



# GRAFT

IRVIN S. COBB

Each Episode Suggested by a Prominent Author  
Serialization by HUGH WEIR and JOE BRANDT  
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## FIRST EPISODE

### Liquor and the Law

Suggested by IRVIN S. COBB,  
Author of "Back Home"  
And "Judge Priest Stories"

DUDLEY LARNIGAN, district attorney of New York, was a man who would never be suspected of hysterical fear. His word was good. When he said a thing it was taken for granted that he knew exactly what he was talking about and that he had the facts to back up his statements. And yet he was at this time almost the laughingstock of the city that had swept him into office at the last election by an unprecedented majority. The newspapers, while they did not actually attack him, made fun of him. His own friends looked at him askance. Even his own son, Bruce Larnigan, an unpaid and volunteer assistant in the district attorney's office, shared the prevailing opinion, at least to a certain extent. Father and son were talking.

"I've no doubt that there's a good deal of graft. We all know there is, in fact," said Bruce. "It's not so very long since I was admitted to the bar, and, of course, I haven't been in this office long, but I've seen a few things. Still, to say that there is a syndicate made up of respectable men, big business men, that practically makes a business of crime—I think you went pretty far, dad."

Dudley Larnigan sighed. He wasn't at all angry. He looked at his son patiently and a little wearily.

"You think I went pretty far," he said. "Half the city thinks I'm insane. I believe. And yet I shall prove, if I live, every charge I have made. I shall prove that the most powerful organization this country has ever seen has its center right here in New York—an organization founded on the determination to secure unfair advantages—graft—for its members. I shall prove that this organization will not stop and has not stopped at murder."

Bruce laughed uncomfortably.

"Can't you tell me more, then?" he asked. "Why, there must be known in this organization that I know—men who are supposed to be respectable?"

"Yes," said his father, "they're the leading men of the city—the whole country. They are business men who



are the leaders of our great industries. They control the business of the country as it is, but they want to get everything into their own hands. They want to stifle all competition. They are not content with the fair, legitimate profits. They want to get graft in every line and so double their profits. If they are not checked they will get a strangle hold on the nation. They will control elections everywhere; they will name one of their own as president and this country will cease to be a republic."

Bruce hesitated a moment. He saw the wild light in his father's eyes. He knew his father better than the news columns who lauded him, who had praised the speech that had started the trouble. Never had Dudley Larnigan since his son's remark refused to make good any statement, any promise. For this he believed what he heard now—called for more

faith than Bruce could muster. He was about to say something of the sort when there was an interruption. There was a knock at the door, and an office boy appeared, bearing a parcel, which he handed to the district attorney.

"This came by special messenger, sir," he said. "The boy said there was no answer, and he wouldn't say where it came from."

Bruce took the package and took out his pocketknife, making to cut the string, but his father checked him.

"Let me see that a moment," he said. He studied the writing of the address carefully, and then, with a gesture of dislike and distrust, he shrugged his shoulders. "I thought so," he said. "It's from them."

Bruce laughed aloud.

"What do you mean, dad?" he asked. "Are you afraid they're sending you a bomb?"

"No; I don't think so," said Larnigan quite seriously and heedless of his son's jesting tone. "I don't believe the time has come for that yet. Open it, Bruce. We might as well see what's in it."

Bruce cut the strings, tore off the papers, and then, as the contents of the package were revealed, he started back, filled for the moment with horror. It



"I shall enforce the law," was a yellow, grinning skull that he revealed, and on its forehead some words were written.

"Let the liquor trust alone," Bruce read. "We will phone for your answer."

Dudley Larnigan looked at him.

"You see, Bruce," he said, "there are some who take this business more seriously than you do."

"But why—this is a joke—a silly, senseless, practical joke!" exclaimed Bruce. "Surely they wouldn't try seriously to frighten you with a stogy old trick like this?"

"Whether they tried seriously or not, they succeeded," said his father, "for I am certainly frightened, Bruce."

Bruce stared at him incredulously.

"You are frightened—by this?" said Bruce, looking from his father to the grinning skull. "Dad, you need a rest. Your nerves are upset. You've been overworking. You'd better take a vacation and get back into shape."

Dudley Larnigan shook his head sadly.

"I shall take no vacation until I have beaten the grafters or until they have beaten me," he said. "I have been waiting for the time to come, Bruce, when I could take you into my confidence regarding this. I see that nothing I can say will convince you that this is a real and deadly danger that I face. But the proof will come soon enough. It will be unmistakable when it does come. I know that I can count on you, my boy—that if they succeed in getting me out of the way they will still have to reckon with you."

In spite of himself Bruce was beginning to be affected. His father was so serious, was so evidently in deadly fear, that Bruce could not help being moved. It was impossible for him to believe when he tried to think things out that there was any basis for his father's fear, but it was equally impossible for him to believe that a man like Dudley Larnigan would give way to panic without the very gravest reasons.

"You needn't wait, Bruce," said his father finally. "I have a good deal of work to do, and I shall need you."

Bruce got up and moved hesitatingly toward the door. Just then the telephone on his father's desk rang out sharply. Dudley Larnigan before he answered pointed to another instrument, and Bruce, understanding, lifted his receiver to listen to the conversation.

A strange voice, evidently disguised, spoke thinly to his ear.

"Hello! Hello! Is this District Attorney Larnigan?"

"Yes."

"Larnigan, you know who is speaking. If you are in doubt look at the skull we sent you."

"I am looking at it." That skull is the symbol of the uncertainty of life. We admire you—we admire any strong and brave enemy. But do not mistake foolhardiness for bravery. You can never beat us, and you will sacrifice yourself if you try. We do not offer you money. Leave us alone—or you will suffer."

"I shall do my duty. You have had before the only answer I shall ever give you. I am sworn to uphold and enforce the law. I shall do so at whatever risk to myself."

"Remember, this is the last chance you will have to save yourself. We hear you no ill will; we do not want to be obliged to move against you, but if you do not yield your blood be on your own head."

"I shall enforce the law. Sooner or later you will pay the penalty for all your crimes."

And on the word Dudley Larnigan, his forehead beaded with heavy drops of perspiration, slammed the receiver into the hook. He rose and stared at Bruce.

"Now do you believe?" he said. "You heard what I said. I think I have one chance in a million to escape them. I am a marked man. It is impossible for me to guard myself effectively. Yet I shall go on."

"You said you were afraid," said Bruce.

"And so I am. I live in deadly fear. But, no matter how much I fear them, I fear my own conscience more. They can never punish me, no matter what they do, as would my own conscience if I betrayed my trust."

For the moment Bruce managed to shake off the depression that his father's mood and all the other circumstances had induced.

"They're trying to frighten you," he said. "Good Lord, this is the twentieth century! They're trying to frighten you with old tricks. They'd never dare actually to use violence."

"We shall see," said his father. "At least I shall do my duty, no matter what the outcome may be, as long as I am spared. And I have faith enough in you, my son, to believe that if the men who are opposed to me give the last proof of the truth of my words you will take up that duty and make it your own."

Bruce shook his head sadly as he went out. It seemed to him that he had hit upon the truth—that his father was breaking down from overwork and that he was taking seriously a melodramatic and absurd campaign of blackmail.

"No doubt attempts are being made to dissuade him from doing his duty," said Bruce to himself, "but he is allowing himself to be upset by threats that would only have amused him a few years ago. Poor old dad!"

Bruce himself had a pleasant errand. His steps took him to the home of Roger Maxwell, whose vast interests in the field of insurance had caused him to be known commonly as the head of what was called the insurance trust. But it was not the great financier that Bruce went to see. He seemed to be well known at the house. The servant who answered his ring smiled as she took his hat and stick.

"Miss Dorothy's in the library, sir," she said. "She is expecting you, sir, I'm sure."

Dorothy Maxwell as Bruce entered the room was standing near a window. As she heard his step she turned, with a glad little cry, and came straight to him.

"Bruce," she said, "I'm so glad! You never sure that you could come." He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"I usually manage to come, though, don't you?" he said, with a laugh. "Still, it's a little doubtful. Dad, you know?"

He stopped, and she frowned a little.

"Whatever is the matter with your father, Bruce, dear?" she said. "Father says he must have gone suddenly mad to make such a speech; that he's antagonized all the solid business men in New York by the wild statements he made. I think—I'm afraid he isn't quite as pleased as he was at the idea of our—of our engagement!"

"It's got nothing to do with us," declared Bruce angrily. "I'm not responsible for my father's actions. I think myself he's wrong about this; that he's been excited by things that have happened. But I can't let your father criticize him to me!"

"Of course not," she said soothingly. "And he won't, I'm sure. And, anyhow, Bruce, dear, we're not going to quarrel, you and I, even if it turns out that our fathers do."

Bruce was about to reply when he looked over Dorothy's shoulder, and saw two men in the next room. One was her father, Roger Maxwell, the other was Stanford Stone, who did not know that Bruce could see him, was regarding them with such a malevolent expression in his usually inscrutable eyes that Bruce was startled. Stone at this time was reckoned the most powerful man in the great financial world of New York. He was concerned in a hundred great enterprises. Even the Sunday newspapers did not pretend to estimate the size of his vast fortune.

But while Bruce, wondering, was on the very point of saying something to Dorothy, Stone broke into a smile. He took Roger Maxwell's arm, and the two older men came into the library. Both greeted Bruce in the most friendly fashion, while Stone shook Dorothy's hand, his eyes devouring her.

"I hear I'm to congratulate you young man," said Stone, and Dorothy blushed becomingly. "By the way, your father's given his friends—and I wish you to remember that I'm one of the best of them—a good deal of satisfaction lately. Can't you persuade him to

take a rest? He ought to go somewhere and play golf for a week or two—get entirely rid of the strain and worry of his office."

"I suggested something of that sort to him today, sir," said Bruce. "But it's always been very hard for my mother and myself to persuade him to spare himself in any way. He works as hard as if he hadn't a cent in the world, and, as a matter of fact, he's a fairly rich man."

"That's always the way—always the way," said Stone. "Well, do the best you can to persuade him, my boy. He needs the rest."

"I think so, too," said Maxwell. "Dorothy, suppose you take Bruce somewhere else. Stone and I have some business to talk over, and we'll need the papers I have in my desk here in our talk."

Bruce and Dorothy were not at all loath to go. They smiled at one another as they went, and neither turned to see the look that Stanford Stone sent after them, a look that might well have aroused Bruce's fear and wonder had he seen it, knowing what he did of Stone's power.

Meanwhile District Attorney Larnigan had stayed at his office long enough to finish some important work and then had taken his place in his automobile.

"Drive me around the long way home, Jack," he said to his chauffeur. "The air is so beautiful today that I think it will rest me just to ride around. Go up into the country along the river and don't turn back until it's time to get me home for dinner."

"Yes, sir," said the chauffeur. Bruce got home long before his father's return. In spite of his feeling concerning his father's fears, Bruce was worried. As for his mother, she had always opposed her husband's entry into public life, and she was worried every time he was a few minutes late in getting home. Bruce tried to calm her increasing nervousness, but he himself was worried, and as it grew dark he stood in the hall, looking for the rays from the headlights of the car that would herald his father's coming. At last he saw them, far down the drive that led to the house. His heart leaped happily, and he went back to call his mother.

"Here he comes, mother. It's all right, of course!" he cried. "You were silly to be worried."

She was in the conservatory at the back of the house, cutting flowers for the dinner table, and he had to go well away from the front door to find her. Then he slipped an arm around her waist, and they walked through the great hall together. They heard the car stop outside and heard Dudley Larnigan's voice giving some order. The car started again, and then outside there was a muffled cry. Mrs. Larnigan screamed. Bruce leaped forward. The door burst open, and his father staggered in, clutching convulsively at his side and fell. Bruce took one look. He saw the blood that stained the floor, and then, as his mother, transformed by the need of action and gaining control of herself, went to work to staunch the flow of blood, Bruce raced for the telephone. He gave a number and waited impatiently for the answer.

"Hello, hello!" he cried at last. "Dr. Morgan? Hurry over here, doctor. Bruce Larnigan talking. My father's been badly hurt. It's very serious, I'm afraid. Yes, bring your instruments."

Then he helped his mother to do what little there was to be done before the doctor's arrival. Together they got the wounded man on a couch and made him as comfortable as they could. He had fainted and was no longer conscious. His breathing was heavy, and a growing, spreading grayness in his cheeks told Bruce, little as he was used to such scenes, that there was little hope, if any.

Then Bruce telephoned to the police. But he could give no clew—he had not taken the time to try to find the assassin. But when he heard the doctor's car rattling up outside, Bruce

had imposed upon him—that he would avenge his death and bring his murderers to justice.

Against the advice of his friends, against the pleadings of Dorothy Maxwell, against his mother's urgings even, Bruce stuck to his determination.

The murder of Dudley Larnigan had thrown the reform elements of the city into a panic. This terrible and sinister proof of the powers of the forces of graft had caused a revulsion of sentiment. Men who had assailed the dead district attorney as a fanatic and a hysterical demagogue for his great speech attacking graft had to admit that there had been some basis for his sensational accusations. But these same men were afraid to move. So it had been easy for Bruce to secure the reform nomination for district attorney. No one else wanted it. The graft syndicate had made it too plain that peril as well as honor went with the office.

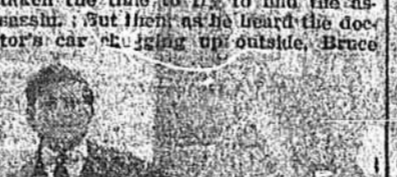
Bruce was making a splendid campaign too, against the forces of graft. All the former, vicious elements of the city were arrayed against him. From the dives, the gambling houses, the haunts of the drink sellers and the men and women who lived on vice and depravity, on crime and ignorance, the forces of evil sent out their cohorts against him. But Bruce, dwelling always on his father's martyrdom, on his own determination not only to avenge the dead man, but at whatever risk to himself to continue to fight against all the forces that were exploiting the poor and the ignorant, made a great impression and increased his own popularity tremendously.

He developed into an effective speaker, and his bitter, ringing speeches made many converts to his cause. Dorothy Maxwell had opposed his entrance into the campaign since she feared for his safety. Dorothy was beginning to be haunted by frightful suspicions, suspicions she had not dared as yet to communicate even to Bruce.

But once he was in the fight she stood by him. Ungrudgingly she consented to the postponement of their marriage that was made inevitable since it was impossible for him to take the time for his wedding during the campaign. And Dorothy herself, an ardent advocate of woman suffrage, did all she could to array the women of the city on his side.

"Women can't vote," she said in a speech she made to a suffrage organization, "but they can influence the men who can. Let every woman here go to the polls with some man and let that voter fight for Larnigan and decency against graft and corruption." Thousands of women took up that cry and the graft organization, which had expected a walkover which had eliminated Dudley Larnigan, began to be worried and so that it removed one only to make up another in its place whose youth made him even more formidable a competitor.

And Dorothy's ally, who was more and more suspicious. She learned that



Bruce Was Making a Splendid Campaign.

went to the door and flung it open. Pinned to the doorpost was a note written on rough paper in an unfamiliar hand.

"Congratulations of the fifteen!" That was all. But it was enough. Bruce shuddered with terror and remorse as he realized that his father had been right—that he had been marked for death by an implacable organization, which had struck him down at last on his own doorstep. Then the doctor came. At the sight of Larnigan

he looked grave. Gently he examined the wound.

"I'm sorry," he said, his voice showing his emotion. "There is nothing I can do—except perhaps to bring him to before—before he—he goes."

Bruce, speechless, nodded, and the doctor bent down and used a hypodermic needle. In a few moments his effect was manifest. Dudley Larnigan's eyes opened, and he reached out a hand gropingly. Bruce took it and bent down to listen.

"You will believe now"—he said painfully, and with a mighty effort. "It is the work of the fifteen—the graft syndicate. Hunt them down—free this land of this mighty graft trust. Finish my work—run for district attorney!"

His voice died away; then, with a tremendous effort, he spoke again, one word. "Mary!" he said feebly.

With tears streaming down his cheeks Bruce turned to his mother. She leaned over, and it was in her arms that Dudley Larnigan died. And, standing over his body, Bruce swore that he would be true to the trust his father



Dorothy Tried to Follow Him in Vain.

had imposed upon him—that he would avenge his death and bring his murderers to justice.

That evening before the count was finished Bruce saw the signal and was admitted to a dive that looked like a fit meeting place for conspirators. Dorothy attempted to accompany him, but was thrust back.

"We thought you'd come," said a man. "Mr. Larnigan, you walked into a trap. Now you have one chance. Sign this paper agreeing to obey the commands of the fifteen or your political career is at an end; even your life is at stake."

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her father was bitterly opposed to Bruce's election.

"I won't have you taking part in his campaign," he said. "You make me look ridiculous."

He said this in the presence of Stanford Stone, but Dorothy was not afraid to speak her mind.

"I have a right to live my own life!" she flashed. "Why are you so opposed to Bruce?"

"Because he's a demagogue, a dangerous man," said Maxwell. "He, a rich man, is siding with the poor—the Socialists and the anarchists. He is a traitor to his own class."

"Now, Maxwell, Miss Dorothy is entitled to her own view," said Stone soothingly. But Dorothy had begun to distrust Stone. She refused to accept him as an ally. Bruce had told her of a discovery he had made. Stone, while pretending to be friendly, had secretly contributed heavily to the campaign fund of the opposition.

Election day came. Bruce, in his office, waited, knowing he had done his best. The result was with the voters. Would they trust him? Would they give him the power he required to do his work? He was waiting for Dorothy. She came at last.

"You're going to win, Bruce," she said as he took her in his arms. "I know it! I feel it!"

And then came Stone.

"Well," he said, "how does it look?"

"Dad for you," said Bruce uncompromisingly.

Stone laughed, with an excellent assumption of amusement.

"My dear boy," he said, "why do you mistrust me? I'm your friend."

Bruce looked at him. And just then there was a scuffle at the door. A rough looking man burst in and made for Bruce, waving a knife. Stone with a quick leap grappled with him, seized his hand and bent the wrist back till the knife dropped. Then quite calmly he pushed him out.

"Just an election rowdy," he said, with a smile. He handed Bruce the knife. "Perhaps you'll believe I'm your friend now. Well, I'll leave you."

"I'm grateful, Mr. Stone," said Bruce. But he was puzzled as he looked at Dorothy. Then his eyes fell on a bit of paper the thief had dropped. He picked it up and cried out in surprise and delight. "Look!" he said.

He gave it to Dorothy, and together they looked at it. It was a typewritten slip and read:

Come alone. For safety we will admit but one man. Will outline plan regarding Larnigan should be elected. Number is 23 West street. Rap one, then two, then one.

"It's my chance," cried Bruce, with glowing eyes—"my chance to get on the trail of this secret enemy at last! I'll go!"

"Bruce, there'll be danger!" said Dorothy.

"Then I must face it!" he cried. "My dear, you know I must!"

"Then I'll go with you!" cried Dorothy.

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**MOTHER! YOUR CHILD IS CROSS, FEVERISH FROM CONSTIPATION**

If tongue is coated, breath bad, stomach sour, clean liver and bowels.

Give "California Syrup of Figs" at once—a teaspoonful today often saves a sick child tomorrow.

If your little one is out-of-sorts, half-sick, isn't resting, eating and acting naturally—look, Mother! see if tongue is coated. This is a sure sign that its little stomach, liver and bowels are clogged with waste. When cross, irritable, feverish, stomach sour, breath bad or his stomach-ache diarrhoea, soft, throat, full of cold, give a "teaspoonful of California Syrup of Figs," and in a few hours all the constipated poison, undigested food and sour-bile gently moves out of its little bowels without griping, and you have a well, playful child again.

Mother can rest easy after giving this harmless "fruit laxative," because it never fails to cleanse the little one's liver and bowels and sweeten the stomach and they dearly love its pleasant taste. Full directions for babies, children of all ages and for grown-ups printed on each bottle.

Beware of counterfeit fig syrup. Ask your druggist for a 50-cent bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," then see that it is made by the California Fig Syrup Company.

**Recommended for Croup, Coughs, colds, Whoop, hoarseness, Inflamed throat, bronchial troubles or sore chest are relieved by Foley's Honey and Tar which opens stopped air passages, soothes and heals inflamed surfaces, and restores normal breathing.**

W. C. Allen, Esq., says: "I have raised a family of four children and used Foley's Honey and Tar with all of them. I find it the