

TANGLED TRAILS

By WILLIAM MacLEOD RAINE
Author of "A Man Four-Square,"
"Gunsight Pass," etc.
Copyright, 1922, by William MacLeod Raine

CHAPTER XXXIX

Kirby invited himself to a table. He put the envelope in his pocket and went out to get some luncheon. "I'll call it a morning," he told himself with a smile.

The Twin Baites men had said he would call in a morning, but he caught the appearance of James left unexplained. Kirby had become the pivot of his waking thoughts. He had an appointment to meet a man for lunch, but he found his guest waiting for him outside the door.

As far as the dovetailing of time went, there was only the ten minutes between the leaving of the Hulls and the appearance of James left unexplained. If some one other than those mentioned on his penciled memorandum had killed Cunningham, it must have been between half past 10 and twenty minutes to 10. The X he had written in there was the only possible unknown quantity. By the use of hard work and common sense he had eliminated the rest of the time so far as outsiders were concerned.

The restaurant was an inconspicuous one on a side street. Kirby had chosen it for that reason. The man who stopped into the booth with him and sat down on the opposite seat was Hudson, the man whom James had accused of losing the sheets of paper with the Japanese writing.

"I've got it at last," he said as soon as he was alone. "Thought he never would go out and leave the key to the private drawer inside the safe. But he left the key in the lock—just five minutes ago—while Miss Harriman came to see him about something this morning. He walked out with her to the elevator, tucked into his office, and in the drawer, right at the bottom under some papers, I found what I wanted."

He handed to Kirby the sheets of paper found in the living-room of the apartment where Horikawa had been found dead.

The cattlemán looked them over and put them in his pocket. "Thought he wouldn't destroy them. He dares't. There might come a time when the translation of this writing would save his life. He couldn't tell what the Japs had written, but there might be a twist in it favorable to him. At the same time he dares't give it out and let any one translate it. So he'd keep it handy where nobody could get at it but himself."

"I reckon that just about covers the story between me and Mr. James Cunningham," the clerk said vindictively. "He hawled me out before a whole roomful of people when he knew all the time I hadn't lost the papers. I stood by because right then I had to. But I've dug up a better job and start in on it Monday. He's been claiming he was as anxious to get these sheets back to me. Well, I hope he's satisfied now."

"He had no right to keep 'em. They weren't his. I'll have 'em translated, then turn the sheets over to the police if they have any bearing on the case. Of course they may be just a private letter or something of that sort."

The clerk went on to defend himself for what he had done. Cunningham had treated him outrageously. Besides, they weren't his papers. He had no business



Down in the bottom of your heart you're not dead sure he didn't do it—either one of you

street diagonally and passed in front of an electric headed south. He caught a glimpse of the driver and stood smiling at the door, with his hat off.

"I want to see you just a minute, Miss Harriman. May I come in?"

Her long, dark eyes flashed at him. The first swift impulse was to refuse. But she knew he was dangerous. He knew much that it was vital to her social standing must not be published. She spurred for time.

"What do you want?"

"He took this as an invitation and whipped open the door."

"Better get out of the traffic," he told her. "Where we can talk without being disturbed."

She turned up Fifteenth. "If you have anything to say," she suggested, and swept her long-lashed eyes around at him with the manner of delicate disdain she held at command.

"I've been wondering about something," she said. "When James telephoned my uncle, on the evening he was killed, that you an' he were on the way to his rooms, he said you were together; but James reached there alone, you an' Jack arrivin' a few minutes later. Did James propose that he go first?"

The young woman did not answer. But there was no longer disdain in her face as though by a sudden impulse, to the left and drove to the building where the older James Cunningham had had his offices.

"I want to ask me questions you'd better ask them before Jack," she said, as she stepped out.

"Quite so exactly," he agreed.

Her little, long body moved beside him gracefully, its every motion perfectly synchronized. In her close-fitting, stylish gown she was extremely handsome. There was a kind of proud defiance in the set of her oval jaw, as though even in the trouble that involved her she was a creature set apart from others.

"Mr. Lane has a question he wants to ask you, Jack," she said when they were in the inner office.

Kirby smiled, and in his smile there were friendliness and admiration. "First off, I have to apologize for some things I said two days ago. I'll eat humble pie. I accused you of something. You're not the man, I've found out."

"Yes," Jack, standing behind his desk in the slim grace of well-dressed youth, watched him warily.

"We've found out at last who the man is."

"Indeed!" Jack knew that Esther McLean had been found by her friends and taken away. No doubt she had told them her story. Did the cattlemán mean to expose James before the woman he knew to be his wife? That wouldn't be quite what he would expect of Lane.

"Incidentally, I have some news for you. One of your uncle's stenographers, a Miss McLean, has just been married to a friend of mine, the champagne rough rider. Perhaps you may have heard of him. His name is Cole Sanborn."

Jack did not show the great relief he felt. "Glad to hear it," he said simply.

"We come here to discuss stenographers?" asked the young woman with

a little curl of the lip. "You mentioned a question, Mr. Lane. Hadn't you better get that out of the way?"

Kirby put to Jack the same query he had addressed to her.

"What's the drift of this? What do you want to prove?" Jack asked curtly. The eyes in the brown face plunged deep into those of Jack Cunningham.

"Not a thing. I've finished my case, except for a detail or two. Within two hours the murderer of Uncle James will be arrested. I'm offering you a chance to come through with what you know before it's too late. You can kick in if you want to. You can stay out if you don't. But don't say afterward I didn't give you a chance."

"What kind of a chance are you giving me? Let's get clear on that. Are you proposing I turn State's evidence on James? Is that what you're driving at?"

"Did James kill Uncle James?"

"Of course he didn't, but you may have it in that warped mind of yours that he did."

"What I think doesn't matter. All that will count is the truth. It's bound to come out. There are witnesses that saw you come to the Paradox, a witness that actually saw you in Uncle's rooms. If you don't believe me, I'll tell you something. When you an' Miss Harriman came into the room where my uncle had been killed, James was sitting at the desk looking over papers. A gun was lying close by his hand. My uncle nearly fainted as you steadied her."

Miss Harriman, or rather Mrs. James Cunningham, nearly fainted again. She caught at the back of a chair and stood rigid, looking at Kirby with dilated, horror-filled eyes.

"He knows everything—everything. I think he must be the devil," she murmured from bloodless lips.

Jack, too, was shaken badly. "For God's sake, man, what do you know?" he asked hoarsely.

"I know so much that you can't safely keep quiet any longer. The whole matter is going to the police. It's going to them this afternoon. What are you going to do? If you refuse to talk, then it will be taken to mean guilt."

"Why should it go to the police? Be reasonable, man. James didn't do it, but he's in an awful hole. No jury on earth would refuse to convict him with the evidence you've piled up. Can't you see that?"

Kirby smiled. This time his smile was grim. "I ought to know that better than you. I'll give you two hours to decide. Meet you at James' office then. There are some things we want to talk over alone, but I think Miss Harriman had better be there ready to join us when we send for her."

"Going through with this, are you?"

"I'm going through in spite of hell and high water."

Jack strode up and down the room in a stress of emotion. "You're going to ruin three lives because you're so pigheaded or because you want your name in the papers as a great detective. Is there anything in the world we can do to head you off?"

"Nothin'. And if lives are ruined it's not my fault. I'll promise this: The man or woman I point to as the

one who killed Uncle James will be the one that did it. If James is innocent, as you claim he is, he won't have it saddled on him. Shall I tell you the thing that's got you worried? Down in the bottom of your heart you're not dead sure he didn't do it—either one of you."

The young woman took a step toward Kirby, hands outstretched in dumb pleading. She gave him her soft, appealing eyes, a light of proud humility in them.

"Don't do it!" she begged. "He's your own cousin—and my husband. I love him. Perhaps there's some woman that loves you. If there is, remember her and be merciful."

His eyes softened. It was the first time he had seen her taken out of her selfishness. She was one of those modest, appealing young women who take, but do not give. At least that had been his impression of her. She had specialized, he judged, in graceful and lovely self-indulgence. A part of her code had been to be the best possible bargainer for her charm and beauty, and as a result of her philosophy of life time had already begun to enamel on her a slight hardness of finish. Yet she had married James instead of his uncle, she had risked the loss of a large fortune to follow her heart. Perhaps, if children came, she might still escape into the thought and actions that give life its true value.

A faint, sphinx-like smile touched his face. "No use worryin'. That doesn't help any. I'll go as easy as I can. We'll meet in two hours at James' office."

He turned and left the room.

CHAPTER XL
The Mills of the Gods

Kirby Lane did not waste the two hours that lay before the appointment he had made for a meeting at the office of his cousin James. He had a talk with the Hulls and another with the chief of police. He saw Olson and Rose McLean. He even found the time to forge two initials at the foot of a typewritten note on the stationery of James Cunningham and to send the note to its destination by a messenger.

Rose met him by appointment at the entrance to the Equitable Building, and they rode up in the elevator together to the office of his cousin. Miss Harriman, as she still called herself in public, was there with Jack and her husband.

James was ice-cold. He bowed very slightly to Rose. Chairs were already placed.

For a moment Kirby was embarrassed. He drew James aside. Cunningham murmured an exchange of sentences with his wife, then escorted her to the door. Rose was left with the three cousins.

"I suppose Jack has told you of the marriage of Esther McLean," Kirby said as soon as the door had been closed.

James bowed, still very stiffly.

Kirby met him, eye to eye. He spoke very quietly and clearly, "I want to open the meeting by telling you on behalf of this young woman an' myself that we think you an' your wife are debarred from sayin' so before your wife, but it's a pleasure to tell you so in private. Is that quite clear?"

The oil broker flushed darkly. He made no answer.

"You not only took advantage of a young woman's tender heart. You were willin' our dead uncle should bear the blame for it. Have you any other word than the one I have used to suggest as a more fitting one?" the Wyoming man asked bitingly.

Jack answered for his brother. "Suppose we pass that count of the indictment, unless you have a practical measure to suggest in connection with it. We plead guilty."

There was a little gleam of mirth in Kirby's eyes. "You an' I have discussed the matter already, Jack. I regret I expressed my opinion so vigorously then. We have nothing practical to suggest, if you are referring to any form of compensation. Esther is happily married, thank God. All we want is to make it perfectly plain what we think of Mr. James Cunningham."

James acknowledged this and answered: "That is quite clear. I may say that I entirely concur in your estimate of my conduct. I might make explanations, but I can make none that justify me to myself."

"In that case we may consider the subject closed, unless Miss McLean has something to say."

War Veterans to Meet

Arrangements have been completed for the annual banquet of the veterans of the First Regiment Engineers, First Division, to be held at the Hotel Walton on March 4. John V. Scott, 230 West Apley street, Germantown, treasurer of the committee, is in charge of the banquet.

40 Golden Cups

LORD CALVERT COFFEE

Quality Supreme

To be continued tomorrow

After-Dinner Tricks

LOWER RIGHT CORNER

86

No. 86—To Tell if Number on Dollar Bill is Odd or Even

Let some one take a dollar bill and lay it on the table. Put your thumb over the entire serial number and letter that appears on the bill. To tell if the hidden number is odd or even, note the single Old English letter which appears on the upper left-hand corner, about an

GOLD MEDAL MILK

Quality Brings Volume

A testimonial of which we are justly proud—

Our volume of sales of milk and ice cream for the year 1921 was the largest in the history of our business. Which speaks for itself as regards our products and service.

ALL SUPPLIES WILLIS-JONES

Sisters in beauty

Two pretty girls, sharing the same beauty secret, although one lived 3,000 years ago. Girls who both know that a fresh, smooth, radiant skin is not only woman's greatest charm, but one within the reach of every woman.

For pretty girls used Palmolive in the days of ancient Egypt, just as they do today. The crude combination of palm and olive oils which served as beautifying cleanser was the inspiration of the familiar Palmolive cake, famous for its mildness the world over.

Modern science, with all its progress, can find no milder, more soothing cleansers than these two ancient oils. It can only perfect their combination and offer it in the most efficient and convenient form.

Gives a perfect skin

To state that just washing your face every day will give you that all-desired, fresh, smooth skin may sound too simple to be true. But such cleanliness is the foundation of complexion beauty, for this reason:

The accumulations of dirt, oil and perspiration, cold cream and powder must be removed or they will collect and clog the tiny pores which compose the surface of the skin.

Such clogging enlarges, which soon results in coarse texture, and the imbedded dirt causes blackheads, and when it carries infection, eruptions follow.

There is no beauty in such a neglected skin, which repels when it should attract, and prevents popularity and social success.

Not extravagant at the price

If Palmolive was a very expensive soap, such advice would mean extravagance. But the firm, long wearing cake of generous size costs only 10 cents.

The reason is gigantic production which keeps the Palmolive factories working day and night and the importation of the bland, mild oils in the vast volume which reduces cost.

Thus this finest facial soap, which if made in small quantities would cost at least 25 cents is offered at the popular price which all can afford for every toilet purpose.

THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY
MILWAUKEE, U. S. A.
THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED
TORONTO, ONT.
Also makers of a complete line of toilet articles

Not for face alone

Don't forget that your neck and throat are also conspicuous for skin beauty or the lack of it, and that this is where age first shows.

Volume and efficiency produce 25-cent quality for only 10c