

# THE DOUBLE CROSS

By A. E. THOMAS

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## THE STORY

Jim Stanley, wealthy young New York business man, unable to concentrate in his dictation to his dark audiphone, has the machine taken to his home, intending to finish his work there. Rollin Waterman, his business partner and closest friend, also in love with Doris Colby. Stanley proposes they toss a coin to determine which of them shall, that evening, first ask her to marry him. Waterman wins. Nina Morgan, Waterman's secretary, also his mistress, has overheard his conversation with Stanley and resents Waterman's plan to desert her. Waterman tells her he is practically penniless and must make a rich marriage. He urges Nina to go to Doris and tell her she (Nina) has been wronged—by Stanley. The girl consents. Doris admits to her father her interest in both Stanley and Waterman, but is unable to make up her mind which to marry.

## CHAPTER III—Continued

"Well," admitted Mr. Colby, "one never can be certain in these matters, but of recent weeks my aging eyes have been more or less offended by the continual presence around this house of Rollin Waterman and Jim Stanley. Am I warm?"

"You're hot," said the girl.  
"That being the case, I have to say that I would cheerfully poison both of them, but aside from that I have no particular complaint to make of either."

She sighed and murmured, "You're a darling, daddy, but you don't help me very much."

"Well, I'll tell you," said her father, "I have an opinion in the matter. I admit that I have a decided preference for one of these candidates over the other, but I don't intend to indicate it, because I do not wish to handicap my favorite."

"Don't be absurd," said the girl.  
"No," insisted her father, with a grin. "So far as I'm concerned, my man is going to have a run for his money."

"Don't think you can fool me, papa. I know which one you like best."

"If you know, why ask me?"  
"Daddy you're exasperating. You find your only child is in a crisis in her life, perhaps the greatest crisis in her life, and you won't say a word to help her."

"That's not true, my dear. I'm perfectly willing to analyze the characters of these two young men, so far as I know them. But when it comes to saying which of them you ought to marry, I quit. Because, if you take my advice and it turns out badly, I'm in for a bad quarter of an hour; and if you don't take my advice and it turns out badly, you're in for one. So there."

"Well," she said, "if you've really got anything to say in the matter, now is the time to say it."  
"Oh," he answered, "as near as that?"

"Just as near as that."  
Her father rose and pushed back his chair. "Come up to the library," he said.

## CHAPTER IV

"I wish to see Miss Colby," said Nina.  
"And what is the name, please?" said Barker, closing the front door behind her.

"Morgan, Miss Morgan."  
"If you will kindly wait in the drawing room, I'll see if Miss Colby's at home."

"Very well. Please say," added Nina, "that I will not keep her long, but that my business is important."  
The butler bowed and departed.

Nina's nerves were good and her life had accustomed her to the taking of chances of divers sorts. Nevertheless she was excited. She had made up her mind to do a certain thing, a thing which required an impudence amounting to courage, and yet at the last moment she had an impulse to leap to her feet and run from the house before it was too late. She had sufficient resolution to control the impulse, and now she was making a last attempt to gather all of her resources to do the thing she had come to do.

It had been a rough world for Nina. Born into poverty, the daughter of a wayward father and an anemic mother, she was well on toward womanhood before she realized that there was anything but hardship in this world. As she blossomed into womanhood and her good looks became a settled acquisition, she found that they brought her little but persecution.

But she had sense enough, while yet a child, to realize that education meant increased earning capacity. She read the newspapers and discovered that there were various ways whereby some sort of education could be obtained at slight expense. There were night schools, free lecture courses, correspondence schools, museums, public libraries. To all of these sources from time to time she applied, with no inconsiderable results. But through all her progress from the depths of poverty and ignorance to a moderate degree of intelligence and sophistication, she had found her path beset by men. She had found many men anxious to improve her education, but the motives of few of these instructors turned out to be altruistic. By the time she was twenty years old she had come to regard men as a race of wolves. She admitted no exceptions.

And it was in pursuance of this confirmed philosophy of life and action that she had come tonight to the home of Doris Colby, and now that she was here, although even her settled assurance was a little ruffled, she had no thought of turning back.

She was not even daunted by the sudden appearance of the beautiful Miss Colby herself, when the latter came into the drawing room a moment later.

"How do you do," said Doris.  
"How do you do," said Nina.

There was a moment's mutual inspection, as always between two women who meet for the first time—and it is probable that in that fraction of a second each one of them had come to some definite conclusion about the other. Each one of them had probably said to herself: "I like her," or "I don't like her." But aloud Miss Colby said:

"What can I do for you, Miss Morgan?—that was the name, was it not?"  
"Yes, Nina Morgan."  
"I don't think I know you, do I?" said the daughter of the house.

"No," said Nina, "we have never met, but I have seen you several times."  
"Ah?"

"Yes. You see, I am a secretary in the office of Stanley and Waterman."  
"Indeed?" said Doris. "Perhaps you bring me a message from one of them?"

"Not exactly," replied Nina, "and yet in a way, perhaps."  
"You interest me," murmured Doris, "won't you sit down?"

Nina summoned all her resolution, and began: "I've come to tell you something, Miss Colby, which it is most important you should know, for your own sake, before it is too late. But before I tell you what it is I want you to promise on your word of honor that you will never repeat it to a living soul."

"Really," said Miss Colby, "I cannot imagine what you can have to say that could concern me so deeply."  
"You will in a moment, but I cannot speak without your promise."  
"I can give you no such promise lightly."

"I don't ask it lightly. When I have told you what I have to say you will realize that only after long and anxious thought have I persuaded myself that it is my duty to come and tell you. It is a matter that concerns my happiness deeply, and your own also, perhaps even more deeply than mine. But if you cannot give me your word of honor never to repeat to anyone what am going to tell you, there is nothing for me to do but shut my mouth and go away."

Miss Colby smiled: "Ah-h," she said, "this sounds like melodrama!"  
"Call it what you please. It's a thing that strikes at the heart of the happiness of two women, you and me. And now you must decide—yes, or no?"  
Miss Colby's smile still lingered playfully. She was by no means moved to any sort of anxiety, but her curi-



"And Now You Must Decide—Yes or No?"

osity was engaged. So after a moment's hesitation, she said: "Very well, I give you my word of honor."  
"Very good," said Nina.

"Yes," continued Doris, while the smile still lingered in the corners of her mouth, "it shall be our little secret. And now what is it?"  
Nina lifted her black eyes from the rug and fixed them upon the eyes of the other. "I suppose," she began, "you will be curious as to my motive. You will perhaps call it revenge, and it is partly that—I don't deny it. But it is more than that. I am determined that my happiness and yours shall not be ruined by the same man, if I can prevent it."

"The violet eyes widened in surprise. "Really," breathed Doris.  
"I do hope," went on the other, "you won't think me impertinent or curious, and I am sure you won't when you have heard me out. But the fact is that I have reason to suppose that you are considering the possibility of marrying a certain man."

"Upon my word," cried Doris, with a touch of sarcasm, "how things do get about! And how, may I ask, have you arrived at this conclusion?"  
"From various sources," answered Nina. "I have seen you occasionally in public in company with the man I mean. I have seen frequent references to the possibility of your engagement in one or two of those gossip society papers, and what's more, I have had some talk with the man himself upon this very subject."

"I suppose," said Doris Colby, "that I ought to ask you to go away at once."  
"Please, please don't," said Nina quickly, and something in her sudden earnestness caught and held the other. "If you do you will regret it as long as you live, believe me."  
"Very well," said Doris, after a moment's reflection, "but I warn you if what you have to say is merely silly gossip, actuated by a spirit of petty malice, it will have no effect whatever upon me."

"I'll take that chance," said Nina, "for I know full well that when you have heard me, you will recognize that what I tell you must be the truth."  
The golden head bowed slightly. "I am waiting," said Doris.  
"Very well, then," said Nina, "and again I remind you that what I am going to say is said upon the assurance of your solemn word of honor never to repeat it. If you will say to me, right here and now, that you have no intention whatever of marrying Jim Stanley, why I'll say good-night and good-bye, without further ado."

"So—that's it," said Doris quietly.  
"Well," inquired Nina, "shall I go on, or shall I say good-night?"  
"Go on," said Doris briefly.  
"After what I have already told you," continued Nina, "the mention of his name almost completes my story. He has wrecked my life—that is the long and the short of it."  
"In the—usual way?" murmured Doris.  
"Oh, yes," cried Nina passionately. "I know, I know! It is the oldest story in the world, but I suppose it will be told and told and told again as long as the world stands and men are what they are."  
"Of course I don't believe it," said Doris quietly.  
"Why not?" said Nina.  
"Because I know Jim Stanley."

"Then perhaps," said Nina, "perhaps you will tell me what you think my motive could possibly be in doing a thing like this? Do you think anything but a sense of desperation would have driven me to it?"  
The host went home, and Nina saw it.

"I can't believe it. I can't believe it," murmured Doris. "Jim Stanley, of all men in the world!"  
"Oh, yes, I know," said Nina, "I know well enough how you must feel about him. I've been through it all. I hadn't had any too square a deal from life when I first met Jim Stanley, and when he came into my life I felt as you do, that here at last was a man I could tie to. Oh, he has a way with him."

"Why didn't he marry you?" said Doris.  
"Of course he promised to," said Nina, "not once but a hundred times. If he hadn't I shouldn't be here. But variations in the form of the convolutions," said Doctor Donaldson, "may mean something but they do not explain that for which explanation is sought, for in their fundamental structure human brains are remarkably alike, and the variations in the convolutions are incidental, as the several measurements show."

## Pencil Sharpening

A drawing master states that he is often able to judge the characteristics of his pupils by their manner of sharpening a pencil. The artistic individual usually makes a fine tapering point, the business-like person a short, stubby one. Those who sharpen a pencil towards themselves on a thumb are often secretive. The untidy person reduces his pencil-end to shapeless irregularity, while the very happy-go-lucky one hacks away in careless fashion and finishes with about half the length he started with.

## Everybody Interested

The whole family owns the car. That is, when the car is idle it is mother's car, when it is in use it is the children's car, and when disabled or with a tire down it is dad's car.—Patt. Republican.

now he only laughs at me. Oh, you'll say I've been a fool."  
"I'm afraid," said Doris gently, "I wasn't thinking of you for the moment."  
"Yes, and a fool I have been. I ought to have known that Jim Stanley could have only one use for a woman like me. But women like me gain knowledge only at the cost of hard experience. And I was in love—no, you understand that, you who know Jim Stanley so well. You know how charming he can be, and I sometimes think that that was the story—part of it."

"What—more yet?" demanded Doris.  
"More yet," said Nina. "I have a child to think of. Will you come and see him?"  
"God forbid," replied the other. She grew suddenly cold. Little shivers ran up and down her spine. She wanted to go away and be alone. She hated the sight of this dark woman sitting there implacably before her. She hated the sound of her voice, and the glance of those Spanish black eyes.

Something of this feeling Nina must have sensed, for she went on quickly: "Try and think what it cost me to come and tell you this. Try and put yourself for a moment in my position. I needn't have come at all, I could have held my tongue, I could have done well for myself from one point of view. He has offered to buy me off, to buy my silence. I could have lived in comfort for the rest of my life. Jim's got plenty of money, and I had him where I wanted him. All this I've thrown away by coming here tonight. At least, I've risked it. And now if I haven't convinced you that I'm telling you the truth, I cannot see how it can be done."

Doris rose. She shivered a little as she said: "Perhaps I ought to thank you, but somehow I can't."  
"Don't thank me," answered Nina, "believe me—that's all I want." And suddenly, silently, as ever, she was gone.

Doris rang the bell. "Light the fire, Barker," she said, "it's cold."  
Directly across the Avenue a young man had been pacing nervously up and down for twenty minutes, with his eyes constantly upon the Colby house. As he saw the door swing upon its hinges and close upon the emerging figure, he hurried across the Avenue, nimble dodging a bus and a flock of hurrying motors, and approaching Nina from the rear, seized her by the elbow.

"Well," he said, "well, what did you tell her?"  
Nina looked at him with mocking eyes. "Find out for yourself," she said.

## CHAPTER V

The Strollers club was an institution so old and exclusive that if you wished to become a member of it before you were ten you had to use it and be proposed about the Colby house. As he saw the door swing upon its hinges and close upon the emerging figure, he hurried across the Avenue, nimble dodging a bus and a flock of hurrying motors, and approaching Nina from the rear, seized her by the elbow.

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The conservative mind is first of all a biological product. It is a part of the process of growing old. As the body hardens so the mind hardens. As we get less and less fluid and flexible in our physical reactions, as we get along in years, so we get less fluid and flexible in our mental reactions.

At the bottom no man can escape the doom of becoming fixed in his ideas and therefore unadaptable to the ever-changing world. But he can escape a closed mind and an intolerant spirit. Even if we find it impossible to accept or even to comprehend new ideas, we can be considerate of them and give them welcome to the freest opportunity to win their way. An open-minded free-spirited conservative is one of the finest sights in all the world.

The conservative mind is an educational product. To a greater extent than we realize we are all the children of our fathers. We are made for better or for worse by the environment of home and school into which we are thrust. Each generation carries over and revives the ideas and habits of the former generation.

This is curiously true, even of some of our radicals. Take Russia, for example, where a whole generation of young people is being trained hard and fast in the ideas of Communism. These young people will grow up to be conservatives of the deepest dye. They will have their orthodoxy as forced upon them by their fathers, even though it chances to consist of ideas commonly called radical.

## Future of British Nation Periled by Unwise Course of Government

By DEAN INGE, London, England.

The "bungaloid system" of modern life is responsible for small families and threatens the nation's future. The government is taking the cream of the working classes and educating them at the expense of the taxpayers, so that eventually they will be able to take the bread out of the mouths of professional men's sons.

That is not the way to fulfill one's duty toward the next generation. Those classes which are the best are not reproducing their kind. The better class of artisan is also diminishing in numbers.

Mr. Chamberlain, minister for health, stated that during the nine years' existence of this arm of the government remarkable progress has been made.

The general death rate of this country has fallen from 14 per 1,000 to 12.3 per thousand, and infant mortality has dropped from 89 per thousand to 70 per 1,000 in 1927.

## High School Student Council Important in the Formation of Citizenship

By R. R. CROMWELL, High School Principal, Peoria, Ill.

The student council is a necessary agent of administration in a large, modern high school. Self-preservation of our democracy demands that the high school stress citizenship above all other objectives, and prominent leaders and leading educators recommend that we try to develop civic responsibility.

A high school should therefore be a laboratory for teaching citizenship, even if it interferes with scholarship, although I have never found that teaching responsibility for citizenship through student co-operative self-government and developing scholarship were necessarily incompatible.

## Men With Ideas and Positive Character Needed to Lead the World to Peace

By RAMSAY MACDONALD, Ex-British Prime Minister.

Secretary of State Kellogg's proposal that the nations sign a treaty outlawing war does not include everything. The gesture Mr. Kellogg wants us to take is not a final thing. We have been too niggling—too panicky. We have written too many Oxford university essays on disarmament—those nice essays school boys write in order to get degrees. No foreign office or foreign minister writes essays like that.

A man who is going to lead the world in peace is not going to be a man who sits in his chair—who writes essays and proves by verbal formula where dangers and difficulties lie. The virtue of gestures is that you should not shilly-shally about it.

## All-Year School Would Have Tendency to Lower Number of Failures

By WARREN A. ROE, National Education Association.

CHILDREN live day by day. They are not born to suit school terms. They do not cease growth in June or begin in September. Much that we know of child development, both physical and mental, mocks our stated calendar terms and challenges our grades and classes.

As schools pass from irrational to rational living conditions, we shall destroy much of this rigid administrative machinery we have created and replace it by flexible regrading and reclassifying procedures that will bring our regimental regrouping into some sane relationships to our knowledge of individual differences.

Psychologists know the permanent evil results produced in children when partial failure compels pupils over long time periods to repeat work that has lost its interest.

Parents know the unhappy children indifferently performing bore-some school work.

Taxpayers do not know the tremendous cost of re-educating failure. School financial statements conceal such costs. Country-wide, approximately \$200,000 of every \$1,000,000 spent on public schools is to re-educate failure.

Changing five or ten-month terms to three months and operating school districts twelve months increases educational opportunity, increases service, produces more successes, reduces overhead, reduces failure and makes education a full-time job.

The health of children and teachers is better, for vacations may be taken during any three months. A real correlation of health and vacation between business, home and school, is made when recreation is not limited to two summer months.

## Environment of Home and School Molds All for Better or for Worse

By REV. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES, New York.

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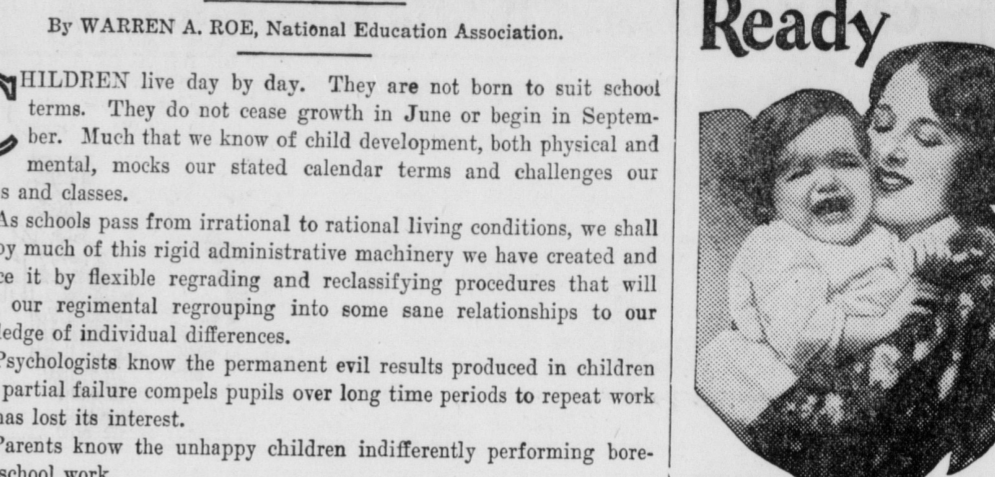
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## Are You Ready



## When your Children Cry for It

Baby has little upsets at times. AD your care cannot prevent them. But you can be prepared. Then you can do what any experienced nurse would do—what most physicians would tell you to do—give a few drops of plain Castoria. No sooner does than Baby is soothed; relief is just a matter of moments. Yet you have eased your child without use of a single doubtful drug; Castoria is vegetable. So it's safe to use as often as an infant has any little pain you cannot pat away. And it's always ready for the crueler pangs of colic, or constipation or diarrhea; effective, too, for older children. Twenty-five million bottles were bought last year.

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## Fletcher's CASTORIA

## INDIGESTION RELIEVED

Carter's Little Liver Pills  
Purify Vegetable Laxative  
assist nature in its digestive  
duties. Many times one of  
these little pills taken after meals or at bedtime  
will do wonders, especially when you have  
overeaten or are troubled with constipation.  
Remember they are a doctor's prescription  
and can be taken by the entire family.  
All Druggists 25c and 75c Red Packages.

## CARTER'S LITTLE PILLS

## Submarine Possibilities

As far as we have been able to ascertain, the greatest depth attained by a submarine is 285 feet, although submarines have been known to reach a depth of 300 feet unintentionally. We are informed by the Navy department that the length of time which a submarine can remain submerged depends upon the equipment which it carries for the purification of the air. Normally, submarines are so equipped that they may remain submerged for 50 hours and operate efficiently.—Washington Star.

## Defined

"Can you define matrimony?"  
"Yes. You go to adore, you ring a bell, you give your name to a maid—and then you're taken in!"

The golden rule is frequently used in drawing a line of conduct for others.

A pawnbroker's shop is always a place of interest.



DON'T suffer headaches, or any of those pains that Bayer Aspirin can end in a hurry! Physicians prescribe it, and approve its free use, for it does not affect the heart. Every drug-gist has it, but don't fail to ask the druggist for Bayer. And don't take any but the box that says Bayer, with the word genuine printed in red.



Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacturing Co. of Monroeville, Pa.  
KREMOLA...SKIN BLEACH  
Wonderful and sure. Makes your skin  
white and clear. Also cures eczema. Price \$1.50  
Per 50c bottle. 25c and 50c. Beauty  
booklet sent free. Ask your dealer or write  
DR. C. H. BERRY, CO.  
2975 Michigan Ave., Chicago

## THE FEATH



## FINNEY OF

OFFICER!—THAT STRANGE MAN JUST ACCOSTED ME!



THIS IS ABOUT DELIVERED TO A GRAND TIME HERE!

## The Comic Strip