

enter the room, she hustled the Hindu and his pal through the portiers that separated the parlor from the music room, making haste to tightly draw the curtains.

Greeting his mother affectionately, the young man's first question was: "How is father today? Is he showing any signs of improvement?" "I'm afraid not," said Mrs. Lund. "He is growing weaker and complaining more of his heart."

"Run up and tell him I am here," said the young man. "And say I shall come to him in a few moments."

Young Lund watched his mother as she left the room. He was mystified because of her strange conduct, and gradually the suspicion of her unworthiness was dawning upon him.

For a moment he stood in deep thought, clearly troubled and perplexed. Suddenly arousing himself, he entered the music room and faced the two men.

"I told you once before, you greaser, to stay away from here. Now get out, and do it quickly," As he stepped aside to give the two men a chance to pass through the door, young Lund could not resist the impulse to make a pass at the Hindu. His fist swung against the back of Chockro's head and gave impetus to his movement.

Lund made no move to follow the thugs, but, instead, closed the portiers carefully and sat down in a chair to quietly await developments. He heard his mother enter the next room and talk to her henchmen in tones so low that only a mumbled sound reached his ears.

"Go back to the circus and get the girl away," said Mrs. Lund to Chockro in a voice little above a whisper. "The double box will do it, and she will have the letter. Get my son into the storeroom and I will detain him here. And don't make any more noise about it than you can help. My husband is very ill."

The maid, hidden behind an immense leather chair that stood in the corner of the room, overheard the plan.

Determined to see the plan work out, and to help young Lund in any way she could, the girl remained hidden after Mrs. Lund again left Chockro and his man alone in the parlor. The thugs immediately turned their attention to young Lund, making a rush through the curtains, into the music room.

Lund was ready for them, and met blow for blow, as they both set upon him in an effort to knock him out. The struggle was terrific, but brief, Lund working against odds fast and expertly.

The two men again proved themselves no match for Lund on even terms, but when Chockro found an opportunity to draw his revolver, a blow from the butt of the "gun" upon Lund's head soon settled the battle.

Carrying him between them, the two thugs transferred Lund to the storeroom to which Mrs. Lund had previously directed them.

Depositing their burden on the floor, the two crooks met the fendish woman at the door as they were leaving the storeroom. Mrs. Lund turned the key in the lock and said to Chockro: "Hurry on to the show. I will watch him closely, and see that he does not get away." And the inhuman creature stood with her back against the door as the men hurriedly left the house.

Mrs. Lund stood for several moments leaning against the door. She listened for some sound from within the room, until, evidently convinced that her prisoner was thoroughly subdued, she made her way upstairs.

From her hiding place behind the chair everything that had transpired was seen by the maid. She saw Chockro and his man carry young Lund downstairs, and a moment later heard them pass from the house by way of the front door.

The girl hurried downstairs, with the purpose of trying to communicate in some way with young Lund, but she discovered Mrs. Lund had returned to the door and was intently listening. Unobserved, the maid retreated, and tried another method of reaching the prisoner.

She remembered that the chimney, running from cellar to roof had at its base a fireplace in the room where young Lund was confined, and the girl at once began a search for a connection with this chimney in some of the upper rooms. Her search was rewarded in finding a vent into which a stovepipe might be inserted, covered with wall paper and entering the chimney a few feet from the floor.

Removing this cover, the girl called into the chimney. She waited for an answer, and then shouted again and again. Finally she dropped a book through the vent hole, and it landed in the fireplace of the room where Lund was confined. Again she called, and this time an answer came from below.

"Your mother is watching by the door," said the maid. "She is guarding it closely; but if I have a chance, I'll get the key and drop it down to you. Keep close watch; I'll work as fast as I can."

It took time for the girl to accomplish her purpose. Finally, after repeated attempts, the maid discovered a moment Mrs. Lund had left the door unguarded.

She made a hurried dash to reach the door, but Mrs. Lund appeared from a room across the hall, and the two women arrived simultaneously at the door leading to Lund's temporary prison. The maid stopped directly in front of the key, but had no time to either turn it or wrench it from the lock.

"What are you doing here?" Mrs. Lund demanded angrily. "Oh, madam, I'm so faint!" the girl exclaimed.

She put her right arm over her face with a gesture of bewilderment, leaning against the jamb of the door and, reaching behind her, slipped the key from the lock with her left hand.

"Well, if you are faint or sick, your room is the place for you, not spying around here," was Mrs. Lund's retort. The girl, having accomplished her purpose, fled upstairs with all speed and dropped the key down the chimney.

"Quick! Quick!" she fairly screamed. "Your mother's automobile is outside. Run for it!"

When the key struck the bricks of the fireplace, Lund was eagerly waiting for it. Turning the key in the lock, he felt the door being held against him.

His strong shoulder against the panels quickly overcame the obstruction, and when Lund forced his way through the door he was dumfounded to find that his mother had been keeping him a prisoner.

Without saying a word he fled upstairs, out of the front door, and after starting the engine, vaulted into his mother's machine. He darted away in the direction of the circus grounds.

The entire afternoon had been consumed by the maid in her efforts to free him. Twilight had passed, and it was well into the evening before young Lund stopped his machine in front of the circus lot and leaped from the car.

Chockro's double-box clown act was indeed one of the most amazing performances ever given with a circus. Six of Chockro's burly henchmen constituted his "troupe of clowns."

When they entered the ring, they were a grotesque lot, variously made up to represent policemen and firemen.

The Hindu manipulated matters so that his outfit worked in the ring, not far from an exit to the back of the lot. In their performance the "clowns" would put a man in one box, shut down the cover and, apparently, transfer the same man to the other box, without being caught at the trick. It was mystifying, and the Hindu's native cleverness brought to bear a degree of expertness to make the trick work smoothly and well.

Again the man was made to appear and disappear, from one box to the other. At a moment when the audience was convulsed with the drolleries of the "clowns," one of Chockro's gang entered the ring, bearing in his arms a woman, her head covered with a cloth and her arms and legs flying around as if resisting her captor.

The audience enjoyed the incident as great fun, and the circus performers also looked on in keen professional interest. Old Flip was one in the crowd who looked with suspicion on the whole proceedings, and when the woman was rushed into the ring the old clown raised a cry of alarm.

He ran toward the bunch of "clowns" when the woman was being hurriedly forced into the wooden case, and as the cloth fell from the girl's head, Flip caught a glimpse of Peg's face before the cover to the box was slammed down.

The supposed clowns raised the box to their shoulders and ran with it to the exit. The onlookers imagined the sudden exit was a part of the trick. But when Flip appealed to his fellow performers for aid, a crowd of show folks followed him in the direction the "clowns" had fled with their burden.

The showmen were just in time to see the packing case lifted to the platform of a big motor truck that was standing at the side of the road. The engine was quickly started and the truck moved rapidly away.

Flip, recovered from the injuries to his foot, ran as fast as he could, and was the last one to give up the chase. He ran behind the truck after it had turned a corner of the street, followed it a block farther and was then unable to proceed farther.

Dejectedly the old clown walked back toward the show grounds. Just as he was turning from the street, young Lund dashed up in his automobile. When the young man jumped to the ground he barely escaped colliding with Flip.

"Oh, my boy, I'm glad you are here," cried the old clown hysterically. "They have run off with Peg!" "Tell me quick—which way?" Young Lund took Flip by the shoulders and shook him, in eagerness to get the information.

"Down that next street. They have her in a box, on an auto truck—but Lund waited for no details. "Don't worry, I'll get her," and running at top speed, he had turned the corner Flip had indicated almost before the old clown realized what had happened.

The motor truck bearing Chockro and his gang, with Peg safely confined in the strong wooden box, sped straight for the edge of town. Going at its best speed, the truck consumed the better part of an hour before it halted beside a clump of trees that sheltered a low, rambling shack, occupied by a swarthy Mexican who had that day rented it to the Hindu.

"There's a road here somewhere," said Chockro, as he jumped down from the motor truck and began a search. "Here's the gate; drive in here," he soon called out. The truck stopped a little way inside the gate. The cover of the box was raised and the burly thugs lifted the screaming girl to the ground.

"Scream if you like, you vixen," said the Hindu derisively. "Nobody can hear you. We've got you now where you can't be rescued."

With main force Peg was carried or dragged along the roadway and into the house. The driver of the motor truck was ordered to turn out of the yard and run immediately back to town.

Running with his own lights out, the truck man was compelled to make a quick turn to avoid collision with the speeding car as it flashed past him. Young Lund missed the volley of verbal abuse, but mentally thanked the truck man for proving that the trail of Peg was straight ahead.

There were two rooms in the Mexican's shack, and into the living room Peg was carried by Chockro's motley crew.

Peg determined to fight her way out of her desperate position. While Chockro was outside, placing his men as guards to all approaches to the house, the girl made a dash for the open door. The one man who stood guard over her attempted to restrain her.

Had this man been Peg's only barrier to freedom, she would have soon made good her escape. But just at the moment she had knocked down the desperado with a well-aimed chair she had swung high above her head, Chockro, attracted by the scuffle, put in an appearance.

The Hindu called for help, and when his cries failed to bring prompt response, he fired his revolver into the ceiling. The report brought two of his henchmen on the run, and when there was enough strong men present to subdue the girl she was thrown into the adjoining room.

Peg found herself in a bedroom, dimly lighted by a greasy lamp. She observed that there was but one window in the wall, and when she went there to look out, Chockro's hateful eyes leered in at her.

"I warn you not to try and make a get-away," said the Hindu. "There is a man outside with orders to shoot the first person to show their head at this window. So, if you want to die, just try to escape."

to finish her off." Peg heard no more conversation, for at that instant a sudden commotion in the next room put an end to talk.

Lund, driving madly along the country road, with every sense alert to guide him, had reached the vicinity of the Mexican shack, when he heard the sound of shots. He stopped his machine and listened. Another shot soon decided his action.

Driving his car to the side of the road, he jumped out. Arming himself with a heavy wrench from the tool box, he proceeded on foot until he came to the gate leading to the Mexican's yard. He then cautiously turned in. Lund crept among the hedges until he came to Chockro's first sentinel.

Sneaking noiselessly behind the "clown" Lund felt him with one blow of the heavy wrench. Going on farther, and coming to a second sentinel, Lund attacked that "clown" in a similar manner, but halted then to disrobe the senseless crook and changed clothes with him. Thus disguised as a policeman, Lund pulled the helmet low over his eyes and walked straight to the Mexican's shack and entered the living room.

"What are you doing here," said Chockro to his supposed pal. "I thought I told you to watch outside."

"Well, I thought I'd come in—and take a fall out of you," said Lund, and snatching the action to the word, the young athlete started at once to mix things up.

There were three men to one in the lively battle that ensued. Lund made use of his fists and feet, pummeled his opponents with everything he could lay hands on, kept his men busy, scrambling to their feet following the results of his well-placed blows.

Peg's curiosity got the better of her before the battle had waged more than a few seconds, and opening the door she started to enter the living room. Lund saw her and yelled for her to go back.

In the instant that Lund's attention was attracted by Peg's unexpected appearance, one of Chockro's men found an advantage. Frank crumpled under a fierce blow behind his ear.

"Throw him up with the girl," yelled Chockro. And in a twinkling Lund was flung into the bedroom and the door was slammed shut.

"Stay there, or else climb through the window," the Hindu shouted. Peg dragged Lund to the bed and doused water in his face. The treatment speedily revived him, but he was still half-stunned from the blow that had so quickly put him out of the fight.

"Gee, that was a sockdolager," said Lund, as he rubbed his head. "But I'm still alive, and while I have life that gang is not going to down me."

As he looked about for means of escape, the open window naturally attracted him. Peg anticipated his move by pleading with him not to approach the opening.

"There is a sentinel out there with orders to shoot," she cried. Then she hurriedly related her own feat of Chockro's assertion. Lund made an attempt to force the door, but it firmly resisted his efforts. Like a caged tiger he looked about him, and then expressing a firm resolve he turned to the girl and said:

"We'll go to the window, and if they shoot, all right. But I don't believe the man who shot at the bottle is there. I settled two of them on my way in, and I'm going to take the chance."

Despite her pleadings, Lund moved toward the window, keeping Peg hidden behind him. As he started to climb through the opening, a shot rang out and young Lund fell backwards into the room.

(END OF THIRTEENTH EPISODE.)



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