

The GIRL and the BILL



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SYNOPSIS.

At the expense of a soiled hat Robert Orme saves from arrest a girl in a black touring car who has caused a traffic jam on State street. He buys a new hat and is given in change a five dollar bill with "Remember the person you pay this to," written on it. A second time he helps the lady in the black car, and learns that in Tom and Hessie Wallingham they have mutual friends, but gains no further hint of her identity. He discovers another inscription on the marked bill, which, in a futile attempt to decipher it, he copies and places the copy in a drawer in his apartment. Senior Portol, South American, calls, and claims the marked bill. Orme refuses, and a fight ensues in which Portol is overcome. He calls in Senior Alcantara, minister from his country, to vouch for him. Orme still refuses to give up the bill. Orme goes for a walk and sees two Japs attack Alcantara. He rescues him. Returning to his rooms Orme is attacked by two Japs who effect a forcible exchange of the marked bill for another. Orme finds the girl of the black car waiting for him. She also wants the bill. Orme tells his story. She recognizes one of the Japs as her father's butler, Maku. The second inscription on the bill is the key to the hiding place of important papers stolen from her father. Both Japs and South Americans want the papers. Orme and the "Girl" start out in the black car in quest of the papers. In the university grounds in Evanston the hiding place is located. Maku and another Jap are there. Orme tells Maku and the other Jap escapes. Orme finds in Maku's pocket a folded slip of paper. He shows the girl, whose name is still unknown to him, to the home of a friend in Evanston. Returning to the university grounds Orme gets in conversation with a Jap at the life-saving station. They hear a motor boat in trouble in the darkness on the lake.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

"I know why he went out so far," remarked Porter. "He is running without lights."
"That in itself is suspicious, isn't it?" Orme asked.
"Why, yes, I suppose so—though people aren't always as careful as they might be. Our own lights aren't lighted, you see."
"Have you any clue at all as to where she is?"
"Only from the direction the sounds came from just before the explosions stopped. She had headway enough to slide some distance after that, and I'm allowing for it—and for the currents. With the lake as it is, she would be carried in a little."
For nearly half an hour they continued straight out toward mid-lake. Orme noticed that there was a slight swell. The lights of Evanston were now mere twinkling distant points, far away over the dark void of the waters.
Porter shut off the power. "We must be pretty near her," he said.
They listened intently.
"Perhaps I steered too far south," said Porter at last.
He threw on the power, and sent the boat northward in slow, wide circles. The distant steamship had made progress toward the northeast—bound, perhaps, for Muskegon, or some other port on the Michigan shore. She was a passenger steamer, apparently, for lines of portholes and deck windows were marked by dots of light. There was no other sign of human presence to be seen on the lake, and Orme's glance expectantly wandered to her lights now and then.
At last, while he was looking at it, after a fruitless search of the darkness, he was startled by a strange phenomenon. The lights of the steamer suddenly disappeared. An instant later they shone out again.

With an exclamation, Orme seized the steering-wheel and swung it over to the right.
"There she is," he cried, and then: "Excuse me for taking the wheel that way, but I was afraid I'd lose her."
"I don't see her," said Porter.
"No; but something dark cut off the lights of that steamer. Hold her so." He let go the wheel and peered ahead.
Presently they both saw a spot of blacker blackness in the night. Porter set the motor at half-speed.
"Have you got a bull's-eye lantern?" asked Orme in an undertone.
"Yes, in that locker."
Orme stooped and lighted the lantern in the shelter of the locker.
"Now run up alongside," he said, "and ask if they need help."
The outline of the disabled boat now grew more distinct. Porter swung around toward it and called:
"Need help?"
After a moment's wait, a voice replied:
"Yes. You tow me to Chicago. I pay you."
It was a voice which Orme recognized as that of the Japanese who had been with Maku in the attack at the Pere Marquette.
"Can't do that," answered Porter. "I'll take you in to Evanston."
"No!" The tone was expostulatory. "I go to Chicago. I fix engine pretty soon."
At this moment Orme raised his lantern and directed its light into the other boat. It shone into the blinking eyes of the Japanese, standing by the motor. It shone—
"Great Heaven! Was he dreaming? Orme could not believe his eyes. The light revealed the face of the one person he least expected to see—for, seated on a cushion at the forward end of the cockpit, was the girl!

CHAPTER VII.

A Japanese at Large.
What was the girl doing out there in mid-lake in the company of her enemy? Orme had seen her enter the house of her friends in Evanston; had bidden her good-night with the understanding that she was to make no further move in the game before the coming morning. She must have left the house soon after he walked away. Had she known all the time where the Japanese was? Had she hunted him out to make terms with him? If that were the case, her action indicated a new and unsuspected distrust of Orme himself. Her failure to call for help when Orme and Porter came up in their launch seemed to show that her presence in the other boat was voluntary. And yet Orme could not believe that there was not some simple explanation which she would welcome the first chance to make. He could not doubt her.
The immediate thing to do, however, was to find out just what she desired. Suppressing his excitement, he called out:
"Girl!"
At the same time he turned the lantern so that his own face was illuminated.
"Mr. Orme!" she cried, rising from her seat. "You here?"

"At your service."
He smiled, and turned his eyes for an instant on her companion. The face of the Japanese was a study. His eyes were narrowed to thin slits, and his mouth was formed into a meaningless grin.
Orme spoke to the Japanese in French. "Maku has confessed," he said. "He is under arrest."
The face of the Japanese did not change.
"Do you understand?" asked Orme, still in French.
There was no answer, and Orme turned to the girl and said, in French:
"I don't think he understands this language."
"Apparently not," she replied, in the same tongue.
"Tell me," he went on, "are you there of your own will?"
"No."
"Has he the papers?"
"I think so. I don't know."
"See if you can manage to get past him, and I will help you into our boat."
"I'll try." She nodded, with a brave effort to show reassurance.
Orme frowned at the Japanese. "What are you doing with this young lady?" he demanded.
"No understand."
"Yes, you do understand. You understood well enough when you robbed me this evening."
"No understand," the Japanese repeated.
The girl, meantime, had moved slowly from her position. The two boats were close together. Suddenly, after a swift glance from Orme, the girl stepped to the gunwale and leaped across the gap. Orme reached forward and caught her, drawing her for a brief instant close into his arms before she found her footing in the cockpit.
"Splendid," he whispered, and she tossed her head with a pretty smile of relief.
Porter had been standing close by, the boathook in his hands. "Is there anything more to be done?" he asked of Orme.
"Yes, wait a moment."
The Japanese had made no move to prevent the girl's escape. Indeed, while she was leaping to the other boat, he balanced himself and turned to his motor, as though to continue the work of repair.
"Now, then," called Orme, "you must give me those papers."
"No understand." The Japanese did not even look up from his task.
Orme turned to Porter. "Give me the boathook," he said, and, taking it, he hooked it to the gunwale of the other boat, drawing the two crafts together. His intention was to use the boathook to bring the Japanese to terms. But the Oriental was too quick. His apparent indifference vanished, and with a cat-like pounce, he seized the boathook and snatched it from Orme's grasp.
The action was so unexpected that Orme was completely taken by surprise. He made ready, however, to leap in unarmed, but the Japanese thrust the blunt end of the boathook at him, and the blow, which struck him in the chest, sent him toppling backward. He was saved from tumbling into the cockpit by Porter, who caught him by the shoulders and helped him to right himself. The two boats tossed for a moment like corks in the water.
When Orme again leaped to the gunwale, the Japanese was using the boathook to push the craft apart. A final shove widened the distance to six or eight feet. The jump was impossible. Even if the boats had been nearer together it would have been folly to attempt an attack.
Stepping down into the cockpit, Orme bent over the girl, who had sunk down upon a cushion. She seemed to be content that he should play the game for her.
"What is wrong with his motor?" he said. "Do you know?"
She answered in an undertone: "I shut off the gasoline-supply. He wasn't looking. He didn't see."
"Good for you, Girl!" he exclaimed. "Where did you do it? At the tank?"
"No. Unfortunately the valve is at the carbureter. Oh," she continued, "we must get the papers!"
Orme turned to Porter. "Are you willing to take a risk?" he asked.
"Anything in reason." The life-saver grinned. "Of course, I don't understand what's going on, but I'll back you."
"This is a good, stout tub we are in." Orme hesitated. "I want you to ram her nose into that other boat."
Porter shook his head.
"That's going pretty far," he said. "I don't know that there is warrant for it."
"It won't need to be a hard bump," Orme explained. "I don't want to hurt the fellow."
"Then why—?"
"To frighten him into giving up some papers."
Porter looked straight into Orme's eyes. "Do the papers belong to you?" he demanded.
"No," Orme spoke quietly. "They belong to this young lady—or, rather, to her father. This Japanese, and the

other one, there on the shore, stole them."
"What is the lady's name?"
"I can't tell you that."
"But the police—"
"It isn't a matter for the police. Please trust me, Mr. Porter."
The life-saver stood irresolute. "If this boat is damaged, I'll make it good five times over," continued Orme.
"Oh, it wouldn't hurt the boat. A few scratches, perhaps. It's the other boat I'm thinking of."
"It's pretty grim business, I know," remarked Orme.
The younger man again studied Orme's face. "Can you give me your word that the circumstances would justify us in ramming that boat?"
It flashed over Orme that he had no idea what those circumstances were. He knew only what little the girl had told him. Yet she had assured him again and again that the papers were of the greatest importance. True, throughout the affair, thus far, with the exception of the blow he had given Maku, the persons concerned had offered no dangerous violence. The mysterious papers might contain information about South American mines—as little Portol had suggested; they might hold the secrets of an international syndicate. Whatever they were, it was really doubtful whether the necessity of their recovery would justify the possibility of slaying another man.
Perhaps the girl had unconsciously exaggerated their value. Women who took a hand in business often lost the sense of relative importance. And yet, she had been so sure; she had herself gone to such lengths. Then, too, the South Americans had hired a burglar to break into her father's house, and now this Japanese had abducted her. Yes, it was a serious game.
Orme answered Porter. "I give you my word," he said.
Porter nodded and tightened his lips.
"At the very least, that fellow has tried to abduct this young lady," added Orme.
"All right," said Porter. "Let her go."
The other boat had drifted about 50 feet away. Orme called out:
"Hello, there, Japanese. Will you give up the papers?"
No answer came.
"If you won't," cried Orme, "we are going to ram you."
"Oh, no!" exclaimed the girl suddenly. "We mustn't drown him."
"We shan't," said Orme. "But we will give him a scare." Then, in a louder voice: "Do you hear?"
The only reply was the tapping of metal on metal. The Japanese, it seemed, was still trying to find out what was wrong with his motor.
"Well, then," Orme said to Porter, "we'll have to try it. But use low speed, and be ready to veer off at the last minute."
"He'll try to fend with the boat hook," said Porter.
"If he does, I'll get him."
"How?"
"Lasso." Orme picked up a spare painter that was stored under the seat, and began to tie a slip-knot.
The girl now spoke. "I suppose we shall have to do it," she said. "But I wish there were a less dangerous, a less tragic way."
Hardly knowing what he did, Orme laid his hand gently on her shoulder. "It will be all right, dear," he whispered.
If the word embarrassed her, the darkness covered her confusion.
Porter had started the motor, setting it at a low speed, and now he was steering the boat in a circle to gain distance for the charge.
"I've lost the other boat," exclaimed Orme, peering into the darkness.
"She's off there," said Porter. "You can't see her, but I know the direction."
He swung the launch around and headed straight through the night.
"Hold on tight," Orme cautioned the girl, and coiling his lasso, he went to the bow.
The launch moved steadily forward. Orme, straining his eyes in the endeavor to distinguish the other boat, saw it at last. It lay a few points to starboard, and Porter altered the course of the launch accordingly.
"Make for the stern," called Orme, "and cripple her propeller, if you can."
Another slight change in the course showed that Porter understood.
As the lessening of the distance between the two boats made it possible to distinguish the disabled speeder more clearly, Orme saw that the Japanese was still tinkering with the motor. He was busying himself as though he realized that he had had no hope of escape unless he could start his boat.
Narrower, narrower, grew the intervening gap of dark water. Orme braced himself for the shock. In his left hand was the coiled painter; in his right, the end of the ready noose, which trailed behind him on the decking. It was long since he had thrown a lariat. In a vivid gleam of memory he saw at that moment the hot, dusty New Mexico corral, the low adobe buildings, the lumbering cattle and the galloping horses of the ranch.

There he had spent one summer vacation of his college life. It was ten years past, but this pose, the rope in his hand, flashed it back to him.
Now they were almost on the Japanese. For the moment he seemed to waver. He glanced at the approaching launch, and reached uncertainly for the boat hook. Yet it did not seem to occur to him to yield.
And then, as for the hundredth time he laid his hands on the motor, he uttered a cry. It was plain to Orme that the cause of the supposed breakdown had been discovered. But was there time for the Japanese to get away? It was doubtful. He opened the feed pipe and let the gasoline again flow in. The launch was now so near that Orme could almost have leaped the gap, but the Japanese bent his energy to the heavy fly wheel, tugging at it hurriedly.
The motor started. The boat began to move.
Even now it looked as though the collision could not be prevented, but the Japanese, seizing the steering wheel, turned the boat so quickly to starboard that the stern fell away from the bow of the approaching launch. There was no crash, no hard bump; merely a glancing blow so slight that in that calm water it scarcely made the boats careen.
Then Orme threw his noose. The distance was less than ten feet, and the loop spread, quick and true, over the head of the Japanese. But, swift though the action was, the Japanese had an instant to prepare himself. His right arm shot up. As Orme, jerking at the rope, tried to tighten the noose, the hand of the Japanese pushed it over his head and it slid over the side into the water. In a few seconds the swift boat had disappeared in the night.
Tightening his lips grimly, Orme drew the wet rope in and mechanically coiled it. There was nothing to say. He had failed. So good an opportunity to recover the papers would hardly return.
Silently he turned back to the others. Porter had swung the launch around and was heading toward the distant lights of Evanston. The girl was peering in the direction whence came the sound of the receding boat. Thus, for some time they remained silent.
At last the girl broke into a laugh. It was a rippling, silvery laugh, expressing an infectious appreciation of the humor of their situation. Orme chuckled in spite of himself. If she could laugh like that, he need not stay in the dumps. And yet in his mind rinkled the sense of failure. He had made a poor showing before her—and she was laughing. Again the corners of his mouth drew down.
"I suppose the notion is amusing," he said—"a cowboy at sea."
"Oh, I was not laughing at you." She had sobered quickly at his words. "I shouldn't blame you, if you did."
"It is the whole situation," she went on. "And it wouldn't be so funny, if it weren't so serious."
"I appreciate it," he said.
"And you know how serious it is," she went on. "But truly, Mr. Orme, I am glad that we did not damage that boat. It might have been terrible. If he had been drowned—" her voice trailed off in a faint shudder, and Orme remembered how tired she must be, and how deeply disappointed.
"Now, Girl," he said, bending over

her and speaking in a low voice, "try to forget it. Tomorrow I am going after the papers. I will get them."
She looked up at him. Her eyes were softly confident. "I believe you," she whispered. "You never give up, do you?"
"No," he said. "I never give up—when I am striving for something which I greatly want." There was meaning in his voice, though he had struggled to conceal it. She lowered her eyes, and said no more.
Slowly the lights of shore grew brighter. After a time Orme could distinguish the masses of trees and buildings, grayly illuminated by the arc lamps of the streets. He spoke to Porter in an undertone.
"Can you land us some distance south of the life-saving station?" he asked.
"Sure, I'll run in by the Davis street pier."
"I'll be obliged to you," Orme sighed. "I made a bad mess of it, didn't I?"
"Oh, I don't know," replied the life-saver. "We got the lady."
Orme started. "Yes," he said, "we got the lady—and that's more important than all the rest of it."
Porter grinned a noncommittal grin and devoted himself to the wheel.
They had saved the girl! In his disappointment over the escape of the Japanese Orme had forgotten, but now he silently thanked God that Porter and he had come out on the water. The girl had not yet explained her presence in the boat. In her own good time she would tell him. But she had been there under compulsion; and Orme shuddered to think what might have happened.
He stole a glance at her. She was leaning back on the seat. Her eyes were closed and her pose indicated complete relaxation, though it was evident from her breathing that she was not asleep. Orme marveled at her ability to push the nervous excitement of the evening away and snatch the brief chance of rest.
When at last the launch ran up under the end of a little breakwater near the Davis street pier, she arose quickly and sprang out of the boat without help. Then she turned, as Orme stepped up beside her, and spoke to Porter. "If you and Mr. Orme had not come after me," she said, "there's no telling whether I should ever have got back. I should like to shake hands with you," she added; and bending down, she held out her firm white hand.
Then Orme laid his hand on the life-saver's shoulder. "You've done a piece of good work tonight," he said.
Porter laughed embarrassedly. "I only ran the boat for you," he began.
"You took me at my word," said Orme, "and that's a good deal in such a case. Goodby. I will look you up before I go back east."
(TO BE CONTINUED)

A Canary's Ears.
A canary's ears are back of and a little below its eyes. They are not hard to find when one has learned where to look. There is no outer ear, such as animals have, but simply a small opening which is covered by feathers. It is quite surprising that birds possess the very acute hearing which they do, while lacking the fleshy flap which enables the animals to catch sounds.—St. Nicholas.



"Perhaps I Steered Too Far South."



It Looked as Though the Collision Could Not Be Prevented.