

ANGLED TRAILS

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET
 James Cunningham is rich and such a man who says Cunningham saw him...
 "Do you know or are you guessing?"
 "I know. Our clock struck the quarter to what we looked at them..."
 "At them or at him?"
 "At him, I mean."
 "Can't stick to his own story," Olson grunted.
 "A slip of the tongue. I meant him."
 "And Jack and the lady were three or four minutes behind him?" Kirby reiterated.
 "Yes, sir. It kept ringing. Finally the wife said to answer it, pretending I was Cunningham. We were afraid some one might butt in on us. Your uncle had said he was expecting some folks."
 "What did you do?"
 "I took up the receiver and listened. Then I said, 'Hello! Fellow at the other end said, 'This you, Uncle James?' 'Kinda grufflike, I said. 'Yes, then, 'James talking,' he said. 'We're on our way over now.'"
 "I was struck all of a heap, not knowing what to say. So I called back, 'Well, come on that I—don't retract. I do. Not to say for certain sure. A same likeness had passed into the rough rider's figure. It was as though every sense were alert to catch and register impressions."
 "All three of 'em, Mrs. Hull?" she asked.



AND HERE IT CONTINUES
CHAPTER XXXVII
On the Grill
 IN SPITE of the fact that his mind had at times moved toward his cousin James as the murderer, Kirby experienced a shock at this accusation. He happened to glance at Olson, perhaps to see the effect of it upon him. The effect was slight, but it startled Kirby. For just an instant the Dry Valley farmer's eyes told the truth—showed it as plainly as words could have done. He had expected that someone he, too, had reason to believe in the truth. Then the lids narrowed and the man's lip lifted in a sneer of rejection. He was covering up.
 "Pretty near up to you to find some one else to pass the buck to, ain't it?" he taunted.
 "Suppose you tell us the whole story, Hull," the Wooming man said.
 The fat man had one last flare of resistance. "Olson here says he seen Cunningham with the butt of my gun. How did he see me? Where does he claim he was when he seen it?"
 "I was standing on the fire-escape of the Wyndham across the alley—about ten or fifteen feet away. I heard every word that was said by Cunningham and your wife. Oh, I've got you good."
 Hull threw up the sponge. He was caught and realized it. His only chance now was to make a clean breast of what he knew.
 "Where shall I begin?" he asked weakly, his voice quavering.
 "At the beginning. We've got plenty of time," Kirby replied.
 "Well, you know how your uncle beat me in that Dry Valley scheme of his. First place, I didn't know he couldn't get water enough. If he give the farmers a cooked deal 'tain't a thing to do with that. When I talked up the idea to them I was acting in good faith."
 "The number one," interrupted Olson bitterly.
 "Hain't no better let him tell his story in his own way?" Kirby suggested. "If we don't start any arguments he ain't so liable to get mixed up in his facts."
 "By my way of figuring he owed me about four to six thousand dollars he wouldn't pay," Hull went on. "I tried to get him to see it right, thinkin' at last he was just head-headed. But pretty soon I got wise to it that he plain intended to do me. O' course I wasn't gini' to stand for that, an' I told him 'em."
 "What do you mean when you say you weren't gini' to stand for it. My uncle told a witness that you said you'd give him two days, then you'd come at him with a gun."
 The fat man mopped a perspiring face with his bandanna. His eyes dodged. "Maybe I told him so. I don't recollect. When he's sore a fellow talks a heap of foolishness. I wasn't looking for trouble, neither."
 "Not even after he threw you down stairs?"
 "No, sir. He didn't exactly throw me down. I kinda slipped. I've seen expectin' trouble when I have. Let Mrs. Hull go up to his rooms with me?"
 Kirby had his own view on that point, but he did not express it. He rather thought that Mrs. Hull had driven her husband upstairs and was gone along to see that he stood to his guns. Once in the presence of Cunningham, she had taken the bit in her own teeth, driven to it by temper. That was his guess. He knew he might be wrong.
 "But I knew how violent he was," the fat man went on. "So I slipped my six gun into my pocket before we started."
 "What kind of a gun?" Kirby asked.
 "A sawed-off .38."
 "Do you own an automatic?"
 "No, sir. Wouldn't know how to work one. Never had one in my hands."
 "You'll get a chance to prove that," Olson sneered.
 "He doesn't have to prove it. His statement is assumed to be true until it is proved false," Kirby answered.
 Hull's eyes signaled gratitude. He was where he needed a friend. He would be willing to pay almost any price for Lane's help.
 "Cunningham had left the door open. I reckon because it was hot. I started to push the bell. He had the walk right in an' of course then I followed. He wasn't in the sitting room, but we seen him smokin' in the small room off of the parlor. So we just went in on it."
 "He acted mean right from the start—boiled at Mrs. Hull what was we doin' there. She up an' told him, real civil, that we wasn't his business. He boss over an' see if we couldn't come to some agreement about it. He kept right on insultin' her, an' one thing led to another. Mrs. Hull she got mad, but she told him where he'd have to hold in at. Fact is, we'd about made up our minds to see him. Well, he went clean off the handle then, an' said he wouldn't do a thing for us, an' how we was to get right out."
 Hull paused to wipe the small sweat beads from his forehead. He was not enjoying himself. A cold terror constricted his heart. He felt he slipping a loose over his own head. Was he telling more than he should? He wished his wife were here to give him a hint. She had the brains as well as the courage and audacity of the family.
 "Well, sir, I elinin' self-defense," Hull went on presently. "A man's got to call to stand by an' see his wife shot down. Cunningham reached for a drawer an' started to pull out an automatic gun. Knowin' him, I was scared. I bent him to it an' laimed him one over the head with my gun. My idea was to head him off from drawin' on Mrs. Hull, but I reckon I hit him harder than I'd aimed to. I knocked him senseless."
 "And then?" Kirby said, when he paused.
 "I was struck all of a heap, but Mrs. Hull she didn't lose her presence of mind. She went to the window an' pulled down the curtain. Then we sawed, seen' us how we'd got in bad so far, we might as well try a bluff. We tied your uncle to the chair, intendin' for to make him sign a check before we turned him loose. Right at that time the telephone rang."
 "Did you answer the call?"

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 "I know. Our clock struck the quarter to what we looked at them..."
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"No, sir. Nothin' a-tall."
 The rough rider signaled the strikers, which was erecting the lake at the foot of the hill. Presently it came up the incline and took on its passengers.
 "Drive to the Paradox Apartments," Kirby directed.
 He left Hull outside in the cab while he went in to interview his wife. The completion going on all day long."



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