UNCONFESSED

CHAPTER XI-Continued

—10—
Ten minutes later I was in my room, feeling as stunned and bewildered as if I had just run, racing, full tilt against a wall. The thing that I had found out in those last ten minutes, the thing that my flash of inspiration had led me to, simply did not fit in. Sheer accident must have intervened. Another maid. . . .

I felt as if I were sinking in one of those morasses where everything you tay hold on slips out from under your clutching fingers.

The death of Anson had so filled my mind that I had been forgetting the menace of all that had gone before, but now it repossessed me very completely. I was not so frightened for myself as I ought to have been; I knew my own innocence so well that I was naively sure I could make it clear, but my forebodings deepened when I thought of Deck, high-strung, defiant, confronting Donahey's hard, slow-focusing distrust, and Harriden's outspoken hate.

I wondered if they had decided to arrest him. The finding of that diamond must have seemed to them conclusive. They might have arrested him at once, I thought, but for the finding of Anson's body. That death had bewildered and distracted them for a time, but now they must be all the keener for some decisive action.

I could see Deck held up before the public as an unscrupulous spendthrift making love to a rich woman, trying trade on her affections, drunkenly

eatening her when she refused some m, then murdering her for the possession of her diamonds. He would be represented as having tried to hide the chain with me but as having retained possession of the big diamond that might, more easily, escape a search.

It all fitted together. Now that the diamond was found Harriden must be surer than ever that his suspicions had been right. . . . He would make everybody else sure.

I was glad I had spoken to Donahey about Rancini and Anson. Perhaps I had roused enough suspicion in Donahey's mind to delay his action against Deck. If only my clue had not failed me-if only I had found what I expected to find. . . Well, I hadn't. All right then, I thought determinedly, I'd see what sort of case I could build up. anyway.

Nora Harriden had been quarreling with a man in her room about seventhirty. Rancini might have been the man for all his wife's testimony that he had been in his own room. . . . Later, after Harriden had gone down, he had stepped into Nora's room again. Nora had been stabbed. Rancini had a cane, with a stabbing knife concealed in one end. He had wiped it off with a handkerchief-

Not his own. His own did not match that blood-stained one. He had picked helped. . . . But he can't hear what we come up to try and cool off-to plan up one of Dan's to wipe off the blood. say if we stay away from that door." He had locked Nora in the closet, fled back to his room, washed out the handkerchief and spread it on the radiator to dry. Then, seized with the thought of making the murder appear a suicide, he had slipped back again, thrust her out the window, after stuffing the diamonds in his pocket, and hurried talk things over," I said stoutly. down to dinner.

During the search for Mrs. Harriden, Anson had happened to notice the drying handkerchief. . . . Perhaps the prince had noticed it, later, and stuffed in your dress. They'll have to believe it in his pocket with the diamonds. your story. The publicity may be deuc-That night, he had torn out the initials | edly annoying for you, but that's all." and stolen up with the diamonds to my

He had chosen me, I thought, because if he were discovered there his fertile imagination would conceive the idea of saying that it was a rendezvous. If I, alone, discovered him, he would try to make love to me. . . . It would be just what he would think of hidden that, but after Anson's deathand my suspicion insisted that he had killed her-he had realized the danger the corner. God, I almost believe in he was in, with that body in his closet, and so he had hurried to get rid of the pendant and at the same time to throw more of the suspicion upon Deck.

Some things I could not explain to myself. Why had Letty Van Alstyn fainted at Harriden's dreadful words? If she were guilty, then I could credit her with a moment's faltering weakness as she saw the fate she was bringing upon an innocent man, but if she were not guilty, if she had no reason to know Deck innocent-

I could hardly believe, after Mitchell's words about her, that she would faint out of sheer compassion.

And what about that crescent? Why had she wanted it back from Anson? And how had Anson come to have it again in her hand?

But these did not seem to me the essential questions. The thing was to establish my suspicions of Rancini.

A knock came on my door. One of the butlers, Graff, it was, stood there with a note on the house note-paper. I came back into my room, pressed on the lights and tore open the stiff

paper. Scrawled across the sheet was a single line, written in Italian! "Please be in the picture gallery in

ten minutes."

Some of those minutes I spent in brightening up that scared looking girl I saw in the glass. "You're not afraid." I told her. "He isn't going to choke you to death."

Before I left the room I wrote in English, below that scrawl on the letter, "I have gone to the gallery to meet Rancini," and signed my name with the time. Then I went to the picture gallery

Mary Hastings Bradley

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CHAPTER XII

Darkness and emptiness greeted me; the curtains hung closed against the light, their heavy folds forming black oblongs along the shadowy reaches of the walls. The darkness played on my nerves, and I reached hastily for the electric switch.

The opening of a door at the far end of the gallery made me straighten and whirl about and started my heart to hammering. I told myself to be wise and wary. . . . I told myself that this was my chance to learn something.

It was not Rancini who came in that door. It was Alan Deck. He was the apparition of the first night I had seen him there, his handsome face marked with tormenting bitterness.

Impulsively I started towards him; we met in the middle of that vast room. He murmured, a wry smile on his lips, "I was afraid you might not

I stammered my surprise. "Oh, did you-did you send that note?"

"Who else?" "But-in Italian?"

"Did you think it was Rancini?" he grinned. "I wrote in Italian because I knew you knew it, and I didn't want



So We Began to Walk Up and Down That Huge Gallery.

the servants to read it. . . . However, that police fellow tagged me. He's just outside."

I said in a low tone, "Well, he knows So we began to walk up and down that huge gallery.

"I expect it isn't very helpful for you to be seen with me-but I had to see you somehow."

"They've linked us so in suspicion that it would be only natural for us to "Not that the suspicion can do you

any real harm," he declared. "They can't do anything to you simply because the diamonds were found pinned I hoped he was right.

"They may end by proving that I pinned them there!" His laugh was ragged. He groaned out, "It's this circumstantial stuff that gets me! First my threats, then Anson seeing me outside Nora's door-coming out of it, as a matter of fact, but she can't tell that now-then the diamond hidden in my . As for the big diamond, he had cigarette case, and now Anson's being choked off, in an empty room, while I was conveniently at hand, around my guilt, myself!"

"But who did it?" I demanded des-

perately. "How do I know? I don't give a damn who killed either of them," he Harriden stops riding me. . . . He came him crazy."

"Letters?" "My letters," he said with indescribable bitterness. "The fool love letters that I wrote-oh, months and months ago. The letters that she threatened to show him."

I was stupid with surprise, "To show him-? Why-what for-"

"She wanted to play hell with me! That was what for." He remembered to lower his voice to a hard undertone. "To make me marry her. To make Dan divorce her. I was through, but she

wasn't going to let me off." Well, I knew then. I had always known, but I had been wilfully trying I thought I could knock him out and a hopeless, romantic infatuation. . But it was a curious sort of shock that

he had been "through." In a more guarded voice he went on She'd made a scene that afternoonthat was what Elkins overheard, Swore she'd get a divorce and make me marry her. Said Dan would divorce her like a shot if he found out, and she was going to tell him. I told her I'd give her the lie, and she said she'd show my letters." That was the first time I knew she hadn't burned them, as she had

"She showed them to him all right," Deck muttered. "He was quoting from them downstairs when he went crazy

-when they found the diamond. There were phrases that he'd gotten from them. About having compassion on my lovesick soul-about drowning myself in her eyes!"

"They were beautiful eyes," I said

Suddenly I remembered something. I remembered those slow, blunt fingers of Harriden's moving about in his wife's dressing case, searching the key to the jewel case. I remembered their pause, their feeling over and over the silk lining, and the queer, indefinable look that had passed over the man's face. . . . I had thought him recollecting some association.

Quickly I spoke. "I don't believe she showed them. I believe that he found them where she kept them hidden-under the lining in her dressing case." I told him, in a carefully lowered voice,

all the details. He nodded. "That might be. More likely than for her to show them. Tell-

ing him about me would be enough. He'd see red. Anyway it's the same thing now. He's read them. Probably been reading them all these nights." I felt sorrier for Harriden than I

had ever felt for any person in my "He loved her-terribly," I said.

"Oh, he was a fool about her. I was a fool, too, in my time," he acknowledged grimly. "The damnedest fool alive. I always am about beauty. You know that thing of Cecil John's-'Oh, I am Beauty's fool?' I thought her Aphrodite herself, all love and loveliness."

Harshly he pronounced, "And she was a cheat and a wanton-and a domineering devil. What's worrying me is that one of those letters, the very last, was written in a rage. I'd been breaking away and she'd started threatening-she might have known she couldn't make me come to heel! I told her I'd see her in hell before I married her. I wrote her that. That would supply the motive, wouldn't it? All that the case lacks now. Doing away with her before she made the

I couldn't speak for a moment. "It was-definite," I said then, a little shakily.

After a minute he brought out: "She might not have kept it. Her pride might have been too great. And Dan's pride may keep him from using it. He'd hate the world to know I chucked his wife."

"I like him for that." Something in my tone must have stung him, for he said quickly, "Don't think any worse of me than you have to. I saw him first as a jealous brute and she as a lovely martyr. I thought we were entitled to our love. . . . I

didn't know her." He went on talking in his tense undertone, the pent-up emotion seething out in him. "I was mad with worry we are here together. That can't be that first night I met you here. I'd a way out . . . I was wondering how to get hold of those letters . . . Won dering if I could play a game with her

. . Then I saw you and I thought, 'Damn it, there's a girl that's real-a girl I want to know,' and I knew if I made a move to you that Nora would rip the roof off. I felt tied hand and foot. That made me hotter than ever." "But you asked me to go up to her-"

"I know. There was something about you-" He broke off and added, "It would have been all right-coming with that message. And I was desperate."

He broke out now, "If Dan thought that letter would send me to the electric chair, he'd sink his pride and use it. He'd show me up, first as the seducer of his wife, then as the abandoner. If that last letter got to a jury I wouldn't have a Chinaman's chance.'

He turned on me his bitter, desperate eyes. "I must get those letters. That's my only way. . . . He can't be carrying them about with him, they're too bulky. They must be somewhere in the room."

I suggested that they were probably still in the hiding place in the case.

"That's right, . . . Look here-can you think of any way of getting hold of them for me?" He stopped short, gripping hold of my arm. "The funeral said, his voice roughening, "just so is tomorrow-he'll leave in the morning and take all the stuff with him. downstairs again when I was with My only chance is now. . . . Do you Donahey. . . . Those letters have driven | think you could work on your maid?"

"To do what? To steal them?" "I'd pay anything I could." I knew it was folly to imagine bribing that sensible maid of mine. . . But there must be some way. I could

see that his very life might depend upon getting hold of them. I said again that the thing to do was to find out who really had done it,

then the letter wouldn't matter. At the look in my face he flung out, not unreasonably, "How can I find out -overnight?" And then, "I don't give a damn who did it, I tell you, so I get out from under. Once I've got that

CHAPTER XIII

get away-"

It was a thoroughly shaken Leila Seton who went back to her room, to the tray of dinner waiting on a little table drawn close to the rose cushloned chair. The soup had chilled, the food cooled, but the coffee in the ther- ting when she's low spirited." mos pot was hot, and I drank it gratefully. My mind was just a sounding board for the words and phrases of I could. Within I was resentfully wonthat past hour.

"I've flung myself into your hands. I thought her Aphrodite herself. . . . I was sick of her. . . . I don't give

a d-n who killed either of them. . . . I told her I'd give her the lie. . . . It was more pique than passion. . . . To play hell with me. . . .

And I thought that Nora Harriden. dead, had continued to play hell very thoroughly with the living man.

I wanted to see Monty Mitchell. He, at any rate, was concerned with the problem of finding the real killer, and hoped he had made some discoveries that would bolster my suspicions against Rancini. Down the stairs I started, pausing, on the second floor, to glance along the main hall to that closed door behind which Nora Harriden lay. Tomorrow that door would open and her body would be carried to its last resting place. Harriden had decided against having it moved to their home. He wanted no ceremony except at the grave. There she would be left, under her mound of costly flowers. Finis for Nora Harriden.

Finis, too, for Sonya Anson. There would be an inquest for her tomorrow, and afterwards a simple funeral service in some undertaker's chapel, probably. Fewer flowers on her gravefewer headlines in the press. Elkins for chief mourner.

I went on downstairs. The house there was a blaze of lights. In a few minutes Monty Mitchell came down. "I wanted to see you," I confessed. "I've been hoping that you'd found out something."

He put his hand through my arm, leading me over to the deep divan where we had first talked it all over. "Give me a little time, my dear," he was saying. Then, "You know I've got an idea-a very luminous idea." waited, eagerly. "But not a word till

I have put a foundation under it." After a moment I said to him, "I've just been seeing Deck. We've been talking up in the gallery together." He raised his head and blazed out,

"You pair of fools!" "Deck needed some one to talk to," I retorted, defensively.

"Yes, and he needed some one yesterday afternoon. . . . Hasn't the man got enough on his mind without having to have you entertain him?"

"Yes, but tonight it was about the case-it was because he had so much on his mind. He wanted to talk it over with me.'

I hesitated, then I thought there could be no harm in telling Monty Mitchell about Deck's letters as long as I did not mention the one which gave any motive for murder. Deck had not wanted Monty to know about that, but Monty had already shown his knowledge of their love affair.

So I told him. "He's afraid-he's sure, really-that Harriden has found some of his old letters to Mrs. Harriden-letters written some time ago. He says that Harriden was quoting from them yesterday-and again to-



Letty Just Likes a Little Petting When She's Low Spirited.

day. He thinks that jealousy will make Harriden determined to saddle him with the murder."

"He's darned tooting it will. They've sent for the district attorney already." And then Mitchell gave his sudden, ironic chuckle. "Do right-and fear no man. Don't write-and fear no

woman." I was chilling at the thought of that district attorney. "Do you think he'll be indicted?"

"As sure as God made lovely women-and jealous husbands."

"Then do something!" I besought. "If you've any idea-if you can prove more than I can about Rancini." At his unresponsiveness I flung out heatedly, "You're his friend, and yet you sit here joking about it, when he's in such danger I"

"I do like you when you're mad." said Monty Mitchell equably. He patted my hand. "Don't look so startled.

He must have thought I looked wan, then, for he told me that a little food and drink wouldn't do me any harm. 'They sent up trays, but there must be something lying about the dining-room. Let's look."

At the door he swung me lightly about again. But not before I had seen Deck within the room, having a drink with Letty Van Alstyn, an arm about her shoulders.

"He doesn't look worried," said Mitchell cheerfully. "What say we leave them and come back to our couch? . . . Letty just likes a little pet-"I thought she was all for Har-

riden?" I murmured as detachedly as dering if Deck was telling Letty that he was putting himself in her hands.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



TRADING JOBS

The navigator and the chief engineer had an argument as to who was the most indispensable in operating the ship; whereupon the navigator agreed to take a try at the engineer officer's job and the engineer officer agreed to take the bridge.

After about half an hour's running, the ship stopped and the navigator crawled out of the engineroom hatch. His clothing was wet from perspiration, and his features were covered with grease and grime.

"It's no use," said the navigator. "I can't seem to make the darned thing go again."

"Certainly not," said the chief ngineer. "We're aground."—The engineer. Shipmate.

KNOWS HIS TASTES



Kid-Do you exchange goods that ain't wanted?

Druggist-Certainly. We like to please our customers.

Kid-Well, I've got fifteen cents' worth of castor oil we bought here. I want to exchange it for a chocolate sundae.

Playing in Luck

Muriel-And you're sure you've read through all the list of sweepwinners? Milicent-Every blessed one. Muriel-And you mean to say

we haven't even got a tiny consolation prize? Milicent-Not even a teeny share

Muriel-I say, isn't it lucky I didn't but any tickets!-Stray Stories Magazine.

Secured Good Evidence

The magistrate fixed the policeman with an inquiring eye. "And what caused you to this the prisoner was under the influ-

ence of drink?" he asked. "Well, Your Honor, I found him in Trafalgar square throwing his walking-stick into a fountain and urging the lions on Nelson's Column to go in and fetch it."-Stray Stories Magazine.

Absent-Minded Physician's Wife-Now, my dear, you must positively forget shop if you are going into society with

Her Hubby-What have I done? Physician's Wife-Why, you feel the pulse of every one who extends a hand.

TO GET EVEN



"Why is your father so glad to get city boarders?" "Well, yo' see, one of 'em sold him the Empire building last win-

Not Tactful "Don't you think my new dress is exquisite?" "O, lovely! I think that dress-

maker of yours could make a

clothes - prop look graceful!"-Stray Stories Magazine. Timid Soul-I would like to cash

this check, please. Chashier - What denomination. Timid Soul-Oh, I belong to the Corner Church.

Ostentation of Wealth "Ostentation of wealth is somewhich good taste always

avoids. "Especially," said Senator Sorg-"when the subject under dishum. cussion happens to be a campaign

Who's Lifetime?

"But you guaranteed that this watch would last me a lifetime." "I know-but you didn't look very healthy the day you bought it."-Lewiston Journal.

STAR DUST Movie · Radio ****By VIRGINIA VALE **

THE death of Thomas Meig-I han may not mean very much to the younger movie-goers, but it will shock those who remember him as one of the big stars of the days of silent pictures. Like many stage stars, he was not too sure at first that he would like pictures.

But he did "The Miracle Man" and with it hit his stride. Oddly enough, Lon Chaney made his name in that picture too. And so did Betty Compson, who was finding it none too easy to climb the ladder of fame.

Nobody suspected that "The Miracle Man" would be such an epochmaking picture as it was. But it established its three leading actors as stars almost overnight.

And speaking of star-making pio tures, see what's happened to the people who ap-

peared in "The Private Life of Henry the Eighth," none of whom were well known in this country till it was released-and the rest of the world had acclaimed only Charles Laughton, of the cast. But since then

Laughton, Robert

Donat, Merle Ober-

Charles Laughton

on, Wendy Barrie and Binnie Barnes have been welcomed by Hollywood. All have been extremely successful in American pictures.

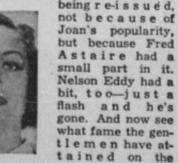
Since her marriage Jean Parker has been luckier than many Hollywood brides; she has had assignments that provided a pleasant honeymoon. First they went to Texas, on location with the company that was making "The Texas Ranger"; now they're off to Mammoth lake and the mountains for 'King of the Royal Mounted." Now all she needs is an engagement with some company that's headed for Honolulu, Hollywood's pet honeymoon spot.

Joe Penner is going to make that picture at last. And because children have become sure-fire hits on the screen, he'll be assisted by Patsy Lee Parsons, a five-year-old who sings and dances. The dancing teachers of this land ought to give Shirley Temple a medal or something. Everywhere-even out in the country where you wonder where and how they can take dancing lessons, you see little girls doing tap dancing nowadays. And Shirley is responsible for that!

---Just one more story of the way things happen in Hollywood. Samuel Goldwyn wanted a German actress for a role in "Come and Get He was sure that none of the local talent measured up. So he had old German films run off for him, for days and days, in the hope of seeing exactly the right actress in one of them. If he found her, of course he'd have to find out where she was, and put her under contract, and have her brought to

California at once. He found the girl in a picture called "Frederika" and the wheels began to turn. Then it was discovered that she is Mady Christians, who has been right in Hollywood for two years, yearning to make a lot of pictures but not getting too many assignments.

Remember Joan Crawford in "Dancing Lady"? The picture is being re-issued.



screen! Fred As-

taire has achieved

Joan Crawford

an unprecedented popularity in the gay night club type of vehicle; Nelson Eddy has become the idol of millions of moyie goers as well as radio listeners.

ODDS AND ENDS . . . Don't miss "The Moon's Our Home" if you want to see a very funny picture . . . Richard Arlen has just entered the Vancouver \$5,000 golf tournament; he'd rather golf than eat . . Joe E. Brown and his wife went to Peoria, Ill., for the opening of his picture, "Earthworm Tractors," Peoria being the world's tractor center . . This last year in radio has proved that the public doesn't care any more for programs that depend on gags instead of the public doesn't care any more for programs that depend on gags instead of funny situations... And the fact that Ed Wynn failed to regain his former popularity is one proof of it... Rubinoss (and his violin) turned down an offer to reappear with Eddie Cantor... Constance Bennett, Simone Simon, Loretta Young and Janet Gaynor will reork together in "Ladies in Love"—and Hollywood looks for displays of temp rament from at least three of them before the picture's sinished. the picture's finished.

• Western Newspaper Union