



"I Am Not Through With You Even Yet, Puppy."

The LASH of CIRCUMSTANCE by HARRY IRVING GREENE

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Abner Halliday, a miserly millionaire, is found gagged, bound and insensible in his room, his safe rifled and \$40,000 missing.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

At the first corner a shrieking newsboy nearly ran between my legs, and above the uproar of the street I heard him shout a sentence that caused me to gasp and clutch at a lamp post for support.

The world swam drunkenly before me in a hideous gray mist, through which men with faces lined and hardened by hopes long deferred, passed ghostlike as they plodded silently along with strained eyes in search of the sordid necessities which bind the soul and the body together.

planning a new campaign, and beg of her a few days' indulgence until I could go over matters. She had told me that she was to be at home that evening, and it had been understood between us that I was to be with her; therefore, at eight o'clock I arose and called for her number.

With an overwhelming presentment of more misery to come, I vainly implored some information as to where she had gone and at what hour she was expected to return.

In the midst of my stupor I heard the ringing of the door bell and a moment later the sound of light footsteps ascending the stairs.

He laid them on the table before me. They consisted of a silver card case, a bookmaker's ticket, a bit of steel, a soiled piece of paper and a small lump of some grayish substance.

CHAPTER XVI.

In the silence that followed the slow ticking of the tall clock sounded like the tolling of a bell. I shut my eyes. "Go on," I commanded as he sat facing me with no signs of any inclination to proceed.

"When I began this investigation, Tom, as I then told you I was about to do, I commenced to shift the chaff from the wheat in order to decrease the number of objects which I would in the last analysis be compelled to examine with great minuteness.

His teeth showed beneath his heavy mustaches; his eyes burned and his face was stamped with the vindictiveness that had brought this information about. He saw me at once and a brutal laugh of satisfaction burst from between the half-sealed lips which my fist had split.

"I understand. Having eliminated the possibility of its having been done by a professional, you have brought it down to Bruce, who possessed a key, or to Richard Mackay or one of his friends who might have obtained a duplicate from the key I left at Mrs. Dace's. However, go ahead."

"You seem to be following me to a certain extent. Having decided that it was the work of an amateur, I was obliged to start out with those thoughts in my mind as I attempted to still further construct the circle.

"I did not know that Bruce went to such places," I muttered. LeDuc went on. "Nor does he voluntarily. He had

been drugged. But I will come to that in a moment. Having secured this information, which of course eliminated him as the active burglar, I went to him and told him uphill and down that he was making a blank fool of himself.

I drew out the information that the change in address had been given by a certain party whom the driver knew to be a friend of his passenger from the fact of having seen them together, and who had stopped him and given new instructions as to where to convey the sleeping one inside.

"I suppose you mean his possession of the key and his denial that he had it, coupled with the possibility that some one else had somehow come into possession of it," I said, breaking the moment's lull. LeDuc nodded.

"Exactly. I was almost certain from the time that Miss Winton announced the loss of her key that it had somehow got into the possession of her sweetheart; for its disappearance from her keeping convinced me that you had not been mistaken when you said Bruce had exhibited it or its duplicate. I had several talks with

him and her on the subject, and they still insisted with a positiveness that I could not ignore that their original statements were absolutely correct; namely, she denied that she had ever loaned him the key, and he asserted that he had no knowledge of ever having it in his possession.

the piano wire strength of his tendons and clinched my teeth between the fierceness of the clasp. "Tom Halliday," he returned sternly, "you stole your uncle's money."

"Glaring at him, quivering under an impulse to tear myself from him and strike him down, I first swelled my muscles for the effort, then letting them subside sank back with an exclamation of supreme disgust.

"So that was your ultimate analysis!" I said, with bitterest scorn. "Of all the absurd, asinine idiots it was ever my misfortune to come in contact with, you are the most complete—you, an alleged detective. But you might as well finish your dream. I will compel myself to listen."

the arm of the heavy oaken chair. Frenzied with rage I made an awkward dive behind my back with my left hand for my right-hand hip pocket as he locked his arms around me.

enough had not missed it. So we got the coat he had worn on that occasion and went through it. We found a small rip in the bottom of the outside pocket, and going further discovered the key in the bottom lining.

"I think so. And having eliminated Bruce, whom I all along told you was innocent, you turned your attention to Richard Mackay as the next possibility."

"Yes, for about ten minutes. At the end of that time I had reasoned him out of the case. The man who strangled your uncle was described by him as a large, strong man who coughed peculiarly.

"I rose in my chair with a mingled sensation of heat and cold climbing my spine and stiffening my hair. "Do you mean to say as the last remaining possibility you fastened your suspicions upon me?" I gasped.

"I immediately made it, the experiment consisting of my going rapidly to the head of the alley passing the Pacific hotel and waiting there for you. True to my reasoning you went straight to the place where I had found the card case, and lighting a cigar made a brief search of the premises by the light of the match, of course unsuccessfully.

Unnecessary Advice. A Boston school teacher, on retiring after 49 years' service, had these suggestions to make to young women teachers: "A little harmless flirting with nice people with whom you are acquainted will do much to rest the tired mind after the arduous duties of the schoolroom; be a live wire every minute; do not eat too much."

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"Tom Halliday, You Stole Your Uncle's Money."

the arm of the heavy oaken chair. Frenzied with rage I made an awkward dive behind my back with my left hand for my right-hand hip pocket as he locked his arms around me.

"So you feared I would murder you," I sneered. He negatived. "No, I did not think you would do that. But I feared that you might murder yourself. Do you wish me to proceed quietly, or shall I summon your uncle to hear what I have to say?"

There could be no good in getting him excited. "If you have anything more to say to me you may continue or not, as you choose. I can scarcely help hearing you, but you will regret this outrage when I am set free."

He did not seem to become either alarmed or angry at the threat; on the contrary his voice was even smoother than before as he resumed his seat. "Tom," he continued, "I have always been your friend and I wish to always remain so. When I have done telling you what I know about this crime we will talk about other matters, if you desire. But what I wish to tell you additionally is this. I had been compelled to eliminate everybody but you, and was therefore compelled, most regretfully, to start along your trail. As my first step I went to the hotel where you told me you staid on the night of the crime; looked at the register and ascertained the room that you had occupied. I engaged it, and went to it for the purpose of a thorough inspection.

It was a back room overlooking an alley and the fire escape ran close by one of its windows. It at once occurred to me, therefore, that it would have been the simplest thing in the world for you, after having called up your uncle and after having left a request at the office for a morning summons in order to impress it upon the minds of others that you were in your room at midnight, and thus establish an alibi in case of suspicion, to have passed down the escape in the darkness, gone to any place you wished and returned before daybreak. I therefore went down the ladder, as I assumed you had done, and at its bottom chanced upon what I consider to have been the only piece of pure good luck that came my way in the whole case. For, mind you, I insist that the rest of my discoveries were the result of experience in such matters, aided by close reasoning. Be that as it may, at the foot of the ladder I found your lost card case. I could only account for its presence there in one way; namely, that it had dropped from your pocket while you were either descending or ascending the ladder with your arms working above your head. That will perhaps remind you of the other night when you and I burglarized that office downtown. You will remember upon that occasion I handed you your match safe after we had come down, and told you that I had picked it up at the foot of the ladder we had just left; mentioning the fact that climbing up and down under such conditions was apt to work a smooth article out of one's vest pocket. There is nothing truer than that statement, and I have no doubt but that is exactly what happened in the original case of your lost card receptacle. Now as a matter of fact, I extracted that match safe from your pocket in the darkness when you were occupied in pressing the putty against the window in order that I might try an interesting experiment. The experiment succeeded. My calling your attention to the likelihood of losing such articles under conditions similar to those you had just experienced, started a train of thought in your mind. I knew you were worried by the loss of your card case and were very desirous of regaining it. My stratagem of the restored match box made it occur to you that it was possible that you had lost your card case in going out of the window on the night of the crime, and that there was a bare possibility that it had not been picked up and that you would find it among the rubbish back of the hotel. Having as I hoped sowed this thought in your mind, I made an excuse and left you. You will recall that the pretext I made for departing was that I wished to make another experiment alone. I immediately made it, the experiment consisting of my going rapidly to the head of the alley passing the Pacific hotel and waiting there for you. True to my reasoning you went straight to the place where I had found the card case, and lighting a cigar made a brief search of the premises by the light of the match, of course unsuccessfully. Then as you came hurrying into the street you popped into my arms where I had stood to watch if you would fall into the trap. I remember your expression of surprise and displeasure at unexpectedly seeing me there. As an excuse I told you that the criminal was downtown then and moving around considerably himself. I imagine that remark rather got you to guessing."

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