

THE BAT

A Novel from the Play
By Mary Roberts Rinehart and Avery Hopwood

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WNU Service

CHAPTER XI—Continued

Bailey swung in through the window, panting a little from his exertions. "The man Lizzie saw drop from the skylight undoubtedly got to the roof from this window," he said. "It's quite easy."

Dale explained the situation to Jack. "Aunt Cornelia thinks the money's still here," Miss Cornelia snorted. "I know it's here," she started to open the closets, one after the other, beginning at the left. Bailey saw what she was doing and began to help her.

Miss Cornelia rattled the knob of a high chest by the other wall. "This one is locked—and the key's gone," she announced. A new flicker of interest grew in the eyes of the Unknown. Lizzie glanced away from him, terrified.

Miss Cornelia pondered. "It may be locked from the inside—I'll soon find out." She took a wire hairpin from her hair and pushed it through the keyhole. But there was no key on the other side; the hairpin went through without obstruction. Repeated efforts to jerk the door open failed. And finally Miss Cornelia brought herself a key from the other closet doors.

Dale and Lizzie on one side—Bailey on the other—collected the keys of the other closets from their locks while Miss Cornelia stared at the one whose doors were closed as if she would force its secret from it with her eyes. The Unknown had been so quiet during the last few minutes, that, unconsciously, the others had ceased to pay much attention to him, except the casual attention one devotes to a piece of furniture. Even Lizzie's eyes were now fixed on the locked closet. And the Unknown himself was the first to notice this.

At once his expression altered to one of cunning—cautiously, with infinite patience, he began to inch his chair over toward the wicker clothes-hamper.

At last, he was within reach of the revolver. His hand shot out in one swift sinuous thrust—clutched the weapon—withdraw. He then coiled the revolver among his tattered garments as best he could and, cautiously as before, inched his chair back again to its original position.

"There—that unlocked it," cried Miss Cornelia, triumphantly, at last, as the key to one of the other closet doors slid smoothly into the lock and she heard the click that meant victory.

She was about to throw open the closet door. But Bailey motioned her back. "I'd keep back a little," he cautioned. "You don't know what may be inside."

"Mercy sakes, who wants to know?" shivered Lizzie. Dale and Miss Cornelia, too, stepped aside involuntarily as Bailey took the candle and prepared, with a good deal of caution, to open the closet door.

of the Union bank free from suspicion—and it put the blame on me." He paused, thinking it out. "Only they slipped up on one place, Dick Fleming teased the house to you and they couldn't get it back."

"Then you are sure," said Miss Cornelia quickly, "that tonight Courtleigh Fleming broke in, with the doctor's assistance—and that he killed Dick, his own nephew, from the staircase?" "Aren't you?" asked Bailey, surprised. The more he thought of it, the less clearly could he visualize it any other way.

Miss Cornelia shook her head decidedly. "No." "Wells tried to get out of the house tonight with that blue-print. Why? Because he knew the moment we got it, we'd come up here—and Fleming was here."

"Perfectly true," nodded Miss Cornelia. "And then?" "Old Fleming killed Dick and Wells killed Fleming," said Bailey succinctly. "You can't get away from it!" But Miss Cornelia still shook her head.

"No," she said. "No. The doctor isn't a murderer. He's as puzzled as we are about some things. He and Courtleigh Fleming were working together—but remember this—Doctor Wells was locked in the living room with us. He'd been trying to get up the stairs all evening—and failed every time."

But Bailey was as convinced of the truth of his theory as she of hers. "He was here ten minutes ago—locked in this room," he said with a glance at the window-ladder up which the doctor had ascended.

"I'll grant you that," said Miss Cornelia. "But—she thought back swiftly. "But at the same time an Unknown Masked Man was locked in that mantel-room with Dale. The doctor put out the candle when you opened that hidden room. Why? Because he thought Courtleigh Fleming was hiding there!" Now the missing pieces of her puzzle were falling into their places with a vengeance.

"But at this moment," she continued, "the doctor believes that Fleming has made his escape! No—we haven't solved the mystery yet—there's another element—an unknown element," her eyes rested for a moment upon the Unknown. "And that element is—the Bat!"

She paused, impressively. The others stared at her—no longer able to deny the sinister plausibility of her theory. But this new tangling of the mystery, just when the black threads seemed unraveled out at last, was almost too much for Dale. "Oh, call the detective!" she stammered, on the verge of hysterical tears. "Let's get through with this thing! I can't bear any more!"

But Miss Cornelia did not even hear her. Her mind, strung now to concert pitch, had harked back to the point it had reached some time ago, and which all the recent distractions had momentarily obliterated.

for his moment, and now that it had come was in no hurry about it. With equal deliberation he drew the revolver and took a step forward. And at that instant a red glare appeared outside the open window, and overhead could be heard the feet of searchers, running.

"Fire!" screamed Lizzie, pointing to the window, even as Beresford's voice from the roof rang out in a shout. "The garage is burning!" They turned toward the door, to escape, but a strange and menacing figure blocked the way.

It was the Unknown—no longer the bewildered stranger who had stumbled in through the living-room door—but a man with every faculty of mind and body alert and the light of a deadly purpose in his eyes. He covered the group with Miss Cornelia's revolver.

"This door is locked and the key is in my pocket!" he said in a savage voice, as the red light at the window grew more vivid yet and muffled cries and trappings from overhead betokened universal confusion and alarm.

CHAPTER XII
"He is—the Bat!" Lizzie opened her mouth to scream. But for once she did not carry out her purpose.

"Not a sound out of you!" warned the Unknown, brutally, almost jabbing the revolver into her ribs. He wheeled on Bailey. "Close that satchel," he commanded, "and put it back where you found it!" Bailey's fist closed. He took a step toward his captor.

"You—" he began in a furious voice. But the steely glint in the eyes of the Unknown checked him.

"I picked up one of the cheap paper novels," Unknown was enough to give any man pause. "Jack!" pleaded Dale. Bailey halted. "Do what he tells you, Miss Cornelia insisted, her voice shaking.

A brave man may be willing to fight with odds a hundred to one—but only a fool will rush on certain death. Instantly, dejectedly, Bailey obeyed—stuffed the money back in the satchel and replaced the latter in its corner of shadows near the window.

He watched the Unknown intently. One moment of relaxed vigilance—and— But though the Unknown was unlocking the door with his left hand—the revolver in his right hand was as steady as a rock. He seemed to listen for a moment at the crack of the door. "Not a sound, if you value your

lives!" he warned again. He shepherded them away from the direction of the window with his revolver. "In a moment or two," he said in a hushed, taut voice, "a man will come into this room, either through the door or by that window—the man who started the fire to draw you out of this house."

Bailey threw aside all pride in his concealment for Dale's safety. "For God's sake, don't keep these women here!" he pleaded, in low, tense tones.

The Unknown seemed to tower above him like a destroying angel. "Keep them here where we can watch them!" he whispered with fierce impatience. "Don't you understand? There's a killer loose!"

And so for a moment they stood there, waiting for they knew not what. So swift had been the transition from joy to deadly terror, and now to suspense, that only Miss Cornelia's agile brain seemed able to respond. And at first it did even that very slowly.

"I begin to understand," she said, in a low tone. "The man who struck you down and tied you in the garage—the man who killed Dick Fleming and stabbed that poor wretch in the closet—the man who locked us in, downstairs, and removed the money from that safe—the man who started that fire outside—is—"

"Sssh!" warned the Unknown, imperatively, as a sound from the direction of the window seemed to reach his ears. He ran quickly back to the corridor door and locked it.

CHAPTER XIII
Quite a Collection. An hour or so later, in the living room whose doors had departed, Miss Cornelia, her niece and Jack Bailey were gathered before a roaring fire. The local police had come and gone; the bodies of Courtleigh Fleming and his nephew had been removed to the mortuary; Beresford had returned to his home, though under summons as a material witness; the Bat, under heavy guard, had gone off with the doctor.

In an instant the Unknown and Bailey were upon him. There was a short, ferocious struggle in the darkness—a gasp of laboring lungs—the thud of fighting bodies clenched in a death-grapple.

"Get his gun!" muttered the Unknown hoarsely to Bailey, as he tore the Bat's lean hands away from his throat. "Got it?"

"Yes," gasped Bailey. He jabbed the muzzle against a straining back. The Bat ceased to struggle. Bailey stepped a little away.

"I've still got you covered!" he said fiercely. The Bat made no sound. "Hold out your hands, Bat, while I put on the bracelets," commanded the Unknown in tones of terse triumph. He snapped the steel cuffs on the wrists of the murderous prisoner. "Sometimes even the cleverest Bat comes through a window at night and is caught. Double murder—burglary—and arson! That's a good night's work even for you, Bat!"

He switched his flashlight on the Bat's masked face. As he did so the house lights came on—the electric light company had at last remembered its duties. All blanked for an instant in the sudden illumination.

French Dandies First to Sport the Cravat. One of the few words of Slavonic origin that does not retain its exotic flavor is cravat. The linen scarves worn around their necks by Croatian merchants captivated the fancy of the fashionable French, who adopted the French word for Croatian to designate this kind of neckwear. Thus "cravate" became "cravate" or "cravat," from whence our word "cravat."

The Unknown floated over his captive. "I'm Anderson," he said. "This man has been impersonating me. You're a good actor, Bat, for a fellow that's such a bad actor!" he taunted. "How did you get the dope on this case? Did you tap the wires to headquarters?"

The Bat allowed himself a little sardonic smile. "I'll tell you that when I—" he began, then, suddenly, made his last bid for freedom. With one swift, desperate movement, in spite of his handcuffs, he jerked the real Anderson's revolver from him by the barrel.

She smiled, sweetly, and came toward the Bat as if the pistol aimed at her heart were as innocuous as a toothbrush. "Why?" she queried mildly. "I took the bullets out of that revolver two hours ago."

HOW SHE DOES IT. The Bat flung the revolver toward her with a curse. The real Anderson instantly snatched up the gun that Bailey had dropped and covered him. "Don't move!" he warned, "or I'll fill you full of lead!" He smiled out of the corner of his mouth at Miss Cornelia, who was grimly picking up the revolver that the Bat had flung at her—her own revolver.

"You see—you never know what a woman will do," he continued. Miss Cornelia smiled. She broke open the revolver—five loaded shells fell from it to the floor. The Bat stared at her—then stared incredulously at the bullets.

"You see," she said, "I, too, have a little imagination!"

Bankrupt. Mrs. Mark—Your husband comes of fine old stock, doesn't he? Mrs. Park—Yes, but he rarely pays any dividends.

TOUGH LUCK. "He was so adorable! We got out about five miles and the car broke down." "Gee! You were lucky." "No, he turned out to be an auto mechanic and the stupid boy fixed the thing right up."

Finesse. "Send no money," say the ads. And they never vary. They must bring a lot of scads, people are contrary.

Foresight. "You are going to buy a radio?" "No, two of them." "What's the idea?" "Well, we are buying two because on the nights when the static is bad on one we can use the other."

Fate. Jail Visitor—What made you a thief? Prisoner—Circumstances; the same thing that made you a gentleman.—Boston Transcript.

Hard Luck. "Did you hear the joke about that cinema actress?" "No, what was it?" "Her secretary didn't keep the records straight, and now she finds she has had two more divorces than she's had weddings."

Well Stocked. Dog Catcher—Do your dogs have licenses? Small Boy—Yes, sir, they're just covered with them.

Adrift With Humor

BORN PEDAGOGUE. "Look here," cried the indignant housewife, "you said that if I gave you a square meal you'd mow the grass and roll the lawn for me."

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The BABY

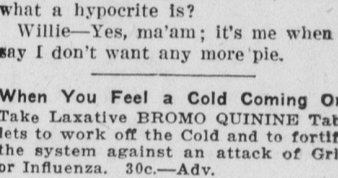


No mother in this enlightened age would give her baby something she did not know was perfectly harmless, especially when a few drops of plain Castoria will right a baby's stomach and end almost any little ill. Puffiness and fever, too; it seems no time until everything is serene.

That's the beauty of Castoria; its gentle influence seems just what is needed. It does all that castor oil might accomplish, without shock to the system. Without the evil taste. It's delicious! Being purely vegetable, you can give it as often as there's a sign of colic; constipation; diarrhea; or need to aid sound, natural sleep.

Just one warning: it is genuine Fletcher's Castoria that physicians recommend. Other preparations may be just as free from all doubtful drugs, but no child of this writer's is going to test them! Besides, the book on care and feeding of babies that comes with Fletcher's Castoria is worth its weight in gold.

Children Cry for



An Example. Teacher—Can you tell me, Willie, what a hypocrite is? Willie—Yes, ma'am; it's me when I say I don't want any more pie.

Help Kidneys By Drinking More Water

Kidney and bladder irritations often result from acidity, says a noted authority. The kidneys help filter this acid from the blood and pass it on to the bladder, where it may remain to irritate and inflame, causing a burning, scalding sensation, or setting up an irritation at the neck of the bladder, obliging you to seek relief two or three times during the night. The sufferer is in constant dread; the water passes sometimes with a scalding sensation and is very profuse; again, there is difficulty in voiding it.

Bladder weakness, most folks call it because they can't control urination. While it is extremely annoying and sometimes very painful, this is often one of the most simple ailments to overcome. Begin drinking lots of soft water, also get about four ounces of Jad Salts from your pharmacist and take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast. Continue this for two or three days. This will help neutralize the acids in the system so they no longer are a source of irritation to the bladder and urinary organs, which then act normal again.

Jad Salts is inexpensive, and is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia, and is used by thousands of folks who are subject to urinary disorders caused by acid irritation. Jad Salts causes no bad effects whatever.

Garfield Tea

For every stomach and intestinal ill. This good old-fashioned herb home remedy for constipation, stomach ills and other derangements of the system so prevalent these days is even greater favor as a family medicine than in your grandmother's day.

FINN... GIVE... A LOT... A He... T... CLA... K... A He... By PERC...