



# GRAFT

GEORGE BRONSON HOWARD

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

### The Traction Trust

Suggested by GEORGE BRONSON HOWARD, Author of "Snobs," "God's Man," Etc.

#### SYNOPSIS

Dudley Larnigan, district attorney of New York, attacks the liquor and vice trust. He is killed by an agent of a secret society, the committee of fifteen. His son, Bruce Larnigan, is elected district attorney and takes up the fight. Bruce is in love with Dorothy Maxwell, whose father is head of the insurance trust. Bruce Larnigan is decoyed to an evil resort in an effort to frame him up. He beats the conspirators by having the police commissioner present. A fire starts in a tenement across the way. Larnigan saves the children of Dow, one of the conspirators. This man agrees to expose the trust. He is murdered by the gang.

**B**RUCE LARNIGAN'S crushing defeat of the tenement house trust, resulting in the murder by the graft syndicate itself of Anton Dow, who was about to give Bruce evidence against the fifteen, served to show Stanford Stone and the remaining members of the graft syndicate that in Bruce they faced a foe far more dangerous to them than his murdered father had ever been.

Stanford Stone, the secret head of the powerful graft syndicate, had despised Bruce in the beginning. Now he was beginning to fear him. And the fact that he was in love with Dorothy Maxwell, the girl who was Bruce's fiancée, only increased his determination to get rid of Bruce.

It was impossible for Stanford Stone to work in the open. It seemed to him vitally important to hold secure his own connection with the graft syndicate. Even Bruce Larnigan was so far from suspecting it that after the death of Anton Dow he confided many of his plans for the future to Stone.

"Dow's death is unfortunate," he told Stone. "He was a villain, but he was about to turn over a new leaf. He would have been a useful witness."

"However, I have other iron in the fire. I am more and more convinced that all the graft in this city runs ultimately to a central spot; that one man dominates all the corrupt elements. I can't strike at any particular form of graft, no matter what it may be, without weakening that great central power."

"That sounds reasonable," said Stone sympathetically.

"Now, for instance," said Bruce, "I am planning to look into the opera-



Dorothy Picked Up the Dictaphone Receiver.

tions of the traction trust. I am convinced that whole organization is riddled with graft and that the city is being looted right and left in connection with the new subways. I haven't got all my evidence yet, but I'm going after it. And I may need your help."

"I am at your service," said Stone. "As I've told you before, I feel, as a public spirited citizen, that it is my duty to stand by you in the fight you have undertaken."

But no sooner was Stone alone than his face was transformed and twisted by hate and malice. Without delay he sent for Bruce Black, one of his confidential agents. He told Black that Larnigan must be killed.

Through men and women known to him he got into touch with Bruce Larnigan's chauffeur. This man, seemingly respectable and actually faithful enough to Bruce, had a dark spot in his life. Black managed to learn of this and so got the man Bonner into his grip. He arranged to have Bonner drive Larnigan through the park while gunmen were planted there.

Stanford Stone by means of a dictaphone was able to keep in close touch with Black's movements, since he never for a moment trusted Black. On the day after his conversation with Bruce, however, Stone, listening over the dictaphone, nodded with approval. Bruce he knew was coming to see him. Afterward Bonner should be able to take him through the park. And then the graft syndicate's most dangerous enemy would be removed!

Bruce arrived while Black was still discussing his plans. With him was Dorothy Maxwell.

"We're not really together, Mr. Stone," she said gayly. "I'm looking for papa. I thought he might be here."

"I'm sorry he isn't, Miss Dorothy," said Stone. "But if you'll call up Boyd Penrose's office I think you'll get him. I'll take Larnigan outside while you telephone."

Dorothy smiled her thanks. She was left alone and by pure accident picked up the dictaphone receiver. To her horror and amazement she heard Black giving the final orders for Bruce's murder. Her heart almost stopped, but she managed to control herself and heard enough to put her in possession of all the details of the plot. Then, schooling her features, she went out and joined Bruce and Stone.

"I think I'll go straight home. I can't reach papa," she said. "Coming, Bruce?"

He nodded a farewell to Stone and went down with her. At the curb she seized his arm.

"Bruce, where are you going?" she asked tensely.

"To see an old friend—Jim Stevens," he said. "He's a newspaper man, and we're going to pull off a stunt together."

"Let me take you there," she urged. "Please, Bruce! Send Bonner home alone. I want to show you how my new car runs."

He thought nothing of her request and was glad to yield. Bonner, started and dismayed, saw what had happened, and at once, instead of going home as he was told to do, he hurried to Black.

"Damn!" said Black. "Well, we'll have to get those fellows and plant them near Larnigan's house. Come on; take me through the park. It's riskier, but that can't be helped."

Bonner obeyed. They hurried into the park, and at the fatal spot, as Black stood up, a volley rang out. The gun men had mistaken their employer for their victim. Black fell dead!

Meanwhile Dorothy had waited for Bruce during his talk with Stevens and had then driven him home. They found Mrs. Larnigan in tears. The holder of the mortgage on her house had arbitrarily refused to give her more time, and her lawyer had told her that he had found no one willing to take it up, good as was the security. Bruce saw in this a plot on the part of the fifteen to punish him. But Dorothy, without telling him of her intentions, determined to save him.

"Everything will come out all right," Dorothy assured Bruce.

She had some property of her own, and she went straight to her father and asked him to advance her a large sum on certain securities. He laughed. "He did so, giving her the money in cash."

"What do you want it for?" he asked.

She told him, and though she saw the startled look that came into his eyes she did not know the reason nor that it was Roger Maxwell's insurance company that had threatened to foreclose on Mrs. Larnigan's house. Yet it was true—she had unwittingly defeated a plan concocted by her father and Stanford Stone.

Maxwell said nothing to Dorothy of the truth. Perhaps he hated her. Perhaps it was because he, at that time, learned what she meant to do. Her father, his old friend, and his daughter, Mabel, one of Dorothy's best girl friends, were announced. Penrose was head of the traction trust. He and Maxwell had many interests in common. And in the course of the talk the inclusion of the mortgage seemed to be forgotten.

It was the next day that Bruce and his friend Jim Stevens, the reporter, went to work on the B. & O. subway. Having decided that this was the best chance they had to get their first-hand evidence of an inconceivable sort against the trust. And were they wrong, in a very short time they discovered the truth of what they had suspected—that a city inspector was being bribed to allow an inferior grade of cement in the construction work.

"The graft in that might run to millions!" said Jim, appalled. "And the danger—my God! The whole thing might collapse at any minute!"

"Get the facts down—and print them," said Bruce. "I'll stay here to get more evidence if I can. I don't think they suspect us yet."

Stevens obeyed. But at the office of his paper instead of being praised for his enterprise in securing a wonderful story he was bitterly attacked by his managing editor. Stevens had not known it hitherto, but his paper was a tool of the graft syndicate and was preparing at that moment to launch a bitter attack upon Bruce Larnigan. The story Stevens turned in was torn up. He himself was summarily discharged.

But that as it turned out, was a false move, for it only aroused the fighting blood of Stevens. He went from newspaper to newspaper, until finally in the office of the Independent he found an editor with courage enough to face the consequences of defying the trust.

"They may smash us," he said, "but Larnigan is in the right, and we'll back him up. We'll begin by printing your story and putting you on our staff. Go out and get as much more stuff of this sort as you can."

A new danger threatened, however, for Stanford Stone had been in the office of Stevens' paper talking to the managing editor when the reporter made his report. Unseen by Stevens, he had heard everything and so knew that Bruce, in disguise, was working as a laborer in the subway. At once he saw a chance to crush his enemy. He went to Penrose, and the two concocted a new scheme for Bruce's destruction.

Bruce, suspecting nothing, was pleased by the praise that Kelly, ostensibly



"Everything will come out all right," said Dorothy.

the foreman of the work, but actually the personal representative and graft collector of Penrose, gave him for his work.

"Sure, an' you do well for a greenhorn," said Kelly. "I'll be after raisin' in your pay and givin' ye better work to do."

Bruce grinned his thanks. He was disposed to like Kelly and to believe that the man did not understand the rottenness of the work that was being done. Kelly, as was afterward to appear, was a good actor wanted on the job he held. He refused, in spite of Penrose's urgency, to be hurried.

"You'd be wantin' him to smell a rat," he said. "He's no fool, that lad. He takes careful handlin'—such as he gets from me. Lave it to me. Mither Penrose, I'll see that he goes to kingdom come. Lave it to Kelly!"

Day by day Kelly saw to it that Bruce got better work and more important to do. He praised him, encouraged him. And he did fill Kelly's suspicions, so that when at last he was ready to strike Bruce trusted him.

"It's times yez learned the blastin' That's the work that pays," said Kelly. "Take this dynamite cartridge, now, and carry it into the tunnel. The place to set it is marked with a red cross. The hole the drill left is there. Ye see, ye carry this wire along. Then when yez come back ye report and make the contact—and hit. Aisy does it—see! Don't be droopin' that stick!"

Bruce obeyed, working his way into the tunnel. But when Kelly came out, Penrose was waiting by the electric switch.

"Aisy does it, sorr!" said Kelly. "Give him time to get the end and start back. Then I'll touch the switch—and good night Larnigan!"

"Sprung!" said Penrose. "Here, I must get my girls out. They're inspecting the work. I don't want them to take any chances!"

Dorothy and Mabel, indeed, were sent for. And Dorothy had recognized Bruce. She had an accomplishment that few of her friends suspected—she could read lips. And so, though out of hearing, she knew what Kelly and Penrose had said. At once she slipped into the tunnel after Bruce.

"Come quickly! There's a plot to kill you!" she screamed. "Drop that stick and run! Don't ask me how I know!"

Bruce obeyed. Together they ran for the street. And just as they got out of the tunnel there was a dull roar behind them. Bruce had escaped.

## WORKMEN ARE ICEBOUND

Work on Alaskan Railroad to Begin in Spring. Washington, Dec. 23.—Fifteen hundred men, pioneers, building the government Alaskan railroad, are ice-locked in Anchorage, America's nearest frontier town, waiting to resume work with the first appearance of the northern spring.

William C. Edes, chairman of the Alaskan railroad commission, just returned from Alaska, to report to Secretary Lane, brought news from the marooned camp. He said thousands of tons of freight and dried meats, including a supply of California turkeys meant for holiday feasting, is being held at Seward, while the road builders have to content themselves with canned goods and dried meats, of which they have a plentiful supply. Navigation in Cook Inlet closed earlier than was expected and steamers carrying cargoes for the new port were forced to return to Seward.

Some of the freight was material wanted for winter work and more was needed for the early spring rush. About thirty-five miles of new roadbed, including numerous minor bridges and culverts, was completed during the past year. The line when completed will extend from Seward, on Resurrection Bay, to Fairbanks, on the Tanana river, 471 miles and will include the existing Alaska Northern Railroad from Seward, seventy-one miles through the Kenai peninsula to Turnagain Arm, and a branch line from Matanuska Junction thirty-eight miles to open the Matanuska coal fields. Mr. Edes said he thought the road will be completed in a little more than five years and without developing any difficult engineering problems.

## Swans Taught to Swim

You're acquainted with the proverbial phrase, "like a duck takes to the water." That may apply all right to ducks, but there are some water birds which have to be taught to swim, just like we do. They hate the water at first as much as a boy hates the bathtub. One of these birds, which takes swimming lessons from its parents, is the black-necked swan.

The swan babies are called cygnets. They are hatched in a elaborate nest which the parent swan builds along the edge of a pool. The little cygnets are able to walk and run as soon as they are out of their shells, but they can't swim.

So the mother swan takes them for a little ferry ride. She puts them on her back and starts out across the pond. The baby swans, frightened at first, soon get used to seeing water all around them.

One day the mother swan turns her long neck and gives her babies a gentle push into the water. Such a scramble and splash! The babies flounder around and try their best to get back on their mother's dry feathers. Finally they learn that their feet are webbed paddles, given them for swimming purposes, and they are able to glide over the water as gracefully and as easily as their parents.

## Real Horsepower vs. Mechanical

"In Western and Southern States," says Farm and Fireside, "horses can be kept for a year as low as \$50. In states where feed is high, the cost may reach \$120, and for the entire United States is \$38.50. The figures preceding take into account, shoeing, veterinary charges, housing, and feed."

"The average horse develops seven tenths of a horsepower. The weight of the team ought to be eight times the draft of the plow, under average conditions."

"A horse can pull with a force equal to about one-eighth of its weight continuously for eight hours at a speed of two and a half miles an hour."

"The United States has one-fourth of all the horses in the world. The world's supply before the war began was 100,000,000."

"A furrow fourteen inches wide and five inches deep requires a draft of 310 pounds in ordinary loam soil. A furrow eight inches deep requires 450 pounds draft."

## Incorporating the Farm

In Minnesota, says Farm and Fireside, is a Scotch farmer named McCullum who thought out a new way to increase the efficiency of his property and keep his children on the farm. The result of his scheme is that eight of his nine children are farmers and glad to remain so.

Mr. McCullum had his farm incorporated as a business. Reserving a third of the stock for himself, he divided the remainder among his children. At a director's meeting—the directors were all his sons and daughters—he was elected president, while his sons became the different officers of the company. The advantages of this scheme, says Mr. McCullum, are that each of his children has a direct personal interest in the family property and the different farm departments, such as hogs and poultry. Each has become a business department with the manager responsible to the corporation for the departmental stock and management.

## The "Snowball Army"

Sydney, Australia, Dec. 23.—The "snowball army" which Captain Hitchcock of the Olgoodra Rifle Club started with a handful of men, who set out from Olgoodra on October 25 for a 250 mile march to Sydney to enlist, attracted to itself so many other patriots or the way that it entered Sydney with a total of 232 men who have been accepted for service. The enthusiastic reception which the little army received at its various stopping places and on its arrival here made one of the most picturesque local episodes of the war.

Mr. Bryan may be doing the hard job under the circumstances, but someone or other he is not getting much credit for it. —Durham Herald.

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Farmers and Prosperity.  
The standard of prosperity among the farmers of any community must not be judged by the conditions prevailing among that class of hand-to-mouth farmers whose chief object in life seems to be to "work" the time supply men for everything they can and who generally have a hard luck story to tell even in the most prosperous times. It does the latter class of farmers a grave injustice to judge their prosperity by any such standard.—Henderson Dispatch.

**LAST SEASON'S GGWN DRY CLEANED**  
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