The Vengeance of Henry Jarroman

By ROY VICKERS

Must the Woman Always Pay?

THIS BEGINS THE STORY

Henry Jarroman, released from prison, [illegible] he was sentenced twenty years [illegible] for the murder of Charles Adams, [illegible] that John Camden, [illegible] the other state his wife, Mildred Adams, [illegible] the crime to him, is [illegible] nourished his hatred of Camden [illegible] and his embittered heart [illegible] Camden's daughter [illegible] of her father. He adopts and [illegible] luxury on Nadia Camden's [illegible] formerly a typist, who marries [illegible] Wilfrid Stranack, a rising young [illegible] His parents are Lord and [illegible] Doncaster, who have come [illegible] Camden's orphan niece, Claudine, the [illegible] solicitor, and Claudine, the [illegible] who deserted Jarroman, plot to get [illegible] money. Jarroman's real daughter [illegible] a crude factory girl. Jarroman [illegible] a lawsuit against Nadia and [illegible] Doncasters as his revenge, thus [illegible] robbing them and surrounding [illegible] carter, hears from his detective [illegible] was innocent. He has a stroke [illegible] the shock, and Theed believes him [illegible] the world to Claudine's house. [illegible] wants to make restitution to Nell. [illegible] Lady Doncaster persuades Nell [illegible] would hurt Stranack's career, and [illegible] by Theed, prevails on her to [illegible] the secret till Jarroman is better.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

NEVERTHELESS, Walters, I think the courtesy title of "lady" could be applied to any one who calls at this office," he said with gentle irony. "Did she give a name?"

"She gave the name of Nell, sir, and said that you would know her."

"Oh, ah, indeed!" said Theed thoughtfully. He was formally certain as to the identity of his caller, but [illegible] to conceal that fact from his [illegible]. "I wonder who she can be? I'd like to see her, I think. Yes, show the young lady in, Walters."

In the presence of Walters Nell's [illegible] was stony, slightly disdainful. With the click of the latch it was as if [illegible] had been released within her. [illegible] body relaxed, her eyes sparkled [illegible] mingled amusement and cunning. "Crumbs, Soapy Sam, you ain't 'arf [illegible] it on 'em, you ain't! Some people is born lucky. Why, it ain't a [illegible]month since you was in that little [illegible] in the Waterloo road."

"You're quite wrong, my dear," he [illegible] affably. "I've had this office for [illegible]. The other was an extra office [illegible] I've only recently given up. Now, [illegible] down and tell me why you've come. [illegible] aren't in trouble, I hope?"

"Depends what yer call trouble," [illegible] Nell, arranging the rust red taffeta with care before sitting down. "Mine it's a bit of all right, where [illegible] come in useful, and maybe it's [illegible] aye, which if it is you won't get [illegible] out of it till I've earned it up [illegible] factory."

"Tell me everything," said Theed in [illegible] manner of a West End specialist. [illegible] know that it will be a great [illegible]—I might say a privilege—to [illegible] of service to you in any way that lies [illegible] my power."

Five Pounds Weekly for Nell

Theed was waiting for Nell to explain the reason for her visit. She [illegible] and, removing the pins from [illegible] heavily feathered hat, regarded them [illegible]ingly and then skewered her headgear more firmly into place.

"I got a father, see? 'E done twenty [illegible] for manslaughter, see?. 'E's got [illegible] o' dough, and last week one of [illegible] pals, if it wasn't 'is own self, comes [illegible] to my place, tells me all about [illegible] 'e's going to load me with diamonds and the rest of it, and leaves [illegible] eight quid deposit.

"I've blown the eight quid, Soapy," [illegible] warned him. "I'd have brought [illegible] of it along 'ere else."

"My dear, you must really try not [illegible] that ridiculous nickname here," [illegible] told her. "It's all right when [illegible] by ourselves, but here—it's different. You know my proper name, [illegible] please use it. Now, let me see—a [illegible] came to you, said he was [illegible] friend of your father—"

"You've got it, Soapy—I mean Mr. Theed," she interrupted him enthusiastically. "Ben said you was a wonder. That was last Wednesday, true as I'm sittin' 'ere."

"Since Wednesday," she added impressively. "I've not seen nor 'eard a word of 'im—except I've seen 'is photo in the piper, or leastwise wot looks like 'im, though 'e said it wasn't."

That was a little too much for Theed. He drew cross lines on a pad and eventually worked it out. As the tangle began to unravel itself he asked a question.

"What paper?"

For answer Nell dived into the recess of a violently beaded bag and produced the sheet of paper.

Theed took the paper gingerly and studied it. The strong, clearly defined features of Jarroman were instantly recognisable through a splash of fish [illegible]. He was thinking quickly. The position was fairly clear. Jarroman had been to see the girl, had shirked telling her that he was her own father, probably for the same reason for which Claudine had shrunk from asserting her motherhood, but had given her to understand that she had a father who wished to provide for her. He toyed with the idea of trying to convince the girl that it was a cock and bull story, but decided that this would not be safe.

"What do you want me to do for you, Nell?"

"Is there anythink in it, Mr. Theed?"

"There is a great deal in it, Nell, and it is fortunate—most fortunate—that you chose to come to me."

Nell Is Impressed

The girl leaned forward, visibly impressed. Theed knew the advantage of his position. To the mind of Huckster's Row a solicitor can do marvels with the law or any form of negotiation—just as a doctor can perform miracles of healing if he really wishes to do so. The detested nickname notwithstanding, they had a tremendous respect for him. And the girl would believe almost anything he liked to tell her.

"Would you be surprised to hear Mr. Jarroman is a client of mine?"

"Not 'arf!" said Nell. "Fair takes me breath away. If 'e was me dad, why couldn't 'e say so?"

"He had his reasons, which you will understand later on—when you know [illegible]," said Theed cryptically.

"Why ain't 'e been near me since?"

"Where you do him a grave injustice," said Theed. "He has not been able to see you since then because he has had to go to Paris on urgent business. I don't know how long he will be away—he does not know himself."

Nell looked at the solicitor suspiciously.

"'E ain't bin lagged again, 'as 'e?"

"Tut-tut-tut, no such thing!" said Theed in a shocked tone. "I take it your object in coming to see me was to get me to persuade your father to fulfil his promise of giving you monetary assistance?"

For a moment Nell struggled with [illegible] and then:

"Meaning to s'y as I'm after the money?" she challenged. "Well, wot if I am? Would you s'y no thank yer after long lorst dad come along and offered to give yer a chaunce?"

"Your father," said Theed, "left his affairs in my hands and gave me power of attorney. To be precise, he gave me power to come to an arrangement with you which I am wholly willing to do, here and now. But before we discuss the matter, I hope you realize that your father is by no means a wealthy man. Your dad he did not lead you to think otherwise."

"I can't rightly say 'e led me to think anythink—except that 'e was a queer ole bird, which I didn't let on, as it wouldn't 'ave bin polite."

"You are quite right there," said Theed. "He is—as you say—a queer old bird. That is, he is a man of peculiar and eccentric habits. One of his peculiarities is that he dislikes being hurried—he likes to do things in his own way.

"As he is anxious to do his duty by you, we don't want to spoil it all by pestering him and hurrying him, or even writing to him. Let him do the thing in his own way. And until he comes to you again I propose acting in accordance with the powers he has left in my hands to make you an allowance which will be sufficient for your needs. Shall we say two pounds every week? All you will have to do is to call here every Saturday and my clerk will hand you the money."

For a long time Nell was silent. It was beyond Theed's imagination to guess that she was merely hesitating as to whether her pride would allow her to accept the money, even from her father, in such circumstances. His own explanation was that she was disappointed with the offer.

"Of course, when your father returns I have no doubt that he will make the allowance larger," said Theed. "He might even allow you double the amount—though if you were to expect more than this you would leave him very little."

"I didn't ask 'im for money," protested Nell hotly. "It was 'im wot started it."

"Pray don't misunderstand me," said Theed. "There is every reason why you should allow your father to do all that he wishes for you. I'm merely giving you an idea of what he can and will do. I have suggested two pounds a week—it is in your power to demand more."

"Two pahnds a week money for jam and me complaining—catch me!" answered Nell.

Jarroman Is Better

Theed knocked at the door of Claudine's house. The Japanese butler who admitted him passed him on to a wooden-faced maid, who in turn led him to Claudine's boudoir—a lacquer and jade apartment against which Claudine's orange rust gown gleamed balefully. The air was heavy with smoke and the scent of orchids.

"Good afternoon," said Theed. "I have indulged in the luxury of a walk across the park. And tell me, how is the patient?"

Claudine looked at him enigmatically through the haze. Theed had perched himself on a nearby divan before she answered.

"He's practically all right. He's not able to walk or move much, but he can speak. He is clear-headed. He is asking for you."

Theed's smile vanished as if he had wiped it from his face. He sat staring.

"He sent a message to you," continued Claudine. "I didn't forward it, of course. It was given to Nina."

Theed recovered his speech.

"What has she to do with him?" he asked with unwonted sharpness.

"She's his nurse," answered Claudine. "I got rid of the proper one as soon as he showed signs of recovery.

"It's all right," she added impatiently. "He doesn't recognize her—and even then I don't think they ever actually met."

"At the same time I think it is a leetle unwise," said Theed. He had recovered his outward serenity. "I never approved of having her to help you with the card-playing business. That mask she wears when she plays—people think it is a little theatrical and more than a little ridiculous. I assure you her pose irritates them—particularly that everlasting liqueur. I've heard more than one comment to the effect that it makes the place look like a provincial gambling den."

"What about Jarroman?" said Claudine wearily. "What are you going to do?"

"About Jarroman? Yes, indeed, a marvelous recovery. Marvelous. With your permission, dear lady, I propose to see him at once."

Claudine put out her cigarette viciously.

"I asked what you intended to do," she said.

Theed's polite perplexity exasperated Claudine. She raised herself on her purple cushions, her hands tearing at tassels and embroideries.

"You understand me perfectly. Why waste a good pose? You realize as well as I do that nowadays one can't keep a hale and hearty man a prisoner. As soon as he thinks he is fit to be moved he'll speak to the doctor about it, and the doctor will speak to me, and what then?"

"Let us deal with each emergency as it arises," said Theed complacently. "The day to which you allude is yet some distance away. Take comfort in the old adage and—never meet trouble half way."

Before Claudine could prevent him he was patting her hand.

Claudine tore her hand away and, turning a little, picked up the receiver of the house telephone.

"Mr. Theed is coming upstairs," she said into it. "I think you'd better meet him."

"You know your way up," she added, and lit another cigarette.

Theed bowed but made no movement to leave.

"When I called the other day," he said, "our friend had spoken but little, and had not commented on his surroundings. Has he done so since?"

"He asked two days ago whether he were in his wife's house. Nina told him he was and added that you had brought him there. I won't repeat his next remark; it might disturb that clerical atmosphere you're working up for the sickroom. But it decided me to keep out of his way at any rate. I haven't been near him all the time he's been here."

She rose to her feet with one of those panther movements that made Theed blink. The bitterness in her tone confirmed a conclusion to which he had come some time ago. "She tried to link up with Jarroman again and he refused," ran his thoughts. "And now she hates him."

With a swirl of misty orange, Claudine began to pace the room. As if she had read Theed's thoughts, she spoke just above her breath.

"I hate Henry Jarroman. I hate him. I hate him!"

She wheeled back to Theed again.

"I was a fool to acquiesce in this dilly-dallying. We planned something so different. Jarroman was to be got rid of as soon as the girl and Stranack were well involved and unable to face exposure. We could have got a grip on her, that nothing would have shaken."

"I explained to you that that situation had been spoiled by Jarroman finding out, just after the wedding, that Nadia wasn't his daughter, but Camden's," said Theed with a beautiful patience. "I hinted to you when I brought Jarroman here that a new situation had arisen."

"I won't work by hints. I'll do nothing more until you crystallize the whole state of affairs."

He left Claudine smoldering on a heap of cushions, and began a leisurely and obese ascent of the stairs.

CONTINUED TOMORROW

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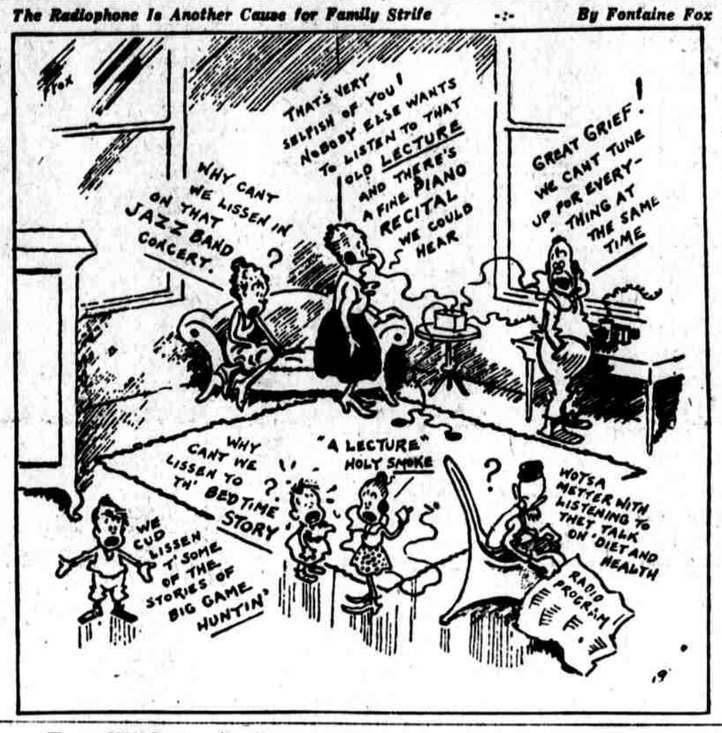

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