whispered.

Granard looked at the entrance. Mrs. Trimp no longer wore her sable coat, but her too-luscious body was clothed in a creation much too ornate for Palm Beach.

“I see Mrs. Trimp and her husband,” said Granard. “But I thought you just said that one was all washed up.”

The girl’s body swayed against his own. For a moment Granard thought she would faint. Then she recovered herself and walked to the table. But as she sat down, she reached for her glass and drank the champagne greedily. As she put the glass down, she looked with frightened eyes at Granard.

“Bill, you won’t let anything happen to me, will you?”

“Happen to you? Certainly I won’t. But what could?”

“What often happens to girls who know too much? Bill, I’m frightened.”

He frowned at her.

“Of what, Milly?”

Her words of reply seemed ridiculously melodramatic in these lovely surroundings.

“Of death, Bill. Of being murdered.”

Granard glanced quickly about. No one was near enough to have overheard them. He gave his entire attention to the girl again. She was shaking with fear.

“Bill, I had to tell you,” she said.

“Go on telling me,” Granard bid coolly.

“Go on?”

He nodded.

“Here?” she demanded with a dismay which set him glancing around again.

“You mean he—your trouble—is here?”

“I don’t know where he is,” Milly replied.

“Then he’s not Trimp?”

“I don’t know who he is.”

Granard bent forward. “Then what is the trouble, Milly?”

“I don’t know what—except that somebody will kill me, if I don’t keep ‘quiet.’” She reached for the rest of her champagne.

“Keep what quiet, Milly?” Granard asked.

“That’s what I don’t know,” the girl whispered, setting down her glass empty. “I ‘know’ something; or I’m supposed to know something which somebody will kill me for, if I ‘say anything.’ But God knows, Bill, I don’t know what it is.”

Granard could not, without turning, see Trimp; but she could, and her eyes went quickly toward Trimp’s table and down again.

“How’s he in this?” Granard questioned quickly.

“Jimmy? I don’t know.”

“But you know he’s in it?”

“He’s the one sending me the money, I think.”

“What money?”

“The money I get in the mail.”

“How much money?”

“Five hundred dollars each time.”

“How often?”

“I’ve had it twice.”

“Not checks, of course?”

“No. Cash—bank notes. Five hundred-dollar bills.”

“What comes with them?”

“Nothing—but four words. They’re on a plain white sheet.”

“Typewritten?”

“Yes.”

“What are the words?”

“*For a good girl.*”

“The same both times?”

“Exactly the same.”

“Nothing else?”

“Not a word, Bill—not a scratch. The envelopes are perfectly plain. The kind you buy at a post-office.”

“You had two, you said.”

“Yes.”

“Where were they mailed?”

“The first in New York.”

“New York City?”

“Yes. I got it there, before I came down.”

“Then you got the other here?”

“Yes. This evening. It was different in one way.”

“How?”

“It came special delivery.”

“To you here in Palm Beach, of course.”

“Yes; and it was mailed here.”

“By Trimp, you think?”



Milly shook her head. “Oh, Bill, I don’t know!”

“But you said you thought he is the one sending you the money.”

“Because I can’t think who else it might be. And Jimmy’s in that racket now, isn’t he?”

“What racket?”

“The racket that—that makes big money out of people’s troubles, and makes them pay out big money, too.”

“You’re a sweet kid, Milly,” Granard said. “You never could say the hard word. Yes, Jimmy Trimp’s a blackmailer. And just now he happens to have something especially big on somebody.”

“Who, Bill?”

“Somebody you know, apparently; but you don’t know who it is or what it is; but Jimmy Trimp knows, and he thinks you do too.”

“Then you think Trimp did send me the money?”

“I didn’t say so,” Granard put in hastily. “I was just following your guess. . . . But it wasn’t the money that frightened you, Milly.”

“No; it’s—Bill, it’s the man who calls me up.”

“On the phone, you mean.”

“Yes.”

“Where?”

“Twice in New York, Bill.”

“And then here?”

“Yes, Bill; just about an hour ago.”

“What does he say?”

“That I’ve got to be careful—damned careful.”

“About what?”

“He’s sure I know.”

“You talk to him, do you?”

“I’ve tried to; but he doesn’t answer anything I say. He just says I’ve got to be damned careful. And tonight—well it got me, Bill.”

“Why tonight, especially?”

“He told me everything I’d done recently, Bill. He’s been about—watching me.”

“You don’t know his voice, of course.”

“No. He doesn’t even suggest anybody I know.”

“He’s not like Trimp at all?”

“Not in the least. . . . But he’s watching me. He watched me in New York; and now he’s watching me here. . . . More champagne, Bill,” Milly appealed, moving her glass.

He poured it for her. “Tell me how these calls began.”

She shook her head. “Not here. *He’s* watching me. . . . I don’t mean Jimmy Trimp. I mean *him*. I can feel he’s watching me. He’ll call me tomorrow—if he hasn’t *got* me before then—and tell me just how I sat and talked to you.” The music was playing again. “Let’s dance to the door, Bill,” she proposed, “and then go out. Go out in the dark.”

As he turned to signal the waiter, Granard glanced over the room; he saw Trimp rising from his table with his wife. They went together to the dance floor. He saw a few acquaintances, many strangers; he noticed no face particularly intent.

In a moment he had Milly in his arms, but she danced perfunctorily, dully, thinking only of escape from the room; and they danced merely the half-circle to the door.

“I’ve my own car,” Granard explained; “no driver.” And they went out to it.

He could feel her relief as she settled beside him and they drove away from the lights on the road near the shore. He asked her nothing while the car was moving, but used the time to check his own thoughts.

The tip which Izzy Mackleton had slipped to him seemed to be hot. Somebody, who presumably was now in Palm Beach,

had done something he had to cover up; and the signs were that it was more than usually outrageous—and therefore more than usually costly.

Izzy knew about it; but it was not Izzy's business to make his money of "the know"—that is, not to make his money directly. Izzy had other ways of getting his. Jimmy Trimp played the direct take; that was Jimmy's racket. For Jimmy to be in the know of something, meant that Jimmy promptly was on the pay roll. Jimmy did not believe in allowing a time lag after he learned something which must be covered up.

But the payments to Jimmy, large as they might be, would not be complete; he could come and come again for his coin—as long as he kept what he knew covered up. So if someone else also was in the know, Jimmy had to keep him—or her—quiet.

The matter of the money mailed to Milly needed no further explanation.

The telephone-calls could be connected with the same affair and yet not be traced to Trimp's activities. It seemed to Granard that somebody else, other than Jimmy Trimp, also believed that Milly Welton possessed damaging or dangerous information; and he was taking his own course to silence her. He certainly had her scared.

As Granard drove, she pressed close to him for protection; and soon he stopped the car.

“Tell me the rest of it now, Milly,” he said, but he realized that she had little left to tell; no more, indeed, than the detail of the words over the phone which had threatened her. She honestly had no idea in what way she was a danger to anybody else.

“I hadn’t done a thing, Bill; nothing was different. Just that man began calling me and somebody mailed me the money.”

“Exactly when did he begin calling?”

“It was a week ago yesterday.”

“Who did you tell?”

“Nobody at first.”

“Then who?”

“Ralph.”

“Ralph Strather?”

“Yes, Bill.”

“What did he think?”

“He wanted me to leave the show.”

“That want is hardly original with him, Milly.”

“He wanted me to marry him.”

“When you didn’t—for you didn’t, did you?”

“No.”

“Then what?”

“He wanted me to come down here.”

“So you came—alone?”

“No; with Ralph’s sister—Esther Railston.”

“So you’re staying with her?”

“Yes.”

“Where’s Ralph?”

“He stayed in New York; but he’s on the way down here now, I’m sure. I wired him.”

“To come?”

“No; just that the Voice is in Palm Beach. . . . Ralph stayed in New York to try to trace him.”

“And because you weren’t ready to make this a honeymoon.”

“I suppose so.”

A car approached with only its dim lights burning, and Granard felt Milly pressing closer to him. He held her quiet, watching the car which slowed almost in front of them. Suddenly its bright lights switched on, and the car, after almost halting, caught speed again, and Granard heard a

girl's mocking laughter. Peggy's laugh; and he got a glimpse of her. And of Shane Kilday.

Another girl and another man were in the car. Granard scarcely saw them.

Milly removed her soft body from the close contact with him.

"Oh!" she whispered, contritely. "Friends of yours! Sorry, Bill."

"Don't be silly," Granard said, pulling his feelings back from the car that had passed. "You were saying you're with Esther Railston."

"She has a house here, you know."

"Is her husband here?" Granard asked practically.

"No; but there are servants, of course."

"Men in the house?"

"Yes. I ought to be perfectly all right in the house, Bill," Milly said. "I know I'm all right. I suppose I was crazy to come out. But I'd just got the call there."

"From the Voice. Who else heard it?"

"Nobody. A servant called me to the phone. I didn't tell Esther afterwards. I don't want to bother her—at least until Ralph gets here. I came out first only to telegraph him, so

they wouldn't know I'd sent for him. Then I felt I had to see somebody."

"I'm glad you saw me, Milly," Granard said.

"And I'm glad I told you. I didn't mean to tell anyone. I just wanted to see who was here in Palm Beach that I knew. . . . Then I saw you."

"And Jimmy Trimp," Granard reminded her.

"Oh, Bill, what do they think I know?"

"I'll try to tell you—tomorrow, Milly."

"I feel much better. . . . You're awfully—steady, Bill."

"Steady?" Granard repeated, disappointed.

"That's what girls say of dull men, don't they? Forgive me, Bill. I meant it takes a lot to shake you. It was luck for me I found you. I'm sure I'll be all right in the house for the night. In the morning, Ralph will be here."

"He'll have to fly, then."

"He'll fly, I think. He likes to fly, you know."

Granard thought, too, that Ralph Strather would fly; almost any man would fly, if he could, when summoned by this girl.

"Thank you, Bill, for being here," she said; and her soft fingers clasped over his in her impulsive



acknowledgment of his protection. She had warmth and gentleness, this lovely girl; and someone threatened her.

Who? And why?

He doubted that Ralph Strather, flying through the night to reach her, would bring much information. Ralph, though he went in for flying, was the steady type. Her adjective, Granard thought, went well for Ralph. Strather was stubborn in a way which made other men dub him a bit stupid. The thorough sort—always personally strained through chamois his gasoline before a big flight and personally examined the spark-plugs.

Ralph, if he started tonight, would arrive in the morning; but he would bring little in the way of elucidation with him.

“Do you know where Esther lives, Bill?” Milly asked.

“I know nothing at all about Palm Beach,” Granard replied. “But I’m learning.”

“I’ll teach you this way, then,” she said; and reluctantly he reached forward and started his engine.

Half an hour later, he returned to the apartment he shared with Kilday. Shane was not about, but the alert little colored man was on duty.

“Collect all the recent newspapers you can, Abe,” Granard bade him, “especially New York papers between a week and ten days old.”

Abe went out and left him alone in the apartment.

Granard had brought a bundle of papers with him; and he spread some of them before him. Their contents—and especially the items local to New York City—were of course familiar to him. The first-page columns, which paraded political and economic developments, he ignored. There was news from Washington which promised a personal scandal; but Granard could not conceive of any connection on the part of Milly Welton.

There were plenty of sensational stories of the personal type; but during the last ten days four stories had almost monopolized the headlines between them.

The contest, which had come to court, for the guardianship of the Letherton child (and her millions); the murder, as yet unsolved, of the show-girl Sally Doane; the divorce testimony of the maid of Mrs. Jasper Plack; the suicide of Selden Trefl.

Over the first of these stories Granard shook his head; that had already proceeded beyond the point of hushing-up. As to the second and the third, he now had his answer. He had asked Milly about them before he left her. She had never met, nor, to the best of her knowledge, ever heard of Sally Doane; and Irene Plack had been equally a stranger to her. Selden Trefl, whatever his past, was dead; and—Shakespeare had said it for such as him.

*“Nor steel nor poison,  
Malice domestic, nothing can touch him further.”*

Granard lit a fresh cigarette and went to the window. The midnight was quiet, moonlit and cool; at a tantalizing distance was dancing. He could hear the music less than he could feel the rhythmic, throbbing pulsations reaching him through the night air.

Peggy was dancing somewhere in that direction—Peggy, who had passed him with that mocking peal of laughter when she had caught him, like any Eighth Avenue beau on a summer lane, “necking” in a car. How else could she have seen it?

His lips pressed tighter; and he thought how Peggy pouted when she danced with him, playing at being displeased.

He turned on his heel and applied himself to the newspapers.

He realized that very likely the affair, in which Milly Welton unwittingly was involved, had not yet come to public notice at all. Something exceedingly serious might have occurred and have been so competently concealed that no inkling of it yet had appeared in print. In that case, his search of the papers was useless.

But the chances were that something had been printed—something trivial and innocuous had been given out to cover a terrible truth. Underneath some news item which was superficially innocent and inconsequential, lay a secret which had to be hidden at any cost—and which had been hidden for eight days, at least.

It was a week ago yesterday that the voice over the phone first had frightened Milly Welton in New York; and the time coincided aptly enough with Jimmy Trimp's new prosperity. Prompt as he was to collect, he was also prompt to spend. A week was just about the time required for Jimmy's wife to display a new sable coat.

Granard thumbed over again the society columns and the humbler pages of the papers. Perhaps the merest paragraph of arrival at Palm Beach or of sailing for the Riviera held the hint, if he could read it.

Abe returned with a great bundle of newsprint under his arm. Granard thanked him and sent the little man to bed; and patiently spread the papers out under the lamp.

Shane Kilday let himself in with his latch-key and silently, for he was really a considerate young man, and it was possible that Granard had preceded him and was asleep.

Granard, he immediately saw, was ahead of him, and was asleep—not in bed, but in a chair in the living-room before the table, which was strewn with newspapers.

Shane closed the door quietly and stood for a moment staring at his friend.

It may be an almost too-revealing matter to come upon a man robbed of the mask of his pretences which he keeps in place when awake; and it is especially so when he is seen, not in bed, but dressed and in a chair, nearly in an ordinary posture—but for his head dropped forward and his mask removed.

Some men look older and declare ugly things. Bill Granard, the hard-boiled, looked like a boy. A woman, Shane thought, would have watched him long before awakening him.

Shane stepped back and noisily reopened the door. Granard started up and swung around. "Oh, hello!"

"Sorry," said Shane, pocketing his key as if he had just taken it from the lock. "Didn't know you were doing a night watch. Not sitting up for me, I hope."

Granard shook his head.

"Happy dreams?"

Granard blinked. "They'll do."

"But marred by remorse."

"Over what?"

"Somebody's spoiled evening. She saw you, of course."

Granard offered no comment; and Shane passed him and stepped to the window, where, standing with his back to Granard, he gazed out. The hour was three, and moonlight lay on this land like a sheen that seemed to shine of itself. There was no stir in the air; it was cool.

Granard appreciated the stillness. The distant, disturbing pulsations of dance music had ceased.

"What's in the papers?" Shane presently inquired.

“It’s what isn’t in them,” Granard replied.

Shane turned quickly. “Oh, something you know—and you were looking to see if it was ‘out.’”

Granard shook his head. “Not quite that, Shane,” he said.

“What, then?”

“It’s something I don’t know—and I was looking to see if anyone else does.”

Shane regarded his friend. “Thought you’d declared a vacation.”

“I did; and I’ll take one—here, I hope.”

“When?”

Granard pushed his newspapers into a neater heap; and he arose. “I guess when human nature takes one, Shane,” he said.

“I see! Stumbled into something down here, did you?”

“Close again, Shane; but not quite on the button. I stumbled into it in New York; but over it again down here.”

“Oh! Then she’s in it?”

“You saw who I was with?”

“Of course; and we were told afterwards.”

“People are pleasant that way. . . . Sleep in a chair often?”

“No,” said Shane. “Generally I manage to make it to a bed.”

“Stick it out in a chair sometime,” Granard advised. “You doze off differently.”

“What does it give you?”

“A special slant, sometimes.”

“On what?”

“Whatever you’re working on; for instance—weaknesses.”

“And worse?”

“And worse.”

“What about them?” Shane inquired.

“I was thinking how dumb the bunnies are, who are forever printing figures on the cost of crime, and the amount we’d save if everybody went in for morals and honor and what not. The fact is, we’d be just about ruined.”

“We?” said Shane.

“The world, I mean; or at least civilization. I fell asleep, Shane, making a rough calculation of the percentage of our present working population that would have to go on relief if everybody really went honorable. It would be an economic calamity.”

Shane nodded. “What to tell me about tomorrow?” he inquired abruptly.

“What about it?”

“You’re carrying on with Milly—or with us?”

“Milly,” said Granard, “sent for Ralph Strather tonight. She thinks he’s flying down.”

“He would. Ralph likes everything the hard way. But he’s a damn good flier. What about him?”

“I’m looking after Milly till he gets here,” said Granard.

“That’s what you want me to tell Peggy?”

“If she has to be told anything.”

“Good night.”

“Good night.”

When Granard awoke, the sun was high, the morning half gone. Abe, the quick little colored man, seemed to have been awaiting the first sound of activity; and he had remembered Granard’s desire for newspapers. A half-dozen morning editions, from Miami to Jacksonville, accompanied the coffee and fruit on the breakfast-tray.

Granard glanced over the headlines. If anything extraordinary had happened during the night, it was not yet celebrated in type.



Shane continued to sleep.

Peggy probably also slept, Granard considered; at least, she would not yet be about. A little later on the beach, perhaps, but more likely in the afternoon. Hers would be the slimmest, the most graceful of the cool, rounded legs splashing into the sea. She would bend her lovely body, thrust forward suddenly and go under, and then swim—with someone swimming beside her. Not himself.

A clock somewhere struck eleven; and Granard reckoned that Ralph Strather, if he really had set out last night in his plane, would have arrived. Granard took up the telephone, called the number which Milly had given him, and inquired of her.

“Oh, yes sir,” a servant said. “Miss Welton is about.” Afterwards he heard Milly’s voice, and with her first word, he caught her concern.

“Bill?”

“Hello, Milly. All right?”

“I am, Bill.”

“Then who isn’t?” Granard attempted cheerfully.

“Ralph—I’m afraid.”

“What about him?”

“I don’t know.”

“Where is he?”

“Flying, Bill. He left Newport News at ten o’clock last night.”

“Newport News, Virginia? How do you know?”

“He wired me from there—a night message. I just got it this morning.”

“What did he say?”

She repeated it verbatim: “*On my way to you. I have learned a lot. With you in the morning. Conditions perfect.*”

“That means to you that he’s flying?”

“He’s flying his pontoon plane, I’m sure, Bill—following the coast-line. That’s what he likes to do. He thinks it’s safer in good weather; anyway, that’s what he does.”

Granard agreed. Unquestionably, Ralph was flying and in his seaplane. How else would he have stopped at Newport News on his way to Florida? Ralph was one of those solid souls who trusted to the sea, depending upon the innumerable harbors and inlets and bays along the Atlantic coast for a landing-place at any moment of need. Ralph was strong on the mechanics of flying, but weak on navigation. On a calm moonlight night he preferred simply to follow a clear, unmistakable coast-line to plotting his way far across country or attempting to ride the radio beams from Washington, Raleigh and Charleston in his land machine.

So Granard did not question that; what he queried was the time; “Ten o’clock last night he was at Newport News, Milly?”

“The telegraph company says so.”

“Then he never got your wire in New York.”

“No; he must have left before I sent it. He was on his way already——” Her voice broke. “I don’t like it, Bill. I don’t like it a bit! He ought to be here.”

“I’m coming over, Milly,” Granard said.

“Oh, please!” she begged him.

He hung up and he sat back gazing at the palms outside his window. Nothing could be more utterly peaceful than palms on a quiet sunny noonday. His mind repeated the telegram from Ralph Strather: “*On my way to you. I have learned a lot——*”

A lot, Granard thought; but probably not enough. Not quite enough.

He leaned to the phone again and asked for Long Distance. “I want the city desk of the *Globe* in New York City,” he said. .

..

“How’s it there, Carewe?” he asked when he heard the city editor’s voice. “Still a blizzard?”

“I suppose,” said Carewe, “you’re phoning from an extension on a beach, under an umbrella shaded from the sun. I trust you’re entirely comfortable.”

“If weather was good up there last night, Carewe,” Granard said, “Ralph Strather. Got the name?”

“Ralph Strather,” Carewe repeated.

“Right. He left Long Island in his seaplane late in the afternoon probably. He’d fly it himself.”

“I know,” said Carewe.

“If weather was bad, he might have left New York some other way.”

“It wasn’t bad.”

“Then probably in his own ship he got down to Newport News about ten at night; and he continued, bound for here.”

“But hasn’t arrived?”

“Not yet.”

“And no word?”

“Not since Newport News.”

“He was alone?”

“As far as I know.”

“What was his hurry?” inquired Carewe, practically.

“That’s why I called you. Perhaps you can find out.”

“How much,” demanded Carewe, “do you know?”

“I know he felt he had to be in a hell of a hurry, Carewe.”

“Woman?”

“Yes.”

“He was getting to her or away from her?”

“To her.”

“Who?”

“Milly Welton.”

Carewe whistled softly. “She’s there?”

“With his sister, Mrs. Ken Railston. Milly’s wired him to come; but before he got her wire, he must have left.”

“In his hell of a hurry,” Carewe added.

“That’s it. Find out what set him off, if you can; if you can’t, find out where he was and who he was with yesterday. And I’ll call you later.”

“Hold on!” Carewe attempted to command, but the wire did not answer. With anyone else but Granard, he would have traced the number in Palm Beach and called back. As it was, he simply swore, slammed down the receiver and called over a couple of reporters.

Granard drove through quiet shade-girt streets, past pleasant, secure-seeming places. A stranger would call this a part of Paradise, he thought; then he recollected that he was himself a stranger to Palm Beach.

But he was no stranger to the lives of the people who wintered here, summered at Newport, Narraganset or Southampton, and, between seasons, indulged their various fancies for England, Scotland, France or for Italy, the Tyrol or Tunis.

He glanced aside at a great cool mansion which gave to the eye every evidence of security and permanence; and his mind clicked on items of gossip about the possessors of that splendid structure. Granard wondered, sometimes, whether their own feeling of the falseness of their affections made some of these people seek the more the architecture of happiness.

A little further along, his mind matched another great house with the almost open secret of its domestic discords. A year or so ago Jimmy Trimp, or some one of his ilk, might have made some money out of that house, Granard thought; but that particular situation was “pay-dirt” no longer. No one took the trouble, now, to deny it.

But here were the homes of happier couples—happier, Granard cynically considered, so far as he knew. Jimmy Trimp, perhaps, might know otherwise.

The Railstons were pointed out as a particularly happy couple—Esther Railston, who was down here, and now was entertaining Milly Welton. A big blonde girl, was Esther Railston, pleasant, good-natured and popular—perhaps the more so because she was too slow-witted ever to be “clever,” if she were inclined that way. Her brother Ralph was never clever; and he was always well-liked. A shade of stupidity, Granard hazarded, was required for the recipe for general popularity. One liked a friend of whom he—or she—need never be afraid.

At the door of Mrs. Railston’s house, Granard learned that she had gone out, but that Miss Welton was in.

Indeed, she was waiting for him; and as soon as the servant admitted him, Milly led him to the corner of the garden where she had taken her refuge. Breakfast had been brought her some time ago, he saw, and laid before her on the pretty shaded table; but he saw, too, that she had touched nothing, not even the fruit. The coffee in its silver pot was cold; and the butter had softened. A servant brought out a fresh pot, and cold, firm pats of butter, taking the other away.

“Breakfast, Bill?” Milly offered.

“Had breakfast, thanks,” Granard said. “But evidently you haven’t.”

“No.”

“Why not? No more news?”

“That’s it, Bill. No more news—when we both know he ought to be here; or some word from him should be.”

She sank into her chair, and he gazed down at her. She was not dressed for the day. She had on a loose, lovely gown for the garden. Her hair had been arranged, but her lips and her cheeks were pale.

She seemed slighter and more fragile than before; and more appealing. And always she had been appealing enough to men—to too many men who were unaccustomed to be balked of their desires. From girlhood, she had had to fight and fend for herself, Granard knew. He was well aware that frequently she had found champions; but no one knew better than Granard, that a girl had her greatest difficulties, sometimes, with her champions. Such as Jimmy Trimp!

Ralph Strather was one champion, at least, whom she never had had to fear. A bit of the Galahad there was in stubborn, slow-witted Ralph, who lay this morning—where?

“Flying conditions have been perfect all morning,” Milly said.

“That’s right.”

“Then Ralph’s down! He must be—down!”



Granard realized that, weakly, he would have much preferred to reassure her. She was afraid, this morning, not for herself but for the Galahad she had found in Manhattan or rather who had found her and taken her under his protection—his stubborn, slightly stupid protection. For now, he had got into trouble himself; and Granard did not believe it was merely trouble with his plane.

Granard had no patience with the silly convention which causes one to protest, weak-mindedly, the opposite of the probable truth.

“Yes, Milly,” he said. “Ralph may be down.”

“But you’ve not heard that he is!”

“No. I’ve heard nothing. I merely agree with you; the chances are—Ralph’s down.”

“Where? And is he—killed?”

“Neither of us can even guess of the chances of that,” he caught her up. “He might have got down, fairly safely, in some inaccessible place. He’s a damn good flyer.”

“Oh, he is!”

“We both believe he headed down here from Newport News, clinging to the coast. There’s a lot of coast, and inlets, between Virginia and here; and an awful lot of that coast has poor communications—or none at all. Ralph might be in any of a hundred spots and be perfectly safe——”

“But you don’t think he is!”

“No,” said Granard, “I don’t; and neither do you.”

“I read to you Ralph’s message,” Milly presently said. “He wired me ‘I’ve learned a lot!’”

Granard nodded.

“He meant, I think, Bill,” she said, “that he learned the thing that threatened me. As soon as he was sure, he wouldn’t waste any time getting to me. And he didn’t. He started down to me—flying. Last night.”

Granard made no comment.

“Last night—in that Thing that threatened me—was a special time, Bill,” she said. “Remember?”

He did, but he questioned her: “Remember what?”

“The Voice warned me especially, last night, to be careful. And last night that money was sent me, special delivery, reminding me again to be ‘good’”

“You were,” said Granard.

“Yes. And I had you with me. Nothing happened to me, Bill. Ralph—he’d found out something; and he was alone. I wonder if what was to happen to me, happened to Ralph instead? Do you suppose, Bill, they did it to Ralph instead of to me?”

“It?” Granard repeated.

“Did they kill him, Bill?”

Her nerves and her fears were spinning now; her mind almost too much alert. She was not stupid, this ex-show girl; she was not slow-witted at all.

She turned her head, listening. She had caught, a second or two earlier than Granard, the hum of an airplane droning at a distance.

“It’s coming from the south—not the north,” he said; but still she bent forward, tensely, staring into the sky until the winged thing appeared and declared itself a big transport plane on the route toward Jacksonville.

“They may meet Ralph,” Milly said; but her next words were: “Or they may see his wings on some shore—or in the sea.”

“They’ll not follow the shore or be close to it beyond Jacksonville,” Granard said.

“They ought to. An alarm ought to be out, Bill! They ought to be searching for him now.”

“I put an alarm out before I came here,” Granard now told her. “I phoned my paper in New York. By now, they’ve started things.”

“Then you thought all the time he was—down. Bill, get me a plane!”

“You?”

“If he’s down, he’ll need help now—not later.”

“I’m getting a plane, Milly.”

“For us both?”

“For me, Milly.”

“Then I’ll get a plane too—or you take me with you.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Palm Beach and the long lagoon of Lake Worth lay below. Shining sands, specked by parasols and the tiny impertinences of human figures, edged an azure sea upon which floated the slender seed-pods of ships.

The seaplane, pointing north, ceased to climb; it ceased even to seem to move. It felt as if suspended, anchored by some incredible gossamer thread to the sun, so that it, like the sun, stood still, allowing the sea and shore to slip on and on underneath. Only the racket of the propeller gnawed at this divine illusion, reminding of the effort required to support this height.

Granard, often as he had flown, found himself caught again by the agreeable sensation; and he gave himself to it. There was little sense, along this stretch of sand, in scanning the beach for a seaplane down. Anything here long ago would have been reported.

But Milly's eyes already were searching.

She searched Jupiter Inlet and St. Lucie; the lazy, indolent channel of Indian River and the shore of Hutchinson's Island. Granard gazed down, and he searched too; and the pilot aided them.

But Granard expected nothing here.

They sighted airplanes, of course, in the air and on the land and on the sea; but nothing that they saw hinted of disaster. Twice they turned back, when Milly cried out and pointed; but once she immediately was satisfied; and the second time, they merely circled a hundred feet over the suspect machine and then went on again.

Past Titusville and Daytona.

The sun, which had seemed to suspend the plane, no longer aided that illusion. It was losing something of its height while the machine maintained its altitude.

Granard bent beside the pilot. "We'll look in at St. Augustine for news."

There was none of Ralph Strather, nor of his plane. Palm Beach had no word of him; and neither had the newspaper in New York.

"Strather left the city a little after noon yesterday, Bill," Carewe said. "He left in a hurry, and as far as we can find out, alone. He didn't fly from here in his own plane. He took the three o'clock plane from Newark to Washington. It

seems he had a ship of his own at Newport News. Between Washington and Newport News, he picked up a friend. We don't know who, yet. Strather was pilot, and he had a passenger when he took off from Newport News about ten o'clock."

"Nothing since?"

"Nobody has a thing since."

Granard stepped out of the booth, and Milly confronted him.

"Bad news, Bill?"

"Ralph was flying with a friend, Milly."

"Who?"

"He picked him up in Washington, or between there and Newport News. They don't know who. Got any ideas?"

She shook her head. "Ralph had lots of friends," she said, with quivering lips. "He had friends everywhere—everywhere he went. He hadn't an enemy in the world. An enemy of his own," she qualified; and Granard, watching, knew what went through her mind. Yesterday, Ralph Strather who had had only friends, and no enemies of his own, had discovered something exceedingly perilous to the possessor of that discovery.

Granard touched her to steady her; and she leaned on his arm as they went back to the plane.

Four dark specks soared and circled in the sky. Birds—birds of ill omen. They flapped their broad, short wings, and dropped down toward the shore; then they flapped their wings and rose again.

They were watching some object over which they circled, these sinister sentinels of the sky. Buzzards, with black, bald heads.

Wings. Man-made wings; silver wings which stayed out straight and did not fold when they ceased to fly; the wings of a plane appeared against the sand of the shore.

The ship stood in shallows between a little sandy island and the Georgia shore. It stood stranded beside a pool left by the tide running out. Specks surrounded it; black bare heads: negroes, curious and frightened.

The buzzards were waiting for them to go away.

Granard reached to the seat opposite his, and his hand met Milly's and grasped it.

The pilot pointed down the nose of the plane, and he circled below the buzzards. Gently, with a sweeping splash on the surface of the little bay not yet drained of the tide, he put the pontoons down; he turned and "taxied" about beside the ship which rested on the sand.

The negroes—many of them were boys—had run away. But above, the buzzards watched, flapping wings that were willing to wait.

Granard stepped down; and he turned to Milly. The pilot followed them.

A single figure sat in the stranded plane. It occupied the pilot's seat. The place for the passenger was empty.

That figure, in the pilot's seat, was fallen forward. His profile was plain and perfectly recognizable.

“Ralph!” Milly Welton cried. “Ralph! . . . *Ralph!*” as though she might awaken him. But he did not stir.

He showed no hurt; and his ship displayed no damage. It had not crashed. When the tide flowed full again, it might float and fly once more. But Ralph Strather was dead. There was no doubt whatever about it. They had discovered Ralph, and he was dead.

Granard caught Milly, and he thrust her back while he, and the pilot, stepped forward.

They entered the cabin; and they saw, then, the wound. Ralph had been shot, once, in the back of the head. A pistol shot which showed the blackened powder marks.

They stepped out. “Someone shot him, Milly.”

“Ralph!” she stared. “Ralph—instead of me! They killed him—instead of me. . . . He found out the thing that threatened me; and so—they killed him!”

Granard put his arm about her. It was a useless gesture, he realized, without influence either upon her



grief or upon her fear. But a man, at such a moment, had to make some gesture of protection; so he stood in the soft wet sand, holding Milly and yet denying his mind to her.

For a few moments he denied his mind even to the objects which his eyes were seeing. He was not on the shore before this seaplane in which Ralph Strather sat slumped forward in the pilot's seat; Granard felt himself again facing Izzy Mackleton in the lawyer's office off Times Square.

“Go South!” Izzy had told him. “Go to Palm Beach. You'd cancel a trip to Africa and go to the North Pole on less of a tip than this. . . . There's something going to break in Palm Beach. . . . You won't have to wait long there for it.”

Well, Izzy was right. There had not been long to wait; and the “break” was even bigger than Izzy had promised him. What a story to have in one's hands!

And Granard, as he stood staring about, realized that this was but the start of it. This shooting of Ralph Strather could not possibly be considered by itself; it was clearly a consequence to, and an incident in, some other enterprise.

An enterprise of which Izzy had had more than a hint. How much more? Granard wondered, as he stood there in the wet sand with Milly Welton sobbing and shaking with fear in his arms.

“Bill, don't leave me!”

“Of course I'll not leave you, Milly,” he said, gazing down into her wide frightened eyes. Then his eyes set again to

scanning the sand of the tide-slip.

It showed the prints of many feet small and large, but all bare. Not one of the feet had been shod; and not one of them, Granard noticed, had made prints with the toes cramped together as would have been left by a foot recently freed from the confinement of shoes. All displayed the wide, separated toes of people habitually barefooted. They seemed, without exception, the footprints of negroes such as those who had scattered at the descent of the second plane.

Granard looked for them and saw several of them watching from a discreet distance.

Milly again was speaking to him. “When—when——” she began; and finished: “How long has Ralph been dead?”

“Six hours, Milly, judging from the tide.”

“What do you mean—judging from the tide?”

“It’s run out since the passenger left the plane, Milly. There are no shoemarks but our own in the sand.”

She steadied herself a little, and for a few moments studied the sand. “That’s so, Bill.”

“We know, Milly, that Ralph had a passenger. Whatever else may be uncertain about him, it’s almost sure he wore shoes. And anybody who wore shoes, and was in this plane, left it at least six hours ago while the tide could still wash out his footmarks.”

“The passenger’s, you mean,” whispered Milly.

“Yes.”

“For Ralph never left the plane at all.”

“Probably not.”

“His passenger killed him!”

“It looks like it, Milly.”

“He flew down here with Ralph! . . . What did you tell me in St. Augustine, you heard about Ralph—and his friend?”

“Friend?” the pilot repeated. He put in at that word, standing beside them. “Your friend,” he said, “had a hell of a friend along.”

“Blaine,” said Granard, “does it look to you that they had to make a forced landing?”

Blaine shook his head. “Not for any mechanical failure, as far as I can see. I can make sure by turning her over. But I’d say, Mr. Granard, if your friend was forced down, it wasn’t by his engine.”

“Don’t get in again just yet,” Granard warned quickly. “We’ll touch nothing about the plane—any of us, for a while. Fingerprints, you see.”

“I’ll catch us a black boy,” Blaine offered, “and find out what they know.” He started off across the soft sand.

Granard took Milly to the seaplane in which they had flown. When he released her, she sank down upon one of the pontoons.

“Ralph’s family,” she whispered. “His father—and Esther. She’s waiting for word, Bill. We have to send—something to them.”

Granard gazed down at her, small and slight and pretty and appealing; and again he thought, as he had a thousand times before, that nothing in life may be so destructive as such a bit of fragile femininity. It endowed a girl with a danger to herself, and to others, for which she was not responsible and which she could never completely control. She had been born desirable; and she had grown from girlhood in possession of a power over men which she had never meant to wield to anyone’s disadvantage, much less to his destruction. Yet merely by being—by existing—she spread ruin over others. She showed herself on a stage; and some man, whom she had not so much as seen across the glare of the footlights, from that moment ended the orderly way of his life and set out in pursuit of her.

Granard knew that the girl encouraged few, indeed, of the men who swarmed about her. She was essentially sweet, as he had said to her; she never intended anyone harm. It had been from no urging of hers that Dan Fletchen, after meeting her, neglected his wife and goaded his wife to seek Reno and divorce him, so he could be “free.” The pitiful fate of the little accountant Gregory followed no fault of hers. The little man had not even spoken to her; she had never so much as met him when he began embezzling, out of his

infatuation for her, and his determination to put himself in a position to have money to spend on her. Jimmy Trimp, she despised and refused; but she could not discourage him. Walter Yardell, perhaps, she had loved. Then there had been Thornway. . . . Now Ralph Strather sat in his seaplane, slain on some errand for her.

Granard knew Ralph's father, whom Milly had just mentioned. He was the senior Strather of his generation, the head of a secure, firmly founded family, careful and conservative. That meant, a bit slow and stupid. Ralph had come honestly enough by his characteristics. The men of this family, whatever affairs they might have on the side, married in their own set and of their own sort. Not one had wedded a show-girl.

Granard glanced at the still figure in the pilot's seat of the other plane; he gazed again at Milly, and he thought: "If *they* had killed *you*, Ralph's family would have been only relieved. But *they* didn't kill you; they got to him." And Granard formed in his imagination the headlines when this news reached New York.

"What will we say?" Milly's quivering lips asked him.

"I'll take care of his sister," Granard promised; and he thought what to say to her, the only one of Ralph's family who had not fought him for his infatuation for Milly. "I'll take care of his father too."

"He's in New York."

“I know,” Granard said; and he thought of the house in New York which had been the Strathers’ through two generations, and which would have become Ralph’s—and Milly’s, if he had lived and she had married him.

Granard wondered, as he looked down at her, whether she was thinking of that too. He felt sure she was not—not at this moment, at any rate. She was gazing toward the store whither the negroes had fled, and Blaine had followed. Blaine was returning with a little group which he had collected.

“They’re coming here?” Milly said.

“No,” said Granard. “I’ll meet them.”

“Bill—you’re not leaving me here?”

“I’ll just step away, Milly. I’ll see you, and you’ll see me.” He stooped and touched her hand. For a moment, before she let him go, she clung to his fingers.

“Thank you, Bill,” she said, and she sat on the pontoon, her toes in the wet sand, and supporting herself with her hands to keep upright.

She could not hear what Granard asked and what the negroes answered. Only the deep boom of one black man’s voice was borne to her on the breeze. They used their hands as they talked, pointing and gesticulating. Milly shut her eyes. It let her deny, for a moment, that anything had happened, that Ralph was dead.

His arms were the strongest and steadiest that ever had enfolded her; his breath, when he had kissed her, was clean like a boy's; and he had been a man with money—with much, much money.

The boom of the big negro's voice aroused her; she opened her eyes, but she did not immediately look up; she examined the sand, and a shadow swept across it, lazily, patiently with flapping wings. A buzzard.

Milly shut her eyes again. She wished she had married Ralph; and in this wish was yet no thought of the great house that would have become his and hers. She shivered, wishing for his arms, which never again could hold her. Another's might be more thrilling, but no other man's ever could feel so strong and steady.

“Milly!”

She started up. “What is it, Bill?”

“The negroes found the plane about an hour ago. One of the boys happened to see it. He came near it alone, and got frightened and ran away, but he told about it. Then those that we saw came down here. . . . No whites are anywhere about.”

“The passenger, Bill? Ralph's passenger—who shot him?”

“Nobody's seen him. Nobody's seen any stranger about. The big man——”

“With the big voice——”

“—says he heard a noise in the dark; in the dark just before daybreak.”

“The shot, Bill?”

“No. If he heard anything, it was the airplane engine and the propeller. Maybe he did hear it; he imitated it. . . . If he did, Milly, Ralph was in the air, here, just before dawn. He made a good landing; that’s clear.”

“But why did he? Why did Ralph come down?”

“He did; that’s all we know. And I’ve told you all the negroes know, which is nothing. . . . Milly, I’m going to the nearest phone—it’s about five miles away—to talk to New York.”

“Ralph’s father?”

“No. My paper.”

“Bill, you’ll not have him hear it from the paper!”

“No. I’ll call him before it’s in print. But I’ve got to leave you now.”

“Take me with you!”

Granard shook his head. “Blaine will stay with you. He’ll watch the plane—both planes. Be a good girl, Milly.”

“A good girl?” she caught at that, and repeated it.

“That’s what the note said that came with the money.

Each time it said it. *‘For a good girl. . . . For a good girl.’*”



“I remember,” Granard nodded; and he thought of Trimp, and Trimp’s wife with her sable coat over her too-luscious body. So Ralph Strather was part of the price of that coat!

\* \* \* \* \*

Granard started off, striding over the pools in the sand. The big negro with the booming voice—they called him Zeky—was waiting for him; and a retinue of blacks ran before and behind.

About half a mile from the shore, Zeky had a mule and wagon; and Granard shared the seat with him. The road was rutted and deep in dust; and Granard coughed when the mule stopped and the dust drifted over him. There were white folks in the town, Zeky’s booming bass assured Granard, though they passed none but negroes on the road.

However, the town was still only a spire in the distance when a cabin appeared, white and trim; and a wire ran to it. A white woman stood in the doorway; and Granard jumped down.

The wire was for a telephone; a farm line, but it tied to an exchange which dealt with “long distance.”

“Carewe?” Granard said at last when the call to New York was completed.

“Where’s Ralph Strather?” said Carewe.

“The nearest town is Talousa.”

“Florida?”

“Georgia. On the coast. He was following the coast, as we figured.”

“He crashed?”

“No. Not a mark on the plane—or the pontoons. He got down all right. Then he was shot.”

“Killed?”

Granard gave Carewe the facts; and he could feel, as he repeated them, the clustering of other men about the city editor at the other end of the wire. Already they were preparing the story; someone was setting up a huge headline; someone else was drawing a diagram; others were sorting over photographs of Ralph Strather, of his father, of the big house in New York and of the place on Long Island. They were getting out their pictures of Milly, and their clippings and reports of men and events connected with her before.

“Carewe!” said Granard quickly. “I’m calling Ralph’s father. I’ll talk to him from here. . . . Then you can send over somebody to see him, if you want. . . . I’m calling Palm Beach too.”

“His sister, you mean,” said Carewe, “who had Milly Welton staying with her?”

“Yes, Carewe.”

“Milly’s not with you now?”

“You mean can she come to the phone? No; she can’t, Carewe. I left her with the pilot on the shore.”

“Then you give us a line for her.”

“To hell with your line for her!” Granard denied it, savagely; but knew he must give it, or they would have to make up one of themselves.

“She flew with me to find him,” he reminded Carewe. “Make something of that.”

“When she found him—what?” Carewe demanded.

“Damn you, Sam,” Granard refused him. “I was with her; she was with me.”

“Then you certainly know how it hit her.”

“She’s not the point!” Granard found himself protesting, futilely as he well knew, to protect her.

“Oh, isn’t she?”

“The point, stupid, is the passenger—the friend Ralph took aboard at Newport News.”

“A hell of a friend!”

“You’ve caught a line on that, Carewe! Blaine, our pilot, said it too.”

“How did it look in the cabin?” Carewe demanded. “As if there’d been a struggle?”

“No struggle,” said Granard. “Not a thing disturbed. They’d landed—that is, it seems that Strather must have put the plane down; and then, when he was sitting still in his seat, his passenger shot him.”

“Without warning, apparently.”

“That’s it.”

“By any chance, did he leave anything behind him—the passenger?”

“Fingerprints, we hope,” Granard replied.

“No baggage—or garment?”

“We found a bag aboard, but clearly it was Strather’s. I’m scaring up some fingerprint powder, if this county has any. We’ll ‘dust’ the plane inside and out,” Granard continued. But he thought, as he talked, that the passenger’s fingerprints, even if found, would prove of small service. How to name the man to fit them to? Fingerprints were invaluable when they corresponded to other prints, already on file at New York police headquarters or at Washington; when they were prints of a man who already had a “record.”

Small chance that Ralph Strather’s passenger could be named in that manner; and Carewe was considering this too.

“Good luck to you!” he wished ironically.

Granard hung up; and he stepped back from the telephone, which was a ponderous, old-fashioned instrument, secured to the wall.

The woman of the house was watching him; throughout the talk, she had been behind him, and of course she had heard everything he had said. She was excited and shaking.

“There’s a friend of yours flew down here,” she repeated to Granard, “and was killed on our shore?”

“That’s it.”

“A Yankee like you?”

Granard nodded, dismissing the difference between Ralph Strather and himself, which would seem, to this neighborhood, insignificant beside their similarities. “From New York,” he said. “And with him was another man like him—or me,” Granard added. “Did you happen to see or hear of any stranger on the road—or keeping to the woods, perhaps—early today?”

The woman shook her head. “I can inquire,” she offered.

The telephone bell rang; and Granard picked up the receiver and replied.

“This is the operator at Talousa,” a girl’s voice said. “You want Sheriff Denkirik now, sir?” The operator, of course, also had listened; and she had both ends of the talk.

“Give me the Sheriff in a few minutes,” Granard said. “First get me New York again. Have New York locate Mr. Winston Strather for me. . . . After that, I’ll want Palm Beach. I’ll give you that number.”

The New York operator located Mr. Winston Strather at one of his clubs; and Granard spoke to him. The call to Palm Beach then was completed; and Granard spoke to Ralph’s sister.

As soon as he finished, the phone rang again.

“This is the Talousa operator,” the local girl’s voice said again. “Mr. Granard, our Sheriff is on his way to you. He’ll stop in at Mrs. Heath’s, where you are. He wants you to wait there for him. And I’ll tell you, sir, he’s bringing Kelsey Clark, who’s mighty smart with fingerprints powder, with him.”

“Good girl,” Granard approved her. Probably better for present purposes, he thought, than the Sheriff. “You know the people hereabouts,” he said, “who might see or hear of a stranger coming up from the shore early this morning?”

“Yes sir, I know.”

“Then start calling them. The man we’d want is a Northerner, probably; he ought to be well-dressed; probably——”

“Oh, I get you!” the girl interrupted eagerly. “You mean, we’re to look for a gentleman.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The news was out. The bare facts, at first, as they were spread by radio news-flash. This told that William Granard, of the *New York Globe*, and Milly Welton, recently of the *Frivols*, had chartered a seaplane to search for their friend Ralph Strather, who, in his own seaplane, was missing. They had found him and his plane on the Georgia shore. Strather sat in the pilot's seat, dead; he had been shot—murdered, evidently—by someone who had shared the flight with him.

In New York, the family and friends of Ralph now had the news; and Izzy Mackleton had it. And his pretty blonde secretary, who had spoken to Granard of the monkey and the cat and a fire, and some chestnuts which the cat coveted.

In Palm Beach, everybody had the news. And Jimmy Trimp and his luscious wife were at Palm Beach, in their extravagant, luxurious suite. Jimmy had the radio tuned to the news announcement, but tuned low, so that he could hear it distinctly, but so that it would be difficult for anyone who might be eavesdropping on the other side of the door to discover that he was interested at all in the item.

When the crisp, perfectly enunciated words of the announcer took up some other topic, Jimmy Trimp swiftly twisted the dial, hoping to pick up added information from another station. But no other news was on. Jimmy most urgently required further information; but he dissembled display of his anxiety, though only his wife watched him.

He did not like it that Cora was watching him so closely while she dressed, though he liked to watch her at all times. He never had been foolish enough to confide to Cora, or to

any other woman, the secrets of his transactions. Jimmy operated by having other people in his power, not by putting himself in the power of anyone else—particularly not by putting himself in the power of a woman.

He did not delude himself that Cora was so stupid that she did not suspect—or indeed actually know—the nature of his profession, which at times so illy and at other times so extravagantly provided for them. In fact, Cora and he had terms of their own by which they referred, between themselves, to the more pleasant aspects of his activities.

The periods of prosperity, for instance, were times when someone—male or female but otherwise anonymous—was “kicking in” with plenty of coin. The principal was, therefore, a “kick-in.” When Jimmy had one—or more—all was well or better; when a “kick-in” of even an inferior sort was lacking, times were thin.

Jimmy had admitted—indeed had he not celebrated with her the fact?—that he had a most prodigal kick-in just now. The trouble with a transaction so profitable was not only that it might suddenly go sour, but without warning go too “hot” also. The precept of “no profit without risk” went, multiplied, for Jimmy’s profession.

Cora stepped into the room where Jimmy continued patiently to twist the radio-dial. She was in her most distracting state of dishabille, and Jimmy lifted his eyes to let them rove over her appreciatively.

“Hello, baby,” he approved her.



Cora came closer, and before essaying more with him, tempted him until he suddenly seized her; then, petting him, she ventured:

“Something not so good, Jimmy?”

“Maybe,” said Jimmy boldly, “something’s better.”

“How much better, big boy?” Cora hailed that idea greedily.

“How much more,” returned Jimmy, this being no moment for cool calculation, “could you use, baby?”

“How much more,” countered baby, “can you get?”

“Plenty,” promised Jimmy, and then qualified with, “—if what’s happened is what I think.”

And it might be a lot better for him, he realized; that is, he might have just double the hold, which he had had before, on his kick-in. But on the other hand, he might have nothing at all soon, and less than nothing. Certain consequences which he had always considered but which never had touched him yet, might come close this time—and more than merely close.

Cora could feel this realization in her contact.

“But maybe, big boy, it might go worse.”

“Maybe,” Jimmy reluctantly admitted.

\* \* \* \* \*

Peggy Cartwain had the news, and not directly from the radio. Several of her friends phoned her; and between their calls she waited, with a dull feeling of offense and expectation, for a call from Granard.

He had called Esther, she knew. Of course he had had to. He had phoned Shane.

Why should he phone her?

Peggy's mind warned her that he had no reason to, merely because he—and Milly—had found Ralph Strather dead on the Georgia shore. She had known Ralph, but as scarcely more than an acquaintance. She would miss him now, merely as a name no longer to be carried on the list of men to include in any large formal affair. Yet, it was not pleasant to think of Ralph dead—shot by someone presumably of his, and therefore also of her, general “set.” It was startling, shocking.

Peggy felt that Bill Granard should realize this. She was sure that he did realize it, if he thought of her at all; for no one was so incisive as he in appreciating effects. She felt, therefore, that he was deliberately ignoring her; and it infuriated her that she wanted and waited for his attention, even by long distance.

She had, or could have at smallest encouragement, plenty of attention from other men close by; but she sat in her room near the phone, answering it whenever it rang, and replying to other voices while she pictured Bill with Milly on the

shore near Ralph's seaplane—and Bill beside Milly, close beside her. Very close indeed.

Peggy thought how she had surprised them, when the headlight flashed on them last night. He had been easy for Milly Welton then; how much easier he would be now! Bill Granard, the hard-boiled newspaper man!

Peggy wanted to laugh; she wanted to dismiss the idea of him. But here she held on, reaching for the phone each time it rang, each time again with that expectation.

He could not be continually with Milly. The police, or whoever were the local authorities, must be examining him, and Milly, for what they knew; and he must be busy, also, sending out news—the shocking sensational news which would go on the wires to New York, and which Carewe would rush to the presses and send to the streets under screaming scare-heads, in her father's paper.

Her father, and she, were in it too. To be sure, her father was removed from personal contact with the items headlined in his paper. Her father, in these days, was a proprietor more than a publisher; but his profits were drawn from the sale of sensations, which made them only the more distasteful to the girl.

She thought again, as she had before, that the money in her handbag, the always-renewed balance at the bank which made good the many checks she drew, came from the profits from the spread for sale of catastrophe, disaster, vice, crime and the various cruelties—with occasional spectacular

kindnesses and mercies thrown in—of man to man, and woman to woman, and man to woman and woman to man.

Peggy told herself that if she married Granard she would better this situation by not one whit. The income upon which he lived was independent of the paper; but news—human violences, frailties and passions—were the breath of his body. She could not imagine Bill Granard removed from the arenas of conflict which provided that shocking, fascinating, alluring commodity—news.

Peggy refused to herself the idea that under any circumstances she would marry Bill Granard; but she could not shake him from her feelings. She wanted him to speak to her; she wanted his attention; she wanted, too, some brief, curt comment of his which would tell her—what nobody else would know—the actual truth underlying the published news.

That was one trouble with trying to ignore Bill Granard. He made other men pallid, or innocent, by comparison—as her father made most of the older men of her acquaintance. When you lived by, and for, and in, news, you *knew* things that no one else ever learned—much, much more than ever you published.

Others felt themselves wise, prattling repetitions of the little that news people permitted in print.

But Peggy told herself again that she abominated “news”; she hated Bill Granard, who was up there on the Georgia

shore, with Milly Welton. And, with Milly Welton, he remained there, or in the little town of Talousa.

They, and the inquiry into the fate of Ralph, naturally dominated the discussions between the girls and men sunning themselves on the Florida sands the next day.

“Bill Granard, for once in his life,” Shane commented, as if with satisfaction, “isn’t a free agent.”

“You mean Milly’s got him?” some mischief-maker said, glancing at Peggy and turning the eyes of the others toward Peggy too.

“The Talousa sheriff’s got him—and Milly too,” Shane returned. “Material witnesses, you know; and all that sort of thing.”

“Oh!”

“What makes an ordinary witness, Shane,” Helen Gorlande asked, “into a material witness?”

“The amount that he—or she—knows or is supposed to know,” Shane explained.

“How much,” a man beside Helen questioned, “do you suppose Bill Granard knows—and isn’t telling?”

“And Milly?” the same mischief-maker put in again.

Peggy said almost nothing; and she soon left the group. But she was back on the beach the next day; and across the

shining sand, she saw Bill Granard in a bathing-suit.

He appeared unheralded, and he strolled along, glancing up the beach and gazing out over the sea, as though nothing whatever had happened, as though no one would be interested in his coming. As a result, the first few who noticed him were slow to recognize him; but Peggy knew him as soon as he was in sight.

The crispness of his stride, even when he slowed it to a stroll, was unmistakable; there was vigor in the way he stood; and Peggy, watching him, felt her pulse hurrying and her body becoming warmer; and she insisted to herself that she hated him.

Somebody called out his name, and jumped up; a dozen others, girls and men, jumped up and surrounded him, all clamoring, questioning him.

Peggy sat silent; and soon she was alone, staring over the sea. She sifted sand through her slim fingers and whispered to the little rills of sand: "I hate him . . . I hate him. . . . Where's Milly? Is she with him? . . . Where did he leave her?"

At last a shadow stood over her; and she knew whose it was. In his way, he had satisfied the others and freed himself of them; he was alone, looking down at her. She looked up at him.

"Going into the sea?" was his greeting.

“Not now,” she said, and was furious at her own heart for its hammering.

“Then neither am I,” he told her, and dropped down beside her.

“Where’s Milly?” she asked, not meaning to.

“She left for New York, from Talousa, just before I started this way,” Granard said.

“You flew?”

He nodded. “I came back with Blaine in the plane. Milly’s on the train for New York with Ralph’s family—and Ralph.”

Peggy said hastily: “I know. Esther left here yesterday morning. She said they’d have services at home—on Long Island. Why didn’t you go?”

“Am I family?” Granard returned.

“Is Milly—when she didn’t even mean to marry him?”

“Who told you that?”

“Esther. Isn’t it true?”

“It’s true.”

“For she told you.”

Granard gazed over her slim and perfect body, his eyes resting at last on hers; and she met his gaze.

“We quarrel as well as ever,” he observed.

“What else,” she retorted quickly, and he watched now not her eyes but her full and lovely lips, “what else is there to do with you?”

“When shall I show you?”

“Parked-car Romeo!” Peggy cast at him, as he kept watching her lips.

Granard let that go by default. He gazed down, discovering the little heap of sand which she had piled up, sifting sand through her fingers. He patted it flat, and then heaped it up again.

“I’ve been putting a few things in print,” he said. “Read any of them?”

“Yes,” she admitted.

“In fact, all of them?” he demanded.

“Yes, all. That is, everything through this morning’s papers.”

“There’s more to come.”

“More of the same thing?” Peggy questioned distastefully.

“It’s a rather useful thing,” Granard retorted.



“To whom?”

He gazed at her coldly, and let himself say: “Financially useful to you, for one, I’d say.” And he saw her flush. “But that wasn’t,” he added, “what I meant.”

“What did you mean?” Peggy defended herself. “The facts you’ve given out could be put in two paragraphs, or less. What are they? Ralph Strather was flying down here to follow Milly Welton, who was staying with his sister. He picked up a friend—or at least a passenger, whose identity is still unknown. And apparently the passenger shot him, left Ralph in a lonely spot on the coast of Georgia, and disappeared. Milly and you found him there. That covers the facts you’ve printed, doesn’t it?”

“It does.”

“But you’ve made of it pages and pages. And you know what sort of pages. Agony stuff!”

He said nothing.

“Agony stuff made for amusement!” she continued.

“Damn well made,” Granard grunted.

“Too damn well made!” Peggy accepted. “That’s the trouble with it. I mean, it’s made by too good a man, or a man who ought to be too good for it—but isn’t. Why do you do it, Bill? You’ve no need to. You’ve money of your own. You don’t have to work; yet you do work,” she went on wonderingly, “like nobody else on the paper.”

“What would you have me do? Loaf?”

She started; she couldn't imagine him loafing. “Not loaf,” she admitted.

“Then what? Peddle stocks and bonds?”

“Of course not.”

“Try my hand at poetry?”

“At least not give your life to disaster, crime and every human baseness and degradation.”

“Suppose they amuse me?”

“That's just what I was saying; that's the trouble. They do. It *amused* you the other night to take me to the Cypress Club and show me a near-murder—and that might have been a murder.”

“And that might, if it had come off, been a better thing,” Granard added.

“It would have more amused you, I suppose.”

“Just possibly—I'm not sure yet, Peggy—it might have saved a much better man's life.”

“Ralph's, you mean?”

“Possibly. I don't know yet.”

“How could Izzy Mackleton, being killed in New York, have saved Ralph in Georgia?”

“I’m not saying he could; but I rather suspect——”

“What?”

“That out of over-sentimentality, I made a mistake.”

“What over-sentimentality?”

“The weakness—or perhaps it’s vanity, Peggy—that leads a man, who ought to know better, to interfere with a natural course of events.”

“Such as?”

“Well, the impulse of one Murphy Pantadosi, when he feels peeved, to empty his automatic into the person of his peeve. On that occasion, Izzy Mackleton . . . Yet if I hadn’t interfered to ‘save’ Izzy, when I knew what was coming, you’d have said even more to me than you did. And you’d have felt worse. . . . As it happened, it seems extremely probable that by saving Izzy, I condemned Ralph to death.”

“You mean Izzy Mackleton shot him?”

Granard shook his head. “Nothing so simple as that, Peggy. Nothing nearly so simple. Something much more——”

“More what?”

He tantalized her: “Amusing.”

“Amusing again!” she cast back at him.

He nodded. “There are three general attitudes which one can take toward this tragic comedy we call life, Peggy, my child,” he replied, aware that he was further infuriating her. “The most popular attitude, by all odds, is to attempt to ignore it. Never by any chance explore it for yourself, or try to think about it. If anyone is so rude as to bring up realities, suggest a swim, or hurry and start a bridge game.

“That is,” he amended, “if four are present. If there are only three polite people at hand, then the game is Towie. You’re good at both bridge and Towie, I know.

“If you happen to be cursed with a low mind that makes you, instead of peddling stocks, feel impelled to dive down into the underside of things and muck around the realities which emerge, more or less, into news, you have the choice of only two emotions.”

“What?” she asked.

“You know them; laughter or tears. I prefer the former, whenever possible.”

“God help,” said Peggy, “the girl that marries you! I’d marry a bad man—or even a dull one—before a man that has no heart. I’m going into the water, Bill.” And she rose before she recollected how he had just described her sudden necessity for a swim.

Half an hour after Granard had dressed and departed from the beach, he happened across Jimmy Trimp. The accident of

this encounter had required no little arrangement on Granard's part; and Jimmy, he saw, suspected it.

Jimmy was going after game fish, he said; and obviously he was garbed and equipped for a nautical occasion. He had a launch and crew waiting for him; and he had with him one companion. This was a wide-awake, compact person of some thirty years which could not safely be put down as having been uneventful.

"Mr. Leonard," Jimmy made introduction of this experienced gentleman, "—Mr. K. L. Leonard, of Philadelphia," Jimmy extemporized as an afterthought, Granard guessed. "Mr. Granard," Jimmy continued to his friend, "is of the *New York Globe*; and he is just back from Georgia."

"That's right," Granard confirmed, and added: "I found Ralph Strather up there."

Mr. Leonard met his eyes evenly and shook hands with a strong-fingered, sullen heartiness. He said he was pleased to meet Mr. Granard, and said, further, that he read his pieces in the paper.

Like Jimmy, Leonard was somewhat ostentatiously costumed and equipped for "game fishing."

"Ever caught a tarpon or sailfish, Mr. Granard?" Jimmy inquired, as a devotee of the art.

Granard answered in the negative.

“Then why don’t you come along with us?” Jimmy invited, disarmingly; and Granard crossed him by immediately and positively accepting.

“Wonderful weather,” Granard offered, walking down to the boat between the blackmailer and his friend.

“It’ll do,” Jimmy granted.

The three got aboard.

There was considerable delay, before the launch left the dock, which confirmed to Granard his early guess that the expedition had been camouflage for a far more practical purpose of Jimmy’s. Now he had to go fishing.

Jimmy consulted carefully with his “captain” and pointed the boat out to sea.

Mr. K. L. Leonard, of Philadelphia, settled himself on one side of Granard in the stern; Jimmy sat on the other, and he passed cigars.

Jimmy conversed about the right tackle for tarpon. Mr. Leonard remained taciturn and thoughtful. His fishing gear included, Granard felt sure, at least one automatic pistol; but however vague Mr. Leonard might be as to the employment of other items of his equipment, he undoubtedly had little to learn about that.

Outwardly all continued serene, while side by side sat Granard, who had in his head information of vital importance

to Jimmy; and Jimmy, who must know an essential part, at least, of what Granard needed to learn.

It was Trimp who turned the talk, at last, inquiring casually:

“How did you leave Milly?”

“Head up,” Granard replied, without looking around.

“She went to New York?”

“She started there,” Granard said, meaning to give Jimmy something to think over; and there was a pause before Jimmy proceeded with the advice:

“She ought to go back to the show.”

“Why?”

“She’s a show-girl, ain’t she?” Jimmy argued.

“But she’s not broke, Jimmy,” Granard bluntly said.

“No?” questioned Jimmy unconvincingly; and he supplied, as too obvious an afterthought: “I got you. The Strathers are taking care of her.”

“She’s a good girl,” Granard ventured; and he felt tight attention on the side where Mr. Leonard sat. But there was no other response.

“And it gets her something,” Granard continued.

Jimmy and Mr. Leonard (of Philadelphia) meant to keep their eyes steadily on the sea, Granard thought; but this brought them a glance at each other.

“The hell it does!” Trimp said.

“It does, Jimmy,” Granard assured him.

“How much?”

Granard decided to take the chance. “Five,” he replied.

“Grand?” returned Trimp.

“You know better than that, Jimmy,” Granard retorted boldly.  
“Five centuries.”

“From Strathers?” was Jimmy’s best effort; and there was silence for a minute, during which the skipper came back from the bow. He believed that fishing should begin.

Leonard cast a glance ashore and made his first contribution.  
“Deeper water,” he demanded.

“There’s fish here,” the skipper insisted.

“Not the right sort,” Granard volunteered.

“Get out,” Leonard ordered, “a mile more.”

“You want sailfish?” asked the skipper.



“Why don’t you tell him what you want, Jimmy?” Granard said.

“What do you think we want?” Trimp returned.

“A good, hungry shark, I should say,” Granard answered, “or a biting school of barracuda.”

The skipper returned to the bow.

Jimmy Trimp bent away from the breeze, and with some difficulty lighted a fresh cigar. Mr. Leonard applied himself, very briefly, to a flask.

“No, thanks,” Granard refused; and he settled back in his place between Jimmy the blackmailer, and his friend Leonard of Philadelphia. Was his the voice who, up to the time of the killing of Ralph Strather, had threatened Milly over the phone?

The boat ran on in silence, and Granard reconsidered his position. He had practically told Jimmy, and Leonard, that Milly had informed him of the money—and logically also of the threats—she had received. An inference from this would be that she had told Granard also of the secret which was hers—or which the senders of the money and the threats believed to be hers.

He looked about at his companions; and he saw—or he imagined that he saw in their faces—plans of procedure with him which paralleled the procedure with Milly.

Jimmy Trimp, the blackmailer, would prefer to buy him off, if he could; the friend from Philadelphia would prefer to kill him.

“What kind of a tank town,” Jimmy presently brought up talk again, “is Talousa?”

“Not so tank, Jimmy,” replied Granard cheerfully. “The sheriff’s no *Sherlock Holmes*; but they’ve got one damn clever telephone-girl.”

Jimmy nodded. “I know. I can read. I’ve seen your build-up for her. What are you heading the skirt for? The movies?”

“I kept under cover the real find, though, Jimmy,” Granard continued.

“Another?” said Jimmy. “Who is she?”

“He, Jimmy. He has no business in any tank town. He’s ready for the big time; and this case is giving him his chance to show it.”

“All right,” urged Jimmy, “who is he?”

“The local fingerprint expert, Jimmy.”

That took effect.

“What did he find?” asked Jimmy.

“What do you think he developed when he dusted his powder on the metal under the passenger’s seat, Jimmy?” Granard

retorted. “A recipe for doughnuts?”

Jimmy took a long look out at sea before he inquired:

“Whose fingerprints were they, Granard?”

“The passenger’s, Jimmy.”

The blackmailer took a little more time to think that over.

“I’ll tell you this, Jimmy,” Granard continued presently: “He tried to wipe all his fingerprints away. He seemed to have had plenty of time; so he doused a rag into the sea—the plane was in shallow water then—and he swabbed over all the glass and metal surfaces in the cabin that had been touched—but he missed a bit of the back of a metal rail under his seat, where probably he was holding on when the ship was coming down and landing.

“Kelsey Clark—that’s the name of the local boy who is making good in a big way, Jimmy—didn’t miss that spot when he went dusting with his fingerprint powder; and he got some beautiful impressions.”

For another brief period Jimmy Trimp considered the horizon. Granard did not turn to his Philadelphia friend; he ignored him altogether.

“Where are they?” Jimmy challenged at last.

“The impressions? Where would they be, Jimmy? One set stays in Talousa, of course; another set has gone to the Bureau at Washington.”

Jimmy gazed forward; the breeze was blowing from the bow, and the motion of the boat made more wind, so that it was impossible for the boatmen to hear what was said; and Jimmy saw that they were about their own business.

He turned back to Granard. “What’s on your mind?” he said.

“You, Jimmy—and a blind jade.”

“Jade?” said Jimmy.

“A skirt, Jimmy,” Granard explained.

Jimmy considered this and shook his head. “Not a blind one in my book, Granard,” he denied.

“She hangs around the courts, Jimmy—in brass, sometimes in stone. She’s the skirt that holds the scales, and she goes by one of those fancy names like Liberty. *Justice*, they call this dame.”

Jimmy waited, suspiciously. He glanced at Leonard, but with no hint of objection to his hearing. Plainly, his Philadelphia friend was completely in the know; and Jimmy preferred, rather than otherwise, his presence.

“You’ve been taking money out of something, Jimmy,” Granard proceeded pleasantly. “Some slip that somebody made. I hope it was just a dirty scandal. . . . The business up in Georgia, of course, is more. You haven’t been counted in that sort of stuff before, Jimmy. I’ve an idea that you weren’t counted in this before it happened. I’ve an idea that it was

something of a surprise to you. If I'm wrong, no harm done; if I'm right, maybe you can suggest something."

Jimmy's teeth set hard on his cigar. He did not move.

Leonard moved; and Granard, only by an effort of control, kept himself from jerking.

"I'll suggest something," he said.

"What?" Granard faced him.

"We rented this scow,"—the friend from Philadelphia spoke not at Granard, but across him to Jimmy,—“to fish. Let's get fishing."

Two hours later Granard stepped ashore, not without some satisfaction at finding himself on land again. As a fishing expedition—in all senses of the word—not much could be said for the success of the afternoon. The three brought back, between them, one tarpon.

Granard parted from his fishing companions at the dock, and went immediately to Shane's quarters. Shane was out; but Abe, the clever little colored man, had been constantly on duty. There had been no calls from New York or from Talousa, or from Washington.

There hardly was time, Granard reckoned, for a report on the fingerprint impressions from the Bureau of Identification; and he further realized that the report, when it came, must be, almost surely, negative. As he had realized, when phoning Carewe from Georgia, there was small chance indeed that the

“friend” and the killer of Ralph Strather was the sort to have his fingerprints filed in Washington.

However, Granard had discerned that Jimmy Trimp had not been so sure of this. Why else had he succeeded in disturbing Jimmy with his tale of the impressions under the passenger’s seat?

Granard continued to think that over. . . .

Night came; and Shane returned. Granard went out.

If he had been right in believing that he had interfered, during the afternoon, with some camouflaged errand of Jimmy’s, it might be a good guess that Jimmy would be setting out, in the dark, on his business again. . . .

It was near midnight when Jimmy, alone, appeared on the street and promptly disappeared therefrom. Up an alley, through rear passages.

Granard trailed him, carefully, cautiously, turning in and out of the alleys and back areas.

At last, before a darkened door, the blackmailer halted and tapped. It did not open; no response at all, so far as Granard could hear, came from it.

Jimmy went on past it. Granard passed it.

Then it opened and a light shone out.

Granard spun about, and the light flashed on him, as he flattened himself against the wall.

The light played in Granard's eyes but he managed to make out, behind the light, the stocky figure of the morose fisherman of the afternoon, Jimmy's friend "Leonard" of Philadelphia.

Trimp, who now was behind Granard, stopped and stood still.

For a moment Granard let himself be satisfied by the stillness behind him, which apprised him of the probability that Jimmy was not moving off—nor creeping upon him. Granard was keeping his eyes on Leonard, and especially on Leonard's hand, which was free of the flashlight.

"Was that you?" Leonard challenged Granard quietly—too quietly.

"Was that me—what?" Granard returned, as quietly.

"At the door."

"No."

"You're with Jimmy?" Leonard asked.

Granard jerked his head about, gaining a glance at Jimmy which told him nothing, however, except that Trimp was there behind him.

"Is he with you, Jimmy?" Leonard inquired of Trimp.

“Yes; he’s with me,” Jimmy said.

“Then come in. Him and you—come in!” Leonard invited, and drew back, pushing the door wider open.

Jimmy, the blackmailer, stepped up. “Staying with me, Granard?” he said.

Granard followed him through the doorway, and Leonard let them pass him, and then came on behind. There was a short passage illumined only by the flashlight, which Leonard snapped on and off twice during the dozen steps to the inner door.

At the door, Jimmy halted, and with his hand on the doorknob, he looked around.

“Okay,” Leonard said to him from behind Granard, and immediately he extinguished his flashlight. The passage was pitch dark; and there was no sound but the slight rasp of breathing.

Granard half turned and put out his hands in the dark, the left in the direction of Jimmy, and the right toward Leonard. His hands could not save him from a shot; he considered the chances of a shot, but he did not expect one.

If Trimp were not there,—if Leonard had this business alone,—a pistol flash, before now, would have flared in the blackness; or so Granard guessed. But Jimmy used his head; a shot made noise and spilled blood, which might be inconvenient. A blackjack did neither. Granard stood in the



dark, slightly crouched, with his hands extended at full arm's-length.

Suddenly the door at the end of the passage flew open, and light flooded out. Jimmy Trimp sprang through the doorway and slammed the door behind him, leaving the passage again blind dark.

In the moment of light, Granard saw Leonard standing just out of reach from him. Leonard's left hand held the flashlight tube; his right bulged in his side pocket. A pistol, beyond doubt.

As Granard moved, Leonard snapped on his light, and they looked at each other. Within the house, some further door slammed; then there was silence again.

"Okay," Leonard said now to Granard. "Go where you want. It's okay by me," he softly repeated.

"What are you doing?" Granard asked, as coolly as he could. He was aware that they had accomplished the object of their maneuver; Jimmy Trimp was away and by himself. Granard merely would make himself look foolish, attempting to follow him. Jimmy could proceed at his leisure, and without oversight, upon his business of this night.

"What do you mean," Leonard returned, not unamiably, "what'm I doin'?"

"I mean," said Granard, "are you sleepy? Were you going to bed?"

“No. I wasn’t goin’ to no bed.”

“Out there, you asked me in,” Granard reminded him. “You didn’t mean just in here.”

“You want to come in?” Leonard returned, less amiably. “All right; come in,” he said, and he opened the door through which Jimmy had disappeared.

It led into a fair-sized rectangular room with blinds drawn over its windows, and with three doors beyond—one evidently the second door which Jimmy had slammed in his exit, one a closet door, and the other communicating with a sleeping-porch. There was no bed in the room, but many articles of attire—man’s attire, exclusively. This was a man’s room.

Tobacco, a whisky bottle and cards were on a small table—the cards spread in an interrupted game of one of the simpler forms of solitaire. There were three large photographs of women—different girls but of the same type, and in very similar states of exposure of their charms. They were all young, but none of them was slim. Mr. Leonard evidently liked his ladies well rounded.

There was a photograph of a boy, about five years old, in a large ornate silver frame. But what distinguished the room was its display of articles of masculine attire and adornment.

A wardrobe trunk stood open but only partly unpacked near the center of the room. Granard’s first glance counted four coats on its hangers. The closet door, half open,

disclosed half a dozen suits in a row on the clothes-rail; new, “natty” suitings in tan and brown and grey and green. A pearly suit and another of the sort advertised in the north as a “Palm Beach” suit lay on a chair. A shelf showed hats—a dozen, at least; there was a rainbow rack of ties; and on the floor by the wall, a row of shoes, white and tan-tipped, tan and black-tipped, white banded with brown and with black, white with scallops and crescents; fifteen or sixteen pairs altogether.

Granard could not keep his eyes from running along the line of this display. He looked up and met the gaze of their possessor; and he surprised a deep flow of uncomfortable color under Leonard’s swarthy skin.

He kept his eyes from inspecting the over-tailored, over form-fitted suit which Leonard was wearing; and he did not glance down at the man’s shoes, though Leonard now was examining him from scarf and shoulder to shoe-tip. It had not occurred to Granard, during the fishing expedition of the afternoon, that Jimmy’s morose friend Mr. Leonard was a votary of fashion; for the single suit on display during the afternoon was limited in its effect. The display in this room, however, made full confession; and Granard’s own presence, in his ordinary attire, only emphasized to Mr. Leonard his own fatuity.

“I paid plenty,” the man defended himself sullenly, “plenty—plenty for those suits—and the shoes.”

Granard said nothing.

“What the hell’s the matter with ’em?” Leonard challenged.

“Nothing,” denied Granard.

“The hell there ain’t!” Leonard refused this, his eyes roving again over Granard. “I don’t look like you in none of ’em. What did you pay for what you got on, Granard?”

Granard shook his head.

“I bet,” offered Leonard, “you didn’t lift it above two hundred fifty for the suit.”

“I didn’t,” Granard admitted.

“Then,” said Leonard, “I paid more than you. The so-and-so stuck me. Who’s your tailor, Granard?”

“He’s in New York,” Granard said.

“So’s my blankety-blank,” Leonard said with feeling.

Granard turned the subject.

“Your boy?” he inquired of the child in the silver frame.

“You’re damned shoutin’ he’s mine,” said Leonard with some satisfaction. “And he never was nobody’s little accident, neither. I always wanted a kid; and I got me one.”

“That’s good,” said Granard. “Where is he?”

“That’s my business where he is. . . . But I’ll hand you this: I’m heading him for Gorton.”

“Gorton?” said Granard.

“The swell school—don’t you know it?”

“Oh, yes,” Granard admitted, realizing the fellow meant Groton. “I do.”

“Where Roosevelt went to see his kid,” Leonard further defined the institution. “And I read Roosevelt went there himself, too.”

“He did,” Granard agreed.

“So it’s the swell school—ain’t it? I mean, Roosevelt’s a swell too, ain’t he? He ain’t just a President. He’s a swell. He never was no Lincoln.”

“No woodchopper,” Granard again agreed.

“Sure. I read it. He was a swell, if he never got a vote. So Gorton’s got to be good, ain’t it?”

Granard nodded. “It’s good.”

“Then Harvard for Grant,” Leonard went on.

“Grant?”

“That’s his name. Grant Leslie. Good name?” he referred it to Granard.

“Good for what?” Granard inquired.

“To get him anywhere.”

“After Gorton,” said Granard, careful not to make a correction, “and after Harvard, where do you want to put him?”

“Well,” Leonard gave this back to his guest, “what would you say?”

Granard gazed at the features in the heavy silver frame; alert eyes, too close together, which could develop either shrewdness or cruelty—or both; a nice straight nose, unlike his father’s; but he favored Leonard again in his short, stubborn chin. Granard could not deny himself a glance at the three photographs of the half-dressed women, wondering which—if any of them—was the boy’s mother.

Leonard, watching, read this thought: “I got her pitcher, Granard,” he said. “But I don’t keep her out. She had,” he added after an instant, “what it takes.”

“I don’t doubt it,” Granard said.

“She had it like a tent,”—Leonard regarded her three rivals or successors or whatever they were—“on all of them.”

Granard nodded, and did not make the mistake of further inquiry.

“Drink, Granard?”

“Not now, thanks.”

“Cigarette?”

“Thanks.”

“Sit down?”

“All right.”

Eyes on each other, neither offering any advantage nor trying to take any, they sank simultaneously into chairs half the room’s width apart. Leonard carefully kept his right hand away from the pocket where he had his pistol. He continued to hold the flashlight in his left hand; but as Granard noticed this, he laid it down on the table near him.

The round tube rolled and fell from the edge of the table, and Leonard jumped for it; but after putting himself in motion, suddenly he checked himself and let the flashlight lie on the floor. He sat back, regarding Granard.

“About your boy, Grant,” Granard said conversationally, but his mind not on the subject at all, “are you figuring that—after Gorton and Harvard—he’ll have to work?”

“Maybe,” said Leonard shortly. “Also, maybe not.” Plainly, his mind had left the matter; he shot a glance at his watch.

It was the time, Granard guessed, for Jimmy’s appointment with someone somewhere near, and Leonard’s thought went to that, but not anxiously. In the nature of the business, Jimmy could manage it alone, even if

Leonard had first planned to accompany him; and very probably he had not. One caller would attract less attention than two; and, at least, it must be a furtive affair.

“I’d figure, if the boy were mine,” Granard went on easily, “on travel, after college—Europe, certainly; London, Paris—and Rome.”

Leonard was paying only formal attention. There was some sound at the front of the house. Was Jimmy back already, Granard wondered.

Leonard arose. Granard sat quietly, and he caught an instinct, stifled again, which started Leonard toward the flashlight; but the man left it on the floor and went from the room.

He left the door open behind him, but Granard moved so that he could stoop and pick up the flashlight without being seen, unless Leonard reentered the room. Leonard did not immediately do that; and Granard took the nickel tube in his hands.

He twisted the cap at the bottom, exposing batteries—exposing, too, a little space beside the batteries into which paper had been pushed, as if only to pack the batteries firmly.

Granard drew this out, felt a circlet inside—a ring of white metal with a gleaming green stone, brilliantly cut. He saw at once it was an emerald, and no common one. Its size alone would have distinguished it, aside from its setting and its shape. Granard knew he had seen it before,



and not in a box or in some jeweler's window. He had seen it on some woman's finger. Whose?

His mind was spinning fast, but not swiftly enough to tell him before he was warned to pack it back in its paper wad, replace it in the tube and screw on the cap. He laid the flashlight on the floor, and was in his chair again when Leonard returned.

"Damn dames," pronounced Leonard morosely. His mood of the afternoon, and of the early moments of this evening's encounter, claimed him again.

Granard ventured no comment; and Leonard stood, studying the floor. It might be a mannerism; it might be, Granard realized, that Leonard noticed some change in the position of the flashlight. If he did, he made no mention of it. Slowly and as if absent-mindedly, Leonard picked up the nickel tube and stepped into the next room, this time closing the door behind him.

Without moving, Granard waited the outcome of the investigation which, he was certain, was going on at the other side of the door.

The man's face was a mask when he again presented himself. Granard felt that one guess of his was as good as the opposite, as to what Leonard had learned. At least, he knew that he had his stone.

There were few amenities exchanged before Granard departed.

The air of the street was as agreeable to Granard as the return to shore had been, after the fishing expedition. The night remained mild, calm, reassuring. There was the beat of distant drums in dance rhythm.

“Whose ring? Whose ring?” beat in Granard’s brain at the accent of the measure. He was surer than he had been at the moment when he had held it in his hand, that he had seen that emerald, in its peculiar platinum setting, on a woman’s finger. A privileged finger, an important finger, at some table where dined men of wealth and of peace, and women who were wives or widows of great fortune.

How had the ring been hidden in the handle of Leonard’s lamp?

Not because it was stolen. For if it had been lost to its owner by theft, word would have been given, a report spread, and a reward probably offered for its recovery. This had not been done. Moreover, Jimmy Trimp was no thief or partner of thieves. Jimmy was a blackmailer.

Probably, then, the ring was a payment, or more likely, given as a pledge of a cash payment later to be made. It marked extortion, but not theft; and it marked the victim as a woman.

A woman, not a man, was paying Jimmy and Leonard. It was with a woman, not a man, that Jimmy had had the appointment which he had proceeded to keep this night. . . .

Granard let himself into the apartment which he shared with Shane.

“Calls?” he inquired of Abe.

“One from New York City, sir.”

“The paper?”

“Mr. Carewe, sir. He said it is most important.”

“Call him back,” Granard bid.

“Bill,” said Carewe’s voice from New York, “what’s new down there?”

“Not much,” Granard replied, carefully. “What have you got?”

“Something big on the fingerprints from Ralph’s plane.”

“Whose are they?” Granard asked.

“Too fast, Bill. We haven’t fastened the name on them yet. The prints don’t fit any on file at police headquarters, or in the Washington Bureau. The man who rode with Ralph Strather certainly never had a police record; and he hadn’t voluntarily put his prints on file in the civil identification lists, either.”

“Then what’s so good that you have on them?” Granard demanded. “A ‘no record’ report? You called me to cheer over that?”

“You’ll cheer, Bill! But it’s hell to put it into a headline.”

“What?”

“The man who took the last ride with Ralph Strather—and shot him—is the same man who took the last drink with Sally Doane—and shot her.”

Granard drew in breath quickly as his thought spun about this statement. Sally Doane was a show-girl who had been shot and killed in New York, ten days ago, by some yet unknown “admirer.” The man had gone to her apartment with her; they had been drinking; then a shot. The man had escaped, leaving no indication of his identity but a thumb and a fingerprint on a cocktail glass.

The headlines next morning had declared him a “society man”—a “mysterious playboy.” And the murder of Sally Doane had supplied one of the sensations of the same week which brought the first threat to Milly Welton from the Voice; and which brought to Milly, in the mail, the first five-hundred-dollar bill marked “*For a good girl.*”

But Milly had said she never had had anything to do with Sally. She had not even known Sally. Milly would not even have heard her name, had not Sally Doane been shot so sensationally by some not-yet-named “friend.” She never had played in a show with Sally. Sally Doane was, to Milly, only a girl who had been shot, having taken to her apartment some mysterious “friend” who had drunk with her, and then killed her and disappeared—leaving as evidence of his identity only a few fingerprints on the glass which he had held.

The trouble had been that these fingerprints tallied with none on record anywhere.

Now Ralph Strather had been accompanied, on his flight from Newport News, by some “friend” who, at last, had shot him and disappeared—leaving fingerprints which tallied with the fingerprints left on the glass found beside Sally Doane. . . . The details of the discovery of this fact were coming from Carewe over the phone.

“Where’s Milly tonight?” Granard asked.

“Here,” said Carewe, and he named the hotel.

“You’ve told her about the tally on the prints?”

“Of course I’ve told her,” Carewe returned. “But she’s no good to us. She’s collapsed, practically, Bill. After Strather was buried. She stood up to that; then she’s gone to pieces. Anything keeping you there, Bill?”

“Why?” Granard returned.

“If you came up—and you’d better fly, Bill—you might get something from Milly.”

“Then you think she has something?”

“Who can tell what any girl’s got?” Carewe complained. “But something has struck Milly so hard that it’s shoved her completely under. You’ll leave in the morning?”

“A little later,” Granard replied; and after more talk, which led to nothing, he hung up.

He had not mentioned the emerald ring to Carewe. How could Carewe, from a phoned description, help him identify the owner? Moreover, Granard had no certainty that it was connected with the affair which had involved Milly and drawn Ralph Strather on to his death. Jimmy Trimp and his friend “Leonard” undoubtedly had more than one iron in the fire; and two might be extremely “hot” at the same time.

Granard went to his room and undressed, plagued by the image of the emerald which he almost, but not quite, could “see” upon a woman’s finger. Whose?

Peggy might help him, he thought. A girl, even though she did not go in for gems herself, noticed them on others. It was amazing, the catalogue of articles of adornment which women carried in their minds.

He sat down, and lest sleep might destroy the sharpness of his recollection, he made a drawing of the ring, as he remembered it.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was shortly after nine in the morning when Abe awoke him.

“A telegram, sir,” the little colored man said. “I figured it might be important.”

It was. Milly’s name followed eight words:

*“Am returning. Please be there when I come.”*

Granard creased the yellow slip between his fingers, trying to satisfy himself as to what this appeal to him implied. Indecision, he thought—indecision before a dilemma which she could not resolve by herself.

He recollected, of course, Carewe’s description of her as having been shoved “completely under.”

“Reply, sir?” Abe asked him.

Granard wrote, simply, “I will be here,” signed his name, and handed it to Abe who phoned it to the telegraph office.

“You’ll have breakfast now, Mr. Granard?” the little colored man asked.

“Whenever you’re ready, Abe. . . . And by the way, is there green ink, or perhaps a green crayon, about the place?”

“No sir; but it’s hardly a step to a drug-store.”

“Never mind,” Granard bade, but after he had shaved and dressed, he found a bottle of green ink on the desk in the living room.

He colored, with some care, his drawing of the emerald.

He wished he knew by what means Milly was returning—by train or by air. But he had intentionally kept out of his telegram to her any question which might upset her own

plan. A fragile plan, at best, he thought; and he thought that, when she actually left, he would hear again from Carewe.

He looked at the clock and called Peggy. To his surprise, she herself answered.

“Up?” he inquired.

“And ‘decent,’” she replied, adopting the word of the Broadway jargon for “dressed,” but she failed to make her voice frivolous.

“Going out?” he asked.

“Not now.”

“I’ll be over,” he announced.

“I’d like that,” she said, and her monosyllables strengthened his feeling that, in her sphere, also, something had happened since he had seen her.

He found her alone, and in no morning negligee, but dressed as if she had been about to go out, early as it was. Also she had breakfasted.

She not only was serious, as he had expected, but plainly she was troubled too. Her mood stirred him; a woman’s mood, it was—stubborn, protective, defensive, secretive and a little frightened too. She was more than a little frightened, he realized, before he had spent a minute with her, talking of trivial things.



A glance about the room told him that she had had a newspaper, and had read it and rumbled it and thrust it aside. Peggy watched him, as he noticed this; and she waited for his eyes to return to her.

“You’ve seen that, of course, Bill,” she said. “Or you knew it before it went to press.”

He nodded.

“What goes to press in the next edition, Bill?” she demanded of him.

He shook his head, studying her.

“You mean you don’t know,” she challenged impatiently, “or you’re not telling me?”

“Perhaps a little of both,” he said.

Suddenly she stamped her little foot. “Bill, tell me!”

“Tell you what?”

“What’s coming next?”

“What’s made it so important to you?”

“A queer thing, Bill!” she told him. “A strange thing!” And she looked at him, her eyes big; and her lips parted and troubled.

“What thing, Peggy?” he said, very gently. He led her to a sofa upon which she seated herself. She pulled one foot up under her and stared down. He placed himself behind her, close to her; and gave her a little time.

“What thing, Peggy?” he finally repeated.

“A perfectly terrible, frightful thing—if it’s true, Bill!” she said. “But first tell me; do you know yet who he is?”

“The man who killed Ralph—and Sally Doane?” Granard said.

“Yes. The man—of the fingerprints.”

“No, Peggy; I don’t know.”

“Does anybody know?”

“Anybody,” said Granard, “of course takes in a lot of ground. Several people—or a few, at least—know. We think Jimmy Trimp knows, and his friend Leonard. I got some evidence last night that a woman knows——”

“Milly, you mean?”

“The woman I have in mind isn’t Milly. Milly doesn’t know—or she didn’t,” Granard corrected, “when I last saw her. But perhaps she does now.”

Peggy ignored this, if she heard it. “Of course the man himself knows,” she said shivering.

“Of course,” Granard agreed, closely watching as much of her face as she let him see.

“It’s on his mind every moment—what he’s done,” Peggy proceeded. “He killed Sally Doane in New York days and days ago; and then he killed Ralph. But nobody saw him, either time.”

“Nobody,” said Granard, “who has offered to help the police.”

“But both times,” Peggy pursued her own thoughts, “he left his fingerprints behind him. They haunt him, you see; they would haunt him, wouldn’t they? They must!”

“Sally and Ralph haunt him?” Granard said, knowing she did not mean them; but he wanted to force her to her own plainer words.

“Perhaps they do, Bill! He has them too! But I meant—his fingerprints.”

“He certainly made a mistake,” Granard said, “to have left them.”

“He didn’t think about them when he shot Sally Doane, the paper says,” Peggy whispered. “Probably he’d not shot anyone before. It excited him too much; and besides, he’d been drinking. They found fingerprints everywhere—especially plain ones on the cocktail glass. When he shot Ralph, he’d had—experience.”

“He thought of prints then,” Granard agreed. “He tried to wipe his away from the plane. But he missed one set of impressions.”

“So now,” Peggy breathed, “he’d wipe anything he touched, wouldn’t he?”

Granard waited; but she did not go on, by herself.

“What have you heard, Peggy?” he asked and amended: “Peggy, what have you seen?”

She drew closer, quivering. “Bill, I’ve seen—*him!*”

“*Him?* Who?”

She whispered, aghast at her own declaration: “He wipes everything he’s touched, when he thinks no one sees him.”

“When did you see him?”

“Last night.”

“At a dinner?”

Peggy shook her head. “No; it was afterwards. But I’d almost noticed it before.”

“Almost?” Granard repeated her word.

“I mean—I’d felt, earlier, that something was strange. Last night—it was late, after we’d danced—I saw he was—wiping off things.”

“Like silver, you mean?”

“Yes. His fork, and the handle of his spoon; and the sides of his glass.”

Granard had held himself from the direct challenge of the question, “Who?” And he kept to that restraint.

He realized that Peggy was not ready to speak a name, to accuse of murder a dinner companion—and one with whom later she had danced. Her nearness to accusation was shaking her; and Granard knew that he would completely silence her, if he tried to force a name from her.

He took a different direction, drawing from his pocket the bit of paper on which he had sketched the ring with the stone which he had colored to its emerald green.

“Did you ever see the original of this?” he asked.

She took the paper and stared at it; she lost breath a moment, and then looked up. “Yes. Why?” she said.

“Whose is it?”

“His mother’s,” she said; and she gazed at him, aghast at what now she had told. But still he refrained from trying to force her on to the name. “What is this, Bill?” she asked of him. “Who made this—drawing?”

“I did.”

“Of her ring. Where?”

“I happened on it, Peggy,” he said, “in a peculiar place. A blackmailer has it; a partner of Jimmy Trimp’s. When I found it, I remembered seeing it sometime on some woman’s finger. It’s an extraordinary stone in size and shape, and an extraordinary setting. I was sure I’d seen it, but I couldn’t think on whose finger. I couldn’t take the ring with me; so I made a drawing, hoping you could help me.”

Peggy went whiter and hit her lips. “Help you to what, Bill?”

“The identity of the woman who was being blackmailed. For it’s surely blackmail, Peggy. That’s the business of the man who has the ring.”

“He might have stolen it.”

“No; he’s a blackmailer, not a thief. He made her give him the ring.”

“Give it to him?”

“As a payment, or possibly as a pledge for later payments. It must be worth twenty or thirty thousand dollars. And probably it represents considerable progress in the line of extortion. Before taking rings, my friend undoubtedly had got all the ready cash the woman could scrape up.”

“To save her son,” Peggy whispered.

“Exactly,” Granard agreed.

“And you think I’ll tell you who he is?”

“Have I asked you?” Granard retorted, refusing the stupidity of reminding her, at such a moment, that she was shielding a suspect of a murder. She had not seen Ralph Strather seated so still in his plane, with the buzzards soaring above him; Sally Doane was scarcely a name to her. But very recently she had been beside a frightened man who felt himself a fugitive; and she had surprised him wiping away marks made by his fingers, lest they drag him to his death.

Granard had aroused the protective instinct in her; and he knew, when a woman gave away to that, nothing could be done with her. It made her irrational but more splendid. She stirred him so that he spoke in his own defense.

“What do you think I would do, if I knew?”

“Too much.”

“You want nothing done?” Granard challenged her.

“No. Not—nothing.”

“Then what?”

She was silent.

“The first thing I would do,” Granard proceeded, “would be to make sure of him.”

“Have him locked up, you mean?”

“I mean—make sure he’s the man.”

“Oh! By his fingerprints—which he wipes away?”

“By one, at least,” Granard corrected, “which he didn’t wipe away.”

“Then what will you do?”

“If he’s not the man, nothing,” Granard replied, and was aware that now he was temporizing.

“But if he is,” Peggy pressed him.

“He is,” Granard refused evasion. “We both know that. And who he is, I’ll know soon—if I like.”

“Whether or not I tell you.”

“Of course.”

“You’ll trace him through his mother; for I told you she was his mother.”

“And I know he was with you last night.”

“He wasn’t the man with me!”

“Of course not, but he was in your group. And it’s clear that his mother is here. It’ll not be hard to match them together.”

“Yes; she’s here,” Peggy admitted. “I know her; you know her. You also know him, at least by sight. Bill, it will be—if it’s true—a tremendous scandal. Beyond anything before. His mother, Bill—does she deserve it?”



The irrational instinct of woman's protectiveness claimed her again, making her temporarily immune to argument. Granard saw this; and he found nothing better to say than:

"She seems to have deserved—him."

"She didn't, Bill! That's the most awful part of it. She never deserved—him; and she'll strip herself—or let your friends strip her of her last penny; she'd endure anything to save him."

"My friends," Granard said, but let further protest go by default.

"Bill," Peggy begged, "leave this to me—just for today."

"How much do you mean by *this*?"

"*Him* and his mother. Your investigation—how long will it take you, Bill, to trace them down—if I don't tell you who they are? Would you have them by noon?"

"By night, I should certainly hope," Granard replied.

"Then by night, I'll have them for you. At least, I'll tell you who they are. And by night, we'll know—both of us—whether what we think is surely true. For I'll bring you a print of his, Bill. One of those he won't have wiped away. But you've got to give me all of today."

She rose, and he stood facing her.

“You’re going to trust me, Bill—aren’t you?”

“Of course I trust you,” he said; and by his words he meant that he trusted her not to warn her friends away. He felt sure that at least she would not do that; but how far she could force herself to proceed against them, he did not know.

A tinge of color flushed in her cheek and faded. He wondered to what thought it was tell-tale. He felt her opposed to him. He liked loyalty—to her class, to her kind, to her sex, and to that fundamental instinct, stirring beneath all else, which marked *woman*.

“Good-by, then, Bill, until tonight. After you go, I’ll go out.”

Preceding her, and not even glancing back, Granard thought of her emerging from the house and proceeding about her extraordinary errand. She would be fashionable and frivolous-looking, as always. He went to the beach, intentionally, avoiding any path she was likely to take; but soon he was among them, acquaintances and friends. His mind automatically separated the men known to have mothers living.

At noon, at his apartment, he received a wire from Carewe, informing him briefly that Milly had left New York by airplane.

After five o’clock, Peggy phoned him, and he went directly to her.

“They’re gone,” she told him. “They’re both gone. . . . Bill, I swear I did nothing to frighten them. I expected him all

afternoon. But they've gone."

"Where?"

"I don't know. They drove away together. They took a car and drove away alone."

"You might as well give them a name," Granard said.

"He's Theron, Bill!"

"Theron Drendale!" Granard realized. He had not seen him in Palm Beach; he had not seen him recently in New York or elsewhere. Theron Drendale was one of those men mentioned frequently but seldom conspicuous—weak, wealthy, ubiquitous but in his own furtive way. He had been no special friend of Ralph Strather's, Granard thought; but he had been no special friend of anyone's. Everybody knew him; no one ever singled him out.

His mother, everyone knew and also mentioned. She had divorced his father (who since had died), and she had married again, divorced her second husband and resumed the dead Drendale's name. Her own father had died and left more millions in trust for her. She had never had but the one child, Theron, who now was near to thirty, and who had never married.

Perfectly he fitted into the place of the cautious, furtive "friend" of the show-girl Sally Doane. Perfectly he fitted the requirements of the "friend" whom Ralph had picked up at Newport News, and who had accompanied Ralph to the

plane so inconspicuously and quietly that no one had been able to describe him; no one really had “seen” him.

And now, with his mother, he had disappeared. For that was what Peggy meant. He had taken his mother with him, and no one else, and had fled. Who had alarmed them?

“Theron Drendale,” Peggy was saying, while this raced through his mind.

“You didn’t see him today?”

“No. I meant to but—failed.”

Granard did not demand details of her attempt. It was enough for him, and for her that they had fled.

Granard’s mind went back to midnight when “Leonard” entertained him while Jimmy Trimp proceeded on his important errand. Perhaps it was simply as a result of this that the principals in the matter had fled.

“Do you know when they left?” Granard asked.

“It was early this afternoon, but I just now found it out. They started south, someone said.”

For Miami, Granard guessed. Or they might immediately reverse their course and make for Tampa or Fort Myers, anywhere.

Peggy was repeating the little she had learned. It was plain that she protected them no longer. It was as if she felt they had flaunted her protection of them when they fled. This too was unreasonable; but Granard was thinking, as he had before, that a girl only gains from unreasonable emotions.

No cruelty had come to her. Now she wanted them caught; but when caught, she surely would spare them again.

“Bill, it’s my fault,” she blamed herself. “I let them get away.”

“They haven’t got away,” Granard denied. “Even if they get to Cuba.”

Miami, he thought again; and the Havana plane.

Twenty minutes later he was driving to Miami, where he learned, after some inquiry, that a woman and a younger man, who gave their names as Mr. and Mrs. Ellister, had chartered a special plane to take them to Cuba. The descriptions which Granard gained left little doubt of the actual identity of “the Ellisters.”

Late in the night, Granard returned to Palm Beach; and he went almost immediately to the apartment which he shared with Shane. As usual, Shane was out, but Abe was on hand to report that Mr. Carewe, in New York, had phoned him repeatedly.

Carewe’s news proved interesting. He had no new development directly on the Strather case, but he had learned that Izzy Mackleton had departed suddenly for Florida.

“By plane?” Granard inquired.

“You know Izzy,” Carewe returned. “He’d not leave terra firma for a Federal appropriation. But he got out in an awful hurry on the night train. . . . It must mean a big break is coming quick.”

Granard silently agreed. Izzy was not one to waste his time; he would be on hand, in an emergency which required him, neither too soon nor too late. “Seen Milly?” Carewe inquired.

“Not yet.”

“But she flew; she must be there—or didn’t she arrive?”

“She’s here,” Granard assured Carewe.

“At the Railstons’ again?”

“Yes. Ralph’s sister met her, I hear, and took her home. Nobody blames her, Carewe.”

“Try to make her talk,” was all Carewe replied.

\* \* \* \* \*

Granard called at the Railstons’ at ten in the morning. Milly was not up, and Esther Railston refused to let her out of bed; but she sent Granard in to see Milly.

“She hardly slept at all. She couldn’t sleep on the plane; and she’s been almost in collapse since she got here. It’s what’s

on her soul, as she puts it,” Esther said. “But she won’t talk to me. She will to you. She’s been waiting for you.”

Esther took him into Milly’s room and left him alone with her.

“Bill, sit down, please; but don’t ask me anything. They’ve asked me so much. . . . What could I tell them?”

“I know now why Jimmy Trimp thought I was a ‘good girl’; I know now why the Voice threatened to kill me. . . . Sit down near me, Bill; and don’t—don’t ask me anything.”

“You never loved him,” Granard stated quietly.

“Loved him?” Milly caught at this. “No. . . . No,” she admitted. “But I knew him—so well.”

Granard watched her a moment more, and decided it was time to tell her: “I know him too, Milly.”

She jerked back. “You do? You mean—he’s arrested?”

Granard shook his head. “I mean, I know his name, Milly. And I’ve known him, too; slightly.”

She sat supporting herself again with her arms, and staring at him. Her lips moved, but she did not speak. At last he heard her say as if to herself more than to him: “You wouldn’t trick me?”

“We both know,” Granard said as quietly as he could, “that he’s Theron Drendale.”

Her lips parted, but her breath sighed through them. “Yes,” she said; and a moment later: “Where is he? Do you know?”

“He left the country yesterday, Milly. He flew with his mother from Miami—for Cuba.”

Milly began gathering herself together; she sat straighter, and no longer needed the support of her hands. “You mean—he’s got away?”

“He’s got across to Cuba,” Granard said, and witnessed in this girl something of the same change which had come to Peggy when she learned that Theron had fled.

“He’ll stay there?” Milly asked.

“Do you want him back?”

“I?” she said. “Oh, if he just could never come back! If he just could—vanish!”

“Maybe that will happen, Milly,” Granard said.

“But the police—won’t they bring him back?”

“The police don’t know yet that he killed Sally Doane—and Ralph,” Granard explained. “Only you and I have found it out. And you know more than I. You know—don’t you—why he killed Sally?”

“Yes; I know. After I realized it was Ronny who killed her, I knew how it happened. I knew—almost as if I had been there



—just what he did.”

“Because,” said Granard, very gently, “you could imagine him killing you?”

She nodded, and stared away; and Granard remained quiet. He ceased even to look at her, but gazed away out the window.

“Ronny could have killed me,” she finally said. “He was a frightening person to be with sometimes. . . . I know exactly how he came to kill Sally. He suddenly completely lost control of himself, and she didn’t know how to handle him. . . . How well did you know him, Bill?”

“Scarcely at all,” Granard replied, without turning.

“He wasn’t a man’s man,” Milly kept on in the past tense, as though Theron Drendale, like Sally and Ralph, were dead. “But he had an appeal for women.”

“Some women,” Granard permitted himself to interject.

“He could be sweet, Bill. He could. It wasn’t just his money that made a girl like him. He could be so very sweet—and so very, very terrible.”

Granard continued to gaze away.

“When Ronny wanted to please you, there was nothing—absolutely nothing—he wouldn’t do for you. . . . And when he wanted you to please him, there was nothing—he thought—you shouldn’t do for him.”

“And when you wouldn’t?” Granard said, without turning.

“Then came the trouble. . . . It was terrible, Bill. . . . He gave me a bracelet once; a marvelous old piece with diamonds and sapphires and rubies. I never wore it. . . . I gave it back to him when I sent him away.”

“To Sally Doane.”

“I didn’t know it was Sally he took up next.”

“He never told you?”

“He never told anyone what he was doing—at any time. He was the most careful man I’ve ever known. He’d never have taken me out where I’d be seen with him, if I hadn’t made him. That was one thing we quarreled about. Sally didn’t make him take her out with other people. That was one of her big mistakes. . . . He wanted always to be alone with you. So he was alone with her when they quarreled and he killed her; and no one else knew even that he was her ‘friend.’”

“Not quite nobody else,” Granard objected.

“You mean Jimmy Trimp knew, then?”

“Jimmy, I think, had been watching him for some time,” Granard said. “That was Jimmy’s game—to ‘get something’ on a man who wanted to keep things hushed up. But Jimmy hardly hoped for a break as big as hush-money for a murder.”

“So Jimmy knew he’d gone with me.”

“And then gone to Sally.”

“Jimmy figured I must have known that,” Milly said. “I see that now. Besides—there was the bracelet.”

“The bracelet Drendale gave you, and you gave back?”

Milly nodded. “And he gave to Sally Doane. It was on her arm, when they found her dead. I know now that all the papers told about it at the time. One even had a picture of it; but I never saw it, and I never read the descriptions. I don’t read details of murders in the papers, Bill. The killing of Sally Doane was nothing to me; I never dreamt she died with a bracelet on her arm that I had worn.”

“And Jimmy Trimp never dreamt you didn’t know it, and so could tell who killed Sally,” Granard finished. “Well, Jimmy’s action—and the Voice’s—is now perfectly clear.”

“But Ralph,” said Milly; and with his name, her voice failed her.

“Yes—Ralph,” Granard echoed; and they gazed at each other, remembering the figure in the pilot’s seat of the plane on the Georgia sands, and the buzzards circling overhead.

“Bill,” appealed Milly, “is this why Ronny killed him?”

“You’ve worked that out too?” Granard said gently.

“We know Ralph found out something—in New York,” Milly proceeded. “Ronny was still in New York—but his mother had come down here.”

“That’s right,” Granard encouraged her. “Mrs. Drendale knew what had happened. She already was paying—and paying plenty—to Jimmy Trimp and his friend. She left New York for here; and they followed her down. Perhaps they came on the same train.”

“But Ronny stayed in New York,” said Milly. “Why?”

“Figuring it was safer,” Granard suggested. “A city usually seems safer than a smaller place, to a man in trouble. Besides, he wasn’t especially expected here. His mother was. If she suddenly changed all her arrangements without good reason, it would call attention to her—and Ronny. That was the last thing she wanted. So she came, as she’d arranged.”

“When Ralph found out something in New York,” Milly said, “Ronny was around. Probably he had an eye on Ralph; for he knew how much I liked Ralph, and that Ralph wanted to marry me.”

“Probably he figured that Ralph knew anything you knew,” Granard added for her.

“But I think Ronny got wise, up by himself in New York.”

“You mean, he realized—as Jimmy Trimp didn’t—that you had no idea he’d taken up Sally Doane?”

“Yes. And that I’d not recognized the bracelet. I guess he just about got to feeling that I was ‘safe,’ when he ran across Ralph in some way, and learned that Ralph had turned up something.”

“What, do you figure?”

Milly shook her head. “We’ll never know—exactly. But it made him kill Ralph.”

“So the nature of it, at least, is clear,” Granard proceeded. “Ralph had picked up something which had to do with the killing of Sally. It wasn’t enough to tell him that Ronny killed her; but it was enough to clear up the case, if the information got to somebody else.”

“Me, you mean?”

“Yes; probably you. So Ronny followed Ralph from New York—it’s certain they didn’t leave the city together—and caught up with Ralph at Newport News. Ralph took him aboard; he liked to give a lift,” Milly said, her eyelashes suddenly wet.

“We both know what happened,” Granard said quickly, to spare her more.

“I’ve tried to think whether Ronny followed Ralph to kill him; or whether something came up between them when they were flying. Not that it makes much difference,” Milly whispered, “except in the images in your mind. . . . Nobody recognized Ronny at the airport at Newport News. Ronny saw to that. It was night—and they just knew that some friend of Ralph’s got aboard.”

“Yet that doesn’t prove,” Granard said, “that he’d planned then to kill Ralph.”

“No. For Ronny always hid what he was doing—even if he wasn’t doing anything particular at all. . . . But it makes no difference,” Milly repeated. “Ralph’s dead; and Ronny—soon they’ll be making me help to kill him too. Should I—must I help them, Bill?”

Granard bent forward, and caught her hands, and for an instant, held them tightly. She whispered: “That means—you’ll help me, Bill?”

“Of course I’ll help you. I’ll always help you.”

“Then tell me—who else can I trust now?—what to do!”

“I’ll tell you to do nothing now,” Granard reassured her. “Nothing more than you’ve just done.”

“But I’ve done nothing at all, Bill.”

He shook his head. “No,” he said. “You’ve made my move perfectly plain to me.”

He felt her shiver. “Your move, Bill? . . . I see. Of course, you’ll do something. . . . Bill, what are you going to do about Ronny?”

Granard held her hands more tightly in his clasp until her shaking lessened a little. “Whatever I do, will be mine, Milly,” he said at last. “You’ll not be in it. You’ll have no responsibility for it.”

“But what will it be?”

He bent, and still holding her hands tightly clasped, he kissed her forehead very gently. "The best thing for everybody that I can possibly bring about," he promised her; and a moment later he left her.

\* \* \* \* \*

He went out into the sunlit street and into the warm, agreeable languor of the day. Young people passed him on the way to the beach, or toward tennis-courts and the golf-course; the air of the place was for pleasure and play. Death, for them, dwelt far away.

A few weeks ago, Granard was thinking, Theron Drendale was not unlike some of these men; death must have seemed distant indeed from him. But now, twice he had visited death upon others; and had made his own life forfeit. But how clumsy to send him to the "chair"!

The idea set marching in Granard's mind the pageant of news sensations offered him: Theron Drendale's arrest and extradition; his return to New York under guard; his arraignment, indictment; his trial.

What counsel? What counsel for his defense?

Izzy Mackleton, of course. Izzy, who had left New York on the night train, night before last; Izzy, who had given Granard originally the tip to come down here, promising that something big was soon to "break," because Jimmy Trimp so conspicuously was "in the money."

Granard's mind went back to the remark made by Izzy's blonde secretary, who was alone with him, for a moment, just after he had taken his "tip" from Izzy and was leaving.

"When I went to school," the girl had said, "I read about a monkey and a cat and a fire and some chestnuts."

Granard remembered his own words. "Izzy doesn't look like a monkey," he had said.

"You don't look like a cat," she had retorted, and had told him no more.

Her meaning now had become more plain; and Izzy's action in giving Granard the tip to go to Palm Beach had become much less altruistic.

Murder had been done, Izzy knew; and someone, with much means, was paying Jimmy Trimp big blackmail—someone potentially a client for Izzy; but in the situation, there was not a penny for a defense attorney until that someone, so valuable to Jimmy, was named, accused and arrested. Then, for every thousand dollars paid in tribute to the blackmailers, ten thousand would be offered in fees in the desperate attempt to save the prisoner from the chair. In such a situation, the family would post its last penny, if necessary. But first, there must be an accusation, an arrest, an indictment.

The allusion to the monkey and the cat, and the chestnuts in the fire, needed no further elucidation.



Granard gazed up at the hotel where Izzy, if he was now in Palm Beach, would have established himself; but Granard did not go in. He went by; but his own course had become declared.

He found Peggy at home and waiting for him.

“Where have you been, Bill?” she asked, as soon as they were alone.

He told her.

“She knows about—it?” Peggy whispered, her eyes big and her lips pressed tight after they spoke.

“Yes; she knows all about it.”

“All?” Peggy persisted. “You told her that he did—both?”

“She knew that,” Granard repeated. “All I had to tell her was that he’d left Florida.”

“Bill, what’s she going to do?”

Granard gazed at this girl, so different from Milly, but one who also held a man’s life in her hands.

“We’re going to do it, Peggy,” he replied to her.

She started. “We? You and I? . . . What do you mean?”

“I mean, she’s left it to me; and I’ve brought it to you, Peggy.”

He saw that her breath left her; and though, in a similar emergency, he had seized Milly's hands, he made no move toward Peggy; but the sudden beating within his own breast almost stifled him.

“Why did you bring it from her—to me?”

He put his hands out to her, and she clasped them, but did not cling to them as Milly had. She was much, much less of a child than Milly, and she stirred him incomparably more. He slipped his hands from her clasp and caught her wrists, and slipped his fingers to make a band about her forearms.

“How soft you are, Peggy,” he said, “for all your tan and tennis and your swimming!” (And he thought: “You're soft as Milly, and as adorable; but Milly has not a touch of your steel.”) “But there's something under your softness,” he said aloud.

“What do you mean?”

“Strength,” he said. “Don't think I'll ask you to speak, Peggy—to accuse him. And I'll see that no one else forces you to. I've taken that on myself. What I'll do will be my own, and not in the least your responsibility.”

“How can you keep it,” she rejoined to him, “from being mine too?”

“I will.”

“I don't want you to! What you do, I do.”

“You feel that!” he cried, very gently; and not gently at all, but almost violently, he drew her to him.

“Kiss me,” she said, held by his hands. “Don’t you want to?”

So he released her to take her close against him in his arms.

“I would like to hold you forever,” he said. “But you know I have to go; and you know what I have to do. . . . You don’t know exactly,—and don’t ask me now what it is,—for I’m going to do it. Then—let me come back to you.”

\* \* \* \* \*

When Granard left, he did not tell Peggy whither he was bound; but she knew very well that he had gone to Havana. She understood, too, the cause of his haste. At any moment some one of the official people in New York investigating the murder of Sally Doane, or in Georgia, the killing of Ralph Strather, might stumble upon some item or object to point to Theron Drendale; they would trace him and instantly order his arrest, even in Cuba.

Bill Granard meant to anticipate this action by some action of his own in regard to Ronny. What action?

*What* did Bill mean to do?

The day in Palm Beach continued pleasant; the sun shone on the blue sea, and the white, smooth sands; but the afternoon had become dull and drab to Peggy; and the men about her, trivial and stupid. They dealt with such tiresome matters.

What serious business was in Bill Granard's mind—what choice must be so deliberating—as the airplane in which he flew was bearing him to Havana?

*Havana!*

After a while Peggy overheard the word, and she listened; but the casual, idle talk ran on with no reference to Granard or to the Drendales. It merely was that a pair of these trivial, restless playfellows felt like a little jaunt away from Florida.

“Nassau?” Kim Tetherington offered.

“Not Nassau,” his wife Lila objected.

“Havana,” Peggy heard herself putting in.

“You're with us, Peggy?” asked Kim.

“When—and how, Kim?”

“Fly! From Miami, tomorrow morning.”

“Suits me,” said Peggy. “It's a date.”

\* \* \* \* \*

When Peggy went out with the Tetheringtons on the first evening in Havana, she was uncomfortably alert and apprehensive. She had heard nothing from Granard, and she had no way of knowing that he was in the city—or even in Cuba; or that Ronny Drendale was.

Peggy was registered, of course, at her hotel, which was one of the few whose “arrivals” were noticed in the Cuban papers; accordingly, anyone who watched the newspapers, as Bill Granard always did, must soon learn that Miss Peggy Cartwain and the Tetheringtons were here.

She did not go out much on the next day; and she was alone in her suite, which adjoined the Tetheringtons’ when Granard called. He was colder and more stern than she had ever seen him, when he closed the door behind him and faced her.

“Bill, what’s happened?”

He shook his head. “How do you happen to be here?” he demanded, in return.

“You’re not glad to see me!”

“No,” he told her bluntly. “Not now.”

“Why? Oh, Bill, what’s happened—between us?”

“They’re here,” he told her.

“Theron, you mean? And his mother?”

Granard nodded. “They—and the others. At least one of them.”

“Who do you mean?”

“Jimmy Trimp and his friend. But Jimmy, I think, went somewhere today. Leonard didn’t leave. Of course he’s the dangerous one.”

Peggy came closer to him. “Dangerous to you, Bill?”

He snapped at her: “Not to me!”

She recoiled from him. “I’ll ask you nothing more.”

He stepped forward quickly and caught her hands. “Forgive me, Peggy; but I shouldn’t have come to see you; and you shouldn’t have come down here.”

“No,” she said, keeping her just-given word to ask him no more. “No; but I did come. And I’m glad I did, Bill.” For his plight had become plainer to her.

It was: he had pushed himself to the point of taking final action against Ronny Drendale, and the time for it had almost come; and he hated what he had to do. His repulsion betrayed itself so clearly that when he gazed at her, it almost seemed that he had spoken it. What had he driven himself to do?

Again she forbade herself the agony of asking. She said: “Nobody else knows yet—do they—about Ronny?”

“Not yet,” Granard’s lips proceeded in clipped, short syllables. “But when will he break out again?” he went on; and Peggy was aware he was arguing with himself more than with her. “When a man has killed, nothing worse can happen to him than to be discovered; so when he’s

frightened, he'll kill again. *He* did, we know. . . . There'll be somebody else soon."

"Yes," Peggy said to aid him. "Of course. He has to be taken in charge—some way."

"He'll not be taken in charge," Granard said, and his lips pressed shut. "But we won't think of that tonight, when I come for you."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Have you heard the Mexicans?" Granard asked Peggy, when he returned to her in the evening. "They've just come to Havana; and they're the hit of the season."

"I'd like to hear them," Peggy said; and he gave directions to his driver.

The place where the Mexicans were playing that night proved to be a huge resplendent restaurant with terraces and balconies.

"They've just moved here," Granard observed. "They had to have a bigger floor. All Havana wants to hear them."

Manifestly, it was true. The place was packed. As soon as a table was forsaken by one couple, it was seized by another. Men in white, and women half bare in décolleté, moved in and out and about ceaselessly, while the Mexicans thrummed and sang their haunting half-savage melodies. They made the very air vibrate with a brutal, passionate pulse

which suddenly would interrupt its violence and become caressing and tender.

“Like them?” Granard inquired, as Peggy and he sat down.

“I never heard music so—exciting,” she said.

“Demoralizing, you mean?” Granard suggested.

Peggy nodded.

“That’s the hope of most music, isn’t it?” Granard said; and he ordered for them both. But neither of them had much appetite.

This dinner was meant to be an interlude—Peggy realized—in the business which Granard had undertaken. She felt that he was trying to put it out of his mind, but could not. And after they had been at their table for less than an hour, she became aware that the presence of someone on the floor beyond her disturbed him.

Peggy made no comment and asked no question, but she located the person—a compact, wide-awake man, evidently an American, whose companion was a Spanish girl wearing décolleté that was especially exposing. They had not been there a little while ago, Peggy was sure; for she would have noticed the woman. The man was of far more ordinary type; yet it was at the man, more than at the woman, that Granard kept glancing.

A man—a young man, who had not troubled to remove his hat, yet who bore himself with the confidence of a gentleman



—picked his way between the tables. He wore a white suit with coat cut like a dinner jacket, and with black tie.

He peered about, as he advanced none too steadily. One hand, his left, touched the backs of the chairs or brushed, sometimes, the shoulders of the seated people he passed, who jerked about and gazed up at him. He gave them no attention; he was searching for someone; and as he searched, he held his right hand in his bulging side pocket.

His hat, pulled down, shaded his features; but now he was near enough to be unmistakable.

“*Ronny!*” Peggy breathed aghast.

Now he saw the American with the Spanish girl, and he ceased to saunter. He rushed forward, his hand out of his pocket and pointing a revolver.

“Ronny! It’s Ronny!” Peggy cried. “Bill, stop him! . . . Stop him!”

But the man beside her did not move.

The man with the Spanish girl moved, but too late. The minute before, he had been too absorbed in her. Now, as he rose reaching into a pocket, she jumped up and away from between them.

Ronny fired twice, three times. Four—five!

No. . . . Some of the puff of smoke spat from the other man’s pistol. He was shooting too, as he fell. Ronny fell. The roar

of the shots ceased. Men shouted; women screamed; but there was no more shooting. Ronny and the other man lay on the floor.

Granard got Peggy out, as quickly and as inconspicuously as possible. Drendale was dead; there was nothing that anyone could do for him. Granard found acquaintances, not the Tetheringtons, who escorted Peggy to her hotel. It was two hours before he rejoined her.

Peggy had not gone to bed; she merely had rested, sleepless, awaiting him. And she was alone; for she sent away the friends who had brought her home; and the Tetheringtons had not returned from their evening's engagement.

Peggy's nerves alternately whipped her up to jerking excitability and dropped her into intervals of dull semi-insensibility, far short of sleep, which were the consequences of shock. In these, her feelings confused to sting her to wakefulness again. Ronny was dead—shot down quickly, cleanly, in so far as any killing can be “clean,” in a duel which he had started. Now there never would be the torture of a trial, the delayed waiting for the execution in a death-cell; the blindfold, his head shaved in the proper spot for the electrode; the awful moments while his limbs would be clamped to the “chair.” . . . At last, the awful, tearing course of the fatal current.

Much better; oh, much better that Ronny Drendale now was dead. The other man was dying; he scarcely could survive. Peggy understood that his going would be, in another way, only a good thing.

Her mind could encompass this but her emotions still struggled with it. The restaurant floor in Cuba became confused with that night club in New York a few short weeks ago, where, as here, Bill Granard had been her escort; and one man had moved upon another with a pistol.

There Bill had leaped forward and with his quick coolness thwarted the killing; here he had made no move; and he had known, as soon as Ronny appeared, what must follow. She had hated him, on that night in New York, for his playing with that near-death; she did not hate him tonight, for that death which he might have prevented and had not.

He was at her door; she rose and admitted him and closed the door again. He did not touch her; he stood away from her as though he felt that she did not want him near. She gazed at him, and suddenly seized him.

“I told you in Florida,” she said, “that what you did, I did! So I did that tonight, Bill. . . . We did it! I only want to know exactly what it was you—we had to do.”

“He made it very easy for me, Peggy,” Granard told her. “Not Ronny; I mean the man at the table—who will be dead by morning. He went by the name of Leonard; he was a friend of Jimmy Trimp—worse than Jimmy, an extortioner using any method, including threats to kill. He put the ‘heat’ on Ronny and his mother, so hot that he stripped her of ready cash; he stripped her, as you know, even of her jewels. Then, on top of that, he tried a double-cross on those people who had paid him so heavily. He tried to sell out to me.”

“Sell out?” Peggy repeated, puzzled. “To you?”

Granard nodded. Still he was holding his arms from her. “You see, he knew the game was about up. Not only had he got about everything he could get from the Drendales, but he knew that a break must be near. He didn’t know how much I knew, but he was sure I knew something, and that I had something on him. So he tried to turn a trick to make himself safe and pick up a little more coin too. He offered to sell what he knew to me.” Granard halted for a moment.

“That made what I had to do far easier than I feared it might be. All I had to do was to locate Drendale, and phone him one short message.”

“What, Bill?”

“I can tell you almost exactly what I said. I identified myself; and he knew it was I. Then I said: ‘There’s a man named Leonard who says he knows you. He says he has a story about you worth \$50,000 to any newspaper in New York. Is it true?’

“I needn’t tell you what he said. It was almost nothing. We know what he did. . . . I thought he would do it. I wanted him to do it; but I thought he’d get around to it—today, possibly. Not last night. . . . But Leonard thought he’d hear the Mexicans last night. And Ronny didn’t wait. . . . I guess God arranged it better than I. Leonard got him; but he got Leonard too. . . . Tonight they’re calling it a fight over a girl. It seems the girl with Leonard knew Ronny, too. The Cubans need no

more than that. It may all pass here as a killing because of a woman. There's nothing to tie it to Sally Doane of New York, and to Ralph Strather, who was shot in Georgia. . . . We'll never mention that again."

"Not as long as we live," Peggy said.

"Together," he added.

"Together," she said; and in his arms, the fright and confusion fled from her. She rested against him, simply and frankly, and calm again.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Granard returned to Palm Beach, he called on Izzy and found that the lawyer was cutting short his stay. Izzy was about to depart for New York, and in none too good a humor.

Granard and Izzy gazed at each other with their most eloquent thoughts declared, but most cautiously unspoken.

"As a newspaper man you're even a bum business man," Izzy unburdened himself at last. "What a story you cheated yourself out of!"

"However, you admit I had some story," Granard retorted.

"Not one per cent of what you had in your hands!" Izzy rebuked him.

"What's no per cent of a hundred thousand dollars, Izzy?"

“What hundred thousand dollars?” Izzy demanded sourly.

“The defense-fee I beat you out of, Izzy,” Granard said cheerfully. “Forgive my dry eyes. . . . What I came to say was, thanks again for the tip that took me down here.”

“Thanks for what? Who’s got anything out of it?”

“Well, at least it looks like a minister is going to get a wedding fee,” Granard told him cheerfully. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

On his way out, he spoke to the same girl who, in New York, watched after appointments for Izzy.

“Excuse me for once calling you a cat,” she said.

“And Izzy a monkey?”

“Whatever he may be,” she said carefully, “you’re no cat out of the copybook.”

“Why? Didn’t I pull the chestnuts out of the fire?” Granard challenged.

“I’ll say you did. But, oh, boy, how you pushed them back again! And now who gets anything out of them?”

“I just mentioned to Izzy,” Granard returned, “a minister.”

---

Bill Granard was a newspaper man, not because he needed the money, but because he loved the excitement and tension of being “in the know” on all the news of the day. When it is rumored that something “big” is about to break among Broadway circles, Bill goes to Palm Beach, following a faint clue which may help him to clear up the mystery. How he exposes a huge blackmailing scheme, saves a girl from death, and sends a man to his deserved doom make a lively, ever-enthralling tale which moves with lightning speed from Broadway to Palm Beach and back again.

The gayety, lights and outward glamor of Broadway are never so well shown as by this author who understands and knows the human suffering and heartbreak which go on behind the glittering façade. In this novel, show girls, shyster lawyers, debutantes and gunmen are caught in a tragedy which takes place in a setting of music, laughter and carefree pleasure seeking. Not only is this a story of Broadway and its inhabitants—it *is* Broadway.

---

## **RECENT NOVELS—BY ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE**

THE CASE AGAINST MRS. AMES  
SHADOW OF DOUBT  
PENTHOUSE  
THE STAR OF MIDNIGHT

## Transcriber's Notes

- Copyright notice provided as in the original—this e-text is public domain in the country of publication.
- Silently corrected palpable typos; left non-standard (or amusing) spellings and dialect unchanged.
- In the text versions, delimited italics text in underscores (the HTML version reproduces the font form of the printed book.)

[The end of *In the Money* by Arthur Somers Roche]