

# JACK O'JUDGMENT :-: By Edgar Wallace

**Who's Who in the Story**  
**POISONED DAN BOUNDARY.** Set, leader of a gang of crooks, his behavior toward Jack O'Judgment after he is captured to enrich him without raising the price of a punt. He tries to disarm suspicion by coming around him by convincing to STAFFORD KING, of the London Criminal Intelligence Force.  
**PIVOT SILVA.** A slick man about town, forces his attention on an actress, who rebuffs him. She is the daughter of the comp who makes his return. He is interested in her.  
**SOLIMAN WARRIN.** A full-faced but clever man, who acts as "vamp" of the black. "SWELL" CREWE, once a gentleman, now a crook.

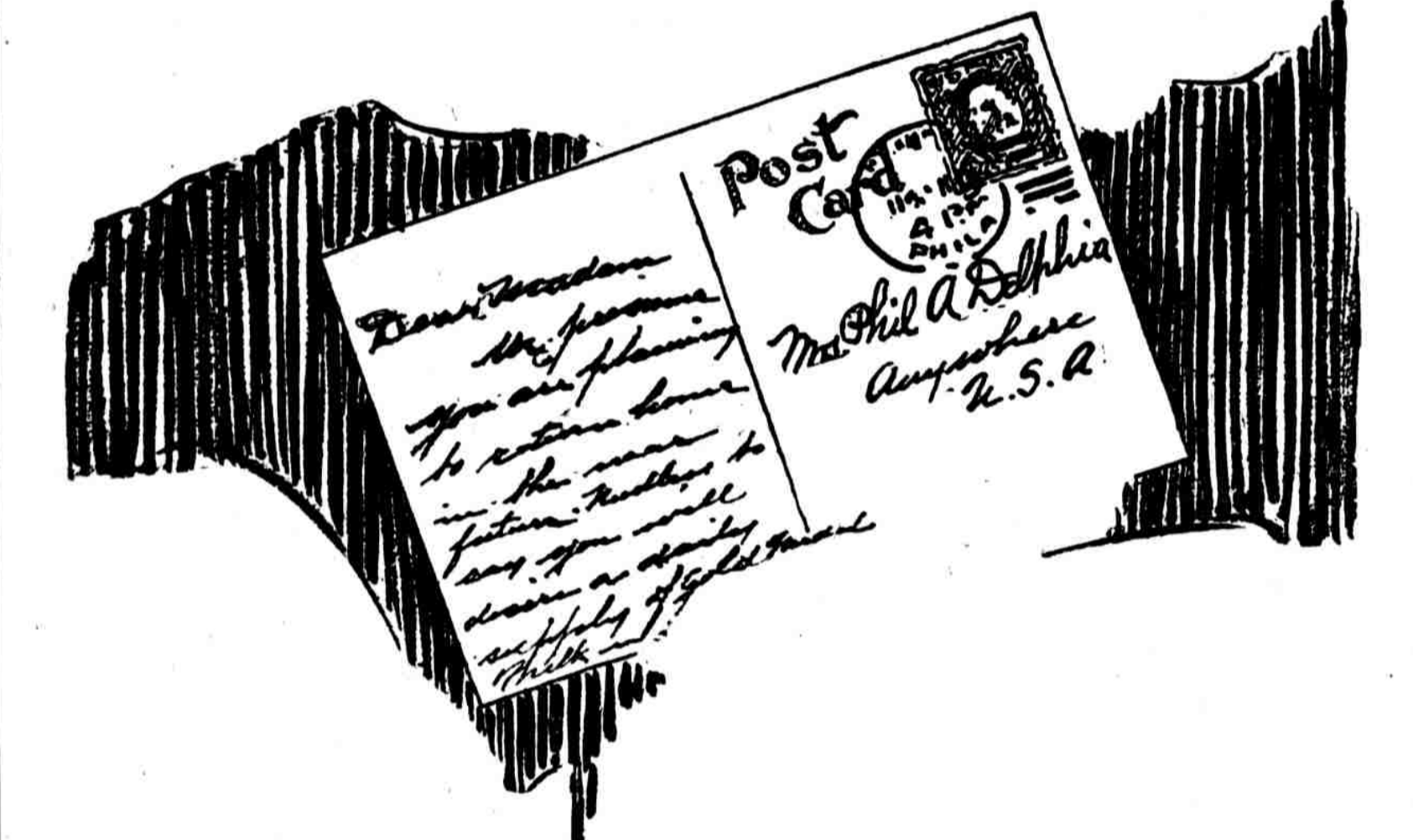
**Lady Sybil's Guest**  
 CROTTIN had taken to secret drinking, little sips at odd intervals both in his room and in his private office. Life had lost its savor, and now a new agony was added to the knowledge that his wife had detected the change. He went to his office and spent a gloomy afternoon wandering about the mill, and came back an hour before usual time. He had not the heart to make a call at the bazaar, and speculated unhappily upon the proceeds of the afternoon session.  
 It was therefore with something like pleasure that he heard his wife on the telephone speaking more cheerfully than he had heard her for months.  
 "Is that you, John?" She was almost civil. "I'm bringing somebody home to dinner. Will you tell Phil?"  
 "That's right, love," said Mr. Crottin eagerly.  
 He would be glad to see some new face, and that it was a new face he could guess by the interest in Lady Sybil's tone.  
 "It is a Mr. de Silva. Have you ever met him?"  
 "No, love; I've not. Is he a foreigner?"  
 "He's a Portuguese gentleman," said his wife's voice, "and he has been most helpful and most generous."  
 "Bring him along," said Crottin heartily. "I'll be glad to meet him. How has the sale been, love?"  
 "Very good, indeed," she replied, "splendid, in fact—thanks to Mr. de Silva."  
 John Crottin was dressing when his wife returned, and it was not until half an hour later that he met Pinto Silva for the first time. Pinto was the man who dressed well and looked well. John Crottin thought he was the most impressive personality he had met

when he stalked into the drawing-room and took the proffered hand of the little mill-maire.  
 "This is Mr. de Silva," said his wife, who had been waiting for her guest.  
 "As I told you, John, Mr. de Silva has been awfully kind. I don't know what you're going to do with all those perfectly useless things you've bought," she added to the polished Portuguese, and Pinto shrugged his shoulders.  
 "Give them away," he said. "There must, for example, be a lot of poor women in the country who would be glad of the linen I have bought."  
 At this point dinner was announced and he took Lady Sybil in. The meal was approaching its end when she revived the question of the disposal of his purchases.  
 "Are you greatly interested in charities, Mr. de Silva?"  
 Pinto inclined his head.  
 "Both here and in Portugal I take a very deep interest in the welfare of the poor," he said solemnly.  
 "That's fine," said Mr. Crottin nodding approvingly. "I know what these poor people have to suffer. I've been among them."  
 His wife silenced him with a look. "It frequently happens that cases are brought to my notice, of women in my mind where these purchases of mine would be most welcome. For example, I heard the other day, quite by accident, of a poor woman in Wales, whose husband deserted her."  
 Mr. Crottin had his fork halfway to his mouth, but put it down again.  
 "I don't know much about the case personally," said Pinto carelessly, "but the circumstances were brought to my notice by a friend. I think these people suffer more than we imagine, and I'll let you into a secret, Lady Sybil," he said speaking impressively. He did not look at Crottin, but went on. "A few of my friends are thinking of buying a mill."  
 "A woolen mill?" she said, raising her eyebrows.  
 "A woolen mill," he repeated.  
 "But why?" she asked.  
 "We wish to make garments and blankets for the benefit of the poor. We feel that, if we could run this sort of thing on a co-operative basis, we could manufacture the stuff cheaply, always providing, of course, that we could purchase a mill at a reasonable figure."  
 For the first time he looked at Crottin, and the man's face was ghastly white.  
 "What a queer idea!" said Lady Sybil. "A good mill will cost you a lot of money."  
 "We don't think so," said Pinto; "in fact, we expect to purchase a very excellent mill at a reasonable sum. That was my object in coming to Yorkshire, I may tell you, and it was

only by accident that I saw the advertisement of your bazaar and called in."  
 "A fortunate accident for us," said Lady Sybil.  
 Crottin's eyes were on his plate and he did not raise them.  
 "I think it is a great mistake to be too generous with the poor," said Lady Sybil, shaking her head; "these women are very seldom grateful."  
 "I realize that," said Pinto gravely, "but I am not seeking their gratitude. We find that many of these women are in terrible circumstances owing to no fault of their own. For example, this woman in Wales, whose husband is supposed to have deserted her—now there is a bad case."  
 Lady Sybil was interested.  
 "We found on investigation," said Pinto, speaking slowly and impressively, "that the man who deserted her has since married, and occupies a very important position in a town in the north of England."  
 Crottin dropped his knife with a crash, and with a mumbled apology, cricked it up.  
 "But how terrible!" said Lady Sybil.  
 "What a shocking thing! The man should be exposed! He is not fit to associate with human beings. Can't you do something to punish him?"  
 "That could be done," said Silva; "it could be done, but it would bring a great deal of unhappiness to his present wife, who is ignorant of her husband's treachery."  
 "Aren't you feeling well, John?" she asked with a start.  
 It was not the first time she had seen her husband's hand shaking and he diagnosed the cause more justly than she was doing at present, for John Crottin had scarcely taken a drink that evening.  
 "I'm going into the library if you'll excuse me, love," he said. "Maybe Mr. de Silva will join me. I'd like to talk over the question of that mill with him."  
 Pinto nodded.  
 "Then run along now," said Lady Sybil. "And when you've finished talking, come back to me, Mr. de Silva. I want to know something about your charitable organizations in Portugal."  
 Pinto followed the other at a distance, saw him enter the big room and switch on the lights, and followed, closing the door behind him.  
 Mr. Crottin's library was the most comfortable room in the house. It was lighted by French windows, which opened to a small terrace. Long, red velvet curtains were drawn, and a little fire crackled on the hearth.  
 When the door closed Crottin turned upon his guest. "Now," he said, harshly, "what's your proposition?"

Make it a reasonable sum and I'll pay you."  
 The Soldier Who Followed  
 In the train which had carried Pinto Silva Huddersfield were one or two remarkable passengers, and it was not a coincidence that they did not meet. In a third-class carriage at the far end of the train was a soldier who carried a kit bag and who whiled away the journey by reading a seemingly endless collection of magazines.  
 He got out at Huddersfield, too, and Pinto might, and probably did, see him as he passed through the barrier. The soldier left his kit bag at the cloak room and eventually became one of the two dozen people who patronized Lady Sybil's bazaar on that afternoon. He passed Pinto twice, and once made a small purchase at the same stall where the Portuguese was buying lavishly. If Pinto saw him he did not remember the fact. One soldier looks very much like another, anyway.  
 Lady Sybil had reason to notice the representative of his majesty's forces, and herself informed him severely that smoking was not allowed. He apologized and his cigarette under his heel with an apology and had walked out of the building. When Lady Sybil and her guest had entered her car the soldier had been loitering near the entrance, and a few minutes later he was following the party in a taxicab which had been driven away to Mill Hall, the last two hours.  
 The taxi did not turn in at the stone-pillared gates of the hall, but continued some distance beyond, when the soldier alighted, and, turning back, walked boldly through the main entrance and passed up the drive. It was dusk by now, and nobody challenged him.  
 "Better she never now than later," said the militant Lady Sybil. "I think you do very wrong to keep it from her."  
 Mr. Crottin arose, and his wife looked at him with suspicion.  
 "Aren't you feeling well, John?" she asked with a start.  
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