

THE CARUTHERS AFFAIR

BY WILL HAZEN

SYNOPSIS

Edward Hendricks, great detective, just returned from Boston, finds awaiting him an unsigned typewritten letter directing him to apartments in Palace hotel, where he will find remains of Mr. Weldon Caruthers—currently reported for past two weeks to be out of town. Detective seems to need letter with attempt made on his own life some time previous. Goes with friend, Dr. Lamplin, to investigate. Upon search of Caruthers' apartments remains of cremated body and jeweled hand of victim are found in a vase. Hand bears marks of finger nails, manufactured to sharp points. Lamplin recalls reports of a row between Caruthers and Arthur Glew, both authors for hand of Dorothy Huntington, who is believed to several millions should the Caruthers, unconditionally in case of Caruthers' death. Late that night Hendricks and Lamplin call at home of Miss Huntington. Dorothy shows detective typewritten letter, which was an invitation for herself and aunt to occupy with Count Baccini, Italian nobleman, his box at horse show, as he was called out of town by pressing business. She recalls Glew had expressed before murder intense hatred for Caruthers and believes him guilty, yet decided to marry him, and with her aunt asked to his studio. Glew has fled. His servant, Heart, tells of overhearing confession to Baccini. Hendricks thought his master should be made aware, concealed in room, bears all this.

CHAPTER VII

The next morning on arriving at his office after having been unavoidably detained uptown for an hour, Dr. Lamplin found a messenger-boy awaiting him. "Are you Dr. Lamplin?" asked the boy, retaining the envelope for which the doctor had extended his hand. "I am," answered Lamplin, impatiently. "Why do you doubt it?" "I had orders at the office to deliver the message only to Dr. Lamplin," replied the boy. "They told me it was very urgent, but I had to wait here. I was afraid I'd miss you if I went up to your house."

"Quite right," said the doctor, and opened the letter, which bore the little yellow seal, peculiar to the important communications sometimes sent him by Hendricks. "Come without a moment's delay—let nothing hinder you—to my house," ran the message. "Bring instruments to probe for bullet. Come in at the rear. My mother will be on the lookout to admit you. Don't attract attention. Explanation when I see you. Hendricks."

"No answer," said Lamplin to the boy. He quickly got the required instruments together and put on his hat and overcoat. "No telling what has happened, and I'm behind time," he grumbled inwardly. "For aught I know Hendricks may have shot the wrong man and be in a frightful muddle."

Fifteen minutes later the doctor was entering the side gate behind Hendricks' house, after having successfully dodged unobserved into an alley leading from the main thoroughfare. He was wending his way through a collection of ash-receivers, garbage-barrels, and bundles of waste-paper, when he saw Mrs. Hendricks' white head appear at the kitchen door.

"Oh, I'm so glad you got here at last!" she exclaimed. "I have been almost crazy with impatience. He wouldn't listen to anyone else being called in, and I am afraid he is seriously hurt."

"What has happened?" inquired Lamplin, excited in spite of his professional calmness by her manner. "Oh, everything!" exclaimed the agitated woman as she hurried him through the dining-room, sitting-room and library to the stairs in the front hall. "For the love of God, Dr. Lamplin—you are his best friend—do urge him to give up this perilous enterprise. The worry of it is slowly killing me. You see, I was with him when he so narrowly escaped from that awful bomb, and now this is the second attempt on his life, and I know they will succeed sooner or later, if they have not actually killed him now."

"How was he hurt?" gasped Lamplin, as he sprang after her up the stairs. She made no reply. The next moment she reached the door of the detective's room, and opened it. Hendricks, white as a ghost, and with dark marks under the eyes, sat in a big extension chair, in his dressing-gown, a rug over his legs and feet. "Don't let my mother frighten you, old man," he said, with a smile, which he gave with evident pain. "You know how women are about a thimbleful of blood."

"And all week—this week," imitated Lamplin. Hendricks' face darkened. "But I simply can't," he grumbled. "I never had more to do in my life, and if I halt now my assailant will have gained by his cowardly attack. No, no, old friend, you must not stop me now that I have something fresh to start from. I have tasted blood, and like a bloodhound I must go on, on. I tell you I have the vilest scoundrel to deal with that ever breathed, and it is to be a fight to the death between us."

"It might kill you to leave your room inside of a week," was the doctor's firm reply. "If you go out and die from it, your enemy will have gained his point." The words told on the detective. His face fell and Lamplin noticed his lower lip twitching. There was a hint of moisture in the big gray eyes. He turned to his mother, who sat near the grate, her face in her hands. "Leave us alone, mother," he said. "I want to tell Lamplin how it happened. As for staying in, I'll take his advice. He knows his business, and I know nothing else will content you."

"Oh, I'm so glad," cried the old lady, and she came to him and parted his hair on the brow and kissed him.

CHAPTER IX

When the door had closed behind her, Hendricks gave a deep sigh and smiled faintly. "She doesn't know what an awfully narrow escape I had," he began. "When I retired last night I was so overcome with fatigue that I hardly could take time to undress. I actually fell asleep while sitting on the side of the bed to take off my boots. I almost tumbled to the floor, and that roused me sufficiently to complete the operation."

"The first intimation of danger came to me in a dream. I thought I was in the basement of a burning building, confined in a room, the walls of which were solid masonry and the doors of iron. I seemed to be choking and gasping for breath. It was no dream; it was really as far as the stifling sensation was concerned, for on waking I found my arms pinioned, a weight on my breast and a towel saturated with chloroform held tightly over my nostrils."

"My Lord! it was awful. Every vein in me seemed on fire. I felt as if I had been pumped full of ignited gas. I tried to scream, but my human nightmare prevented that, or the slightest movement on my part. "All at once the thought struck into my benumbed consciousness that I was in the clutch of my secret foe, and with that came a sort of repugnant desperation that had strength. I threw out my right hand, and catching the towel wrenched it from my nose, and then sucked down into me a whiff of God's pure air. It seemed to set on me like releasing a gigantic spring, for I lurched forward from me as you would a slinging lizard. I heard him strike the middle of the floor and grant as the breath went out of him. Then I felt hastily under my pillow, and missing my revolver, and hearing a click from where he crouched, I knew that he had nabbed it. I was on my feet in a moment, and you can bet I did some tall dodging in the darkness, for I knew I was his target. I saw him moving as I moved, trying to get an aim at me, and all the time I was edging, sometimes erect, again on all fours, toward the center where I knew that old sword stood—a relic of the Revolution."

"Before he pulled the trigger I had hold of it. He heard it rattle and blazed away. His bullet struck the brass scabbard, glanced off and crashed into the mirror there. The flash helped me locate him, and jerking my weapon from its rusty sheath, I dashed at him, hoping to cut him down before he got another shot. My first furious thrust with such a formidable weapon astonished him, and he backed, cocking the gun as he did so. I gave him a stab right at the breast. It would have run a two-inch plank through, but it had no more effect on him than if I had struck the iron sides of an American man-of-war. He had on a bullet-proof suit of clothes. I heard him laugh derisively, and then he fired again. I felt the twinge in my side just as my mother screamed below, and then I was almost overpowered by the thought that she would rush to my rescue and get killed along with me. I dashed at him, cut at the head holding the revolver and was rewarded by hearing the weapon strike the floor at his side. I saw him stoop for it, and plunged my sword's point at his back. It rebounded as if it had struck cork. The next lick was dealt at his hand as it groped toward the pistol. I knocked his arm out and he fell sprawling on the floor. The mistake I made then was in trying to get possession of the revolver, for when I reached for it, he bounded to his feet, and hissing like a cat, sprang out at the open window through which he had come. I saw his head and shoulders disappear below the sill just as I secured the gun. I ran to the window and saw him crawling down the slanting roof of the conservatory. Remembering his armor, I took aim at the back of his neck, but I was too shaky to shoot well, and missed. Before my unnerved fingers could cock the revolver again he was out of sight, and I heard the gate in the rear close with a slam."

"I started in pursuit down the front stairs, but when I reached the first landing I met my mother and keeled over in a dead faint. The drug and the wound were too much for me. I came to in a moment and presented her from notifying the police or the neighbors of the accident. Then it was four o'clock. I tried to get a message to you, but failed on the first attempt. That's the whole account of my adventures."

"You have certainly had a tough time of it," declared Dr. Lamplin. "At whose door do you lay the attack?" "It is the work of the villain who set the bomb for me, and I am now pretty sure he is involved in the Palace Hotel affair."

"What, Glew?" Hendricks mused a moment, then he said: "This attempt and the other, showing such positive enmity to me personally, make the whole business the biggest mystery of my experience. Besides, there is another view which tends to lead me away from the idea of implicating the artist."

"What is that?" Hendricks gazed at the open fire as if debating how to express himself clearly. "You remember," he began, "that the letter Miss Huntington showed us pointing to the Caruthers' at Philadelphia

was forged, of course, since Caruthers was dead when it was written. "I remember," said Lamplin, with a sudden start. "You also recall that I spoke to her of certain idiomatic expressions in it, showing that it was written by a forger?"

"Yes, quite well." Hendricks smiled and stroked his wounded side. "Glew didn't write that letter. Now, what foreigner have we reason to suspect of having had a hand in this matter?"

"Bantini!" exclaimed the doctor, rising excitedly. "My Lord, why did I not think of that before? And he is a suitor for the hand of the heiress, besides."

The detective smiled. He was at one of his old games of trying the effect of conflicting evidence on his friend. "I have forgotten one other thing—and there you are," he grinned. "What about Glew's confession?"

"Dr. Lamplin's face fell. He was silent for several minutes. "You are incorrigible!" he broke out suddenly. "I don't make sport of you when you come moaning around in my profession. I sit down and give you the benefit of all there is in it."

The detective smiled apologetically. "You are at liberty to retaliate at any time," he returned. "Besides, if I let you on to the elixirs of my eyes before I reached them you'd lose interest, and I'd not have the pleasure of your companionship."

"Dr. Lamplin took his hat to leave. He barely got off with his life. For he was met by Hen. Peck's wife, who thought that his this caused the strife— Was Peck, just getting home. —L. A. W. Bulletin.

A FEARFUL MISTAKE. A burglar came to Hen. Peck's house. No more about he'll remain; he barely got off with his life. For he was met by Hen. Peck's wife, who thought that his this caused the strife— Was Peck, just getting home. —L. A. W. Bulletin.

A LITTLE NERVOUS, PERHAPS. CHAPTER X. Despite his strong will and determination not to yield to weakness, Hendricks was compelled to remain in his room longer than he expected. But his mind was not idle. Every time Dr. Lamplin called he found him engaged in some investigation pertaining to the murder of Caruthers.

"You might as well go out and be done with it," remarked Lamplin one day. "Don't you know you'll never get strong again as long as you keep your brain on the race-track?" Hendricks looked down sheepishly. "I don't think you ought to begrudge a fellow the little he can accomplish in a room the size of this when Sergt. Denham and his aides are turning the earth upside down."



Hard Lines. Sprogles—I used to think my face was my fortune, but I've got over that idea. Bingle—What has changed your mind? Sprogles—I was on one of those juries when the bribing was done, but the fellows with money didn't approach me, because, as I have just learned, they thought I had too honest a face.—Chicago Daily News.

Not Tired of Him. Mrs. De Weary—And so you have been married five years, and are as much in love with your husband as ever? Mrs. Cheery—Yes, indeed! "Hum! What business is your husband in?" "He's captain of a ship."—Melbourne Weekly Times.

Another Hard Luck Tale. "Just my luck," he said, disconsolately. "I can't even be sick with any appropriateness." "What's the matter?" "He shook for a minute before replying. "Chills in winter and fever in summer," he answered when he had time.—Chicago Post.

One of Those Queries. "Father," said the boy, with big, serious eyes. "I want to ask you something." "What is it, my son?" asked the old gentleman, closing his book and looking wise. "If a monkey were shoes on his hind feet would they be mittens?"—Washington Post.

It Would Seem So. "There is something burglarious about four aces," said the man who sometimes plays poker. "They are almost like robbery," said the man who sometimes tries to play. "Yes, and they are safe openers."—Indianapolis Journal.

Reversed. "When duty calls us we must go," would seem as plain as day. Yet many people don't think so— They go the other way. —Brooklyn Life.

AN OPTICAL DELUSION. Caused by the fashionable braided jacket and the latest thing in muffs.—Punch.

His Little Joke. Two dudes went in a restaurant, and as they passed within his gates I heard the waiter murmur low: "True, 'All things come to him who waits.'"—Judge.

Oh, So Clever! "They say she is a clever conversationalist." "Clever? Conversationalist? Why, she's brilliant. She doesn't even need to converse. She can blast a reputation just by the way she shrugs her shoulders."—Chicago Post.

Safe from Drowning. Winter Visitor (in Florida)—I should love dearly to go sailing, but it looks very dangerous. Do not people often get drowned in this bay? Waterman—No, indeed, mum. The sharks never lets anybody drown.—N. Y. Weekly.

Accounting for it. "Have you followed the course you marked out for yourself when a boy?" "No; I intended to be a great financier, but I have never yet been able to get enough money to practice upon."—Puck.

A Mere Fact. Where ignorance is bliss 'Tis folly to be wise. And if 'twas not for this Men wouldn't eat poppies— In cheap restaurants. —Chicago Daily News.

He Couldn't Swallow That. "Come, come! cheer up!" said the optimist; "it is all for the best, remember." "So it seems," replied the pessimist; "at all events, we second best ones don't seem to get any."—Ally Sloper.

Easily. "Could you tell me what this prescription calls for?" asked the inquisitive citizen. "Yes," answered the clerk as he glanced over it rapidly, "50 cents."—Washington Star.

Afterward. Vera Goodhart—Poor fellow, she flirted with him dreadfully! Sallie DeWitte—Yes, but just think how well he thought of himself all that time.—Brooklyn Life.

Work of an Amateur. First Tramp—Dat's homemade pie, ain't it? Second Tramp—Must be. No baker was responsible for dat pie eud may in de business.—Puck.

The Name's Significance. "Bostop!" shrieked the brakeman as the train pulled in. "I feel!" sleepily murmured the man who ate at restaurants. "Well, bostop!"—N. Y. Journal.

When the gray dawn breaks o'er the sea It does not wake my heart to pain; With joy I scan my watch and see That I may go to sleep again. —Chicago Record.

A Point in His Favor. Johnny—Mamma, Tommy Jones is a stuff. Mamma—Oh, don't use that expression. It is not good English. Johnny—Well, mamma, it's plain English.—N. Y. Journal.

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