

Dice of Destiny

By JACKSON GREGORY

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"WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU?"

Synopsis—Senor Antonio de la Guerra, a fine old Spaniard living on his ancestral estate on the American side of the Mexican border, is informed by his American lawyer, Dempston, that there is a technical error in his will. He thereupon signs a new will, without reading it. While this is going on his adorable granddaughter and heiress, Senorita Teresa, is out on her rose-covered balcony listening to American love-making from Billy Stanway, owner of the Painted Rock ranch. Teresa goes to join her grandfather and finds him gone, with the drawing room in disorder and blood on the floor. The American takes command of the situation.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

"Twenty-five," replied Gaucho promptly.

"Good," cried Stanway. "Take twenty men with you; send the other five to the house. Pronto, Gaucho."

Gaucho turned and ran, calling to his vaqueros as he went.

"Pedro," called Stanway to the chief of the house servants.

"Aqui, senor."

"Have the doors and windows shut, the shutters locked. When Gaucho sends the five men, put one of them upon the senorita's balcony, the others at the windows, especially the south windows, Pedro. Then put out all the candles and be silent, all of you."

"No one goes to bed again tonight. Each one, man and woman, find a gun of some sort. I do not think that there is danger, but remember that the border is just there, remember that they have taken the good senor from you, remember that we are leaving the senorita in your protection."

He spoke swiftly and turned to follow Gaucho out into the dark. Teresa, who had been watching him in silence, came to him and put her hand upon his arm.

"Senor Billy," she whispered. "You are going with Gaucho and the rest?"

"Yes," he answered shortly. "You are safe here; they do not dare an open attack in United States territory. And no doubt we shall be back before morning."

"What have they done with him?" she was asking, trying to speak steadily. "What do you think—did they—"

She broke off. He could see her lips trembling. One of the Indian women, through habit beginning to tidy the room, moved the rug Stanway had placed by the table, discovered the stain, went down on her hands and knees, and then rose with a shriek.

"Sangre!" she cried. "Jesus Maria! Sta muerto! He is dead. They have killed him. The beloved senor, who was so good—"

Stanway strode back to her, taking her by the shoulders and commanding her to stop her noise and to help Pedro lock the doors and windows. But Teresa had heard; they had all heard.

She stood very still then, looking tall and slender and white.

"Go to the doors and windows as the American senor commands," she said steadily. "Leave no light to show that anyone is awake. Do whatever Pedro tells you to do, in swiftness and in silence. I shall come to see what you are doing in a moment now. Go."

They left as she commanded, in swiftness and silence. The doors closed behind them, and Teresa turned her great eyes, full of dread and suffering, upon Stanway.

"You saw it before?"

He nodded.

"You think that they have—killed him?"

"No," he cried, more assurance in his voice than in his heart. "It means nothing if there is a little blood after men have struggled as they must have fought here. And if they killed him, then why carry the body with them? He is alive; he must be."

"Yes," she answered. "I should feel it here." Her hands were pressed tight upon her breast. "Now go with them, Senor Billy. You are good to us."

"Good to myself," he laughed back at her, trying to speak easily.

Stanway passed out into the patio, running toward the corral where he had left his own horse saddled under a live oak. As he ran he heard the girl's voice calling to him:

"Remember, Senor Billy, that you are riding across the border tonight into Mexican territory. There is danger there. And—well, perhaps there is one who will pray for your speedy and safe return."

He saw the flutter of her gown through the misty moonlight, swept off his hat, called back a cheery word, and ran on.

He saw a group of men mounted or mounting now, at the corral, and knew Gaucho and his vaqueros were ready. He could see the glint of the pale light upon the rifles in their hands.

He found his own horse, a tall, roan-colored sorrel, swung into the saddle, called sharply to Gaucho, and then realized suddenly that something was

keeping the men at the corral gate, that their voices were raised excitedly. Giving his mount the spur he dashed down to them.

"Que es?" he called, half angry at the momentary delay. "What is it, Gaucho?"

"Til answer for Gaucho," came a deep, sonorous voice, unmistakably southern in accent. "It is I, senor."

"And you," snapped Stanway. "Who the devil are you?"

"One who is not accustomed to being addressed as if he were a mestizo," with a certain haughtiness which rode well upon the deep music of the voice. "Senor Don Eduardo Ramon Torre, at your service, senor!"

"Oh, h—l," grunted the American under his breath. And then, riding into the heart of the excited group, reining in his sorrel close to a deep-chested black animal, its hide glistening with sweat, he said shortly: "Well, Torre, what is it? We are in something of a hurry."

Torre laughed.

"We? So you are one of us, senor? Bueno. It is a pleasure to know."

"He has met up with the raiders, Senor Stanway," Gaucho snarled. "He was riding this way from across the river. He is wounded, see?"

Stanway saw that there was blood upon the young Spaniard's cheek, that there was a long cut which might have been made by a grazing bullet.

"Small reason we should loiter here," he said quickly. "What way did they go, Torre?"

"South, naturally, senor," replied Torre evenly.

"Gaucho!" cried Stanway then.

"Scatter your men out as we ride so that we make a line a mile long when we come to the hills just across the line. Let them keep a sharp lookout, and fire if they see the rebels. We must not get too far apart, or we shall not be able to do anything. How many of them were there, Torre?"

"I forgot to count, senor. I should say, fifty, perhaps."

"We are twenty. That is enough. You are not coming with us?"

"I think not. Why, with so competent a leader as you, should I come also? No. I think," and he turned his horse toward the white walls of

"I shall remain here."

the hacienda, "that I shall remain here with my kinswoman. There may be a second attack upon the rancho. Good hunting, senor."

He turned his horse, and, sitting easily, gracefully in the deep Mexican saddle, rode away through the moonlight. Stanway, frowning after the retreating form, hesitated a moment.

Then, calling sharply to Gaucho Morales, he gave his horse the spur and turned southward.

"You understand what we're doing, Gaucho?" he said sternly. "We're invading Mexico, come right down to it. We're not supposed to have any business there just now. We've got to take care of ourselves."

"Si, senor," muttered Gaucho at his side.

CHAPTER IV.

Word From the Insurrectos.

Moon paled, stars died, the east flushed to the coming of the sun before they turned back from a fruitless quest, riding again close together toward the north.

Stanway and Gaucho had kept upon the trail through the fields, the others spreading out to east and west as they rode that there might be no chance of missing the party they sought in the night.

But in an hour they had come into a country where all tracks were mingled with the hoof marks of cattle and vaqueros' ponies, and their trail was smothered and lost.

Shortly before midnight they had come upon three men, ragged, ugly-looking Mexicans, sleeping about a camp fire which was fast dying. The men knew nothing or professed at ignorance, Stanway could not tell which.

After that nothing, although they had pushed many miles into the Mexican country until they realized the utter uselessness of riding farther.

"We may as well go back, Gaucho," Stanway said at last. "They will want ransom, I suppose. When they speak we'll know what to do."

And reluctantly, his face black with the wrath upon him, Gaucho Morales called to his men to turn back.

The sunlight lay bright and warm upon the oranges and their blossoms when they rode back to the rancho. Stanway threw himself from the saddle, a bit stiff from long hours of hard riding.

Then, walking slowly now, loath to greet Teresa de la Guerra with news of their failure, he came into the patio. She was there waiting for him.

"Nothing," he blurted out. "We have found nothing."

"I know," she said quietly. She came toward him, putting out her hands. "You have been good to us, Senor Billy."

He laughed a bit awkwardly.

"I don't know how," he retorted. "I have done nothing. You have not been molested here?"

She hesitated. He saw a quick frown gather her brows. Then, speaking lightly, she replied, saying:

"No. But come; you must be hungry and tired out. Coffee is ready."

He went with her to the broad-open doors.

"Torre is here?" he asked, his eyes intent upon her face.

The frown came again, and was gone quickly. But he had seen it.

"He is here, yes. Asleep. I think. He was wounded. You know?"

"He is not badly hurt?"

"Her tired eyes, into which sleep had not come during the long night, grew brightly contemptuous."

"It is only his beauty which is harmed," she said swiftly.

"Good morning, prima mia!" called a deep, laughing voice. "Ah, still with us, Senor Stanway?"

Torre, debonair in the dark, youthful beauty of him, greeted them at the doorway.

"Certainly Senor Stanway is still with us," said Teresa coolly. "He is my guest, my grandfather's friend, Senor Torre!"

Torre laughed and lifted his shoulders.

"Enter," he said with a graciousness which was in some strange way vaguely insulting; it was as though he were the master here, and because of his generosity not only Stanway but the girl as well were allowed upon the premises.

Now it was Teresa who flushed. "Come, Senor Billy," she said quietly. "We are going to have coffee together."

For the fraction of a second the two men stood fronting each other their level eyes filled with challenge with a mistrust which was little less than hatred.

Then the Spaniard, bowing again, turned away, with a slight smile playing under the small, pointed mustache, and Stanway followed his hostess.

Pedro himself superintended the serving of the simple breakfast.

"Senorita," Stanway said at last, pushing back his chair, "I should like to go back to the drawing room. There might be something there to give us a hint that will help us."

"Si," she said, "I had thought of that. I looked last night carefully after you had gone."

"You found nothing?"

"Nothing that I could understand," she answered quietly. "Something I could not."

He looked up at her quickly, his eyes full of question.

"This," she answered, not waiting for him to speak.

She placed a folded paper before him. He glanced at it, frowned, looked again, and turned once more to her.

"It is his will. Dated last night. But why has he made a new one?"

"Read it," she said as before though her eyes were brightening with some surge of emotion he could not guess.

Stanway to Torre: "You can't get away with a thing like this. Explain it!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

What is a Mofusell? "Mofusell" is a Hindoo word meaning "the provincial or rural districts" as opposed to the towns. The Gangetic delta is the land deposited by the river Ganges in India at its mouth forming an extensive tract of very rich soil. The whole phrase refers to these rich, fertile districts near the mouth of the Ganges, where great quantities of rice are grown.

MIGHT GET IT RIGHT SOON

Youthful Sunday School Teacher by No Means Discouraged by First Rather Wild Statement.

She is fifteen and teaches a Sunday school class of ten little girls. That they might learn to keep and do them," she bade them commit the twelve commandments. The day for the utterance of the "twelve" statutes arrived.

The little girl on the end seat was called on first. Glibly she repeated the ten. There was a pause. She was waiting for the approval of her teacher.

"Give the other two," firmly commanded the teacher. "My mother said there were only ten, and that was more than anyone could keep, and she knows," retorted the assured little end-seat girl.

Nonchalantly the teacher began turning the pages of Revelation. She was working to Deuteronomy.

"Certainly there are but ten commandments. How stupid. I was thinking of Proverbs. You know, my dears, there are twelve of those."

Peace Epigrams.

At a dinner the other night to Edward Price Bell, the well-known American Journalist, several epigrams were related about the peace terms. The Americans described it as "a peace with a punch." An English speaker said he had heard it described as "a peace with a vengeance."

I may add as the expression of the feelings of the ordinary man who has had to work through the 10,000 words, that it is a peace that passeth understanding.—Manchester Guardian.

Not for Charlotte.

Charlotte is the three-year-old daughter of a College avenue resident. One of the recent warm evenings she removed her shoes and stockings and went over to the front porch of a neighbor to show her that she was barefooted. The neighbor said: "You had better get on your shoes or you will catch your death of dampness." Charlotte immediately replied, "Oh, no. I have had it."—Indianapolis News.

In Short.

Sellum—How's the market, Wright? Wright—Rotten; I'm actually starving. Sold a bundle of we-thank-you-for-the-submission slips yesterday to the junkman for enough to buy a package of Unlucky Hit cigarettes. As for checks, they're as scarce as crowned heads in Europe.

Sellum—In short, you're writing for the magazines, but they're not writing for you.

If you would criticize your boss get fully a mile away from everybody, then whisper to yourself.

Pardonable Curiosity.

"Gabe Sogback got hold of a drink or two of bone-dry licker tuther evening and went home and threwed himself on the bed, face down," related a citizen of Sandy Mush, Ark. "As soon as he was asleep his wife took and tied him fast by the four corners, spread out like a capital letter 'X,' and beat and mauled him with a wagon spoke till she mighty nigh smashed him flat. A pessel of us fellers going by beard the hooraw, and, 'lowing a varmint was killing somebody, went in, and sorter persuaded Mizrus Sogback to turn Gabe loose. She said she had whipped him b'cuz she loved him. I reckon that was all right, but I'm sorter curious to know what she'd a-did to him if she'd-p'tul—hated him."—Kansas City Star.

Matter of Jurisdiction.

At the master painters and decorators' banquet the other evening one of the guests said to a companion:

"I notice a couple of doctors in the gathering."

"Yes, I saw them, too," the other replied.

"How do you account for their presence here?"

"Jokingly the painter answered:

"Oh, we are obliged to be very strict on account of the union."

"How does that affect the doctors?"

"Every doctor must have a working card, you know, so he will be able to paint with iodine."—Youngstown Telegram.

That Might Help.

Gwendoline de Vere gazed out of the window at the drizzling rain and the sloppy streets and sighed dimly, as she pondered on the misery of things in general.

"Aye, I am heart hungry," she murmured in thrilling accents to herself. "What, I wonder, can alleviate these terrible pangs of heart hunger?"

Just then a voice came from the kitchen:

"Come on, Gwen! Dinner's ready. Got liver and bacon today!"

Real Guilt.

A Chinese diplomat mentioned something about a Chinese having committed suicide by eating gold leaf.

"Well," said a society woman in the company. "I can't understand how that could have killed him."

"Probably," answered the diplomat, seriously, "he died from the consciousness of inward guilt."—London Ideas.

Happiness and Interest.

Personal happiness is almost synonymous with personal interests; the wider the range of the latter the higher is the degree of happiness.—Lillian Whiting.

It is awfully hard for a genius to keep his name on the pay roll.

WHY SO MOODY?

To feel "blue," cross and nervous all the time is not natural for anyone. Often it is due merely to faulty kidney action. Housework and the many daily cares wear the nerves and so weaken the kidneys. Then comes that tired, fretful, half-sick state. If you have backache, headache, dizziness and kidney irregularities, and sharp, shooting pains, try Doan's Kidney Pills. They have brought health and happiness to thousands of women.

A Wisconsin Case

Mrs. Herman Fleming, 519 Walworth St., Lake Geneva, Wis., says: "I was troubled by a lame and aching back. My back became so lame I could hardly get around. My kidneys didn't act as they should and I felt miserable. I tried many different remedies but got no relief until I used Doan's Kidney Pills. I never had a remedy that gave me such quick and permanent relief. Since I used Doan's I haven't had a return of the trouble."

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W N U, Minneapolis, No. 28-1919.

Which Had Which?

Mother had taken Joe and John to the doctor's for an examination as the teacher had suggested. At the supper table that night she reported the verdict to father. "The doctor says they have adenoids and bad tonsils," she told him.

Father looked surprised but before he could speak, up piped six-year-old John: "Which one of 'em is mine, mom, and which one is Joe's?"

Preparedness.

Mr. Homestopper—Trifler! If you don't love me, why did you throw yourself on my breast and put your arms around my neck and kiss me?

Miss Peachblow—Oh, that was only a training stunt. The best ever is on his way home from France and I want to give him the right kind of welcome.

A woman always has a reason for being unreasonable.

Care and Responsibility.

THE responsibility attached to the preparing of a remedy for infants and children is undoubtedly greater than that imposed upon the manufacturer of remedies for adults whose system is sufficiently strong to counteract, for a time at least, any injurious drug. It is well to observe that Castoria is prepared today, as it has been for the past 40 years, under the personal supervision of Mr. Chas. H. Fletcher.

What have makers of imitations and substitutes at stake? What are their responsibilities? To whom are they answerable? They spring up today, scatter their nefarious wares broadcast, and disappear tomorrow.

Could each mother see the painstaking care with which the prescription for Fletcher's Castoria is prepared: could they read the innumerable testimonials from grateful mothers, they would never listen to the subtle pleadings and false arguments of those who would offer an imitation of, or substitute for, the tried and true Fletcher's Castoria.

Children Cry For

Fletcher's

CASTORIA

A Word About Truth.

"Great is Truth, and mighty above all things." So says the Old Testament, yet it is equally true to-day. Truth shows no favors, fears no enemies.

From the inception of Fletcher's Castoria, Truth has been the watchword, and to the conscientious adherence to this motto in the preparation of Fletcher's Castoria as well as in its advertising is due the secret of its popular demand.

All imitations, all substitutes, all just-as-good preparations lack the element of Truth, lack the righteousness of being, lack all semblance even in the words of those who would deceive.

And you! Mothers, mothers with the fate of the World in your hands, can you be deceived? Certainly not.

Fletcher's Castoria is prepared for Infants and Children. It is distinctly a remedy for the little ones. The BABY'S need for a medicine to take the place of Castor Oil, Purgative and Soothing Syrup was the sole thought that led to its discovery. Never try to correct BABY'S troubles with a medicine that you would use for yourself.

MOTHERS SHOULD READ THE BOOKLET THAT IS AROUND EVERY BOTTLE OF FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

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Bears the Signature of

Chas. H. Fletcher

THE CENTAUR COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

