

THE TIME-LOCK A NEW YORK CITY MYSTERY-ROMANCE By CHARLES E. WALK

Fifty Years After By J. H. Cassel

THE AIRLINE By EDWIN BLISS

CHAPTER I. "Number 1313."

HE deserted old brownstone house—Number 1313—was directly across the street from the ultra-exclusive Powhatan Club in New York's Gramercy Park region.

And because of its hoodoo number and its air of desolate dead grandeur, the house was a theme of endless query to the Powhatan members. To Rudolph Van Vechten and Tom Phinney—both rich, young, idle—the place had an odd fascination.

Van Vechten was nephew of old "Man of Iron" Theodore Van Vechten, a power on Wall Street, and whose pretty and ultra independent ward, Miss Paige Carow, was just now supposed to be travelling somewhere in England with her chum, Mrs. Josephine Devereaux.

One day the Powhatan Club was thrilled by news that Number 1313 had been rented. No one knew to whom. Inquiries were made. It was learned that the house of mystery was owned by Temple Bonner, an odd old millionaire, whose nephew, Percy, was a member of the Powhatan.

They even said they had not done the leasing. No one was seen going in or out of Number 1313 until one Sunday in summer, Rudolph and Phinney, sitting at a window of the Powhatan, saw four men, at half-hour intervals, enter the house. They were rough looking fellows, one and all.

Rudolph and Phinney put on their hats and followed. As the man turned eastward into the street, they were the last sight of him for a moment. But as they rounded the corner they saw him lying on the sidewalk, near an alley mouth—stone dead.

Tom Phinney was so accustomed to what he pleased to call his friend's "aberrations" that at Van Vechten's intimations that he desired to be left alone, Tom stalked off to the billiard room with out a word.

The day was hot. He wanted to get out of town. The voice of the country called to him. Tom's income did not permit of his owning yacht or motor-car; but what he did not know about them was worth anybody's time trying to find out.

While it was yet daylight, Tom found the sail where it was stored in his friend's boathouse, slipped the single mast and rigged it up, then went up into town after a box of provisions. He meant to cruise around the Sound for a day or two.

Dusk was falling when he drifted close to Rocky Cove. He was passing two miles off shore when he heard the muffled exhaust and warning pipe of a motorboat. And here it was where his adventure may be said to have begun.



just and the unjust alike. The wind whistled and shrieked, the thunder boomed and crashed and split the night, and the lightning illuminated the whole scene with a ghastly semibi-ance of daylight.

At last the one called Callis—the sandy-complexioned man—moved suddenly to his knees, but without releasing his grip upon the well-nigh drowned captive—a posture decidedly uncomfortable for Tom, for the boy knew he was sure of it.

"Hold this duffer," Callis shouted above the uproar, "while I knot together a couple of handkerchiefs. If he makes a move, but him over the head." Then came a lower-voiced addendum which Tom alone caught: "I don't know but what we ought to do it anyhow."

Tom now had an opportunity to observe several particulars about him that he had previously missed, or, at least, had not noticed. He was tall, loose-jointed, muscular, youngish, and of a sandy complexion and a serious, not to say sullen, cast of countenance.

CHAPTER II. Tom Phinney's Adventure. TOM PHINNEY was so accustomed to what he pleased to call his friend's "aberrations" that at Van Vechten's intimations that he desired to be left alone, Tom stalked off to the billiard room with out a word.

CHAPTER III. The Man of Iron. SOEVER it was that dubbed Theodore Van Vechten the "Man of Iron," he displayed a pretty wit. For the phrase was descriptive of the man, both figuratively and literally.

He was Rudolph's uncle. The younger man's ample fortune was in the master financier's disposal. Rudolph knew only in a vague way that his extravagant demands had been

could, scarcely above a whisper, "I am here." The first word was met with a stifled, startled gasp. "Oh!" "Don't be frightened. Lord knows I'm harmless enough," he said.

"What ever you do," he heard a tremulous whisper, "be quiet. If I am caught here it will spoil everything; I dread to think of the possible consequences. But I couldn't sleep for thinking of your predicament."

"Just release me," said Tom, "and we can let consequences go hang. I can take care of you." "Oh, no-no-no!" came in a tense whisper.

"I want to hear your voice again. But not for anything else, I want to see your face. If you're the same girl, I'll agree to anything—even to remaining here like this, till I die."

"Tom Phinney," that young gentleman replied simply. "I shall say nothing at present—but I mean to know it some day. I mean to have you to myself some time, so that I can look at you to my heart's content. You are beautiful."

"The response to this, whisper though it was, revealed a flash of spirit. "Much good it would do you to ask! I don't remain quiet I shall leave you at once."

"If silence was what she wanted, surely she could not complain of it. This was declared through life. It remained so long unbroken that the girl's fortune failed her.

"Are you asleep?" Tom whispered. "I've never been you-fainted!" Not a sound from Tom.

CHAPTER IV. In the Dark. NOTWITHSTANDING the exciting experience of the night, and the rough treatment to which he had been subjected, and notwithstanding the wretchedly uncomfortable plight in which his captors had left him, Tom Phinney's day upon the water in time began to produce the natural effect—the dozed fitfully after a while, again and again coming to himself with a start from the verge of slumber; and then at last, when cramped position no longer annoyed him, when his arms and legs grew numb and ceased to pain, he slept profoundly.

Then all at once he was awake, and was alive, to a consciousness of two things—that the hour was late, and that he was not alone in the room. The darkness was still pitch-black, no sound had disturbed him; yet he sensed another presence.

And then a thrill went through him. He was suddenly aware of a faint, delicate fragrance. He knew that the intruder was a woman. Could it be the girl of the wonderfully sweet voice?

CHAPTER V. Mr. Flint Advances a Theory.

Rudolph Van Vechten's bewilderment, but the young man remained completely uncomplained over the seemingly inexplicable manner in which his cousin Paige's purse had appeared. He met the detective's narrow regard with a long, questioning stare; then he abruptly dropped into a chair.

"Flint," he said, "you took my breath away. Sit down, man, sit down. Think I'll let you go, you have told me all about this?"

GOING AWAY FOR THE SUMMER? Remember The Evening World prints each week a complete up-to-date novel—a week's reading! Have The Evening World sent to your summer address.