

# Nothing But The Truth

By **Frederic S. Isham**  
Author of Under the Rose, Aladdin From Broadway, Etc.

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## CHAPTER II.

To tell the truth—to blurt out nothing but the truth to every one, and on every occasion, for three whole weeks—that's what Bob had contracted to do. From the point of view of the commodore and the others, the man who tried to fill this contract would certainly be shot, or electrocuted, or ridden out of town on a rail, or receive a coat of tar and feathers. And Bob had such a wide circle of friends, too, which would make his task the harder; the handsome dog was popular. He was asked everywhere that was anywhere and he went, too. He would certainly "get his." The jovial commodore was delighted. He would have a whole lot of fun at Bob's expense. Wasn't the latter the big boob, though? And wouldn't he be put through his paces? Really it promised to be delicious. The commodore and the others went along with Bob just for a little tryout.

At first nothing especially interesting happened. They walked without meeting any one they were acquainted with. Transients! transients! where did they all come from? Once on their progress down the avenue the hopes of Bob's friends rose high. A car they knew got held up on a side street not far away from them. It was a gorgeous car and it had a gorgeous occupant, but a grocery wagon was between them and it. The commodore warbled blithely.

"Come on, Bob. Time for a word or two!"

But handsome Bob shook his head. "The even tenor of his way," he quoted. "I don't ordinarily go popping in and out between while like a rabbit. I'm not looking to commit suicide."

"Oh, I only wanted to say: 'How do you do,'" retorted the commodore rather sulkily. "Or 'May I tango with you at tea this afternoon, Mrs. Ralston?'"

"Artful! Artful!" Clarence poked the commodore in the ribs. "Sly old sea-dog!"

"Well, let's move on," yawned Dickie. "Nothing doing here."

"Wait!" The commodore had an idea. "Hi, you young grocery lad, back up a little, will you?"

"What for?" said the aggressive at once. Babes are born in New York with chips on their shoulders.

"As a matter of trifling accommodation, that is all," answered the commodore sweetly. "On the other side of you is a stately car and we would hold conversation with—"

"Aw, gwan! Guess I got as much right to the street as it has." And as a display of his "rights," he even touched up his horse a few inches, to intervene more thoroughly.

"Perhaps now for half a dollar—" began the commodore, more insinuatingly. Then he groaned; "Too late!"

The policeman had lifted the ban. The stately car turned into the avenue and was swallowed up among a myriad of more or less imposing vehicles. They had, however, received a bow from the occupant. That was all there had been opportunity for. Incidentally, the small boy had bestowed upon them his parting compliments: "Smart old guy! You think youse—"

The rest was jumbled up or lost in the usual cacophony of the thoroughfare. "Too bad!" murmured the commodore. "But still these three weeks are young."

"Three weeks!" observed Dickie. "Sounds like a plagiarism!"

"Oh, Bob won't have that kind of a 'three weeks,'" snickered Clarence. "Bob's will be an expurgated edition," from the commodore, recovering his spirits.

"Maybe we ought to make it four?" "Three will do," said Bob, who wasn't enjoying this chaffing. Every one they approached he now eyed apprehensively.

But he was a joy-giver, if not receiver, for his tall, handsome figure attracted many admiring glances. His striking head with its blond curls—they weren't exactly curls, only his hair wasn't straight, but clung rather wavy-like to the bold contour of his head—his careless stride, and that general effect of young masculinity—all this caused a sturdy, humble femininity to giggle and to giggle again. Bob's progress, however, was generally followed by pit-a-pats from shop-girls and bonnet-bearers. Especially at the noon hour! Then Bob seemed to these humble toilers, like dessert, after hard-boiled eggs, stale sandwiches and pickles.

But Bob was quite unaware of any approving glances cast after him. He was thinking, and thinking hard. He wasn't so sanguine now as he had been when he had left the club. What might have happened at that street corner appealed to him with sudden poignancy. Mrs. Ralston was of the creme de la creme. She was determined to stay young. She pretended to be thirty years or so younger than she was. In fact, she was rather a ridiculous old lady who found it hard to conceal her age. Now what if the commodore had found opportunity to ask that awful question? Bob could have made only one reply and told the truth. The largeness of his contract was becoming more apparent to him. He began to see himself now from Dan's standpoint. Incidentally, he was beginning to develop a great dislike for that genial land-ma'erin'.

"How about the Waldorf?" They had paused at the corner of Thirty-

fourth street. "May find some one there," suggested Clarence.

"In Peek-a-Boo Alley?" scornfully from Dickie.

"Oh, I heard there was a concert, or something upstairs," said Clarence. "In that you've got to be introduced room! And some of the real people have to walk through to get to it."

Accordingly they entered the Waldorf and the commodore hustled them, "that's how and around, without, however, their encountering a single 'real' person. There were only people present—loads of them, not from somewhere but from everywhere. They did the circuit several times, still without catching sight of a real person.

"Whew! This is a lonesome place!" breathed the commodore at last.

"Let's depart!" digestedly from Clarence. "Apologize for steering you into these barren wastes!"

"That's how and around, without, however, their encountering a single 'real' person. There were only people present—loads of them, not from somewhere but from everywhere. They did the circuit several times, still without catching sight of a real person.

"Ha!" The commodore's quick glance, following Bob's, caught sight, too, of that wonderful face in the distance—the stunning, glowing young figure—that superb vision in a lovely afternoon gown! She was followed by one or two others. One could only imagine her leading. There would, of course, always be several at her either side and quite a number dangling behind. Her lips were like the red rosebuds that swung negligently from her hand as she floated through the crowd. Her eyes suggested veiled dreams amid the confusion and hubbub of a topsyturvy world. She was like something rhythmical precipitated amid chaos. A far-away impression of a smile played around the corners of her proud lips.

The commodore precipitated himself in her direction. Bob put out a hand to grasp him by the coat tails, but the other was already beyond reach and Bob's hand fell to his side. He stood passive. That was his part. Only he wasn't passive inwardly. His heart was beating wildly. He could imagine himself with her and them—those others in her train—and the conversation that would ensue, for he had no doubt of the commodore's intentions. Dan was an adept at rounding up people. Bob could see that, at a table participating in the conversation—prepared conversation, some of it! He could imagine the commodore leading little rivulets of talk into certain channels for his benefit. Dan would see to it that they would ask him (Bob) questions, embarrassing ones. That "advice" dad had given him weighed on Bob like a nightmare. Suppose—

glastly thought!—truth compelled him ever to speak of that? And to her! A shiver ran down Bob's backbone. Never should draw nearer while Bob gazed as if fascinated, full of rapturous, paradoxical dread. Now the commodore was almost upon her when—

"Ah, what was that? An open elevator?—people going in?—She, too, those with her—Yes—click! a closed door! The radiant vision had vanished, was going upward; Bob breathed again. Think of being even paradoxically glad at witnessing her disappear! Bob ceased now to think; stood as the commodore in aggrieved tones. "Some queen, that!"

"And got the rocks—or stocks!" from Dickie. "Owns about three of those railroads that are going a-begging nowadays."

"Wake up, Bobbie!" some one now addressed that abstracted individual. Bob shook himself.

"Old friend of yours, Miss Gwendoline Gerald, I believe?" said the commodore significantly.

"Yes, she's known Miss Gerald for some time," said Bob coldly.

"Known for some time!" mimicked the commodore. "Phlegmatic dog! Well, what shall we do now?"

"Hang around until the concert's over?" suggested Dickie.

"Hang around nothing!" said the commodore. "It's one of those classical high-jinks." Disgustedly, "Lasts so late the sufferers haven't time for anything after it's over. Just enough energy left to stagger to their cars and fall over in a catatonic condition."

"Suppose we could go to the bar?" "Naughty! Naughty!" A sprightly voice interrupted.

The commodore wheeled. "Mrs. Ralston!" he exclaimed gladly.

It was the gorgeous lady of the gorgeous car.

"Just finished my shopping and thought I'd have a look in here," she said vivaciously.

"Concert, I suppose?" from the commodore jubilantly.

"Yes, Dubussy. Don't you adore Dubussy?" with schoolgirl enthusiasm. "Though almost sixty, she had the manners of a 'just-come-out.'"

"Nothing like it," lied the commodore.

"Ah, then you, too, are a modern?" gushed the lady.

"I'm so advanced," said the commodore, "I can't keep up with myself."

They laughed. "Ah, silly man!" said the lady's eyes. Bob gazed at her and the commodore enviously. He tried to be able once more to prevaricate like that! The commodore had never heard Dubussy in his life. Ragtime and merry hornpipes were his limits, and Mrs. Ralston was going to the concert, it is true, but to hear the music? Ah, no! Her box was a fashionable rendezvous, and from it she

could study modernity in hats. Therein, at least, she was a modern of the moderns. She was so advanced, the styles had fairly to trot, or turkey-trot, to keep up with her.

"Well, she said, with that approving glance women usually bestowed upon Bob, "I suppose I mustn't detain you busy people after that remark I overheard."

"Oh, don't hurry," said the commodore hastily. "Between old friends—But I say—By jove, you are looking well. Never saw you looking so young and charming. Never!" It was rather crudely done, but the commodore could say things more bluntly than other people and "get away with them." He was rather a privileged character. Bob began to breathe hard, having a foretaste of what was to follow. And Mrs. "Willie" Ralston was Miss Gwendoline Gerald's aunt! No doubt that young lady was up in her aunt's box at this moment.

"Never!" repeated the commodore. "Eh, Bob? Doesn't look a day over thirty," with a jovial, free-hearted sailor laugh. "Does she now?"

It had come. That first test! And the question had to be answered. The lady was looking at Bob. They were all waiting. A fraction of a second or so, which seemed like a geological epoch, Bob hesitated. He had to reply and yet being a gentleman, how could he? No matter what it cost him, he would simply have to "lie like a gentleman." He—

Suddenly an idea shot through his befuddled brain. Maybe Mrs. Ralston wouldn't know what he said, if he—? She had been numerous times to France, of course, but she was not mentally a heavyweight. Languages might not be her forte. Presumably she had all she could do to chatter in English. Bob didn't know much French himself. He would take a chance on her, however. He made a bow which was Chesterfieldian and incidentally made answer, rattling it off with the swiftness of a boulevardier.

"Il me faut dire que, vraiment, Madame Ralston parait aussi agee qu'elle l'est!" ("I am obliged to say that Mrs. Ralston appears as old as she is!")

Then he straightened as if he had just delivered a stunning compliment. "Mer-ci!" The lady smiled. She also beamed. "How well you speak French, Mr. Bennett!"

The commodore nearly exploded. He understood French.

Bob expanded, beginning to breathe freely once more. "Language of courtiers and diplomats!" he mumbled.

Mrs. Ralston shook an admonishing finger at him. "Flatterer!" she said, and started.

Whereupon the commodore leaned weakly against Dickie while Clarence sank into a chair. First round for Bob!

The commodore was the first to recover. His voice was reproachful. "Was that quite fair?—that parleyvoov business? I don't know about it's being allowed."

"Why not?" calmly from Bob. "Is truth confined to one tongue?"

"But what about that 'even tenor of your way'?" fenced the commodore. "You don't do as a usual thing, go around parleyvooving—"

"What about the even tenor of your own ways?" retorted Bob.

"Nothing said about that when we—"

"No, but—how can I go the even tenor, if you don't go yours?" "Hum?" said the commodore.

"Don't you see it's not the even tenor?" persisted Bob. "But it's your fault if it isn't."

"Some logic in that," observed Clarence.

"Maybe, we have been a bit too previous," conceded the commodore.

"That isn't precisely the adjective I would use," returned Bob. He found himself thinking more clearly now. He had all, perhaps, been stepping rather lightly when they had left the club. He should have thought of this before. But Bob's brain moved rather slowly sometimes and the others had been too bent on having a good time to consider all the ethics of the case. They showed themselves fair-minded enough now, however.

"Bob's right," said the commodore sorrowfully. "Suppose we've got to eliminate ourselves from his age-able company for the next three weeks, unless we just naturally happen to meet. We'll miss a lot of fun, but I guess it's just got to be. What about that parleyvooving business though, Bob?"

"That's got to be eliminated, too!" from Dickie. "Why, he might tell the truth in Chinese."

"All right, fellows," said Bob shortly. "You quit tagging and I'll talk United States."

"Good. I'm off," said the commodore. And he went. The others followed. Bob was left alone. He found the solitude blessed and began to hope for the future. Why, he might even be permitted to enjoy a lonely three weeks, now that he had got rid of that trio. He drew out a cigar and began to tell himself he was enjoying himself when—

(To be continued.)

## RUSSELL.

Lloyd May and wife left Tuesday for Ansonia, Ia., for a visit with his brother Geo. May and wife.

Mrs. H. W. Elliott left Tuesday for an extended visit with her son Ed and family of Washington.

John Doherty returned home Monday from western Missouri where he has been visiting his brother Chas. and family.

Glenn Jennings was taken to Ottumwa Hospital Monday for treatment. Miss Ethel Cassity returned home Monday for a visit with her cousin P. A. Rokey.

## —and the Worst Is Yet to Come



## LITTLE BENNY'S NOTE BOOK

BY LEE PAPE

Ma sent me to the stoar to get a 5 sent spoon of wit thred this afternoon, telling me to hurry up awn akount of her needing it to sew with, wch I went erround to the stoar and got it and wen I cam bak I went bak in the kitchen and noboddy was bak there and I took the jar of blackberry jam awf of the shelf and took 3 big spoonfuls of it and put the jar bak and then I went upstares and gave ma the thred sayin' Heers the thred, ma.

I thawt I told you to hurry, sed ma. I did hurry, I sed.

You took yure time about hurrying, then sed ma do you mean to tell me you didnt go enyware exsept strate to the stoar and bak.

Puds Simkins was down at the cornih with his noo bysickel and he let me ride it up to the telegraph pole and bak I sed.

And wat elts did you do, sed ma.

A horse fell down wile I was kuming bak from the stoar, and I stood there till it got up, I sed.

I suppose if it had nevvir got up, you woud nevvir of kum hoam, sed ma, well wat elts.

Thats awl, I sed.

Are quite sure, sed mar looking at me funy.

Well, the man was cleening the lite awn top of the lampost, but I didnt watch him lwwng, I sed.

And wat elts, sed ma still looking at me funy.

Wch I was going to say. Nothing elts, only jest then I happened to look in the mirrour and saw my face and was awl erround my mouth but blackberry jam, proving I had ate it pritty fast, I gess, and ma sed, Well, think now, wasn't there anything elts.

O yes, I sed I went bak in the kitchen and took 3 spoonfuls of blackberry jam.

Well Im glad to heer you say so, I feered you were going to tell me a lie, and if you had I woud of punished you, but for being truthfull you may have a penny, sed ma.

Proving that its always best to tell the truth, especially wen youve got stanes awl ovir yuref ase to give you away.

## Evening Story

THE COLLECTORS.

By Donald Allen.

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There were those who said that the reason Joseph Blanchard had reached the age of thirty without ever having been in love, to say nothing of having taken a wife, was because he had a fad.

Every man has a fad, even-to the fad of picking up stray pins on the sidewalk, but what all men are ready to deny is that they have one. Some other fellow is invariably the guilty party. Thus, while a score of persons said that John Blanchard had a fad, he said to himself that he was the only man in a thousand who steered clear of them.

As a youth, Master Blanchard was inclined to serious thought; one of the most serious was the preservation of the present for the future. He realized that all things, even to nations, must decay and leave no more behind them than the cave-dwellers. There must come a time, maybe a hundred thousand years hence, when a new nation would long to know how the American lived in his day and date. They would go hunting around for relics and souvenirs, and they would find remains of skyscrapers, subways, elevated roads. Here and there they would uncover a poem written by a Yankee school-ma'am—now and then a speech delivered by a senator; but from those things would arise a future historian make out the real life of the people?

And John Blanchard went to making a collection. It was such a collection as would enable the future historian to make out our every day life, even down to the brand of cigars the men smoked, and the name of the bar of soaps the women bought for the laundries.

John Blanchard's name was to be saved to posterity. The first move he made was to write out his history from birth to date, and then begin a diary which should only close with his death. He bought books to be inclosed in iron boxes; he flew away daily papers; he preserved magazine; he gathered postage stamps and coins.

John Blanchard was the son of wealthy parents. When he attained his majority he had more wealth awaiting him. He could and he did erect a building and stuff it from basement to garret with his collections. He was still at it when he made a new acquaintance that was bound to bring about changes in his life.

John Blanchard might have been the only male faddist in his town that carried the idea to an extreme, and it never occurred to him that a female might enter the lists against him. One did, however. It was Miss Myra Day, a young woman who had dwelt in this vale of tears almost as

## Children's Evening Story

It was very cold in animal land. There had been rain and snow, melting and freezing, and finally all the ponds and lakes were covered over with a coating of ice.

"And it's fine skating!" exclaimed Neddie Stubbalt, the little bear boy, as he ate his breakfast of honey cakes and cherry lollypops in the cave, before going to school.

"But you must be careful not to skate where the ice is thin and fall in," spoke his mother.

"Oh, I'll be careful," promised Neddie.

"And be careful of your sister Beckie too," added Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear gentleman, as he scraped some shavings off his cake of ice to sweeten his cup of coffee.

Neddie and Beckie, the two bear children, were soon ready for school, with their books over one shoulder and their skates over the other, for they were going to have some fun on the ice when school was out.

"I guess I'll take a few of these alone," said Neddie, as he picked up from the table some of the hard biscuits his sister had baked the day before.

"Oh, Neddie! Those are not good to eat!" Beckie exclaimed. "I put too much flour in them, and they are as hard as stones! Why, they even broke the teeth of the chimpanzee monkey when he ate one, before pulling my tail."

"And served him right, too," Neddie said with a laugh. "But I'm not going to eat these biscuits of yours, Beckie."

"No? Then what are you going to do with them?" the little bear girl wanted to know.

"Oh, I'm going to take them in my pocket for stones, to throw on the ice to see if it is strong enough to skate on," Neddie explained.

"Well, I guess that's all my biscuits are good for," said Beckie with a sigh. "Never mind, next time you bake any flour and water to put in," said Mrs. Stubbalt. "Mistakes will happen, you know, in the best of kitchens."

Neddie and Beckie went on to school and both of the bear children received good marks for knowing their lessons. And when school was out, Neddie and Beckie, with Tommy Joie and Kittle Kat, Charlie and Arabella Chick, Jackie and Peetle Bow Wow, the two Bushytail squirrel brothers and Sammie and Susie Littletail, the rabbits, all went down to the duck pond to skate and slide on the ice.

"Hurrah! Here I go!" cried Sammie the rabbit boy as he ran to get a good start for a slide.

"Wait a minute!" exclaimed Neddy Stubbalt. "I must first try and see if the ice will hold us!"

Then, taking some of poor Beckie's stone-hard biscuits out of his pocket, the little boy bear threw them on the ice as hard as he could.

"Bang!" went the biscuits, breaking all to pieces, but the ice was not even cracked.

"It is safe for skating," said Neddie, "though Beckie's biscuits are not safe for eating. But she doesn't care, do you, sister?"

"Not a bit," answered Beckie. "Some day I will learn how to make soft biscuits!"

Then the animal children began skating and sliding. Other animal folk came to have fun on the ice, and among them was a little beaver boy who was not very polite. He was no relation to Toodie or Noddie Flattail,

made Mr. Blanchard volunteer to go with her and help capture a few crickets.

The farmer refused a very liberal offer for his manuscripts, on the grounds that if he had money his credit would pursue him afresh; and when he came to half understand the business of the collectors he was filled with contempt.

"That feller orter be splittin' wood and that woman orter be slicin' apples to dry!" was the way he looked at it, and when they came to ask where the largest and choicest crickets could be found he pointed to a bush in the pasture and replied:

"You'll find some lively ones down there."

The farmer's wife came out to him at the plow and asked:

"Josiah, what does that woman want?"

"Why, she's one of 'em."

"Does she want to buy them dunning letters, or the old letters you wrote me afore we were married?"

"No, she's after bugs."

"Good lands!"

"I couldn't make out exactly what she wanted of them, but when they asked about crickets I sent 'em over in the pasture."

the good beaver chaps, I'm glad to say. And when this beaver chap fell down and the beaver chap fell near him and Neddie's paw-nails accidentally scratched the beaver.

"Oh, what ugly long claws you have!" cried the beaver boy to Neddie. "Go away from me! I don't like you!"

"I am sorry I scratched you," spoke Neddie, politely, "and I cannot help my claws being long. Please excuse me."

"No, I'll not!" grunted the beaver boy, and he went off to slide by himself, sort of cross-like.

Well, the animal children were sliding away, having a fine time, when Neddie saw his sister Beckie going over toward a thin place in the ice.

"Come away from there, Beckie!" he shouted. "It isn't safe there!"

But, no sooner had Neddie spoken than—

"Crack!" suddenly went the ice, like a gun being shot off, and poor Beckie Stubbalt disappeared from sight—that means you couldn't see her any more.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried all the other animal children, as they skated toward shore. "Beckie has fallen in!"

"We'll get her out! We'll get her out!" cried Billie and Johnny Bushytail, the squirrels, as they skated toward the hole through which Beckie had fallen into the cold water.

"No, stay back!" shouted Neddie. "Don't go near that thin ice or we'll all fall in!"

"But, don't you want to save your sister?" asked Sammie Littletail.

"Of course I do!" cried Neddie with tears in his eyes. "But if I fall in myself, I can't save her. She has gone under the ice. Look down through it everybody, and when you see where she is I'll scratch a hole in the ice over her and pull her up through it."

You could see through the clear ice, you know, just as you can through a glass window, and soon the animal boys and girls were watching for a sight of Beckie. For she had gone through the hole and had floated down the duck pond under the ice that covered it.

"Oh, here she is! Here she is!" suddenly cried Charlie Chick, as he looked through the clear ice and saw the little bear girl in the water below. The chicken boy tried to pick a hole in the ice with his beak, but he was not strong enough. Then up rushed Neddie, and with his powerful claws, he soon clawed a hole in the ice, and lifted his sister up through it.

Poor Beckie's eyes were closed, and she was very wet and cold. But just then Uncle Wiggly Longears, the rabbit gentleman, came along in his automobile-sleigh, and he soon took Beckie home, where she could have hot lemonade and be wrapped in warm blankets.

And when the beaver boy saw how Neddie had saved his sister from the ice the beaver chap said:

"I am sorry I made fun of your claws. I'm glad you saved your sister. They have been drowned."

"Yes," said Neddie, kindly, "that is true." So the ice-skating was over for that day, and the next Beckie was as well as ever. So this teaches us a bear's claws are very useful for something besides scratching mosquito bites, and the next story will be about Beckie and Uncle Wiggly, and if the piano does go roller skating with the phonograph I don't believe the sugar will hide in the spoon-holder; no, you?

It was right and proper that Mr. Blanchard should get down on his knees and paw around in the grass, and he pawed with energy and determination. He found insects after a minute, but they were not crickets. The farmer saw Mr. Blanchard leap to his feet in surprise. He heard Miss Day utter a shriek and saw her running away.

Then he saw Mr. Blanchard running away and beating the air with his hat. Then it was Miss Day who bounded around and fought something with her field net. Then the farmer said to himself:

"They've struck that bumble bee's nest that I was saving for a wire fence man, and perhaps they'll need help. Queer that these bug folks can't tell a cricket from a bee!"

There was need of his help. Both collectors were tearing around in the both empanic and snowy. Armed with a broken bush, the rescuer fought the bees to a standstill, but they had done their work. The wife came from the house to lead Miss Day to it, and the husband brought up the procession with Mr. Blanchard.

"They've struck that bumble bee's nest that I was saving for a wire fence man, and perhaps they'll need help. Queer that these bug folks can't tell a cricket from a bee!"