

The BLIND MAN'S EYES

BY
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SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—Gabriel Warden, Seattle capitalist, tells his butler he is expecting a caller, to be admitted without question. He informs his wife of danger that threatens him if he pursues a course he considers the only honorable one. Warden leaves the house in his car and meets a man whom he takes into the machine. When the car returns home, Warden is found dead, murdered, and alone. The caller, a young man, has been at Warden's house, but leaves unobserved.

CHAPTER II.—Bob Connery, conductor, receives orders to hold train for a party. Five men and a girl board the train. The father of the girl, Mr. Dorne, is the person for whom the train was held. Phillip D. Eaton, a young man, also boarded the train. Dorne tells his daughter and his secretary, Don Avery, to find out what they can concerning him.

CHAPTER III.—The two make Eaton's acquaintance. The train is stopped by snowdrifts.

CHAPTER IV.—Eaton receives a telegram addressed to Lawrence Hillward, which he claims. It warns him he is being followed.

CHAPTER V.—Passing through the car, Connery notices Dorne's hand hanging outside the berth. He ascertains Dorne's bell has recently rung. Perturbed, he investigates and finds Dorne with his skull crushed. He calls a surgeon, Dr. Sinclair, on the train.

CHAPTER VI.—Sinclair recognizes the injured man as Basil Santoine, who, although blind, is a peculiar power in the financial world as adviser to "big interests." His recovery is a matter of doubt.

CHAPTER VII.—Eaton is practically placed under arrest. He refuses to make explanations as to his previous movements before boarding the train, but admits he was the man who called on Warden the night the financier was murdered.

CHAPTER VIII.—Eaton pleads with Harriet Santoine to withhold judgment, telling her he is in serious danger, though innocent of the crime against her father. He feels the girl believes him.

(Continued from last week.)

Her color deepened, and for an instant, he thought he saw full belief in him growing in her eyes; but if she could not accept the charge against him, neither could she consciously deny it, and the hands she had been pressing together suddenly dropped.

"I'm afraid nothing I could say would have much effect on you, knowing as little about—about you as I do!"

They dashed the door open then—silenced and overwhelmed him; and



They Dashed the Door Open, Then—

they took her from the room and left him alone again. But there was something left with him which they could not take away; for in the moment he had stood alone with her and passionately pleading, something had passed between them—he could give no name to it, but he knew that Harriet Santoine never could think of him again without a stirring of her pulses which drew her toward him.

The following morning the relieving snowplows arrived from the East, and Eaton felt it was the beginning of the end for him. He watched from his window men struggling in the snow about the forward end of the train; then the train moved forward past the shoveled and trampled snow where rock and pieces of the snowplow were piled beside the track—stopped, waited; finally it went on again and began to take up its steady progress.

The attack upon Santoine having taken place in Montana, Eaton thought that he would be turned over to the police somewhere within that state, and he expected it would be done at the first stop; but when the train slowed at Simons, he saw the town was nothing more than a little hamlet beside a side-track. They surely could not deliver him to the village authorities here.

It made no material difference to him, Eaton realized, whether the police took him in Montana or Chicago, since in either case recognition of him would be certain in the end; but in Chicago this recognition must be immediate, complete, and utterly convincing.

The train was traveling steadily and faster than its regular schedule; it evidently was running as a special,

some other train taking the ordinary traffic; it halted now only at the largest cities. In the morning it crossed into Minnesota; and in the late afternoon, slowing, it rolled into some large city which Eaton knew must be Minneapolis or St. Paul. The car here was uncoupled from the train and picked up by a switch engine; as dusk fell, Eaton, peering out of his window, could see that they had been left lying in the railroad yards; and about midnight, awakening in his berth, he realized that the car was still motionless. He could account for this stoppage in their progress only by some change in the condition of Santoine. Was Santoine sinking, so that they no longer dared to travel? Was he, perhaps—dead?

No sounds came to him from the car to confirm Eaton in any conclusion; there was nothing to be learned from anyone outside the car. Eaton lay for a long time, listening for other sounds and wondering what was occurring—or had occurred—at the other end of his car. Toward morning he fell asleep.

CHAPTER X

Publicity Not Wanted.

"Basil Santoine dying! Blind millionaire lawyer taken ill on train!"

The alarm of the cry came to answer Eaton's question early the next morning. He threw up the curtain

and saw a vagrant newsboy, evidently passing through the railroad yards to sell to the trainmen. Eaton, halting the boy put out his hand for a paper. He spread the news-sheet before him and read that Santoine's condition was very low and becoming rapidly worse. But below, under a Montana date-line, Eaton saw it proclaimed that the blind millionaire was merely sick; there was no suggestion anywhere of an attack. The paper stated only that Basil Santoine, returning from Seattle with his daughter and his secretary, Donald Avery, had been taken seriously ill upon a train which had been stalled for two days in the snow in Montana. The column ended with the statement that Mr. Santoine had passed through Minneapolis and gone on to Chicago under care of Dr. Douglas Sinclair.

Eaton stared at the newspaper without reading, after he saw that, he had not realized, until now that he was told that Harriet Santoine had gone—for if her father had gone on, of course she was with him—the extent to which he had felt her fairness, almost her friendship to him. At least, he knew now that, since she had spoken to him after he was first accused of the attack on her father, he had not felt entirely deserted or friendless till now.

But why, if Santoine had been taken away, or was dead or dying, had they left Eaton all night in the car in the yards? Since Santoine was dying, would there be any longer an object in concealing the fact that he had been murdered?

He dressed and then paced back and forth the two or three steps his compartment allowed him. He stopped now and then to listen; from outside came the noises of the yard; but he made out no sound within the car. If it had been occupied as on the days previous, he must have heard some one coming to his washroom at his end. Was he alone in the car now, or had the customary moving about taken place before he awoke?

Finally, to free himself from his nervous listening for sounds which never came, he picked up the paper again. He read:

"The news of Mr. Santoine's visit of a week on the Coast, if not known already in great financial circles, is likely to prove interesting there. For years he has been the chief agent in keeping peace among some of the great conflicting interests, and more than once he has advised the declaring of financial war when war seemed to him the correct solution. Thus, five years ago, when the violent death of Matthew Latron threatened to precipitate trouble among western capitalists, Santoine kept order in what might very well become financial chaos. If his recent visit to the Pacific coast was not purely for personal reasons but was also to adjust antagonisms such as charged by Gabriel Warden before his death, the loss of Santoine at this time may precipitate troubles which, living, his advice and information might have been able to prevent."

Having read and reread this long paragraph, Eaton thrust the sheet out the window. As he sat thinking, with lips tight closed, he heard for the first time that morning footsteps at his end of the car. The door of his compartment was unlocked and opened, and he saw Doc-

tor Sinclair.

"Mr. Santoine wants to speak to you," the surgeon announced quietly. "This startling necrosis of all the

imagined, unnerved Eaton. He started up, then sank back for better composure.

"Mr. Santoine is here, then?"

"Here? Of course he's here?"

"And he's conscious?"

"He has been conscious for the better part of two days. Didn't they tell you?"

Eaton looked toward the window, breathing hard. "I heard the news-boys—"

Sinclair shrugged. "The papers don't say what they can get and in the way which seems most effective to them," was his only comment.

The surgeon led Eaton to the door of the drawing room, showed him in and left him.

Harriet Santoine was sitting on the little lounge opposite the berth where her father lay. She was watching the face of her father, and as Eaton stood in the door, he saw her lean



Harriet Santoine Was Sitting on the Little Lounge Opposite the Berth Where Her Father Lay.

forward and gently touch her father's hand; then she turned and saw Eaton.

"Here is Mr. Eaton, Father," she said.

"Sit down," Santoine directed. The blind man was very weak and must stay quite still; and he recognized it; but he knew too that his strength was more than equal to the task of recovery, and he showed that he knew it. His mind and will were, obviously, at their full activity, and he had fully his sense of hearing.

Harriet's lips trembled as she turned to Eaton; but she did not speak directly to him yet; it was Basil Santoine who suddenly inquired: "What is it they call you?"

"My name is Phillip D. Eaton," Eaton realized as soon as he had spoken that both question and answer had been unnecessary, and Santoine had asked only to hear Eaton's voice.

The blind man was silent for a moment, as he seemed to consider the voice and try again vainly to place it in his memories. Then he spoke to his daughter.

"Describe him, Harriet."

Harriet paled and flushed. "About thirty," she said, "—under rather than over that. Six feet or a little more in height. Slender, but muscular and athletic. Skin and eyes clear and with a look of health. Complexion naturally rather fair, but darkened by being outdoors a good deal. Hair dark brown, straight and parted at the side. Smooth shaven. Eyes blue-gray, with straight lashes. Eyebrows straight and dark. Forehead smooth, broad and intelligent. Nose straight and neither short nor long; nostrils delicate. Mouth straight, with lips neither thin nor full. Chin neither square nor pointed, and without a cleft. Face and head, in general, of oval Anglo-American type."

"Go on," said Santoine.

Harriet was breathing quickly. "Hands well shaped, strong but without sign of manual labor; nails cared for but not polished. Gray business suit, new. Soft-bosomed shirt of plain design with soft cuffs. Medium-height turn-down white linen collar. Four-in-hand tie, tied by himself. Black shoes. No jewelry except watch-chain."

"In general?" Santoine suggested.

"In general, apparently well-educated, well-bred, intelligent young American. Expression frank. Manner self-controlled and reserved. Seems sometimes younger than he must be, sometimes older. Something has happened at some time which has had a great effect and can't be forgotten."

While she spoke, the blood, rising with her embarrassment, had dyed Harriet's face; suddenly now she looked away from him and out the window.

"He would be called, I judge, a rather likable-looking man?" Santoine said tentatively; his question plainly was only meant to lead up to something else; Santoine had judged in that particular already.

"Mr. Eaton"—Santoine addressed him suddenly—"I understand that you have admitted that you were at the house of Gabriel Warden the evening he was killed while in his car. Is that so?"

"Yes," said Eaton.

"You are the man, then, of whom Gabriel Warden spoke to his wife?"

"I believe so."

"You believe so?"

"I mean," Eaton explained quietly, "that I came by appointment to call on Mr. Warden that night. I believe that it must have been to me that Mr. Warden referred in the conversation with his wife which has since been quoted in the newspapers."

"Because you were in such a situation that, if Mr. Warden defended you, he would himself meet danger?"

"I did not say that," Eaton denied guardedly.

"What, then, was your position in regard to Mr. Warden?"

Eaton remained silent.

"You refuse to answer?" Santoine inquired.

"I refuse."

"In spite of the probability that Mr. Warden met his death because of his intention to undertake something for you?"

"I have not been able to fix that as a probability."

"Mr. Eaton, have I ever injured you personally—I don't mean directly, as man to man, for I should remember that; have I ever done anything which indirectly has worked injury on you or your affairs?"

"No," Eaton answered.

"Who sent you aboard this train?"

"Sent me? No one."

"You took the train of your own will because I was taking it?"

"I have not said I took it because you were taking it."

"That seems to be proved. You can accept it from me; it has been proved. Did you take the train in order to attack me?"

"No."

"To spy upon me?"

"No."

Santoine was silent for an instant.

"What was it you took the train to tell me?"

"I? Nothing."

"That is all, Mr. Eaton."

Eaton started back to his compartment. As he turned, Harriet Santoine looked up at him and their eyes met; and her look confirmed to him what he had felt before—that her father, now taking control of the investigation of the attack upon himself, was not continuing it with prejudice or predisposed desire to damage Eaton, except as the evidence accused him. And her manner now told, even more plainly than Santoine's, that the blind man had viewed the evidence as far from conclusive against Eaton; and as Harriet showed that she was glad of that, Eaton realized how she must have taken his side against Avery in reporting to her father.

Eaton had barely finished breakfast when a bumping against the car told him that it was being coupled to a train. The new train started, and now the track followed the Mississippi river. Eaton, looking forward from his window as the train rounded curves, saw that the Santoine car was now the last one of a train—presumably bound from Minneapolis to Chicago. At nine o'clock in the evening, some minutes after crossing the state line into Illinois, the train stopped at a station where the last car was cut off.

A motor-ambulance and other limousine motor-cars were waiting in the light from the station. Eaton, seated at the window, saw Santoine carried out on a stretcher and put into the ambulance. Harriet Santoine, after giving a direction to a man who apparently was a chauffeur, got into the ambulance with her father. The surgeon and the nurses rode with them. They drove off. Avery entered another automobile, which swiftly disappeared. Conductor Connery came for the last time to Eaton's door.

"Miss Santoine says you're to go with the man she's left here for you."

The porter appeared with his overcoat and hat. Eaton put them on and stepped out of the car. The conductor escorted him to a limousine car. "This is the gentleman," Connery said to the chauffeur to whom Harriet Santoine had spoken. The man opened the door of the limousine; another man, whom Eaton had not before seen, was seated in the car; Eaton stepped in. Connery extended his hand—"Good-by, sir."

"Good-by."

The motor-car drove down a wide, winding road with tall, spreading trees on both sides. The man in the car with Eaton, whose duty plainly was only that of a guard, did not speak to Eaton nor Eaton to him. The motor passed other limousines occasionally; then, though the road was still wide and smooth and still bounded by great trees, it was lonelier; no houses appeared for half a mile; then lights glowed directly ahead; the car ran under the porte-cochere of a great stone country mansion; a servant sprang to the door of the limousine and opened it; another man seized Eaton's hand-baggage from beside the chauffeur. Eaton entered a large, beamed and paneled hallway with an immense fireplace with logs burning in it; there was a wide stairway which the servant, who had appointed himself Eaton's guide, ascended. Eaton followed him and found another great hall upstairs. The servant led him to one of the doors opening off this and into a large room, fitted for a man's occupancy, with dark furniture, cases containing books on hunting, sports and adventure, and smoking things; off this was a dressing room with the bath next; beyond was a bedroom.

"These are to be your rooms, sir," the servant said. A valet appeared and unpacked Eaton's traveling bag. Eaton went to bed, but amazement would not let him sleep.

He was in Santoine's house; he knew it could be no other than Santoine's house. It was to get into Santoine's house that he had come from Asia; he had thought and planned and schemed all through the long voyage on the steamer how it was to be done. He would have been willing to cross the continent on foot to accomplish it; no labor that he could imagine would have seemed too great to him if this had been its end; and here it had been done without effort on his part, naturally, inevitably! Chance and circumstance had done it! And

as he realized this, his mind was full of what he had to do in Santoine's house. For many days he had not thought about that; it had seemed impossible that he could have any opportunity to act for himself. And the return to his thoughts of possibility of carrying out his original plan brought before him thoughts of his friends—those friends who through his exile, had been faithful to him but whose identity or existence he had been obliged to deny, when questioned, to protect them as well as himself.

As he lay on his bed in the dark, he stared upward to the ceiling, wide awake, thinking of those friends whose devotion to him might be justified at last; and he went over again and tested and reviewed the plan he had formed. But it never had presumed a position for him—even if it was the position of a semi-prisoner—inside Santoine's house. And he required more information of the structure of the house than he as yet had, to correct his plan further. But he could not, without too great risk of losing everything, discover more that night; he turned over and set himself to go to sleep.

CHAPTER XI

The Ally in the House.

The first gray of dawn roused Eaton, and drawing on trousers and coat over his pajamas, he seated himself by the open window to see the house



The First Gray of Dawn Roused Eaton, and Drawing on Trousers and Coat Over His Pajamas, He Seated Himself by the Open Window to See the House by Daylight.

by daylight. As it grew lighter, he could see it was an immense structure of smooth gray stone. Eaton was in its central part, his windows looking to the south. As he watched, one of the two nurses who had been on the train came to a window of the farthest room on the second floor of the south wing and stood looking out; that, then, must be Santoine's room; and Eaton drew back from his window as he noted this.

The sun had risen, and its beams, reflected up from the lake, danced on his ceiling. Eaton, chilled by the sharp air off the water—and knowing now the locality where he must be—pulled off his coat and trousers and jumped back into bed. He realized that circumstances had given him time for anything he might wish to do; for the night's stop at Minneapolis and Santoine's unexpected taking him into his own charge must have made Eaton's disappearance complete; for the present he was lost to "them" who had been "following" him, and to his friends alike. His task, then, was to let his friends know where he was without letting "them" learn it; and thinking of how this was to be done, he fell asleep again.

At nine he awoke with a start; then, recollecting everything, he jumped up and shut his windows. There was a respectful, apologetic knock at the door; evidently a servant had been waiting in the hall for some sound within the room.

"May I come in, sir?"

"Come in."

The man who had attended him the evening before entered.

"Your bath, sir; hot or cold in the morning, sir?"

"Hot," Eaton answered.

"Of course, sir; I'd forgotten you'd just come from the Orient, sir. I shall tell them to bring breakfast up, sir; or will you go down?" the man asked.

Eaton considered. The manners of servants are modeled on the feelings of their masters, and the man's deference told plainly that, although Eaton might be a prisoner, he was not to be treated openly as such.

"I think I can go down," Eaton replied. He found the hall and the rooms below bright and open but unoccupied; a servant showed him to a blue Delft breakfast room to the east. He had half finished his bacon and greens before anyone else appeared.

This was a tall, carefully dressed man of more than fifty, with handsome, well-bred features—plainly a man of position and wealth but without experience in affairs, and without power. He was dark haired and wore a mustache which, like his hair, was beginning to gray. As he appeared in the hall without hat or overcoat, Eaton understood that he lived in the house; he came directly into the breakfast room and evidently had not breakfasted.

"I am Wallace Blatchford," the stranger volunteered as Eaton looked up. He gave the name in a manner which seemed to assume that he now must be recalled; Eaton therefore

fledged recognition as he gave him his name in return.

"Basil Santoine is better this morning," Blatchford announced.

"I understood he was very comfortable last evening," Eaton said. "I have not seen either Miss Santoine or Mr. Avery, this morning."

"I saw Basil Santoine the last thing last night," the other boasted. "He was very tired; but when he was

home, of course he wished me to be beside him for a time."

"Of course," Eaton replied, as the other halted. There was a humility in the boast of this man's friendship for Santoine which stirred sympathy, almost pity.

Eaton finished his breakfast but remained at the table while Blatchford, who scarcely touched his food, continued to boast, in his queer humility, of the blind man and of the blind man's friendship for him. He checked himself only when Harriet Santoine appeared in the doorway. He and Eaton at once were on their feet.

"My dear! He wants to see me now?" the tall man almost pleaded. "He wants me to be with him this morning?"

"Of course, Cousin Wallace," the girl said gently, almost with compassion.

"You will excuse me then, sir," Blatchford said hastily to Eaton and hurried off. The girl gazed after him, and when she turned the next instant to Eaton her eyes were wet.

"Good morning, Miss Santoine. You are coming to breakfast?"

"Oh, no; I've had my breakfast; I was going out to see that things outside the house have been going on well since we have been away."

"May I go with you while you do that?" Eaton tried to ask casually. Important to him as was the plan of the house, it was scarcely less essential for him to know the grounds. She hesitated.

"I understand it's my duty at present to stay wherever I may be put; but I'll hardly run away from you while inside your own grounds."

This did not seem to be the question troubling her. "Very well," she said at last. She was abstracted as they passed through the hall and a man brought Eaton's overcoat and hat and a maid her coat. Harriet led the way out to the terrace. The day was crisp, but the breeze had lost the chill it had had earlier in the morning; the lake was free from ice; only along the little projecting breakwaters which guarded the bluff against the washing of the waves, some ice still clung, and this was rapidly melting. A gravelled path led them around the south end of the house.

Eaton saw at a little distance a powerful, strapping man, half concealed—though he did not seem to be hiding—behind some bushes. The man might have passed for an undergrounder; but he was not working; and once before during their walk Eaton had seen another man, powerfully built as this one, who had looked keenly at him and then away quickly. Harriet flushed slightly as she saw that Eaton observed the man; Eaton understood then that the man was a guard, one of several, probably who had been put about the house to keep watch of him.

Had Harriet Santoine understood his interest in the grounds as preparatory to a plan to escape, and had she therefore taken him out to show him the grounds who would prevent him? He did not speak of the man and neither did she; with her, he went on, silently, to the gardeners' cottages, where she gave directions concerning the spring work being done on the grounds. Then they went back to the house, exchanging—for the first time between them—ordinary inanities.

She left him in the hall, saying she was going to visit her father. As Eaton stood, undecided where to go, a young woman coming the main part of the hall, crossed evidently from outside the house—she had on hat and jacket and was gloved; she was approaching the doors of the room he just had left, and so must pass him. He stared at sight of her and choked; then he controlled him-

self rigidly, waiting until she should see him.

(To be Continued.)

—Our world is certainly in a decidedly topsy-turvy condition. In the United States conditions have been improving very rapidly during the past few days and there is reason to hope that contentment may soon become a general possession.

She halted suddenly as she saw him, and grew very pale.



She halted suddenly as she saw him, and grew very pale.

(To be Continued.)