

among 'em quite a lot too. Course, I'll admit that before they get wise to the fact that our cheap blended stuff can't be used at social gatherin's quite so free as their cut rate chianti, they do occasionally furnish business for the accident wards; but carryin' concealed cutlery is one of their national customs, you know. They soon get over that."

"Gwan!" says Swifty. "Bet you ten to one your friend out there's got his cuttin' hardware on him this minute, and would use it at the drop of a hat!"

"What, Cardello?" says I. "Why, he wouldn't hurt a fly!"

**C**COURSE, there was no use arguin' with Swifty, or tellin' him what a mild and gentle party this Joe Cardello was, for he wouldn't believe it; but it's a fact. Honest, I've known him to cry like a kid, just because one of his men had a foot mashed liftin' rock into a dumpcart; and as for playin' the respectable citizen part—why, he couldn't have done better if his name was Cassidy or Mueller. Ain't he a director in the 'Steenth National, and a member of the Board of Trade, and president of the Knights of Columbus? And don't they talk of runnin' him for Alderman at the next city election up our way?

Being rung into politics was what come nearer to puttin' bats in Joe's belfry than anything that ever happened to him. It was that started him wearin' the silk lid on week days, and keepin' his pockets full of campaign cigars. As a matter of fact, they're puttin' him on the ticket on a chance of carryin' his ward; but it's a long shot, at that.

But Cardello takes it all mighty serious, and tells me confidential how proud it makes his little Rosa feel of him. Rosa, she's in the third year of high school, he says, and, accordin' to the picture he presented me with not long ago, she's quite a star. Anyway, Joe seems to think more of pleasin' her than he does of anything else.

"She's an American girl, Rosa," says he. "Two years old she was when I brought her in my arms from the steamer; but what of that? English is all she knows, and I have had my papers twelve years now. Don't that make it? Maybe you have seen our house, the one I built for Rosa?"

Yes, I had. And, say, with its bright blue front steps, and the red trim, and the green blinds, there ain't a house anywhere along the Post Road has got anything on it in the way of lively color schemes.

Seems Joe was a widower when he landed, and that Rosa's been keepin' house for him ever since she was twelve. And what them two ever do in that big place is more'n I can figure out. But that's Joe's idea of livin' comf'able and stylish, and I guess he can afford it better than lots of others who try the same game.

As I was sayin', though, there wa'n't any use in my describin' details like that to Swifty. Like a good many other people I know, he can't get used to the idea that Italians can ever do anything here except dig ditches and sell bananas, or that they'll ever figure prominent anywhere outside of the police courts.

**A**ND Purdy-Pell is about as bad that way. He thought he couldn't go to Joe's offices without riskin' gettin' the cholera, or being mixed up in a stabbin' case; and it was only when I consented to stick around durin' the interview that he agreed to meet Cardello here. When he fin'ly does show up and is introduced to Joe, he seems surprised to find that we don't need an interpreter.

Well, they proceeded to business, and was gettin' along nice with their real estate dicker, when Swifty signals me one side mysterious and announces that there's a suspicious party hangin' around out in the front hall.

"Is, eh?" says I. "Why didn't you give him the run, then?"

"Ahr-r-r chee! How should I know it wa'n't another one of your friends?" says he sarcastic. "Take a look at him and see."

And as soon as I steps out and sizes up this gent in the velveteen suit I gets the drift on Swifty's joke. It's an Italian; one of these wild lookin' kind, with black, shifty eyes, a long black mustache, and rings in his ears. He's crouchin' sleuthlike in a corner at the head of the stairs, and acts like he was waitin' for some one.

"Well, Tony," says I, "who you trailin' here? Who you after, eh?"

"Cardello," says he, noddin' at the studio door.

"Oh, I see," says I. "Brought you along and left you on the mat, did he? All right. Make yourself right to home."

When I mentions the matter to Joe, though, just as he finishes signin' the option receipt, he says he don't know of anyone that's waitin' for him, and suggests that I call the stranger in, which I does.

"Why," says Joe, after lookin' him over careful for a minute, "it must be—yes, it's Salvatore! Did they tell you at home I was here? Well, well!" and he shoves out the welcomin' palm real cordial.

But there's nothin' doing in the hearty grip line on Salvatore's side. Instead of that, he starts off makin' a long and mighty earnest speech, all in his own lingo, and usin' his arms and shoulders and eyebrows to help out. The more he talks, the more excited he gets, and the oftener Joe shakes his head and tries to wave him off, the faster the words come tumblin' out of him. Every once in awhile, too, he repeats a name, Vincenzo Rivetti. And, say, the way he smokes that out, sort of explosive and rattly, you'd thought he was touchin' off a bunch of firecrackers. It's quite a name, Vincenzo Rivetti, just by itself; but you should have heard Salvatore, with his mouth close to Joe's ear, get it off.

Joe seems kind of troubled by the tale at first; but he keeps calm over it, and fin'ly motions that he's



I Admit We Showed More or Less Class to Our Teamwork.

had enough. "No, no!" says he, shruggin' his shoulders and settlin' back in his chair.

**S**OUNDS like this Vincenzo party owed him money," says I. "Hey, Salvatore, this is no collection agency, and if you've told your little hard luck tale I guess you'd better beat it!"

But Salvatore ain't payin' much attention to my remarks. Straighenin' up in front of Joe, he strikes a real tragic pose, one forefinger pointed southeast, and hisses out, "Vincenzo Rivetti—Brooklyn!"

"Ah, can it!" says I. "Can't you see nobody's int'rested in knowin' his address? Say, Joe, what's the matter with your hard breathin' friend, anyway?"

"He is my brother in law," says Joe, "the brother of my wife that was, you understand."

"Yes, the one that died before you came over," says I. "I know."

"She was not my wife when she died," Joe goes on, speakin' slow and calm. "She had run away with Vincenzo. It was afterward, when he did not treat her well, that she died. A bad man, Vincenzo. We were enemies there, always enemies, from boys up. He said he would take her away from me, and he did. That is why I came over here with little Rosa Maria."

Purdy-Pell, who was sittin' at my desk gettin' his papers together, hadn't been takin' much notice of this confab; but at that I sees him prick up his ears and listen. There was something in that low, kind of strained voice of Joe's, as he sketches out this oldtime tragedy of his, that would make most anyone sit up. Anyway, I found myself followin' him close.

"But what about Brooklyn?" says I.

"Vincenzo is there," says Joe. "He came last week. Salvatore has just heard; so he comes for me. He has been here not a year, Salvatore. He wants me to kill Vincenzo."

"Eh! What's that?" gasps Purdy-Pell, turnin' pale and gettin' shaky.

"Well, of all the nerve!" says I. "So that's what he was jawin' about so earnest? Just a little matter of first degree! Cheerful proposition, ain't it?"

"I am not a killer of men," says Joe. "Once I should have taken him by the throat and—but not now. He was always a bad man, Vincenzo. He stole my wife. Yes. He beat her, yes. For that I shall never forget to hate him. But I am no killer."

**A**ND right there Salvatore remembers that he can talk some English. "Aha!" he sneers. "And they calla you greata da man! You! No killa Vincenzo, hey? Maybe you no sweara on da saints dat you kill heem? What?"

"It is so," admits Cardello, noddin' his head solemn.

"I swore by the saints."

"Well! He is in Brooklyn. Come!" says Salvatore, flashin' them black eyes at us triumphant.

"No, no," says Joe. "You cannot understand. I—"

"See, I gotta da knife ready," breaks in Salvatore, and hanged if he don't pull out of his belt a fourteen-inch pig sticker, with a wicked blade that looks as sharp as a razor.

"Here, here, you!" I sings out. "What kind of a movin' picture drama do you think you're actin' out, anyway? Put it up!"

Salvatore stows it away reluctant, and I suspect he'd banked a good deal on the effect of flourishin' that around. But he ain't done, by any means. He still has one more high card to play. It's a queer lookin', faded old photograph that he flashes next, and as he holds it up before Joe he puts over a few appropriate lines.

"Rosa Maria!" he observes. "She is watcha you now, Joe Cardello! She is calla you for keel! See, in da eyes she watcha you! Who killa her, eh? She know! And she is calla you now, now!"

**S**AY, maybe it was done sort of crude and stagey; but he got over the deep emotion, all right. For a minute or so there he had us all hypnotized too. We was watchin' Joe, as he sat starin' at this punk old photograph of his runaway wife and listenin' to this imported fam'ly advice. He ain't the rantin', excitable kind; but I could see by the way his pudgy fingers was twitchin' on the chair arm that he was gettin' consider'ble worked up.

Next thing I knew he was on his feet, and that placid, good natured look is gone from his face. Drops of sweat was standin' out on his brow, and his eyes had narrowed down to little points of green. He don't say a word; but he reaches out a hand towards Salvatore. He'd forgotten all about the bank, and his real estate holdin's, and how proud Rosa was goin' to be when he was made an Alderman. All he could remember then was some events that took place over in Italy years ago, and that Vincenzo was in Brooklyn.

I saw what was comin' just in time, and, bein' handy to Salvatore's coat collar as he gets hold of that knife and starts to pass it over, I yanks him back across a table, gives his wrist the bone crushin' grip until he sheds the dagger into the waste basket, and then slams him over where Swifty is waitin' to pin his arms to the small of his back. It had to be done quick and neat, and I admit we showed more or less class to our teamwork.

Joe Cardello don't take any hand in it at all. He seems to be still under the spell, standin' there starin' at that photo which Salvatore has dropped on the floor.

"Which reminds me, Joe," says I, "of a picture you was good enough to give me not long ago. Now where was it I put that? Ah, here it is," and I fishes it out of a desk pigeonhole. "Know anything about that, Joe?"

As slow and deliberate as anybody comin' out of a sound sleep, Joe unglues his eyes from the photo on the floor and turns them on the one I was holdin' up. But it fetches him.

"Ah! Little Rosa Maria!" says he, breathin' it out husky.

"Nice girl, I judge, too," says I; "but she'd feel nice to hear of you out payin' off old scores with a thing like that, wouldn't she?" and I picks the knife out of the basket and chucks it under the safe.

"No, no! No, no!" says he, slumpin' back into his chair and coverin' his face with his hands.

"Yes; but you was within an ace of havin' your fingers on it," says I. "A hot show you'd have for gettin' into the Board of Alderman if this should be noised around! And next time Salvatore puts the spell on you, I expect you'll hike across the bridge and mix it up with Vincenzo."

"No, no!" he groans. "It was only for a minute, when hate came back too strong. It is over. See!"

Sure enough when he gets on his feet again he's the old Joe once more, lookin' as calm and thick headed as ever.

"Go!" says he to Salvatore, pointin' to the door. "Rosa and I are of America. When you have learned to know what that means, you may come again."

**H**OW about it, eh?" says Swifty half an hour later, when they've all cleared out. "Don't use knives or nothin', do they?"

"Not wishin' to be personal, Swifty," says I, "I'll only say this: I wouldn't trust you at a weddin' reception with a blackthorn handy, even now—and you was born under Brooklyn Bridge. Give 'em time, Son, give 'em time!"