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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Graham Norcross, railroad manager, and his secretary, Jimmie Dodds, are marooned at Sand Creek siding with a young lady, Sheila Macrae, and her small cousin, Unseen, they witness a peculiar train hold-up, in which a special car is carried off.

CHAPTER II—Norcross recognizes the car stolen as John Chadwick's, financial magnate, whom he was to meet at Port City. He and Dodds rescue Chadwick. The latter offers Norcross the management of the Pioneer Short Line, which is in the hands of eastern speculators, headed by Ereckentz, Edgewise Dunton, president of the line. Norcross, learning that Sheila Macrae is staying at Port City, accepts.

CHAPTER III—Dodds overhears conversation between Rufus Hatch and Gustave Henckel, Port City financiers, in which they admit complicity in Chadwick kidnapping, their object being to keep Chadwick from attending a meeting of directors to reorganize the Pioneer Short Line, which would jeopardize their interests.

CHAPTER IV—To curb the monopoly controlled by Hatch and Henckel, the Red Tower corporation, Norcross forms the Citizens' Storage and Warehouse company. He begins to manifest a deep interest in Sheila Macrae. Dodds learns that Sheila is married, but living apart from her husband. Norcross does not know this.

CHAPTER V

And Satan Came Also

"I saw your office lights from the street," was the way the Red Tower president began on me, and his voice took me straight back to the Oregon woods and a lumber camp where the saw-filers were at work. "Where is Mr. Norcross?"

I told him that Mr. Norcross was up-town, and that I didn't suppose he would come back to the office again that night, now that it was so late. "My name is Hatch, of the Red Tower company," he grated, after a minute or two. "You're the one they call Dodds, aren't you?"

I admitted it, and he went on. "Norcross brought you here with him from the West, didn't he? What pay are you getting here?"

It was on the tip of my tongue to cuss him out right there and then and tell him it was none of his business. But the second thought (which isn't always as good as it's said to be) whispered to me to lead him on and see how far he would go. So I told him the figures of my pay check.

"I'm needing another shorthand man, and I can afford to pay a good bit more than that," he growled. "They tell me you are well up at the top in your trade. Are you open to an offer?"

I let him have it straight then. "Not from you," I said.

"And why not from me?"

Here was where I made my first bad break. All of a sudden I got so angry at the thought that he was actually trying to buy me that I couldn't see anything but red, and I blurted out, "Because I don't hire out to work for any strong-arm outfit—not if I know it!"

For a little while he sat blinking at me from under his bushy eyebrows, and his hard mouth was drawn into a straight line with a mean little wrinkle coming and going at the corners of it.

When he got ready to speak again he said, "You're only a boy. You want to get on in the world, don't you? I'm offering you a good chance: the best you ever had. You don't owe Norcross anything more than your job, do you?"

"Maybe not."

"That's better. Put on your hat and come along with me. I want to show you what I can do for you in a better field than railroading ever was, or ever will be. It'll pay you—" and he named a figure that very nearly made me fall dead out of my chair.

Of course, it was all plain enough. The boss had him on the hip with that kidnaping business, with me for a witness. And he was trying to fix the witness.

"I guess we needn't beat about the bushes any longer, Mr. Hatch," I said, bracing up to him. "I haven't told the sheriff, or anybody but Mr. Norcross, what I know about a certain little train hold-up that happened a few weeks ago down at Sand Creek siding; but that isn't saying that I'm not going to."

If I had had the sense of a field mouse, I might have known that I was no match for such a man; but I lacked the sense—lacked it good and hard.

"You're like your boss," he said shortly. "You'd go a long distance out of your way to make an enemy when there is no need of it. That hold-up business was a joke, from start to finish. I don't know how you and Norcross came to get in on it; the joke was meant to be on John Chadwick. The night before, at a little dinner we were giving him at the railroad club, he said there never was a railroad hold-up that couldn't have been stood

off. A few of us got together afterward and put up a job on him, sent him over to Stratheona and arranged to have him held up on the way back."

"Mr. Chadwick didn't take it as a joke!" I retorted.

"I know he didn't; and that's why we're all anxious now to dig a hole and bury the thing decently. Perhaps we had all been taking a drop too much at the club dinner that night."

At that I swelled up man-size and kicked the whole kettle of fat into the fire.

"Of course, it was a joke!" I ripped out. "And your coming here tonight to try to hire me away from Mr. Norcross is another. The woods are full of good shorthand men, Mr. Hatch, but for the present I think I shall stay right where I am—where a court subpoena can find me when I'm wanted."

"That's all nonsense, and you know it—if you're not too much of a kid to know anything," he snapped, shooting out his heavy jaw at me. "I merely wanted to give you a chance to get rid of the railroad collar, if you felt like it. I like a fighting man; and you've got nerve. Take a night and sleep on it. Maybe you'll think differently in the morning."

Here was another chance for me to get off with a whole skin, but by this time I was completely lost to any sober weighing and measuring of the possible consequences. Leaning across the desk end I gave him a final shot, just as he was getting up to go.

"Listen, Mr. Hatch," I said. "You haven't fooled me for a single minute. Your guess is right; I heard every word that passed between you and Mr. Henckel that Monday morning in the Bullard lobby. As I say, I haven't told anybody yet but Mr. Norcross; but if you go to making trouble for him and the railroad company, I'll go into court and swear to what I know!"

He was half-way out of the door when I got through, and he never unde any sign that he heard what I said. After he was gone I began to sense, just a little, how big a fool I had made of myself. But I was still mad clear through at the idea that he had taken me for the other kind of a fool—the kind that wouldn't know enough to be sure that the president of a big corporation wouldn't get down to tampering with a common clerk unless there was some big thing to be stood off by it.

Stewing and sizzling over it, I puttered around with the papers on my desk for quite a little while before I remembered the two telegrams, and the fact that I'd have to go and stick the three-bladed knife into Mr. Norcross. When I did remember, I shoved the messages into my pocket, flicked off the lights and started to go up-town and hunt for the boss.

After closing the outer door of the office I don't recall anything particular except that I felt my way down the headquarters stair in the dark and groped across the lower hall to the outside door that served for the staircase entrance from the street. When I had felt around and found the brass knob, something happened, I didn't know just what. In the tiny little fraction of a second that I had left, as you might say, between the hearse



Everything Went Blank.

and the grave, I had a vague notion that the door was falling over on me and mashing me flat; and after that, everything went blank.

When I came to life out of what seemed like an endless succession of bad dreams it was broad daylight and the sun was shining brightly through some filmy kind of curtain stuff in a big window that looked out toward the west. I was in bed, the room was

strange, and my right hand was wrapped up in a lot of cotton and bandaged.

"I hadn't more than made the first restless move before I saw a sort of pie-faced woman in a nurse's cap and apron start to get up from where she was sitting by the window. Before she could come over to the bed, somebody opened a door and tip-toed in ahead of nurse. I had to blink hard two or three times before I could really make up my mind that the tip-toer was Maisie Ann. She looked as if she might be the nurse's understudy. She had a nifty little lace cap on her thick mop of hair, and I guess her apron was meant to be nursey too, only it was frilled and tucked to a fare-you-well.

"You poor, poor boy!" she cooed, patting my pillow just like my grandmother used to when I was a little kid and had the mumps or the measles. "Are you still roaming around in the Oregon woods?"

That brought my dream, or one of them, back; the one about wandering around in a forest of Douglas fir and having to jump and dodge to keep the big trees from falling on me and smashing me.

"No more woods for mine," I said, sort of feebly. And then: "Where am I?"

"You are in bed in the spare room at Cousin Basil's. They wanted to take you to the railroad hospital that night, but when they telephoned up here to try to find Mr. Norcross, Cousin Basil went right down and brought you home with him in the ambulance."

"That night, you say?" I parroted. "It was last night that the door fell on me, wasn't it?"

"I don't know anything about a door, but the night that they found you all burnt and crippled, lying at the foot of your office stairs, was three days ago. You have been out of your head nearly all the time ever since."

"Burnt and crippled? What happened to me, Maisie Ann?"

"Nobody knows; not even the doctors. We've been hoping that some day you'd be able to tell us. Can't you tell me now, Jimmie?"

I told her all there was to tell, mumbling around among the words the best I could. Then she told me how the headquarters watchman had found me about midnight; with my right hand scorched black and the rest of me apparently dead and ready to be buried. The ambulance surgeon had insisted, and was still insisting, that I had been handling a live wire; but there were no wires at all in the lower hall, and nothing stronger than an incandescent light current in the entire office building.

"And you say I've been here hanging on by my eyelashes for three days? What has been going on in all that time, Maisie Ann? Hasn't anybody been here to see me?"

She gave a little nod. "Everybody, nearly. Mr. Van Britt has been up every day, and sometimes twice a day. He has been awfully anxious for you to come alive."

"But Mr. Norcross?" I queried. "Hasn't he been up?"

She shook her head and turned her face away, and she was looking straight out of the window at the setting sun when she asked, "When was the last time you saw Mr. Norcross, Jimmie?"

I choked a little over a big scare that seemed to rush up out of the bed-clothes to smother me. But I made out to answer her question, telling her how Mr. Norcross had left the office maybe half an hour or so before I did, that night, going up-town with Mr. Ripley. Then I asked her why she wanted to know.

"Because nobody has seen him since a little later that same night," she said, saying it very softly and without turning her head. And then: "Mr. Van Britt found a letter from Mr. Norcross on his desk the next morning. It was just a little typewritten note, on a Hotel Bullard letter sheet, saying that he had made up his mind that the Pioneer Short Line wasn't worth fighting for, and that he was resigning and taking the midnight train for the East."

I sat straight up in bed; I should have had to do it if both arms had been burnt to a crisp clear to the shoulders.

"Resigned?—gave up and ran away? I don't believe that for a single minute, Maisie Ann!" I burst out.

She was shaking her head again, still without turning her face so that I could see it.

"I'm afraid it's all true, Jimmie. There were two telegrams that came to Mr. Norcross the night he went away; one from Mr. Chadwick and the other from Mr. Dunton. I heard Mr. Van Britt telling Cousin Sheila what the messages were. He'd seen the copies of them that they keep in the telegraph office."

It was on my tongue's end to say that Mr. Norcross never had seen those two telegrams, because I had them in my pocket and was on my way to deliver them when I got shot; but I didn't. Instead, I said: "And you think that was why Mr. Norcross threw up his hands and ran away?"

"No; I don't think anything of the sort. I know what it was, and you know what it was," and at that she turned around and pushed me gently down among the pillows.

"What was it?" I whispered, more than half afraid that I was going to hear a confirmation of my own breath-taking conviction. And I heard it, all right.

"It was what I was telling you about, that same evening, you remember—down in the hall when you brought the flowers for Cousin Sheila. You told him what I told you, didn't

you?"

"No; I didn't have a chance—not any real chance."

"Then somebody else told him, Jimmie; and that is the reason he has resigned and gone away. Mr. Van Britt thinks it was on account of the two messages from Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Dunton, and that is why he wants to talk to you about it. But you know, and I know, Jimmie, dear; and for Cousin Sheila's sake and Mr. Norcross', we must never slip it to a human soul. A new general manager has been appointed, and he is on his way out here from New York. Everything has gone to pieces on the railroad, and all of Mr. Norcross' friends are getting ready to resign. Isn't it perfectly heart-breaking?"

It was; it was so heart-breaking that I just gasped once or twice and went off the hooks again, with Maisie Ann's frightened little shriek ringing in my ears as she tried to hold me back from slipping over the edge.

CHAPTER VI

What Every Man Knows—

I wasn't gone very long on this second excursion into the woozy-woozles, though it was night-time, and the shaded electric light was turned on when I opened my eyes and found Mrs. Sheila sitting by the bedside. The change in Mrs. Sheila sort of made me gasp. 'She wasn't any less pretty as she sat there with her hands clasped in her lap, but she was different; sober, and with the laugh all gone out of the big gray eyes, and a look in them as if she had suddenly become so wise that nobody could ever fool her.

"You are feeling better now?" she asked, when she found me staring at her.

I told her I guessed I was, but that my hand hurt me some.

"You have had a great shock of some kind—besides the burn, Jimmie," she rejoined, folding up the bed covers so that the bandaged hand would rest easier. "The doctors are all puzzled. Does your head feel quite clear now—so that you can think?"

"It feels as if I had a crazy clock in it," I said. "But the thinking part is all right. Have you heard anything from Mr. Norcross yet?"

"Not a word. We have been hoping that you could tell us something when you should recover sufficiently to talk. Can't you, Jimmie?"

Remembering what Maisie Ann had told me just before I went off the hooks, I thought I might tell her a lot if I dared to. But that wouldn't do. So I just said:

"I told Maisie Ann all I knew about Mr. Norcross. He left the office some little time before I did—with Mr. Ripley. I didn't know where they were going."

"They went to the hotel," she helped out. "Mr. Ripley says they sat in the lobby until after ten o'clock, and then Mr. Norcross went up to his rooms."

Of course, I knew that Mr. Ripley knew all about the Hatch racket; but if he hadn't told her, I wasn't going to tell her.

"There was some trouble in connection with Mr. Hatch that evening, wasn't there?" she asked.

"Hatch had some trouble—yes. But I guess the boss didn't have any," I replied.

"Tell me about it," she commanded; and I told her just as little as I could; how Hatch had had an interview with the boss earlier in the evening, while I was away.

"It wasn't a quarrel?" she suggested.

"Why should they quarrel?" I asked.

She shook her head. "You are sparing with me, Jimmie, in some mistaken idea of being loyal to Mr. Norcross. You needn't, you know. Mr. Norcross has told me all about his plans; he has even been generous."

Continued on Page Six.

CLEAN-UP COMMITTEE BEGAN WORK MONDAY

First thing to cut weeds and mow parking strips. Penalty for not cutting the weeds.

Yesterday began the big clean-up campaign. The committee having the matter in charge are at work urging all owners of private property to cut their weeds, and mow their parking strips.

Already they have provided a penalty for failure to cut the unsightly weeds, and clean up the refuse on vacant lots. The city will go ahead and hire the work done, and the property owner will pay the bill.

No penalty has been provided for failure to mow lawns, and parking strips, but some measure will be devised to enforce the requirements of a clean city.

Property owners will not be allowed to forget that this is the opening day of the clean-up.

For the pleasure of Miss Lucille McKinney of this city, who is her house guest, Mrs. Verne A. Partlow entertained with tea at her home in Seattle Thursday afternoon. Assisting were Mrs. E. D. Cowan, Mrs. F. E. Flint and Mrs. C. E. Watt. Monday afternoon, Mrs. Partlow entertained with two tables of bridge at her home also to honor Miss McKinney.

TUBERCULAR CASES DECREASE RAPIDLY THURSTON COUNTY

Anti-Tuberculosis League Will Elect Officers' Next Month

COUNTY NURSE GETS NEW FORD COUPE

During Past Quarter Number of New Cases Dropped from 17 in January to 2 in March

Officers will be elected for the ensuing year at the regular meeting of the Thurston County Anti-Tuberculosis League to be held next month in the chamber of commerce. The meeting will be open to the public. The present officers of the league are: Acting president, Mrs. J. W. Mowell; first vice president, L. H. Hubbard of Tentino; second vice president, I. B. Dodge; secretary, Mrs. Charles Lindley.

Miss Lena M. Carpenter, county nurse, who works in conjunction with the county league, will submit her report of the last quarter, which shows a marked decrease in new cases in the county. The county commissioners are so pleased with Miss Carpenter's work in the county, that they recently purchased her a new Ford coupe, to take the place of a Ford touring car.

Tuberculosis Decreases.

During the last quarter new cases dropped from 17 in January to 10 in February and six in March. Suspected cases of tuberculosis in the county dropped from 15 in January to five in February and two in March. During the month of January Miss Carpenter examined 60 children and in February she examined 176 and 191 in March.

During the quarter a total of 397 calls were made by the county nurse, 78 of which were made by physicians. In her report Miss Carpenter shows where three deaths occurred by tuberculosis; schools, children, children examined, number found normal, number defective, homes visited, number of remedies and health talks numbered 941 for the quarter.

Starts Nutrition Class.

During February Miss Carpenter started a nutrition class in Yelm, talked before the T.-T. A. in Yelm, gave a talk before the Hays P.-T. A. The report of the county nurse shows great cooperation among the communities and individuals.

Other activities of Miss Carpenter included the first tuberculosis clinic held in Thurston county, March 11 and 12, meeting of the anti-tuberculosis league on March 11, talk before the Americanization Council March 14, milk talks in four schools, March 15, trips with Chew Chew to Riverside, Grand Mound, Rochester and Rainier, milks talk before the Tumwater school March 18, second class in nutrition in Yelm, March 18, talk before Tumwater P.-T. A. March 23, third class in nutrition March 25 in Yelm.

Balance on hand the first day of the quarter March 31, 1921, \$1,740.25; total expenditures, \$855.62; balance on hand the last day of the quarter, \$884.63, according to the report of Theodore Parker, treasurer.

County Makes Quota. Mr. Parker in his report shows

that \$1,650.50 was collected during the Christmas seal sale in December, which shows that the Thurston county league made their quota.

The report as submitted by Mrs. Charles Lindley, secretary, for the quarter ending December 31, 1920, and March 31, 1921, show a total expenditure of \$1,057.00 in treatment and relief of tuberculosis victims for the two periods, leaving the league with a balance of \$884.63 at the end of the March quarter.

Dr. and Mrs. Paul Turner of Seattle drove to Olympia yesterday to spend a few days here. Dr. Turner is director of health under the new civil administrative code. They are registered at the Hotel Olympian.

Stories and Facts of Alaska

Information of ALASKA's vast resources of gold mines, farming, valleys, reindeer and fox farming, hunting and trapping, oil and coal fields; wages paid to men and women, and cost of living. Government railroad nearly completed. A guide into and all through ALASKA. The different routes, cost of a round trip; stories of life in the mines and on the farm. Large book; 26 illustrations. This book will be mailed to you, price \$2.50 C. O. D. You see the book before paying for it. L. J. Franklin, 1230 W. Congress st., Chicago.

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