THE FORTUNE HUNIER By RUBY M. AYRES

Author of "The Bachelor Husband," "The One Unwanted," etc. Copyright by Wheeler Syndicate, Inc.

THIS BEGINS THE STORY

Young and good-lonking but out of high, the Fortune Hunter runn across a man dead of high, the Fortune Hunter runn across a man dead of high the Fortune Hunter runn across a man dead of high the form a del, who is expecting the man back from a del, who is expecting to man and the litter at Cherry Lodge, is am and he litter at Cherry Lodge, is am and a name is John Smith, sidenly, in response to a cry for help, is received by his sister. She insists but roused by his sister. She insists on his coming to their home to change in the coming to their home to change his clothes. Followed by her uncle and looked his name, he Completively gives the same of the dead nam. To his horrised surprise it develops that the house is cherry Lodge and the girl to his horrised man who is being borne by the house, and thus saves her recogniting the real dam Smith. From her brother he discretes that Anne and the dead man are evaged to be married, and is emborrassed that Anne and the dead man are evaged to be married, and is emborrassed that Anne accepts him in that way.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

CTANDING up, he touched the For-

have a little chat," he said in a friendly fashion.

The Fortune Hunter followed Anne into the hall; he would have given a great deal to avoid this fele-a-tete, but it was so obviously expected of him that he dared raise no objection.

But she seemed instinctively to feel his unwillingness, for she turned and looked up at him with a little hurt look in her eyes.

"Perhaps you would rather not go."

"Perhaps you would rather not go."

"Screen him while he listened further.

It was quite possible that he might pick up some useful information here, he thought, even while he was half ashamed of the hope.

The iandlord, who leaned over the har, was the man who had made the remark, and it seemed to be addressed to the company in general, though one of their—A sharp-faced, rather rate, and a cont with frayed sieeves—was the one who answered:

Perhaps you would rather not go He answered hurriedly:

"No, no. I should like it: the house is so warm."

The garden was palely moonlit, but as Mr. Harding had said, the giver inist was already rising, and everything looked as if it were veiled in gossamer. The most of reports many times, and it's never come true."

"It's true this time, though," the indeed quietly, refilling a glass that had been handed up to him. "It seems that he was on his way to the bouse and that it was he who pulled Mr. Tom out of the water."

The Fortune Hunter glanced down at the girl beside him. "You ought to have a wrap. You'll take cold." he

She answered mechanically. "My cloak is in the hall, if you will He went back without a word, took

Who wou'd have thought that fate would ever land him here? In an idea! Inglish home, amid every comfort and who had run the gamut of tife, and who bore its scars on his very soul. He wondered what the girl at his side was thinking; what she would say if he could take her with him in his thoughts, step by step, and show her the dark places of his life through which he had struggled. He felt her shiver and turned oulekly.

"Some people said that the man was dead, others that he'd done something disgraceful and had to clear out of the country, but nobody seemed to know the rights of the siory, except that Miss Anne wouldn't look at any of the gentlemen round here, and she might have had Mr. Foster, up at the Towers, for the sking, if she'd had a mind, oulekly.

"And now after nine or ten years." ixury-he, a vagrant fortune hunter,

did warn you, and you said it would make no difference. And I thought when I saw you that we were just going man might take if he wishes to his own." The landlord laughed. hat's how it seems as if it ought to be

The Fortune Hunter made a passione gesture of helplessness; the pain voice angered him, and he took he only way he knew by which to oothe her doubt and fear—he put his was round her and hold her fast to

"I suppose I'm afraid of you." he id, and his agitation was real enough. suppose all the time I'm wondering is any one so-so-sweet as you re could even look at a-a man like I'm not worth caring about. If you knew I She laid her hand on his lips, silene-

again. It's all done with and for | penal. otten. You're here and I love you." Her voice sank to a whisper, and she

id her face on his breast.

For a moment the Fortune Hunter tood silent, then he deliberately put his land beneath her chin; he raised her again ace and bent his head, kissing her again talk without your book like that.

The man Feraie rose to his feet.

The man Feraie rose to his feet. nd again passionately.
"I love you, too," he said. "I love

There was a little rapturous silence. hen she looked up at him in the moon-ight, her face radiant once more. ! Now in quite, quite happy again." she said. He pressed her head down to his the door behind him.

o the house.

"You'll take cold out here, and I much.

an't have that " " Yes, I'm oming presently—" He laughed ather nervously. "I've got to face the number with your uncle tonight, you now, and I want to make up my mind in the past, he had always managed to the disgrace of prison, and when

"Nothing Uncle Clem says will make any difference to me."

She haughed happily, and ran away om him up the sloping iswn.

he had stepped so whiting the man's shoes he had never guessed where he would find the pinch.

A jatibird. If this thing was true, and instinct told him that it was, one and instinct told him that it was a second him that it was

e left the garden and walked out along His face was hot, and the memory

ape from the bouse.

He no longer wanted to go, he said ever wanted anything in his life.

And now it was not for the sake of et another adventure to hid to his one list, not for the hope of any marrial gain to himself, but because of a lirl whose arms had clung round his eck, and whose voice had whispered.

The Fortune Hunter felt that he would have given five years of his life to know, as he crossed the garden and entered the door of Cherry Lodge.

Mr. Harding, crossing the hall, stopned to wait for him. "So here you are need to wait for him. "So here you are.

nd the thick river mist hung over the thick river mist hung over the country thing like a gray veil. It was then chilly too, now the sun had one in, and the Fortune Hunter shived a little as more from force of habit an anything he turned his steps to-ard a light that shone inviting a heart of the country that should not be seen to the country that the country the content of the country that the country the content of the country that the country the content of the country that the country the country the country the country that the country that the country the country the country the country that the country the country the country that the country that the country the country that the coun

ard a light that shone invitingly beind a red blind of the village inn.
He pushed open the door and entered,
lied for a glass of beer, and found
steat on a long bench in an unobserved
if was only when he had picked as

It was only when he had picked up evening paper lying at his clow i

and was beginning to feel quite com-fortable that he realized the mistake he had made in entering the place.

No doubt the Cherry Ledge people and their interests were well known to the landlord here and the few loungers who talked together at a center table. The Fortune Hunter glanced apprehensively round him, but every one seemed bent on his own concerns, and not a glance was turned his way.

He finished his drink burriedly, and had risen to leave the place when his attention was caught by the mention of a name that had in the last few lours grown to mean a great deal in

"So Miss Anne's got her young man back, after all?"

The Fortune Hunter looked up sharply, his face flushing, but he sat CTANDING up, he touched the For-tune Hunser's arm as he passed, taking up a paper, held it so as to "Later on, come to the study, and we'll screen him while he listened further.

who answered:
"Um! So they say. But I've heard
them sort of reports many times, and

The sharp-faced man succeed, "That's two events for Somerton in one day," he said. "What with the dead man in the wood, and Mr. Smith turning up, after all, we're getting along."
"What's the story of this Mr.

Smith?" some one else asked interestedly.
The landlord leaned his arms on the the cloud from a chair and brought it to landlord leaned his arms on the counter again and prepared to tell what

to her. She let him fold her in it silently, and they waiked on down the
lently, and they waiked on down the
leloging lawn, till they stood by the
water's edge.

There were twinkling lights from a
houseboat on the opposite bank, and
the muffled sound of a gramophone,
otherwise the night was perfectly still
ave for the lap, lap of the water

counter again and prepared to tell what
he knew.

"Nobody rightly knows the facts."
he said, "but it all happened ten years
ago, when Miss Anne was quite w
schoolgirl. I remember her well—it
was before she come to live along of Mr.
Harding, though she often spent her
he knew.

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save for the lap, lap of the water gainst the bank.

The Fortune Hunter looked up at the back along the chain of years that were cone, with a half wistful, half cynical musement.

Who wou'd have thought that fate the looked was a feer and that Mr. Harding, who was their guarding as to speak, had had the marian, so to speak, had had the mar-riage squashed, if you know what I "Some people said that the man was

"You are coid——"
"Yes. I should like to go in." Her voice was strained and hurt, and the fortune Hunter frowned heavily in the lis arm and would have drawn her into his arm and would have drawn her into his arm and would have resisted.
"I don't understand you; you are seen the feet had a mind.
"And now, after nine or ten years, it must be. I hear that he's walked buck as cool as you please, this Mr. Smith, and they're going to be married." He took a pull at the glass of ale beside him and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "Good luck to 'em, anyway I say!" he said heartily.

its arm and would have districted.

Its circle but that she resisted.

"I don't understand you; you are subtrange! I thought—after all your letters" * * Her voice broke on a sound of tears, and she stopped for a moment, trying desperately to recover herself.

Then she went on more quietly. "I suppose, in spite of everything, I must suppose, in spite of everything suppose, in spit mouth down in an ugly leer. 'Mr. Smith: A fine name! And one any

"Now then, Fernie," he said goodnaturedly, "what bee have you got in your bonnet? The young fellow's done you no harm, has he?"
"Not me, p'rhaps," the other admitted reluctantly, "but when he comes

mitted reluctantly, "but when he comes some posing the hero in the story, as you might say, it makes you a bit sick then you know the truth.

"The truth-well, what is the truth, you know it?" the laudlord asked in-Fernie pulled his hat back from over

his foxy eyes.
"The truth is." he said, with slow mpressiveness, "that if it's true that impressiveness, "that if it's true that Miss Anne's Mr. Smith is in Somerton tonight he's walked straight out We said we would never speak of prison-straight out of seven years'

There was a short silence, then the andlord roused himself from his leaning

pushing his chair back with an ugly crating sound.

"I've no more to say," he said calmly mough, though his eyes were ugly. ' ou mark my words if I'm not right and some day I'll get the laugh of you." He went out unchallenged and slammed

houlder so that she could not see his ace as he answered:

"Happier—God knows—than I de.

And then presently he sent her back of the house.

"You'll take cold out here so

he music with your uncle tonight, you cretions of which he had been guilty snow, and I want to make up my mind that to say to him. She caught his land.

She want to say to him. She caught his he had stepped so willingly into another the had stepped so willingly into another.

The heart of the Fortune Hunter warmed as he walked slowly back to her kisses burnt his lips. He feet thousand, while he was a girl in a if a lifetime had passed since the was not the villain he was supposed to soment when he sat on the side of he; there was no dark stain on the is bed and made up his mind to es- record of his life as there had been

CONTINUED TOMORROW





The Young Lady Across the Way



The young lady across the way says the courts are somewhat to blame for conditions and we need more Judges who will dispense with justice fearlessly and vigorously.

LITTLE EGBERT'S CHRISTMAS TOOL BOX By FONTAINE FOX OWING TO THE FACT THAT DAD WAS TAKING A NAP AT THE TIME, LITTLE EGBERT WAS ABLE TO SAW THROUGH THE ARM OF THE PARLOR CHAIR WITH MOTHER SITTING NOT TEN FEET AWAY.

SCHOOL DAYS By DWIG SOMEBODY PLEASE PUT MY SHATES OH FOR ME. WHEN KHIGHTHOOD WAS IN BUD -DAK

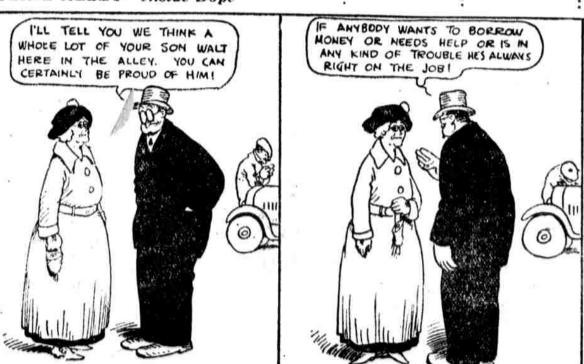






tom him up the sloping lawn.

The Fortune Hunter watched till be never knew what or how far-reaching GASOLINE ALLEY—Inside Dope the consequences might be.







By King

By C. A. Voight