Bull-Dog Drummond

The Adventures of a Demobilized Officer Who Found Peace Dull

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(Continued from last week.)

SYNOPSIS.

PROLOGUE.—In December, 1918, four men gathered in a hotel in Berne and heard one of the quartet outline a plan to paralyze Great Britain and at the same time seize world power. The other three, Hocking, American, and Steineman and Von Gratz, Germans, all millionaires, agree to the scheme, providing another man, Hiram Potts, an American, is taken in. The instigator of the plot gives his name as Comte de Guy, but when he leaves for England with his daughter he decides to use the name Carl Peterson.

CHAPTER I. — Capt. Hugh (Bulldog) Drummond, a retired officer, advertises for work that will give him excitement, signing "X10." As a result he meets Phyllis Benton, a young woman who answered his ad. She tells him of strange murders and robberies of which she suspects a band headed by Carl Peterson and Henry Lakington of being the leaders.

CHAPTER II.—Drummond decides to go to The Larches, Miss Benton's home. An attempt is made on the road to wreck his machine when another, occupied by Peterson, Lakington and a strange man, blocks the road. While dining with Phyllis Benton and her father Drummond hears a terrible shriek at The Elms. During the night Drummond leaves The Larches and explores The Elms. He discovers Lakington and Peterson using a thumbscrew on an American who signs a paper. Drummond rescues the American after a struggle and takes him to his home. The man is Hiram C. Potts.

CHAPTER III.—Peterson visits Drummond the next day, departing with a threat to return later and recover Potts and also a torn paper which Drummond seized the night of the fight. With the aid of Peter Darrel, an old army friend, Drummond arranges to hide Potts, and substitute in his place one Mullings, a demobilized soldier, who is seized by Peterson and his gang and taken to The Elms, along with Drummond.

CHAPTER IV. — When Peterson discovers the hoax Drummond is escorted by Irma to a room where he is to stay for the night. During the night Drummond is exploring the house when he gets in a strange room in which is a cobra. He escapes, but on the stairs has a fight in the dark.

CHAPTER V.—Drummond enlists the aid of Algy Longworth, Toby Sinclair, Ted Jerningham and Jerry Seymour, the latter an aviator. Drummond, after an encounter with the pseudo Potts, meets Irma talking to the marquis of Laidley and suspects the gang is plotting for the Laidley jewels. Drummond and his friends are gassed as they sit in his apartment. Lakington carries off Potts.

CHAPTER VI.—When Drummond and his friends recover they plan to again rescue Potts. Drummond goes to see Phyllis and besides learning Potts has been taken to The Elms also becomes engaged to her. Drummond is captured by the gang in the attempted rescue.

"No go, old bean," said Hugh, decisively. "Too many of 'em to hope to pull it off. No, low cunning is the only thing that's got an earthly of succeeding." With a grin he rose, and then strolled toward the door. "Now go and rope in Ted and Jerry, and for the love of Heaven don't ram the wrong gate."

"What are you going to do yourself?" demanded Peter suspiciously.

"I'm going to look at her from close to. Go away, all of you, and don't listen outside the telephone box."

THREE.

Hugh stopped his car at Guildford station and, lighting a cigarette, strolled restlessly up and down. He looked at his watch a dozen times in two minutes; he threw away his smoke before it was half finished. In short he manifested every symptom usually displayed by the male of the species when awaiting the arrival of the opposite sex. Over the telephone he had arranged that she should come by train from Godalming to confer with him on a matter of great importance; she had said she would, but what was it? He, having no suitable answer ready, had made a loud buzzing noise indicative of a telephone exchange in pain, and then rung off. And now he was waiting in that peculiar condition of mind, which reveals itself outwardly in hands that are rather too warm, and feet that are rather too cold.

"When is this bally train likely to arrive?" He accosted a phlegmatic official, who regarded him coldly, and doubted the likelihood of its being more than a quarter of an hour early.

At length it was signaled, and Hugh got back into his car. Feverishly he scanned the faces of the passengers as they came out into the street, until, with a sudden quick jump of his heart, he saw her, cool and fresh, coming toward him with a faint smile on her lips.

"What is this very important matter you want to talk to me about?" she demanded, as he assisted her into his car.

"I'll tell you when we get out on the Hog's Back," he said slipping in his clutch. "It's absolutely vital."

He stole a glance at her, but she was looking straight in front of her, and her face seemed expressionless.

"You must stand a long way off when you do," she said demurely. "At least if it's the same thing as you told me over the 'phone."

Hugh grinned sheepishly.

"The exchange went wrong," he remarked at length. "Astonishing how rotten the telephones are in town these days."

"Quite remarkable," she returned. "I thought you weren't feeling very well or something. Of course, if it was the exchange . . ."

"They sort of buzz and blow, don't you know," he explained helpfully.

"That must be most fearfully jolly for them," she agreed. And there was silence for the next two miles.

Once or twice he looked at her out of the corner of his eye, taking in every detail of the sweet profile so near to him. Except for their first meeting at the Carlton, it was the only time he had ever had her completely to himself, and Hugh was determined to make the most of it. He felt as if he could go on driving for ever, just he and she alone. It was then that the girl turned and looked at him. The car swerved dangerously. . . .

"Let's stop," she said, with the suspicion of a smile. "Then you can tell me."

Hugh drew into the side of the road, and switched off the engine.

"You're not fair," he remarked, and if the girl saw his hand trembling a little as he opened the door, she gave no sign. He came and stood beside her, and his right arm lay along the seat just behind her shoulders.

"Tell me about this important thing," she said a little nervously.

He smiled, and no woman yet born could see Hugh Drummond smile without smiling too.

"You darling!" he whispered, under his breath—"you adorable darling!" His arm closed around her, and, almost before she realized it, she felt his lips on hers. For a moment she sat motionless, while the wonder of it surged over her, and the sky seemed more gloriously blue, and the woods a richer green. Then, with a little gasp, she pushed him away.

"You mustn't . . . oh! you mustn't, Hugh," she whispered.

"And why not, little girl?" he said exultantly. "Don't you know I love you?" His face was still very close to hers. "Well?"

"Well, what?" she murmured.

"It's your turn," he whispered. "I love you, Phyllis—just love you."

"But it's only two or three days since we met," she said feebly.

"And phwat the divil has that got to do with it, at all?" he demanded. "Would I be waiting longer to decide such an obvious fact? Tell me," he went on, and she felt his arm round her again forcing her to look at him—"tell me, don't you care . . . a little?"

"What's the use?" She still struggled, but, even to her, it wasn't very convincing. "We've got other things to do. . . . We can't think of. . . ."

And then this very determined young man settled matters in his usual straightforward fashion. She felt herself lifted bodily out of the car as if she had been a child: she

She Found Herself Lying in His Arms, With Hugh's Eyes Looking Very Tenderly Into Her Own and a Whimsical Grin Around His Mouth.

found herself lying in his arms, with Hugh's eyes looking very tenderly into her own, and a whimsical grin around his mouth.

"Cars pass here," he remarked, "with great regularity. I know you'd hate to be discovered in this position."

"Would I?" she whispered. "I wonder . . ."

She felt his heart pound madly against her; and with a sudden quick movement she put forth her arms round his neck and kissed him on the mouth.

"Is that good enough?" she asked, very low: and just for a few moments, time stood still. . . . Then, very gently, he put her back in the car.

"I suppose," he remarked resignedly, "that we had better descend to trivialities. We've had lots of fun and games since I last saw you a year or two ago."

"Idiot boy," she said happily. "It was yesterday morning."

"The interruption is considered trivial. Mere facts don't count when it's you and me." There was a further interlude of uncertain duration, followed rapidly by another because the first was so nice.

"To resume," continued Hugh, "I regret to state that they've got Potts.

The girl sat up quickly and stared at him.

"Got him? Oh, Hugh! how did they manage it?"

"I'm d—d if I know," he answered grimly. "They found out that he was in my bungalow at Goring during the afternoon by sending round a man to see about the water. Somehow or other he must have doped the drink or the food, because after dinner we all fell asleep. I don't remember anything more till I woke this morning with the most appalling head. Of course, Potts had gone."

"I heard the car drive up in the middle of the night," said the girl thoughtfully. "Do you think he's at The Elms now?"

"That is what I propose to find out tonight," answered Hugh. "We have staged a little comedy for Peterson's especial benefit, and we are hoping for the best."

"Oh, boy, do be careful!" She looked at him anxiously. "I'd never forgive myself if anything happened to you. I'd feel it was all due to me, and I just couldn't bear it."

"Dear little girl," he whispered tenderly, "you're simply adorable when you look like that. But not even for you would I back out of this show now." His mouth set in a grim line. "It's gone altogether too far, and they've shown themselves to be so completely beyond the pale that it's got to be fought out. And when it has been," he caught both her hands in his . . . "and we've won . . . why then, girl o' mine, we'll get Peter Darrell to be best man."

Which was the cue for the commencement of the last and longest interlude, terminated only by the sudden and unwelcome appearance of a motor-'bus covered within and without by unromantic sightseers, and paper-bags containing bananas.

They drove slowly back to Guildford, and on the way he told her briefly of the murder of the American's secretary in Belfast, and his interview the preceding afternoon with the impostor at the Carlton.

"It's a tough proposition," he remarked quietly. "They're absolutely without scruple, and their power seems unlimited. I know they are after the duchess of Lampshire's pearls: I found the beautiful Irma consuming tea with young Laidley yesterday—you know, the duke's eldest son. But there's something more in the wind than that, Phyllis—something which, unless I'm a mug of the first water, is an infinitely larger proposition than that."

The car drew up at the station, and he strolled with her to the platform. Then the train came in, and he put her into a carriage. And two minutes later, with the touch of her lips warm on his, and her anxious little cry, "Take care, my darling!—take care!" still ringing in his ears, he got into his car and drove off to an hotel to get an early dinner.

FOUR.

At a quarter to ten he backed his car into the shadow of some trees not far from the gate of The Elms. Save for a light in the sitting-room and one in a bedroom upstairs, the front of the house was in darkness, and, treading noiselessly on the turf, he explored all round it. There was one bedroom light at the back of the house, and thrown on the blind he could see the shadow of a man. As he watched, the man got up and moved away, only to return in a moment or two and take up his old position.

"It's one of those two bedrooms," he muttered to himself, "if he's here at all."

Then he crouched in the shadow of some shrubs and waited. Through the trees to his right he could see The Larches, and once, with a sudden quickening of his heart, he thought he saw the outline of the girl show up in the light from the drawing-room. But it was only for a second, and then it was gone. . . .

He peered at his watch: it was just ten o'clock. The trees were creaking gently in the faint wind; all around him the strange night noises—noises which play pranks with a man's nerves—were whispering and muttering. Bushes seemed suddenly to come to life, and move; eerie shapes crawled over the ground toward him—figures which existed only in his imagination. And once again the thrill of the night stalker gripped him.

He remembered the German who had lain motionless for an hour in a little gully by Hebuterne, while he from behind a stunted bush had tried to locate him. And then that one creak as the Boche had moved his leg. And then . . . the end. On that night, too, the little hummocks had moved and taken to themselves strange shapes: fifty times he had imagined he saw him; fifty times he knew he was wrong—in time. He was used to it; the night held no terrors for him, only a fierce excitement. And thus it was that as he crouched in the bushes, waiting for the game to start, his pulse was as normal, and his nerves as steady as if he had been sitting down to supper. The only difference was that in his hand he held something tight-gripped.

At last faintly in the distance he heard the hum of a car. Rapidly it grew louder, and he smiled grimly to himself as the sound of five unmelodious voices singing lustily struck his ear. They passed along the road in front of the house. There was a sudden crash—then silence; but only for a moment.

Peter's voice came first:

"You priceless old ass, you've rammed the blinking gate."

It was Jerry Seymour who then took up the bawl. His voice was intensely solemn—also extremely loud.

"Preposhterous. Perfectly preposhterous. We must go and apologize to the owner. . . . I . . . I . . absholutely . . . musht apologize. . . . Quite unpardonable. . . . You can't go about country . . . knocking down gates. . . . Out of queshtion. . . ."

Half-consciously Hugh listened, but, now that the moment for action had come, every faculty was concentrated on his own job. He saw half a dozen men go rushing out into the garden through a side door, and then two more ran out and came straight toward him. They crashed past him and went on into the darkness, and for an instant he wondered what they were doing. A little later he was destined to find out. . . .

Then came a peal at the front-door bell, and he determined to wait no longer. He darted through the garden door, to find a flight of stairs in front of him, and in another moment he was on the first floor. He walked rapidly along the landing, trying to find his bearings, and, turning a corner, he found himself at the top of the main staircase—the spot where he had fought Peterson two nights previously.

He walked quickly on to the room which he calculated was the one where he had seen the shadow on the blind. Without a second's hesitation he flung the door open and walked in. There lying in the bed, was the American, while crouched beside him, with a revolver in his hand, was a man. . . .

For a few seconds they watched one another in silence, and then the man straightened up.

"The soldier!" he snarled. "You young pup!"

Deliberately, almost casually, he raised his revolver, and then the unexpected happened. A jet of liquid ammonia struck him full in the face, and with a short laugh Hugh dropped his water-pistol in his pocket, and turned his attention to the bed. Wrapping the millionaire in a blanket, he picked him up, and, paying no more attention to the man gasping and choking in a corner, he raced for the back stairs.

Below he could hear Jerry hiccoughing gently, and explaining to the pro . . . pro . . . pritor that he pershonally would repair . . . inshisted on repairing . . . any and every gate posht he posshessed. . . . And then he reached the garden. . . .

Everything had fallen out exactly as he had hoped, but had hardly dared to expect. He heard Peterson's voice, calm and suave as usual, answering Jerry. From the garden in front came the dreadful sound of a duet by Algy and Peter. Not a soul was in sight; the back of the house was clear. All that he had to do was to walk quietly through the wicket-gate to The

"The Soldier!" He Snarled. "You Young Pup!"

Larches with his semi-conscious burden, get to his car, and drive off. It all seemed so easy that he laughed. . . .

But there were one or two factors that he had forgotten, and the first and most important one was the man upstairs. The window was thrown up suddenly, and the man leaned out waving his arms. He was still gasping with the strength of the ammonia, but Hugh saw him clearly in the light from the room behind. And as he cursed himself for a fool in not having tied him up, from the trees close by there came the sharp clang of metal.

With a quick catch in his breath he began to run. The two men who had rushed past him before he had entered the house, and whom, save for a passing thought, he had disregarded, had become the principal danger. For he had heard that clang before; he remembered Jem Smith's white horror-struck face, and then his sigh of relief as the thing—whatever it was—was shut in its cage. And now it was out, dodging through the trees, let loose by the two men. He heard something crash into a bush on his right, and give a snarl of anger. Like a flash he swerved into the undergrowth on the left.

Then began a dreadful game. He was still some way from the fence, and he was hampered at every step by the man slung over his back. He could hear the thing blundering about searching for him, and suddenly, with a cold feeling of fear, he realized that the animal was in front of him—that his way to the gate was barred. The next moment he saw it. . . .

Shadowy, indistinct, in the darkness, he saw something glide between two bushes. Then it came out into the open, and he knew it had seen him, though as yet he could not make out what it was.

Cautiously he lowered the millionaire to the ground, and took a step forward. It was enough; with a snarl of fury the crouch shambled toward him. Two hairy arms shot out toward his throat, he smelt the brute's foetid breath, hot and loathsome, and he realized what he was up against. It was a partially grown gorilla.

For a full minute they fought in silence, save for the hoarse grunts of the animal as it tried to tear away the man's hand from its throat, and then encircle him with its powerful arms. And with his brain cold as ice Hugh saw his danger and kept his head. It couldn't go on; no human being could last the pace, whatever his strength. And there was only one chance of finishing it quickly, the possibility that the grip taught him by Olaki would serve with a monkey as it did with a man.

He shifted his left thumb an inch or two on the brute's throat, and the baboon, thinking he was weakening, redoubled its efforts. And then, little by little, the fingers moved, and the grip which had been tight before grew tighter still. Back went its head; something was snapping in its neck. With a scream of fear and rage it wrapped its legs round Drummond, squeezing and writhing. And then suddenly there was a tearing snap, and the great limbs relaxed and grew limp.

For a moment the man stood watching the still quivering brute lying at his feet; then, with a gasp of utter exhaustion, he dropped on the ground himself. He was done—utterly cooked; even Peterson's voice close behind scarcely roused him.

"Quite one of the most amusing entertainments I've seen for a long time." The calm, expressionless voice made him look up wearily, and he saw that he was surrounded by men. The inevitable cigar glowed red in the darkness, and after a moment or two he scrambled unsteadily to his feet.

"I'd forgotten your d—d menagerie, I must frankly confess," he remarked. "What's the party for?" He glanced at the men who had closed in round him.

"A guard of honor, my young friend," said Peterson suavely, "to lead you to the house. I wouldn't hesitate . . . it's very foolish. Your friends have gone, and, strong as you are, I don't think you can manage ten."

Hugh commenced to stroll toward the house.

"Well, don't leave the wretched Potts lying about. I dropped him over there."

CHAPTER VII.

In Which He Spends an Hour or Two on a Roof.

ONE.

Drummond paused for a moment at the door of the sitting room, then with a slight shrug he stepped past Peterson. During the last few days he had grown to look on this particular room as the private den of the principals of the gang. He associated it in his mind with Peterson himself, suave, impassive, ruthless; with the girl Irma, perfectly gowned, lying on the sofa, smoking innumerable cigarettes, and manicuring her already faultless nails; and in a lesser degree, with Henry Lakington's thin, cruel face, and blue, staring eyes.

But tonight a different scene confronted him. The girl was not there; her accustomed place on the sofa was occupied by an unkempt-looking man with a ragged beard. At the end of the table was a vacant chair, on the right of which sat Lakington regarding him with malevolent fury. Along the table on each side there were half a dozen men, and he glanced at their faces. Some were obviously foreigners; some might have been anything from murderers to Sunday school teachers. There was one with spectacles and the general appearance of an intimidated rabbit, while his neighbor, helped by a large red scar right across his cheek, and two bloodshot eyes, struck Hugh as being the sort of man with whom one would not share a luncheon basket.

Peterson's voice from just behind his shoulder roused him.

"Permit me, gentlemen, to introduce to you Captain Drummond, D. S. O., M. C., the originator of the little entertainment we have just had."

Hugh bowed gravely. "My only regret is that it failed to function," he remarked. "As I told you outside, I'd quite forgotten your menagerie. In fact"—his glance wandered slowly and somewhat pointedly from face to face at the table—"I had no idea it was such a large one."

"So this is the insolent young swine, is it?" The bloodshot eyes of the man with the scarred face turned on him morosely. "What I cannot understand is why he hasn't been killed by now."

Hugh waggled an accusing finger at him.

"I knew you were a nasty man as soon as I saw you. Now look at Henry up at the end of the table; he doesn't say that sort of thing. And you do hate me, don't you, Henry? How's the jaw?"

"Captain Drummond," said Lakington, ignoring Hugh and addressing the first speaker, "was very nearly killed last night. I thought for some time as to whether I would or not, but I finally decided it would be much too easy a death. So it can be remedied tonight."

If Hugh felt a momentary twinge of fear at the calm, expressionless tone, and the half-satisfied grunt which greeted the words, no trace of it showed on his face. Already the realization had come to him that if he got through the night alive he would be more than passing lucky, but he was too much of a fatalist to let that worry him unduly. So he merely stifled a yawn, and again turned to Lakington.

"So it was you, my little one, whose fairy face I saw pressed against the window. Would it be indiscreet to ask how you got the dope into us?"

Lakington looked at him with an expression of grim satisfaction on his face.

"You were gassed, if you want to know. An admirable invention of my friend Kauffner's nation."

A guttural chuckle came from one of the men, and Hugh looked at him grimly.

"The scum certainly would not be complete," he remarked to Peterson, "without a filthy Boche in it."

The German pushed back his chair with an oath, his face purple with passion.

"A filthy Boche," he muttered thickly, lurching toward Hugh. "Hold him the arms of, and I will the throat tear out. . . ."

It all happened so quickly. At one moment Hugh was apparently intent upon selecting a cigarette, the next instant the case had fallen to the floor; there was a dull, heavy thud, and the Boche crashed back, overturned a chair, and fell like a log to the floor, his head hitting the wall with a vicious crack. The bloodshot being resumed his seat a little limply. Hugh resumed his search for a cigarette.

"After which breezy interlude," remarked Peterson, "let us to business get."

Hugh paused in the act of striking a match, and for the first time a genuine smile spread over his face.

"There are moments, Peterson," he murmured, "when you really appeal to me."

Peterson took the empty chair next to Lakington.

"Sit down," he said shortly. "I can only hope that I shall appeal to you still more before we kill you."

Hugh bowed and sat down.

"Consideration," he murmured, "was always your strong point. May I ask how long I have to live?"

Peterson smiled genially.

"At the earnest request of Mr. Lakington you are to be spared until tomorrow. At least, that is our present intention. Of course, there might be an accident in the night; in a house like this one never can tell. Or"—he carefully cut the end off a cigar—"you might go mad, in which case we shouldn't bother to kill you. In fact, if you go mad, we shall not be displeased."

Once again he smiled genially.

"As I said before, in a house like this, you can never tell. . . ."

The intimidated rabbit, breathing heavily, was staring at Hugh fascinated; and after a moment Hugh turned to him with a courteous bow.

"Laddie," he remarked, "you've been eating onions. Do you mind deflecting the blast in the opposite direction?"

His calm imperturbability seemed to madden Lakington.

"You wait," he snarled thickly; "you wait till I've finished with you. You won't be so d—d humorous then. . . ."

Hugh regarded the speaker languidly.

"Your supposition is more than probable," he remarked, in a bored voice. "I shall be too intent on getting into a Turkish bath to remove the contamination to think of laughing."

(To be Continued..)

BEES MUST BE FED TO SAVE STATE HONEY INDUSTRY.

Unless the bee-keepers and farmers of the State provide food for their bees, during the next few weeks, thousand of hives of bees will be lost. These bees are now literally starving to death.

This warning to the bee-keepers has been sent broadcast throughout the State by the Bureau of Plant Industry of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, which has general supervision over the bee industry in the State.

The freezing weather of the spring which destroyed the blossoms on the fruit trees in many sections of the State, destroyed the food supply of thousands of colonies of bees. The clover in many sections of the State was also a complete loss as a result of the late spring freezes. Bee-keepers are urged to see to it that their charges are properly nourished. Advice on the feeding of bees will be furnished by the Bureau of Plant Industry of Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture at Harrisburg.

"Shoot to Kill" is Order to All Post-Office Employees.

"Shoot to kill" is the order which, with 20,000 automatic pistols and thousands of riot guns has gone out to postal employees throughout the country. Postmaster General Hays says:

"We simply have to go back to the old Wells-Fargo days and put an end to mail robberies by the drastic methods then in vogue."

But while the postal employees, by the new order, are instructed to take no chances in protecting their lives and the mail, capturing bandits will be more profitable. An additional order of the Postmaster General provides a reward of $5000 to any post-office employee, civil officer or civilian who delivers a mail robber into custody.

"Ole," said the preacher to the Swedish bridegroom-to-be, "do you take Hilda Sorgeson for your lawful wedded wife, for better or for worse?"

"Oh, well," replied Ole gloomily, "Aye s'pose Aye get a little of each."
—American Legion Weekly.