

The Golden Greyhound

By DWIGHT TILTON

A chase after a fair face leads Overton Brill, a wealthy man about town, into assisting in the defeat of the most astounding act of piracy ever attempted on the high seas.

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PROLOGUE.

The action of the story has its real beginning on an ocean liner bound for Europe and just leaving New York. It has been boarded in haste on a winter day by Overton Brill, an impetuous wealthy young bachelor, who, attracted by a pretty girl accompanied by an elderly gentleman, has followed them aboard. Brill was on his way uptown with Aristides Stebbins, his valet, known as Jay, when he saw the girl, just after purchasing a valuable bracelet as a gift for a Miss Carstairs. The passenger list reveals the names of the pursued as Mr. Andrew Jennison and daughter. Brill finds himself without money and negotiates with a dark individual named Benedict for the sale of the bracelet, receiving \$500 for it, with which he secures a deluxe cabin. At dinner the conversation turns to the weather, and a Professor Pennythorpe's storm prediction is placed before Captain Humphries for judgment. Brill makes the acquaintance of Mr. Jennison, and the two proceed to the captain's cabin to inspect a phenomenal, wonderfully trained canary. At luncheon a jovial person, Christopher C. Marsh, introduces himself to Brill. Starting from a sound sleep Brill hears through the window Benedict, the professor and Jennison discussing the large shipment of gold aboard. Soon after this he is rewarded by a smile from Marion Jennison for a small courtesy. Marsh is informed that he has been selected to take charge of the Christmas concert, and he chooses Brill, Marion Jennison, the professor and Mrs. Blucher-Ward as his aids. Brill, known as Mr. Overton, and Miss Jennison have a pleasant chat together. Icebergs and fog are reported. Jennison, worrying about the gold, becomes sick. Professor Pennythorpe observes that the ship is off its course. Marsh notices that the captain hasn't been at the dinner table for several days. Professor Pennythorpe misses his sextant and compass. Brill has a talk with Marion about the concert and is later told by Benedict that the latter objects to his friendship with Marion, whom Benedict calls his fiancée. Brill meets Marsh on deck. Hearing a noise in a supposedly unoccupied stateroom, they investigate with the captain, but find nothing. The altered course of the vessel frightens the passengers, who protest. Brill and Marsh look to Jay to assist in a secret search of the mysterious stateroom. A wireless reports that Russia has declared war against Great Britain. Marsh suspects Benedict of having manufactured the message. Professor Pennythorpe armed with a marine glass watches a strange craft approach astern. At the Christmas feast Brill becomes jealous of Benedict's attentions to Miss Jennison. Marsh, still suspicious, continues his investigations of the mysterious noises. Knocking on the door of room 33, he is confronted by the smiling Benedict. Another war notice is posted up. Jennison confides to Brill that \$50,000,000 in gold is being shipped to Russia secretly. Jennison wires his partner for instructions and is told to transfer the gold to a Russian ship. Marsh and Brill suspect that the dispatches were tampered with.

More Suspicions.

MARSH almost snatched the sheet from his friend's grasp, nor did he waste time by apologizing. He scrutinized it carefully, then took it to the light of a porthole and examined it again. That done, he turned sharply to Brill. "Did you do any writing on the face of this sheet?" he demanded. "No. I used only one side to scribble on, thinking it a piece of blank paper." "Then it's clear enough. In his anxiety to get his cipher right Jennison traced his figures here and there over the letters they belonged with. See here; there's a 6 and there's an 8, and here's all four of 'em—1, 8, 6, 2—as plain as a row of tin soldiers." The other peered close to the paper. There were the lines, faint and uncertain, but still fairly clear in the light. Brill straightened up and looked at Marsh with great agitation. "Benedict held up the Jennison message and forged this one!" he said excitedly. "That's how it looks to a man with out a telescope," was the mild reply.

"If Jennison goes he'll take the girl with him of course?" Brill inclined his head slowly. Bitterness filled his heart, yet he had no words for such an appalling catastrophe. Marsh looked at his dejected countenance with kindly, almost fatherly, sympathy.

"Benedict's a genius—in his peculiar style," he said. "I pity the man that gets in his way." He took out his pocketknife, went to the bar of light that came from the port hole and began to work industriously on his nails, whistling the ghost of a tune with his queer sibilation.

To the distracted Brill it seemed like indifference, a prudent washing his hands of the whole affair. Of course he could not blame Marsh. Why should he entangle himself in all sorts of unpleasant results for the love affair of another man's heart? And yet—

He could endure this irritating inaction no longer and jumped to his feet. His hand was already on the door-knob when his stout companion cried: "Where are you off to?" "I must do something," was the excited reply. "I must fight against this!"

"Fight? Of course," exclaimed Marsh energetically. "And I'll fight too. But I'm too old to fight without fortifications and ammunition and all modern improvements. Wait till we get in the game and deal ourselves a hand worth playing. My metaphors may be mixed, but my sense isn't. They'll have to wait till the sea goes down, and even then they can't snap tons of gold from one deck to the other by flips of the finger nail."

Brill released the doorknob. Truly there was sense in the calmer logic. Yet he could not refrain from pacing the cabin impetuously. Time, so precious and so scant, was wasting with every moment's delay. "First of all," said Marsh, "don't get nervous. The sea's on our side now. When it goes down there'll be only you and I—and Stebbins. We mustn't forget Stebbins."

He walked over to Brill and put one hand affectionately on his shoulder. "Let's sit down calmly," he continued, "and with your enthusiasm and my discretion draw up a plan of battle. We've got to fight and fight hard, but that's no reason why we should get excited over it before excitement counts for points. That's rather a neat tool your friend Stebbins has made, isn't it?"

"For the lover, with heart aflame, there was little interest in the wretched bit of twisted wire Marsh had picked up from the floor.

Their deliberations, which Marsh with a certain amused pride called the "board of strategy" talk, extended over half the following hour. To carry out the military conceit the stout captain general spread out a large sheet of brown wrapping paper that had been around the books loaned to Stebbins by the chief engineer and designated it as his war map. On this he made strange and very black hieroglyphics with a stub of a soft lead pencil. These outlandish marks, being interpreted to Brill, were the points they decided essential to their plan of campaign.

The younger man realized the fertility of his friend's invention and owned that the plans were distinguished by great common sense. But the policy outlined seemed too Fabian for his fiery ardor. Cavalry charges were more to his taste than mining and sapping. A lovely lady was to be won, and had not heroes of romance ever been impetuous?

"Look here, Overton," responded Marsh to one of his outbursts of energy. "If we accomplish anything it will be by brains, not muscle."

Toward the end of the war council Aristides Stebbins appeared on the scene, his face smeared with oily grime and his right hand clutching a piece of steel that resembled a dwarfed crowbar. Marsh gazed at this disreputable looking figure with keen amusement.

"Hardly do to have him go on our errand looking like that," he remarked to Brill. Then to Stebbins, "Mr. Overton has a commission for you when you remove your makeup."

Jay lost no time in arranging for his ablutions in the next room, whence in a few moments came sounds suggestive of a grampus in his native element.

Marsh's words to Aristides recalled to Brill one important point of their discussion. "You still believe I should tell Miss Jennison what we suspect?" he asked earnestly.

"Absolutely essential. We must have a friend in the enemy's camp."

"But she may not believe me." "The commercial man's round face expanded with a very wide and very significant smile, a smile so comprehensive and so suggestive that Brill flushed warmly. Still he protested, but more feebly.

"Is it right to worry her?" he queried. "No, don't worry her," was the placid reply. "Let her go aboard the other steamer. And, by the way"—He left his sentence hanging in the air and went to a porthole, where his attitude became as fixed as that of a sentinel on duty.

Meantime Stebbins returned with a shining face and a suspicion of soap-suds in the corners of his mouth. Brill decided to accept Marsh's plan. "Do you think you can get a message to Miss Jennison for me, Jay?" he asked.

Aristides believed that he could and said so modestly. "Then say to her that it is of vital importance to her father that she grant me an interview in the library as soon as possible."

If Brill had the slightest doubt of the efficacy of his message Marsh did not.

"She'll think it's a proposal. She'll be there fast enough," he murmured to himself. When Stebbins had gone he said aloud:

"The sea's quieting, and the ships are drawing closer together. She's flying the Russian flag all right. Looks like a revenue cutter or a private yacht."

"Then they will begin to transfer the gold?" asked the young man anxiously.

"The Russian representative must come aboard with his credentials first. It will all be done with the utmost decorum. Trust Benedict for that."

Having delivered himself of that article of belief, Marsh showed a sudden predilection for prowling in Stebbins' room, as if there he might find some magic key to unlock all the doors of mystery. However, he came forth with only a very prosaic bundle of newspapers.

"I see your friend Stebbins keeps a file of old journals," he observed blandly, "mostly of the date we sailed. I notice that the kegs of gold bars weigh 200 pounds each. It'll be no cinch to hike 'em over to the other ship. All this helps us to gain time, but I'm afraid that won't be enough. How's the moon?"

The moon? Brill looked at the rubicund visage of his friend in utter bewilderment. Was the keen brain weakening under the strain of events? "They may work at night," continued Marsh, "if the sea gets quiet and there's moonlight—Hello! Well?"

"The question was for the returning Aristides. "She says 'Yes, sir,' said the youth, looking at Brill, "and I think she's on the way to the library now."

In a second Brill was off, and within ten minutes he was back again, to find Marsh and Stebbins in an animated colloquy, whose nature he could easily guess. Everything was one thing now. Sending his protegee away, Brill began the story of the interview with which his heart was still warm.

"I've told her everything," he said, "except, as you advised, I did not mention Benedict."

"It wouldn't do," returned Marsh, nodding sagely. "Mightn't have been able to disguise her feelings. Then she'd be no use to us. How'd she take it?"

"So brave a girl I never saw. She was—and a great deal more to the same effect, until Marsh felt it absolutely necessary to check this fine enthusiasm.

"For a man so crazy for action," he interrupted bluntly, "you're strangely full of words just now. Come on! The captain next."

"But Stebbins"—Brill began, stopping abruptly as that worthy entered



Jay Bowled Gravely, Picked Up His Wires and Tools and Disappeared Within His Own Portals.

the cabin. Marsh waved his fat hand gracefully and said in his most grandiloquent tone:

"We understand each other, don't we, Mr. Stebbins?"

Jay bowed gravely, picked up his wires and tools and disappeared within his own portals.

"Now, what's our plan of attack on the captain?" asked Brill impatiently. He had ideas of his own, but realized that this cool, clever witted man was a better strategist than he, with his heart so irrevocably entangled in the strange warfare. He listened intently to his companion's words.

"In the first place, Overton," began the commercial traveler, with intense seriousness, "much depends on the attitude taken by Captain Humphries. In a general way, however, I propose that we put a supposititious case and assume, in jocular tone at first, the possibility that the gold reshipment is a practical venture."

"And let him chew on that for a little," suggested Brill eagerly.

"Exactly. And after it has been digested we'll hint at the possibility of the wireless dispatches being forged. This we'll follow with the facts about Benedict's writing the bulletin of the declaration of war before it was made public."

"That's our strongest proof of a plot," said Overton, a great confidence rising within him that Captain Humphries must see the villainy of the whole thing notwithstanding his apparent friendliness with Benedict.

"Right again, my brother," cried Marsh, "for if he can remember at what hour the operator submitted the dispatch for his approval before displaying it to the passengers it will prove Benedict the author of it and that he forged the others. Different details will arise undoubtedly. We'll attend to them as they come. Let's be off."

At the captain's door they knocked once, twice and still again without effect. At last as they were about to turn away the heavy square of steel opened slowly and disclosed the sturdy form of Captain Humphries, his face somewhat flushed and his eyes curiously deep in their sockets.

"Come in, gentlemen," he said, extending his hand cordially. "I thought I heard a knock. I was in the inner room. I—I haven't had many visitors since it set in to blow. We'll have fine weather now. Will you?"

He nodded toward the tiny mahogany sideboard, but both shook their heads with thanks.

Conversation turned—as perennially in a captain's cabin—on the weather, the voyage and the behavior of the ship, and time dragged along until Marsh grew impatient. It was Brill's cue to begin to lead the conversation to the gold shipment, but the young man seemed uneasy and averse to entering the skirmish.

Catching his friend's eye when the captain's back was turned, Marsh made signs intended as an order to proceed. Brill paid no apparent attention, but crossed to the other side of the room and began to whistle softly to the canary singing in his cage. Then he turned toward Humphries.

"How's the bird standing the voyage, captain?" he said cheerily.

Marsh was thoroughly irritated. Why was the man wasting golden time in talking about a bird? He noted that even Captain Humphries was not particularly enthusiastic over the welfare of his pet today.

"Oh, Dick!" the officer replied. "He's all right. Aren't you, Dick? Pretty fellow!"

He put his head aside, close to the fragile bars, and chirruped once or twice. The bird sidled away on his perch to the opposite end of the cage. Clearly he was not on his good behavior. But Brill persisted.

"Can't you make him sing or—turn a somersault, Captain Humphries?" he asked. "Mr. Marsh has never seen him. You'd like to see him turn a somersault, wouldn't you, Marsh?"

That gentleman growled out a most ungracious acquiescence. So long as Brill had lost his nerve he might as well accept anything.

"He's a bit surly lately," explained the captain. "Doesn't like high winds, I suspect. Come, Dick, come!"

The officer thrust his bronzed finger between the bars, but the disobedient Dick merely gave it one savage peck and then hopped to his upper ring, turning his back most unconcernedly on his master.

"You see," laughed the latter thickly. "Dick doesn't like me today. Some other time he'll do better."

"Well, we must be going," said Brill, to Marsh's amazement. "I hope Dick will be more gracious the next time we call on him."

Marsh's indignation was about to lead him to speak on the subject which Brill had apparently forgotten, but a tug at his sleeve and a strange look on the face of the other told him that there was good cause for this action. They bade the captain good day and quickly went out. Not a word was said till they reached their favorite rendezvous, Brill's cabin. Marsh's face was one vast interrogation point, however.

"Seeking the captain's aid would have been sheer folly," were the first words the younger man spoke.

"What do you mean?" "I once had a monetary transaction with Benedict"—Marsh looked up curiously—"and wrote him a note. The envelope containing his reply, which was merely money, bore a peculiar monogram."

"Yes, yes," said the other, deeply interested.

"A sheet of paper bearing that monogram lay on the captain's table," continued Brill.

"And you introduced that bird nonsense to read it. Well, I'm—"

The young man smiled at this tribute to his strategy and proceeded with his narrative.

"On it was written, 'J. decides to go with the gold, but everything must proceed as arranged.'"

Marsh could be extremely annoying at times, as Brill had learned before this. The present was one of the times. He produced his pocketknife and again began some merely hypothetical surgical operation on his finger nails, the while indulging in his softly sibilant whistle. "What do you see in that?" he demanded after a little. "Hasn't Benedict a right to send a note to the captain?"

Brill was vexed and took no pains to conceal the fact.

"Do passengers usually tell the captain what 'must' be?" he asked sharply. "Bear in mind that so far as the people on this boat know Benedict has nothing to do with this gold shipment."

"Which means that Humphries is Benedict's tool," was the calm reply. "You're right, Overton. Only quizzed you to find if you reason it out as I do."

"There isn't any other theory possible," said the young man. "Still, it does seem almost incredible." "The incredible often happens when millions halt the trap," returned Marsh. "Perhaps Benedict had some grip on Humphries. Besides, he's drinking heavily. You must have realized that."

A Column of Smiles For Everybody

Sentimental Compunctions.
"Can't you learn to call me Jim?"
"I'm afraid I can't."
"Why not? That's what all my best friends call me."
"Yes, I know. But it would be so unpleasant. We—we used to have a dog named Jim, and every time I hear his name I cry."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Jury of Ladies.
"Well, how did you get along with your jury of ladies?"
"Pretty fair," said the judge. "They demanded some things not usually accorded juries. Wanted a chafing dish in the jury room and had to go shopping every afternoon."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Its Class.
"The laws forbid this kind of dog on the cars, sir."
"What laws can forbid one kind of dog?"
"The laws against expectation, sir. Your dog is a Spitz."—Baltimore American.



Her Specialty.
Booker, the Agent—I suppose you'll have your wife for your partner in this sketch.
Mugger—She can't do it. Every time we get together she does nothing but a monologue.—Chicago News.

The Intricacies of It.
"Why don't you study the time table, and then you wouldn't have missed your train?"
"That was the trouble. While I was trying to translate the time table the train pulled out."—New York Herald.

At His Best.
Blobs—The doctor told Guzzler drinking was the very worst thing he could do. Slobbs—I guess that doctor didn't know Guzzler or he would have realized that drinking is the best thing he does.—Philadelphia Record.

The Course of Action.
"This book, which had a page loose in it, has undergone a sort of legal action."
"What was that?"
"It has been bound over to keep the piece."—Baltimore American.

Strong Proof.
"Sued for breach of promise, eh?"
"Yep."
"Any defense?"
"Temporary insanity, and I expect to prove it by the love letters I wrote."—Exchange.

Explained.
He—I wonder how they came to call a wife's personal allowance her pin money.
She—I guess it's because her husband generally sticks her on it.—Exchange.

Most Discourteous.
"What did the editor say when you took him your story entitled 'The Wishing Rug?'"
"He told me to beat it."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

A FLY GUY.
He turned around and saw a fly;
He cracked it on the coco.
It made a sound to this nice guy
Like a million killed, by Hoko!

A Woman's Way.
"Your doom is sealed," cried the villain.
"Ha!" laughed the heroine defiantly. "I guess I can steam it open."—Chicago Herald.

Widows Are Dangerous.
"How did you catch your cold, old man?"
"I cod id by siddig dear a widow."
"She must have been very icy."—Boston Post.

Very Likely.
Patience—Peggy says he always brings sunshine when he calls.
Patrice—Is that the reason she always turns down the gas?—Yonkers Statesman.

Among Those Present.
"Did Blinks exhibit at the horse show?"
"Well, he made an ass of himself."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Mean.
Gibbs—I tell you no man can fool my wife. Dibbs—Then how did you get her?

[To be continued.]