

WITHIN THE LAW

By MARVIN DANA
FROM THE PLAY OF
BAYARD VEILLER

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(CONTINUED.)

An agreement was made by which Joe Garson and certain of his more trusted intimates in the underworld were to put themselves under the orders of Mary concerning the sphere of their activities. Furthermore, they bound themselves not to engage in any devious business without her consent. Aggie, too, was one of the company thus constituted, but she figured little in the preliminary discussions, since neither Mary nor the forger had much respect for the intellectual capabilities of the adventuress, though they appreciated to the full her remarkable powers of influencing men to her will.

It was not difficult to find a lawyer suited to the necessities of the undertaking. Mary selected Sigismund Harris, an attorney, just in the prime of his mental vigors, who possessed a knowledge of the law only to be equalled by his disrespect for it.

Forthwith the scheme was set in operation. As a first step Mary Turner



Aggie's Winsome Innocence.

became a young lady of independent fortune, who had living with her a cousin, Miss Agnes Lynch. The flat was abandoned. In its stead was an apartment in the Nineties on Riverside drive, in which the ladies lived alone with two maids to serve them.

Garson had rooms in the neighborhood, but Jim Lynch, who persistently refused the conditions of such an alliance, betook himself afar, to continue his reckless gathering of other folk's money in such wise as to make him amenable to the law the very first time he should be caught at it.

A few tentative ventures resulted in profits so large that the company grew mightily enthusiastic over the novel manner of working. In each instance Harris was consulted and made his confidential statement as to the legality of the thing proposed. After a few perfectly legal breach of promise suits, due to Aggie's winsome innocence of

demeanor, had been settled advantageously out of court Mary devised a scheme of greater elaborateness, with the legal acumen of the lawyer to indorse it in the matter of safety. It was planned as the swindling of a swindler, which, in fact, had now become the secret principle in Mary's morality.

A gentleman possessed of some means, none too scrupulous himself, but with high financial aspirations, advertised for a partner to invest capital in a business sure to bring large returns. This advertisement caught the eye of Mary Turner, and she answered it. An introductory correspondence encouraged her to hope for the victory in a game of cunning against cunning. She consulted with Harris and especially sought from him detailed information as to partnership law. His statements gave her such confidence that presently she entered into a partnership with the advertiser. By the terms of their agreement each deposited \$30,000 to the partnership account.

This sum of \$60,000 was ostensibly to be devoted to the purchase of a tract of land, which should afterward be divided into lots and resold to the public at enormous profit. As a matter of fact, the advertiser planned to make a spurious purchase of the tract in question by means of forged deeds granted by an accomplice, thus making through fraud a neat profit of \$30,000.

No sooner was the \$60,000 on deposit in the bank than Mary Turner drew out the whole amount, as she had a perfect right to do legally. When the advertiser learned of this he was, naturally enough, full to overflowing with wrath. But after an interview with Harris he swallowed his wrath as best he might. He found he could not go into court with clean hands, which is

a prime stipulation of the law, though often honored in the breach. So he let himself be muled in raging silence.

The event established Mary as the arbiter in her own coterie. She next decided that a certain General Hastings would make an excellent sacrifice on the altar of justice—and to her own financial profit. The old man was a notorious rone, of most unsavory reputation as a destroyer of innocence. It was probable that he would easily fall a victim to the ingenuous charms of Aggie. As for that precocious dandy, she would run no least risk of destruction by the satyr.

General Hastings met Aggie in the most casual way. He was captivated by her freshness and beauty, her demureness, her ignorance of all things vicious. Straightway he set snares. He showered every gallant attention on the naive, bread and butter miss and succeeded gratifyingly soon in winning her heart—to all appearance. But he gained nothing more, for the coy creature abruptly developed most effective powers of resistance to every blandishment that went beyond strictest propriety. His ardor cooled and cooled when Harris served a summons in a suit for \$10,000 damages for breach of promise.

Even while this affair was still in the course of execution Mary found herself engaged in a direction that offered at least the hope of attaining her great desire—revenge against Edward Gilder. This opportunity came in the person of his son, Dick. After much contriving, she got an introduction to that young man. Forthwith she showed herself so deliciously womanly, so intelligent, so daintily feminine, so singularly beautiful that the young man was enamored almost at once. The fact thrilled Mary to the depths of her heart, for in this son of the man whom she hated she saw the instrument of vengeance for which she had so longed. Yet this one thing was so vital to her that she said nothing of her purposes, not even to Aggie, though that observant person may have possessed suspicions more or less near the truth.

It was some such suspicion that lay behind her speech as, in negligence, she sat smoking a cigarette, while watching Mary, who was adjusting her hat before the mirror of her dressing table one pleasant spring morning.

"Dollie up a whole lot, ain't you?" Aggie remarked affably, with that laxity of language which characterized her natural moods.

"I have a very important engagement with Dick Gilder," Mary replied tranquilly.

"Nice boy, ain't he?" Aggie ventured inquiringly.

"Oh, I suppose so," came the indifferent answer from Mary as she tilted the picture hat to an angle a trifle more jaunty.

"I don't get you, Mary. You never used to look at the men. The way you acted when you first run round with me, I thought you sure was a snuffragette. And then you met this young Gilder—and—good night, nurse?"

"Well?"

"His old man sends you up for a stretch for something you didn't do, and you take up with his son like—"

"And yet you don't understand?" There was scorn for such gross stupidity in the musical voice.

Aggie choked a little from the cigarette smoke as she gave a gasp when suspicion of the truth suddenly dawned on her slow intelligence.

"Hully gee!" Her voice came in a treble shriek of apprehension. "I'm wise!"

"But you must understand this," Mary went on, with an authoritative note in her voice. "Whatever may be between young Gilder and me is to be strictly my own affair. It has absolutely nothing to do with the rest of you or with our schemes for money making. And, what is more, Agnes, I want to know what you meant by talking in the public street yesterday with a common pickpocket."

Aggie's childlike face changed swiftly its expression from a sly eagerness to sullenness.

"You know perfectly well, Mary Turner," she cried indignantly, "that I only said a few words in passin' to my brother Jim. And he ain't no common pickpocket. Hully gee! He's the best dip in the business."

"But you must not be seen speaking with him," Mary directed, with a certain air of command now become habitual to her among the members of her clique. "My cousin, Miss Agnes Lynch, must be very careful as to her associates."

"He just stopped me to say it's been the best year he ever had," she explained, with ostentatious vanity.

"How can that be when the dead line now is John street?"

"The dead line?" Aggie scoffed.

"Why, Jim takes lunch every day in the Wall street Delmonico's. And only yesterday he went down to police headquarters just for a little excitement, 'cause Jim does sure have a dull life. Say, he told me they've got a mat at the door with 'Welcome' on it in letters three feet high. Now, what do you think of that! And, oh, yes!" she continued happily, "Jim, he lifted a leather from a bull who was standing in the hallway there at headquarters! Jim sure does love excitement."

Mary lifted her dark eyebrows in half amused inquiry.

"It's no use, Agnes," she declared, though without entire sincerity; "I can't quite keep up with your thieves' argot—your slang, you know. Just what did this brother of your do?"

"Why, he copped the copper's kale," Aggie translated, glibly.

Mary threw out her hands in a gesture of dismay.

Thereupon the adventuress instantly assumed a most ladylike and mincing

air which ill assorted with the cigarette which she held between her lips.

"He gently removed a leathern wallet," she said sedately, "containing a large sum of money from the coat pocket of a member of the detective force." The elegance of utterance was infinitely done. But in the next instant the ordinary vulgarity of enunciation was in full play again. "Oh, gee!" she cried gayly. "He says Inspector Burke's got a gold watch that weighs a ton, an' all set with diamond's which was give to 'im by admirin' friends! We didn't contribute."

"Given to him," Mary corrected with a tolerant smile.

"What difference does it make?" Aggie demanded scornfully. "He's got



"I have an important engagement with Dick Gilder."

it, ain't he? Just as soon as I get time I'm goin' after that watch—believe me!"

"No, you are not. You are under my orders now. And as long as you are working with us you will break no laws."

"But I can't see"—Aggie began to argue with the petulance of a spoiled child.

"When you were working alone did you have a home like this?"

"No."

"Or such clothes? Most of all, did you have safety from the police?"

"No; but, just the same, I can't see—"

"Agnes, the richest men in this country have made their fortunes, not because of the law, but in spite of the law. They made up their minds what they wanted to do and then they engaged lawyers clever enough to show them how they could do it and still keep within the law. Any one with brains can get rich in this country if he will engage the right lawyer. Well, I have the brains, and Harris is showing me the law—the wonderful twisted law that was made for the rich. Since we keep inside the law we are safe."

"And now I must be off to a most important engagement with Mr. Dick Gilder."

CHAPTER VI.

A Tip From Headquarters.

AGGIE gave herself over to more cigarettes in an easy chair sprawled out in an attitude of comfort never taught in any finishing school for young ladies. Soon the coming of Joe Garson, who was usually in and out of the apartment a number of times daily, provided a welcome diversion. Aggie explained in response to his question that Mary had gone out to keep an engagement with Dick Gilder.

"Mary has been with him a good deal lately," he said, half questioningly.

"That's what," was the curt agreement.

"Think she's stuck on him?"

"Why not?" Aggie retorted. "Bet your life I'd be if I had a chance. He's a swell boy, and his father's got the coin too."

At this the man moved impatiently, and his eyes wandered to the window. Again Aggie studied him with a swift glance of interrogation.

"Joe, if there's anything on your mind shoot it."

"It's Mary," Garson explained, with some embarrassment; "her and young Gilder."

"Well?" came the crisp question.

"Well, somewhat," Garson went on, still somewhat confusedly. "I can't see any good of it for her."

"Why?" Aggie demanded, in surprise.

"Old man Gilder's got a big pull, and if he caught on to his boy's going with Mary he'd be likely to send the police after us—strong! Believe me, I ain't looking for any trip up the river."

"We ain't done nothin' they can touch us for," Mary says so.

"Whether we've done anything or whether we haven't don't matter," he objected. "Once the police set out after you they'll get you. Russia ain't in it with some of the things I have seen pulled off in this town."

"Oh, can that 'frail talk' Aggie exclaimed roughly. "I tell you they can't get us. We've got our fingers crossed."

A noise at the hall door interrupted her, and she looked up to see a man, while behind him appeared the maid,

protesting angrily.

"Never mind that announcing thing with me," the newcomer rasped to the expostulating servant in a voice that suited well his thick set figure, with the bullet shaped head and the bull-like neck. He was Cassidy, who had had Mary Turner in his charge on the occasion of her ill fated visit to Edward Gilder's office four years before.

"Hello, Joe!" he cried familiarly. "Hello, Aggie!"

"Well?" Joe demanded.

"Just a little friendly call," Cassidy announced in his strident voice.

"Where's the lady of the house?"

"Out," Aggie spoke very sharply.

"Well, Joe," Cassidy went on, "when she comes back just tell her it's up to her to make a getaway and to make it quick."

"Say," Aggie retorted viciously, "you can't throw any scare into us. You ain't got anything on us. See?"

"Nothing on you, eh? Well, well, let's see," Cassidy regarded Garson with a grin. "You are Joe Garson, forger?"

As he spoke the detective took a notebook from a pocket, found a page, and then read: "First arrested in 1891 for forging the name of Edwin Goodsell to a check for \$10,000. Again arrested June 19, 1893, for forgery. Arrested in April, 1898, for forging the signature of Oscar Hemmenway to a series of bonds that were counterfeit. Arrested as the man back of the Reilly gang in 1903. Arrested in 1908 for forgery."

"Haven't any records of convictions, have you?"

"No, but we've got the right dope on you, all right, Joe Garson." He turned savagely on the girl.

"And you're little Aggie Lynch," Cassidy declared as he thrust the note-



"Is that all you've got about her?" Garson demanded.

book back into his pocket. "Just now you're posing as Mary Turner's cousin. You served two years in Burnside for blackmail. You were arrested in Buffalo, convicted and served your stretch. Nothing on you? Well, well!"

Again there was triumph in the officer's chuckle. He went on speaking with obvious enjoyment of the extent to which his knowledge reached.

"And the head of the gang is Mary Turner. Arrested four years ago for robbing the Emporium. Did her stretch of three years."

"Is that all you've got about her?" Garson demanded with such abruptness that Cassidy forgot his dignity sufficiently to answer with an unqualified yes.

"Nothing in your record of her about her coming out without a friend in the world and trying to go straight? You ain't got nothing in that pretty little book of your'n about your going to the millinery store where she finally got a job and tipping them off to where she come from?"

"Sure, they was tipped off. We got to protect the city."

"Got anything in that record of your'n," Garson went on venomously, "about her getting another job and your following her up again and having her thrown out? Got it there about the letter you had old Gilder write, so that his influence would get her canned?"

"Oh, we had her right the first time."

"You did not. She was railroaded for a job she never done. She went in honest, and she came out honest."

"And that's why she's here now with a gang of crooks," Cassidy retorted.

"Where else should she be?" Garson demanded violently. "You ain't got nothing in that record about my jump into the river after her. That's where I found her—a girl that never done nobody any harm, starving because you police wouldn't give her a chance to work. In the river because she wouldn't take the only other way that was left her to make a living, because she was keeping straight! Have you got any of that in your book?"

"Anyway," the officer went on, with a new confidence, now that his eyes were free from the gaze that had burned into his soul, "you've got to clear out, the whole gang of you—and do it quick."

"We don't scare worth a cent," Aggie snapped, with the virulence of a wren. "You can't do anything to us. We ain't broke the law." There came a sudden ripple of laughter, and the charming lips curved joyously as she added, "Though perhaps we have bent it a bit."

"Well, you've got the tip," Cassidy returned, somewhat disconcerted, after a stolid fashion of his own. "It's up to you to take it, that's all. If you don't one of you make a long visit with some people out of town, and it'll probably be Mary. Remember, I'm giving it to you straight."

Cassidy turned and went noisily out of the drawing room. As she heard the outer door close behind the detective Aggie's expression grew vicious.

"The truck horse detective!" she sneered. "An eighteen colter and a

six and a half hat! He sure had his nerve trying to bluff us!"

"Perhaps it wasn't a bluff, Aggie," Garson suggested.

"Well, what have we done, I'd like to know?"

Garson answered with a note of weariness that was unlike him.

"It ain't what you have done," he said quietly. "It's what they can make a jury think you've done. And, once they set out to get you—God, how they can frame things! If they ever start out after Mary— He did not finish the sentence, but sank down into his chair with a groan that was almost of despair.

CHAPTER VII.

A Legal Document.

MARY TURNER spent less than an hour in that mysteriously important engagement with Dick Gilder of which she had spoken to Aggie. After separating from the young man she went alone down Broadway, walking the few blocks of distance to Sigismund Harris' office.

Harris regarded his client with an appreciative eye as he bowed in greeting and invited her to a seat.

"I sent your cousin, Miss Agnes Lynch, the release which she is to sign," he explained, "when she gets that money from General Hastings. I wish you'd look it over when you have time. It's all right, I'm sure, but I appreciate your opinion of things, Miss Turner—particularly of legal documents."

"Thank you," Mary said. "And have you heard from them yet?"

"No," the lawyer replied. "I gave them until tomorrow. If I don't hear then I shall start suit at once." Then the lawyer's manner became unsmiling and self satisfied as he opened a drawer of the desk and brought forth a rather formidable appearing document, bearing a most impressive seal.

"You will be glad to know," he went on unctiously, "that I was entirely successful in carrying out that idea of yours as to the injunction. My dear Miss Turner, Portia was a squawking baby compared with you."

"Thank you again," Mary answered as she took the legal paper. For a moment her glance ran over the words of the page.

"It's splendid!" she declared. "Did you have much trouble in getting it?"

"Why, no," he declared. "But at the outset when I made the request the judge just nearly fell off the bench. Then I showed him that Detroit case to which you had drawn my attention and the upshot of it all was that he gave me what I wanted without a whimper. He couldn't help it, see you know."

That mysterious document with the imposing seal reposed safely in Mary's bag when she returned to the apartment.

Mary had scarcely received from Aggie an account of Cassidy's threatening invasion when the maid announced that Mr. Irwin had called.

"Show him in," Mary directed.

"Who's the gink?" Aggie demanded.

"You ought to know. He's the lawyer retained by General Hastings in the matter of a certain breach of promise suit."

"Hope he's brought the money."

"Leave the room now," Mary ordered. "When I call to you come in, but be sure and leave everything to me. Merely follow my lead. And, Agnes—be very ingenious."

"Oh, I'm wise—I'm wise," Aggie nodded as she hurried out toward her bedroom. "I'll be a squab—surest thing you know!"

Next moment Mary gave a formal greeting to the lawyer who represented the man she planned to mulct effectively.

Irwin lost no time in coming to the point.

"I called in reference to this suit which Miss Agnes Lynch threatens to bring against my client, General Hastings."

"It's not a threat," Mr. Irwin. "The suit will be brought."

"You realize, of course, that this is merely plain blackmail."

"If it's blackmail, Mr. Irwin, why don't you consult the police?"

Mary turned to the maid, who now entered in response to the bell she had sounded a minute before. "Fanny, will you ask Miss Lynch to come in, please?" Then she faced the lawyer again, with an aloofness of manner that was contemptuous. "Really, Mr. Irwin, she drew, 'why don't you take this matter to the police?'"

"You know perfectly well," the lawyer said bitterly, "that General Hastings cannot afford such publicity."

"Oh, as for that," Mary suggested evenly, and now there was a trace of flippancy in her fashion of speaking. "I'm sure the police would keep your complaint a secret. Really, you know, Mr. Irwin, I think you had better take your troubles to the police rather than to me. You will get much more sympathy from them."

The lawyer sprang up with an air of sudden determination.

"Very well, I will then," he declared. Mary pushed in his direction the telephone that stood on the table.

"3100 Spring," she remarked encouragingly, "will bring an officer almost immediately." She leaned back in her chair and surveyed the baffled man amusedly.

"Nevertheless," he rejoined, "you know perfectly well that General Hastings never promised to marry this girl. You know— He broke off as Aggie entered the drawing room.

Now, the girl was demure in seeming almost beyond belief—a childish creature, very fair and dainty, guileless surely, with those untroubled eyes of blue, those softly curving lips of warmest red and the more delicate bloom and the rounded cheeks. There

were the charms of innocence and simplicity in her manner as she stopped just within the doorway, whence she regarded Mary with a timid, pleading gaze, her slender little form poised lightly as if for flight.

"Did you want me, dear?" she asked. "Agnes," Mary answered affectionately, "this is Mr. Irwin, who has come to see you in behalf of General Hastings."

"Oh," the girl murmured, her voice quivering a little as the lawyer, after a short nod, dropped again into his seat. "Oh, I'm so frightened!" She hurried, fluttering, to a low stool behind the desk beside Mary's chair, and there she sank down, drooping slightly and catching hold of one of Mary's hands as if in mute pleading for protection.

"Nonsense!" Mary exclaimed soothingly. "There's really nothing at all to be frightened about, my dear child. You mustn't be afraid, Agnes. Mr. Irwin says that General Hastings did not promise to marry you. Of course you understand, my dear, that under no circumstances must you say anything that isn't strictly true and that

is the truth."

"Oh, I'm so frightened!"

Aggie's face was a study. She looked at the girl with a mixture of sympathy and amusement. "You're a little scared, but you're not really in any danger. Mr. Irwin says that General Hastings did not promise to marry you. Of course you understand, my dear, that under no circumstances must you say anything that isn't strictly true and that is the truth."

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