

The Web of Destiny

By J. U. GIESY and J. B. SMITH

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"I would say I believe you, strange as the thing seems," she declared. "Mr. Dual impresses me as a monster mind in a body, and it seems to me that that mind sees and knows things which are hidden to such as myself. Tell me: Can he do these things at will, or merely on occasion?"

"At will, Miss Foote."

The moon now in its full had come up and was flooding all the country with its mellow light. The girl beside me shivered slightly ere she spoke.

"What a power—to look into the human mind and read what it is thinking—to sense the thought waves it throws off. Mr. Glace, just what is your friend—a reincarnation of one of the olden Magi?"

"Do you believe in reincarnation?" I queried.

"I don't know," she said softly. "Why not? Millions of people do. Wouldn't it after all be a sort of divine justice. Should we be utterly condemned or rewarded on just one trial—one life?"

"I don't know. Why shouldn't some of those old people who did believe in it—some of those ancients upon whom this same moon has shone, thousands of years ago, have had a perception of the truth as well as we of to-day?"

"I think I should like to believe in it—I think I should like to live again and see if I couldn't make something better out of life."

"I don't know much of religion or God, Mr. Glace, beyond what I feel within myself, but take the case of this girl we hope to rescue. Suppose we should fail."

"Can you imagine a God who would condemn her eternally for some fate thrust upon her without her volition? Yet this life of hers must, if the worst comes upon her, be utterly ruined. Don't you think that justice demands another chance for her?"

She paused again and after a moment smiled.

"But you haven't yet told me, who or what is the man, we know as Semi Dual."

"Nor can I tell you," I answered, "save to say he is a most wonderful man, whom I have known for years. Yet since you press the question I shall give you the valuation he once placed on himself to me. He said that he was a man who had suffered much, and studied much, and, as he hoped, learned a few of the great truths of life."

She nodded.

"That sounds like him, too. And one of the things he has learned is to read thoughts. I wonder if that was how he knew the tip on Seattle was false. Did he read those Greek's minds?"

"I think so," I confessed.

"But how does he do it? I never really believed in it as a practical thing."

"His explanation is seemingly simple," I returned. "He begins with the theory that all life phenomena are manifestations of vibration, and that every life act depends upon and is produced by vibration. From that he says that the formation of a thought sets up vibratory waves and that a mind trained to the act can sense these waves and retranslate them into intelligible thoughts again."

"Then they must be all around us—these thought waves. Millions of people are thinking—setting them free, every minute. They fill all space like wireless currents."

"It would be odd to be able to read them. Mr. Glace, at the risk of seeming improperly curious, I am going to ask further, what he does when he works over those sheets of paper? I am both a detective and a woman, remember, and hence doubly inquisitive."

"I smiled, as I made my answer. "Miss Foote, it may seem strange to you, as it did at first to me, to find in this twentieth century a man who still consults the stars. Yet that is what Semi Dual at times does."

"He is an astrologer."

"I have seen him make some wonderful predictions from his calculations on those bits of paper, and I have seen his predictions come true. In fact the results have at times seemed almost uncanny in the foreknowledge they exhibited of what would befall. As a rule I hesitate to say such things to people because they laugh, but I believe you are sincere in your questions."

"Indeed I am," she almost whispered. "I shall not laugh. They believed those things when that old moon up there was young. I wonder—were they wiser than we?"

Suddenly she sat up in her chair and clenched her hands.

"We will win—we will win. I am sure of it now. My God, why couldn't I have known Semi Dual before!"

Her words were those of a soul in torment, and for the moment she seemed to have forgotten my presence. Yet in a minute she spoke again in her natural voice.

"Pardon me, Mr. Glace. Suppose we speak of something else."

I nodded assent. "You have lived in San Francisco," I suggested.

"I was born and raised there," said Miss Foote.

"And how long have you been a detective?"

"Three years."

"I suppose," said I, "that you have met some pretty gripping things in the line you have followed. My work is mostly with thieves and major criminal actions. Yours, I take it, has been more along sociological lines?"

"Yes," she seemed to consider for a moment before she went on.

"Would you like to hear one instance of the work of these people we are fighting at present?"

"Very much," I rejoined.

"I was thinking of that when I made my outburst a few moments ago," she explained. "It was in San Francisco that it happened, too. There was a girl—a young girl—pretty, of course."

"They don't bother with the ugly ducklings—they have to have the fairest flowers."

"Well, it doesn't matter who she was or what she was doing, does it? She was a good girl, Mr. Glace, but fond of pleasure, and the least bit headstrong, as your spoiled beauty is apt to be, but she was clean at heart as I happen to know."

"At the same time she was from people of moderate means, so that when she found employment she took it. She was employed in a photographer's shop."

"One day a man, a young man, came there to sit for a picture."

"He saw this girl and as a customer he addressed her. From that time on he made it a point to see her and gradually they became friendly. He began to show her some little attentions. He took her to places of amusement, and sometimes to dinner at a cafe. After a time he asked her to marry him."

"She told her mother—her father

was dead—and her mother objected. There was a scene, of course. You see I knew the people well."

"A few days later she went with the man to dinner, and he persuaded her to elope. She never came home again, and she never was married."

"This man took her to a place, and placed her in a room, telling her to wait there until he could arrange for the ceremony. Shortly after he had left her a woman came to her room and told her everything was ready and that she was to accompany her to a place where the man was waiting."

"Instead, she took her to one of the places where these people detain their victims."

"Not until she was shut in and helplessly lost did the girl suspect. Then she decided to die rather than submit to the fate she had rushed forward to meet."

"She had some photographic proofs in an envelope in her bag and upon the backs of these she wrote what had happened, and the name of her betrayer, sealed them up and addressed the envelope to me."

"She managed to throw this out of a window, where it was found by some one passing and sent to me. Then—then—she took the pin out of her hat, and stabbed herself straight through—the left breast."

Lucile Foote drew her kerchief and wiped her eyes.

"I ought to cut that out," she observed in a moment, "but you see I had known the girl since she was a baby, and when her mother learned of her death, the shock killed her also. And what good did it do—what end did it serve?"

"And the man?" I inquired.

"Went free as men do," said Miss Foote. "He simply disappeared. The girl had his picture in her room at her home, and we had his description of course, but he was not found."

"Yet he murdered that girl just as surely as if his hand had guided the pin instead of hers, when it pierced her heart. Don't you think a girl driven to a thing like that ought to have a chance to come back and try it over? If not, what would become of her?"

"I think," I rejoined, "that a girl forced to such a choice, who chose death to dishonor, ought to go to a little white and gold room in the very highest heaven."

Lucile Foote turned toward me and I thought that she seemed pale in the moonlight, and that her eyes were very wide and dark.

"Thank you, Mr. Glace," she murmured softly and turned her head away.

"But as for the man," I went on; "the one who was responsible for that pitiful ending of two other lives, even though he escaped the justice of man, he cannot escape the justice of Fate. It will trail him sooner or later to his doom."

My companion glanced back again to me.

"Do you believe that?" she whispered; "about Fate? Really?"

I nodded.

"Yes. I have seen it work out again and again—that men who had done crimes, and thought themselves safe, were overtaken by the arm of an unsuspecting justice. That is one of Dual's strongest beliefs also."

"He says it always happens. He calls it the law of Retributive Justice, which demands that every person pays in full for every act he performs of evil, and is rewarded for every good deed."

"Wherefore by his good deeds one 'acquires merit' as the Orientals say," quoted Miss Foote. "Well, why not? If there is a life after this, why Christians spoke of a recording angel. If there is a life after this, why should there not be a ledger kept, with debits and credits for or against each soul?"

"Dual calls those records the Karmaic Scrolls," I replied.

"You mean he believes in such a record?" inquired Miss Foote in a rather small voice.

"Indeed, yes. In fact it is through that that the law of justice works. He says that every act, every thought of a man makes its record for or against him, and that an act or a thought lives and operates until it produces its effect."

"With him all is cause and effect. The act is the cause, its effect the result."

"The sum total of a man's acts is his karma—the balance, as it were, of the things he has done, which determines what he is to do next. If he is right, and myself I believe that he is, then the man who betrayed that girl cannot escape the payment for his act. At least it is some satisfaction to think that some time it must be."

She made no answer and I too fell into silence, watching her out of half-closed lids.

Her profile told me she was thinking and would rather not be disturbed by more words. I let my eyes wander from her face out over the moon-drenched landscape, silvered into a weird beauty.

Far off to the right a point of reddish light winked from a dark blot—a hut in the wilderness of sage. I watched it dwindle and die behind us. Lucile Foote drew a long, quivering sigh.

"You are right, Mr. Glace: that man shall pay."

A tall figure appeared in the door at our backs and I recognized Dual. He stepped out on the platform and stood behind us.

"Even now the hand of his fate is driving him into the web of the law," he remarked. "I have listened to the last part of your conversation, and Gordon has told you broadly of my belief. He is right. His fate shall overtake the betrayer of your sister."

"My sister?" Lucile repeated in surprised accents.

"We are all children of the one Father, all earthly brothers and sisters," said Semi Dual. "If we could only remember that fact! I perceive that the death of this girl has affected you deeply."

"It is for that reason that I have spoken; because after the matter of Miss Lawton shall have been brought to a close, my next act shall be to enable you to apprehend this other girl's betrayer."

Lucile lifted her eyes and gazed into his while I sat silent in the grip of the situation. Then without one word she rose and turned into the car behind us, and as she went I heard her sob in a hard, dry way.

I turned to Semi Dual.

"I wonder what is the secret of that girl's life?" I remarked.

"I think that is her secret, my friend," he replied.

"And you mean to take up the case of this other girl?"

"Why not?" said Semi.

"And you will be able to find the man who betrayed her?"

"Did you ever know me to fail to find a man, Gordon?" he queried with a smile.

"And how about our case?"

I ran on now that the ice was broken and he seemed all at once the old Dual I knew.

"Will we find the Lawton girl in time, Semi? Why have you shut me out as you have? What is it that makes you so different in this?"

"Necessity," he answered. "I have hurt you, haven't I, Gordon? My friend, believe me that I would not have done it, save for the vital need. In all that I do, save your hurts with that."

"Oh, I knew there was a good reason," I began with the sudden feeling that I had been childish.

Dual smiled upon me.

"Gordon," he said, "in this case—this matter of a little human fly in the web of a spider—every step of our course thus far has been fraught with a danger unrealized by you. And, my friend, it is best that you do not see, lest in your knowledge you blunder."

"Even in this half explanation my words doubtless seem cryptic, and must continue to do so, until I shall have lifted the fly from the web once more. Hence I ask you to trust me wholly, and do whatever I ask without question. In so much you can serve me, and the little human fly. Will you follow me blindly my friend?"

"Do you need ask?" I faltered.

"After all you have taught me, I was a fool not to have understood. Still I am glad we had this conversation, because I think from now on you'll find me a pretty good soldier."

"And now," said Dual slowly, "I shall answer one of your questions. So far as Miss Lawton's welfare is concerned, we will be in time."

(To be Continued.)

HOW THOSE ALLIES STICK



Military uniforms of many nations are seen nowadays in New York hospitals, as well as in the restaurants and the streets. Irving Bloomingdale, of Bloomingdale Brothers, sent his private automobile to the Hospital for the Ruptured and Crippled to give an afternoon's ride to four convalescent soldiers or seamen. And this is the array of nationalities and uniforms that he got:—Paul Krause, United States Marine Corps, recovering from an injury suffered on a hike; Lucien Chauvet, corporal of wireless, French navy, who has a leg that won't walk properly; J. A. Moulton, Royal Newfoundland infantry, who was wounded in six places at one time in France, and C. M. Patrick, first class gunner's mate, United States Navy, whose legs are crippled.



On the Spur of the Moment

by Roy K. Moulton

THOSE STRENUOUS RELATIVES.

Ralph Wilson and Claude Beach were home over Sunday from Purdue University, where they are in army training for a visit with relatives.—Valparaiso (Ind.) Vidette.

Germans "rich and poor" are urged to go barefooted this summer to save leather. Would like to see the kaiser and his six sons start this movement. Photographs of the imperial and princely hoofs ought to bring a tidy sum.

First Colored Gent: "I don't believe it am constitutional fo' to draf' a man an' make him fight."

Second Colored Gent: "Boy, they don't make yo' fight. They jus' sends yo' to France and put yo' in a trench, and' when the Germans charge at yo', they jes' put it up to yo' bes' judgment whether yo' better fight or not."

We have a friend who is a stage carpenter in a vaudeville house in a large city and he has the highest contempt for nonessential occupations. He claims he hasn't much to do, but what he does is important. "I play supe and work the cues for a sketch," he said. "Then hang the drop for a sister act, work the light cues, manipulate the automobile and bark like a dog for an auto act, pull the gylines in a trapeze act, and attend to my own duties. Outside of that I have nothing at all to do. It's a cinch."

REFERRED TO NAT GOODWIN.

Dear Sir: "I am going to be married and I don't know just how much to slip the minister. Would ten bucks be about right, or would it be too much or not enough? I have a friend who always pays five, but I think he is a piker."

A magician was playing a small town in Pennsylvania last week. He did an illusion act with his wife in which he made his wife disappear. A man in the audience jumped up on his seat and yelled: "Say, professor, I'll give you \$1,000 if you'll show me how to do that."

"She was a charming Junk bride," says a typographically incorrect report of a wedding at Albany.

By the way, what is a Junk bride, anyhow? Does that refer to the presents?

Or did you mean June bride? Explain, please.

Germany is said to be in the midst of a cold wave. But she will be struck by a hot wave soon—a wave of Yanks.

Senate has passed a bill to expose all war profiteers. How about passing a bill to punish them, if we may ask a fool question?

War industries board intimates that steel shortage may compel women to go corsetless. Hurry up and win that war. That's all we've got to say. We don't want everything in bad shape, do we?

The housekeeper's idea of heaven is a place where hashed-brown potatoes will grow in the garden; where cherry pies will grow on trees and where the woman at the head of the table may wave a wand and say, "Presto!" and the dishes will wash themselves.

TOLEDO DISTRICT LEADS DELCO-LIGHT SALES ORGANIZATION

Mr. E. H. Walker, Distributor for Delco-Light Products, has just returned from Dayton, accompanied by 35 of his Dealers, Division Managers and Special Salesmen who constitute his district. A school has been conducted for the past week for the benefit of his organization.

Mr. Walker's district led the United States and Canadian selling forces last month and, from present indications, there is every reason to expect District 17 (as it is called) will be in first place at the end of this year. The leading district will receive, as a prize, an automobile fully equipped with demonstrating plant, moving picture machine, etc. This will of course go to the leading dealer in the winning district.

Included in Mr. Walker's organization are Messrs. Frank Reilly and Geo. White, formerly of the National Cash Register's selling force, who are now Division Managers, and Messrs. Chas. Kiley (Division Manager), and D. J. Ford and J. E. Allen (Special men), formerly of the S. F. Bowser Company.

Among his leading salesmen are Messrs. Frank Hochanadel, Chas. Riley and Henry Nehring, of Toledo. Practically the entire District went to Dayton at Mr. Walker's expense on account of the records which the dealers made, the district having made 187% of its quota for June.

HOME FOOD PROBLEMS

"United States Food Leaflets" Convey Nation's Expert Thought to Nation's Women.

Uncle Sam's food advice to his people at war, condensed in four-page "United States Food Leaflets," and aimed to stimulate food saving without slighting body needs, are now ready. Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Food Administration and with the aid of State representatives, the leaflets carry the country's expert thought on food conservation and utilization translated into popular language. For the mother who may be confused with much advice about her war obligation, as well as for the food conservation worker, the message of the leaflets should be most helpful.

Beginning with the day's first meal the experts take up the daily food problems of the average home. "Start the Day Right with a Good Breakfast" is Food Leaflet No. 1. Then follow others now ready: "Do You Know Corn Meal?" "A Whole Dinner in One Dish," "Choose Your Food Wisely," "Make a Little Meat Go a Long Way," "Do You Know Oatmeal?" "Food for Your Children." More will follow.

In four-page nutshells and in big, readable type, the problem of foods and diets are presented in a way which should make them "strike home"—every home in America. War diets for the child and the adult, carefully selected, not only with regard to "calories" and "protein"—scientific measuring rods—but also with delicate respect for young, middle-aged, and grown-up appetites, are presented by means of menus, recipes, and hints—many of them new and all of them simple and practicable.

Confident that "A Whole Dinner in One Dish," presented in Food Leaflet No. 3, will make good its name, the Government's food specialists guarantee that:

"The youngsters will like it."

"Father will like it."

"You will like it."

"Your pocketbook will surely like it."

"Your bodies can't help liking it."

"Uncle Sam is bound to like it."

Diets for the children, one leaflet says in big type, should not be skimpy, but a wise selection will enable food saving even in their meals. And, then, after enumerating model breakfasts, dinners, and suppers, the experts make a bid for the child vote with these suggestions:

"Sweets are good for them—the right ones at the right time. Dates, raisins, stewed fruits, simple puddings, and sugar cookies are better than candy. Give them at meal time. Between meals let them have bread and butter, a cracker, or fruit. They won't spoil the appetite, the candy between meals will."

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