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\* A BALEFUL PLOT \*  
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By Genevieve Ulmar

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"You shan't have her—if the cost is my fortune, my life, yours. I swear you shall never call Leonie Marsh your wife!"

Martin Rood faced his successful rival in love, a breathing volcano of rage and other emotions. His face was distorted, his eyes blazed with a lurking insanity, his fingers writhed as though they would clutch the throat of Vincent Barrows and choke the life out of him.

The latter placed a friendly, kindly hand upon the arm of the other. Rood shook it off wrathfully. The last glance he bestowed on Vincent as he turned away made him shudder.

"Too bad!" reflected Vincent. "I don't doubt that he loved Leonie, and I am sorry for him. It was a fair contest, though—more than fair. I went away to give him his chance. He never had any, it seems, for Leonie loved me all along. She would not marry him if he was the last man in the world. He knows that, yet—how the poor fellow hates me!"

So it seemed, and so it was. Both men were rich as wealth went in the cattle belt. Rood was the elder of the two and was a widower. He was cynical and imperious, and set on an object, usually gained it. His lack of encouragement from Leonie had soured him. Then to disappointment succeeded the dark resolve that if the pretty belle of the town did not marry him she should not wed his rival.

Vincent went home, thoughtful, disturbed and distressed as to his former friend, Rood. The latter, he had noticed, acted strangely of late. At times there was an expression in his eye Vincent did not like. He often wondered if his mind was just right. In a bitter, open way, publicly, Rood had shown his enmity for the man

who had once been his friendly companion.

"Hello!" ejaculated Vincent as he passed along the garden walk beside his home.

A window was open. It had not been when he had recently left the house. His housekeeper was absent for a week and he had been keeping bachelor's hall. The disturbed vines beneath the window warned of an intruder. Vincent decided that there



"You Are Doomed."

had been a burglarious visit during his absence.

He went around to the front door and noiselessly let himself into the house. On tiptoe he proceeded through the various rooms. The one where the window was open was his study. As he glanced in he observed that some money on his desk had not been disturbed. In the cabinet in the dining room the silverware was undisturbed. There was a rustling sound in the kitchen. He proceeded thither,