

The BLIND MAN'S EYES

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Illustrations by R.H. Livingstone

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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. Philip 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 hand 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.

CHAPTER IX.—Santoine recovers sufficiently to question Eaton, who refuses to reveal his identity. The financier requires Eaton to accompany him to the Santoine home, where he is in the position of a semi-prisoner.

CHAPTER X.—Eaton meets a resident of the house, Wallace Blatchford, and a young girl, Mildred Davis, with whom apparently he is acquainted, though they conceal the fact. Eaton's mission is to secure certain documents which are vital to his interests, and his being admitted to the house is a remarkable stroke of luck. The girl agrees to aid him. He becomes deeply interested in Harriet Santoine, and she in him.

CHAPTER XI.—Harriet tells Eaton she and Donald Avery act as "eyes" to Santoine, reading to him the documents on which he bases his judgments. While walking with her, two men in an automobile deliberately attempt to run Eaton down. He escapes with slight injuries. The girl recognizes one of the men as having been on the train on which they came from Seattle.

(Continued from last week.)

"Just ten days ago," he said evenly and dispassionately, "I was found unconscious in my berth—Section Three of the rear-most sleeper—on the transcontinental train, which I had taken with my daughter and Avery at Seattle. I had been attacked—assaulted during my sleep some time in the first night that I spent on the train—and my condition was serious enough so that for three days afterward I was not allowed to receive any of the particulars of what had happened to me. When I did finally learn them, I naturally attempted to make certain deductions as to who it was that had attempted to murder me, and why; and ever since, I have continued to occupy myself with those questions. I am going to tell you a few of my deductions. If you fancy I am at fault in my conclusions, wait until you discover your error."

Santoine waited an instant; Eaton thought it was to allow him to speak if he wanted to, but Eaton merely waited.

"The first thing I learned," the blind man went on, "was the similarity of the attack on me to the more successful attack on Warden, twelve days previous, which had caused his death. The method of the two attacks was the same; the conditions surrounding them were very similar. The desperate nature of the two attacks, and their almost identical method, made it practically certain that they originated at the same source and were carried out—probably—by the same hand and for the same purpose."

"Mrs. Warden's statement to me of her interview with her husband a half-hour before his murder, made it certain that the object of the attack on him was to 'remove' him. It seemed almost inevitable, therefore, that the attack on me must have been for the same purpose."

"I found that a young man—yourself—had acted so suspiciously both before and after the attack on me that both Avery and the conductor in charge of the train had become convinced that he was my assailant, and had segregated him from the rest of the passengers. Not only this, but—and this seemed quite conclusive to them—you admitted that you were the one who had called upon Warden the evening of his murder. It seemed likely, too, that you were the only person on the train aside from my daughter and Avery who knew who I was; for I had had reason to believe from the time when I first heard you speak when you boarded the train, that you were someone with whom I had previously, very briefly come in contact; and I had asked my daughter

to find out who you were, and she had tried to do so, but without success."

Eaton wet his lips. "Also," the blind man continued, "there was a telegram which definitely showed that there was some connection, unknown to me, between you and me, as well as a second—or rather a previous—suspicious telegram in cipher, which we were able to translate."

Eaton leaned forward, impelled to speak; but as Santoine clearly detected this impulse and waited to hear



"You Understand Already," Santoine Asserted.

but he was going to say, Eaton reconsidered and kept silent. "You were going to say something about that telegram in cipher?" Santoine asked.

"No," Eaton denied. "I think you were; and I think that few minutes ago when I said you were not surprised by the attempt made today to run you down, you were also going to speak of it; for that attempt makes clear the meaning of the telegram. Its meaning was not clear to me before, you understand, it said only that you were known and followed. It did not say why you were followed. I could not be certain of that; there were several possible reasons why you might be followed—even that the 'one' who was following might be someone secretly interested in preventing you from an attack on me. Now, however, I know that the reason you feared the man who was following was because you expected him to attack you. Knowing that, Eaton—knowing that, I want to call your attention to the peculiarity of our mutual positions on the train. You had asked for and were occupying Section Three in the third sleeper, in order—I assume and, I believe, correctly—to avoid being put in the same car with me. In the night, the second sleeper—the car next in front of yours—was cut off from the train and left behind. That made me occupy in relation to the forward part of the train exactly the same position as you had occupied before the car ahead of you had been cut out. I was in Section Three in the third sleeper from the front."

Eaton stared at Santoine, fascinated; what had been only vague, half felt, half formed with himself, was becoming definite, tangible, under the blind man's reasoning. His hands closed instinctively, in his emotion. "What do you mean?"

"You understand already," Santoine asserted. "The attack made on me was meant for you. Someone stealing through the cars from the front to the rear of the train and carrying in his mind the location of Section Three in the third car, struck through the curtains by mistake at me instead of you. Who was that, Eaton?"

"I don't know," Eaton answered. "You mean you prefer to shield him?"

"Shield him?" "That is what you are doing, is it not? For, even if you don't know the man directly, you know in whose cause and under whose direction he murdered Warden—and why and for whom he is attempting to murder you."

Eaton remained silent. In his intensity, Santoine had lifted himself from his pillows. "Who is that man?" he challenged. "And what is that connection between you and me which, when the attack found and disabled me instead of you, told him that—in spite of his mistake—his result had been accomplished? told him that, if I was dying, a repetition of the attack against you was unnecessary?"

Eaton knew that he had grown very pale; Harriet must be aware of the effect Santoine's words had on him.

but he did not dare look at her now to see how much she was comprehending.

"I don't understand." He fought to compose himself.

"It is perfectly plain," Santoine said patiently. "It was believed at first that I had been fatally hurt; it was even reported at one time—I understand—that I was dead; only intimate friends have been informed of my actual condition. Yesterday, for the first time, the newspapers announced the certainty of my recovery; and today an attack is made on you. They did not hesitate to attack you in sight of my daughter."

"But—" "You are merely challenging my deductions! Will you reply to my questions?—tell me the connection between us?—who you are?"

"No." "Come here!"

"What?" said Eaton. "Come here—close to me, beside the bed."

Eaton hesitated, and then obeyed. "Bend over!"

Eaton stooped, and the blind man's hands seized him. Instantly Eaton withdrew.

"Wait!" Santoine warned. "If you do not stay, I shall call help." One hand went to the bell beside his bed. Harriet had risen; she met Eaton's gaze warningly and nodded to him to comply. He bent again over the bed. He felt the blind man's sensitive fingers searching his features, his head, his throat. Eaton gazed at Santoine's face while the fingers were examining him; he could see that Santoine was merely finding confirmation of an impression already gained from what he had been told him about Eaton. Santoine showed nothing more than this confirmation; certainly he did not recognize Eaton. More than this, Eaton could not tell.

"Now your hands," Santoine ordered. Eaton extended one hand and then the other; the blind man felt over them from wrists to the tips of the fingers; then he let himself sink back against the pillows, absorbed in thought.

"You may go," Santoine said at last. "Go?" Eaton asked.

"You may leave the room. Blatchford will meet you downstairs."

Santoine reached for the house telephone beside his bed—receiver, the transmitter on one light bar—and gave directions to have Blatchford await Eaton in the hall below.

Eaton was distinctly frightened by the revelation he just had had of Santoine's clear, implacable reasoning regarding him; for none of the blind man's deductions about him had been wrong—all had been the exact though incomplete truth. It was clear to him that Santoine was close—much closer—even than Santoine himself yet appreciated—to knowing Eaton's identity; it was even probable that one single additional fact—the discovery, for instance, that Miss Davis was the source of the second telegram received by Eaton on the train—would reveal everything to Santoine. And Eaton was not certain that Santoine, even without any new information, would not reach the truth unaided at any moment. So Eaton knew that he himself must act before this happened. But so long as the safe in Santoine's study was kept locked or was left open only while someone was in the room with it, he could not act until he had received help from outside; and he had not yet received that help; he could not hurry it or even tell how soon it was likely to come.

As his mind reviewed, almost instantaneously, these considerations, he glanced again at Harriet; her eyes, this time, met his, but she looked away immediately. As he went toward the door, she made no move to accompany him. He went out without speaking and closed the inner and the outer doors behind him; then he went down to Blatchford.

For several minutes after Eaton had left the room, Santoine thought in silence. "Where are you, Harriet?" he asked at last.

She knew it was not necessary to answer him, but merely to move so that he could tell her position; she moved slightly, and his slightest eyes shifted at once to where she stood.

"How did he act?" Santoine asked. She reviewed swiftly the conversation, supplementing his blind apprehensions of Eaton's manner with what she herself had seen.

"What have been your impressions of Eaton's previous social condition, Daughter?" he asked. "You have talked with him, been with him—both on the train and here; have you been able to determine what sort of people he has been accustomed to mix with? Have his friends been business men? Professional men? Society people?"

The deep and unconcealed note of trouble in her father's voice startled her, in her familiarity with every tone and every expression. She answered his question: "I don't know, Father."

"I want you to find out." "In what way?" "You must find a way. I shall tell Avery to help." He thought for several moments, while she stood waiting. "We must have that motor and the men in it traced, of course. Harriet, there are certain matters—correspondence—which Avery has been looking after for me; do you know what correspondence I mean?"

"Yes, Father." "I would rather not have Avery bothered with it just now; I want him to give his whole attention to this present inquiry. You yourself will assume charge of the correspondence of which I speak, Daughter."

"Yes, Father. Do you want anything else now?" "Not of you; send Avery to me."

CHAPTER XIV

Donald Avery Is Moody.

Harriet went down the stairs into the study; she passed through the study into the main part of the house and found Donald and sent him to her father; then she returned to the study. She closed and fastened the doors, and



She Removed the Books in Front of a Wall Safe to the Right of the Door.

after glancing about the room, she removed the books in front of a wall-safe to the right of the door, slid back the movable panel, opened the safe and took out a bundle of correspondence. She closed safe and panel and put back the books; and carrying the correspondence to her father's desk, she began to look over it.

This correspondence—a considerable bundle of letters held together with wire clips and the two envelopes bound with tape which she had put into the safe the day before—made up the papers of which her father had spoken to her. These letters represented the contentions of willful, powerful and sometimes ruthless and violent men. Ruin of one man by another—ruin financial, social or moral, or all three together—was the intention of the principals concerned in this correspondence; too often, she knew, one man or one group had carried out a fierce intent upon another; and sometimes, she was aware, these bitter feuds had carried certain of her father's clients further even than personal or family ruin; fraud, violence and—twice now—even murder were represented by this correspondence; for the papers relating to the Warden and the Latron murders were here. She had felt always the horror of this violent and ruthless side of the man with whom her father dealt; but now she knew that actual appreciation of the crimes that passed as business had been far from her. And, strangely, she now realized that it was not the attacks on Mr. Warden and her father—overwhelming with horror as these had been—which were bringing that appreciation home to her. It was her understanding now that the attack was not meant for her father but for Eaton.

Though Harriet had never believed that Eaton had been concerned in the attack upon her father, her denial of it had been checked and stifled because she would not even defend himself. She had not known what to think; she had seemed to herself to be waiting with her thoughts in abeyance; until he should be cleared, she had tried not to let herself think more about Eaton than was necessary. Though he was involved with her father in some way, she refused to believe he was against her father, but clearly he was not with him. How could he be involved, then, unless the injury he had suffered was some such act of man against man as these letters and statements represented? She looked carefully through all the contents of the envelopes, but she could not find anything which helped her.

She pushed the letters away, then, and sat thinking. Mr. Warden, who appeared to have known more about Eaton than anyone else, had taken Eaton's side; it was because he had been going to help Eaton that Mr. Warden had been killed. Would not her father be ready to help Eaton, then, if he knew as much about him as Mr. Warden had known? But Mr. Warden, apparently, had kept what he knew even from his own wife; and Eaton was now keeping it from everyone—her father included. She felt that her father had understood and appreciated all this long before herself—that it was the reason for his attitude toward Eaton on the train and, in part, the cause of his considerate treatment of him all through.

So, instead of being estranged by Eaton's manner to her father, she felt an impulse of feeling toward him flooding her, a feeling which she tried to explain to herself as sympathy. But it was not just sympathy; she would not say even to herself what it was.

She got up suddenly and went to the door and looked into the hall; a servant came to her.

"Is Mr. Avery still with Mr. Santoine?" she asked.

"No, Miss Santoine; he has gone out."

"Thank you."

She went back, and bundling the correspondence together as it had been before, she removed the books from a shelf to the left of the door, slid back another panel and revealed a second wall-safe corresponding to the one to the right of the door from which she had taken the papers. The combination of this second safe was known only to her father and herself. She put the envelopes into it, closed it,

and replaced the books. Then she went to her father's desk, took from a drawer a long typewritten report of which he had asked her to prepare a digest, and read it through; consciously concentrating, she began her work. At three she heard Avery's motor, and went to the study door and looked out, as he entered the hall.

"What have you found, Don?" she inquired. "Nothing yet, Harry." "You got no trace of them?"

"No; too many motors pass on that road for the car to be recalled particularly. I've started what inquiries are possible and arranged to have the road watched in case they come back this way."

He went past her and up to her father. She returned to the study and put away her work.

Dinner was served in the great Jacobean dining room, with walls paneled to the high ceiling, logs blazing in the big stone fireplace. As they seated themselves, she noted that Avery seemed moody and uncommunicative; something, clearly, had irritated and disturbed him; and as the meal progressed, he vented his irritation upon Eaton by affronting him more openly by word and look than he had ever done before in her presence. She was the more surprised at his doing this now, because she knew that Donald must have received from her father the same instructions as had been given herself to learn what ever was possible of Eaton's former position in life.

Before Eaton's entrance into her life she had supposed that some time, as a matter of course, she was going to marry Donald. In spite of this, she had never thought of herself as apart from her father; when she thought of marrying, it had been always with the idea that her duty to her husband must be secondary to that to her father; she knew now that she had accepted Donald Avery not because he had become necessary to her but because he had seemed essential to her father and her marrying Donald would permit her life to go on much as it was.

Donald had social position and a certain amount of wealth and power; now suddenly she was feeling that he did nothing but these things, that his own unconscious admission was that he was worth while he must have them, that to retain and increase them was his only object in life. She had the feeling that these were the only things he would fight for; but that for these he would fight—fairly, perhaps, if he could—but, if he must, unfairly, despicably.

She had finished dinner, but she hesitated to rise and leave the men alone; after-dinner cigars and the fiction of the masculine conversation about the table were insisted on by Blatchford. As she delayed, looking across the table at Eaton, his eyes met hers; reassured, she rose at once; the three rose with her and stood while she went out. She went upstairs and looked in upon her father; he wanted nothing, and after a conversation with him as short as she could make it, she came down again. No further disagreement between the two men, apparently, had happened after she left the table. Avery now was not visible. Eaton and Blatchford were in the music-room. With a repugnance against her father's orders which she had never felt before, she began to carry out the instructions her father had given her.

She noticed that Eaton was familiar with almost everything; she had liked which had been written or was current up to five years before; all later music was strange to him. To this extent he had been of her world, plainly, up to five years before; then he had gone out of it.

She realized this only as something which she was to report to her father; yet she felt a keener, more personal interest in it than that. Harriet Santoine knew enough of the world to know that few men break completely all social connections without some link of either fact or memory still holding them, and that this link most often is a woman.

Toward ten o'clock Eaton excused himself and went to his rooms. She sat for a time, idly talking with Blatchford; then, as a servant passed through the hall and she mistook momentarily his footsteps for those of Avery, she got up suddenly and went upstairs. It was only after reaching her rooms that she appreciated that the meaning of this action was that she shrank from seeing Avery again that night. But she had been in her rooms only a few minutes when her

house telephone buzzed, and answered.

"Will You Come Down for a Few Minutes, Please, Harry?"

"He told me that, of course, Harry, and that he had asked you to relieve me as much as you could; he didn't say he had told you to take charge of the papers. Did he do that?"

"I thought that was implied. If you need them, I'll get them for you, Don. Do you want them?"

She got up and went toward the safe where she had put them; suddenly she stopped. What it was that she had felt under his tone and manner, she could not tell; it was probably only irritation at having important work taken out of his hands. But whatever it was, he was not openly expressing it—he was even being careful that it should not be expressed. And now suddenly, as he followed and came close behind her and her mind went swiftly to her father lying helpless upstairs, and her father's trust in her, she halted.

"We must ask Father," she said. "Ask him!" he ejaculated. "Why?" She faced him uncertainly, not answering.

"That's rather ridiculous, Harry, especially as it is too late to ask him tonight." His voice was suddenly rough in his irritation. "I have had charge of those very things for years; they concern the matters in which your father particularly confides in me. It is impossible that he meant you to take them out of my hands like this. He must have meant only that you were to give me what help you could with them! Harry, don't you see that you are putting me in a false position—wronging me? You are acting as though you did not trust me!"

"I do trust you, Don; at least I have no reason to distrust you. I only say we must ask Father."

"They're in your little safe?" She nodded. "Yes." "And you'll not give them to me?" "No."

He stared angrily; then he shrugged and laughed and went back to his desk and began gathering up his scattered papers. She stood indecisively watching him. Suddenly he looked up, and she saw that he had quite composed

(To be continued.)



"Will You Come Down for a Few Minutes, Please, Harry?"