

It was a cold-blooded proposition

but neither face exhibited any regret both were intoxicated by success; un troubled by any scruples of con science. West felt the utter useless ness of an attempt to appeal to either
"Where is Natalle Coolidge?" he
asked, his own determination harden ing. "What do you propose doing with him.

Hobart's teeth exhibited themselves in a sarcastic grin.

"That is our business, but you can bet she'll not interfere."

"And a similar answer, I presume will apply also to my case?"

"It will. Don't make the mistakt West, of believing we are d-n fools I don't know just why I've blowed at this to you, but it ain't going to hell you any, you can be sure of that. It fact our knowing now the thing was worked is liable to make things t blame sight harder in your case. We won't do no more talking; so go on it through that door."

The fellow's demeanor had entirely changed; he was no longer pretending to geniality, and his words were al most brutal. Apparently, all at once it had dawned sharply upon him that they had made a mistake-had booster far too freely. Any slip now, afte what had been sald, would wreck the ship. West faced him watchfully, full aware of the desperate situation, it stinctively feeling that this might be his last chance.

"In there, you say?" indicating the closed door.

Yes: move!

He did; with one swift leap forward, the whole impetus of his body behind the blow, West drove his fis; straight into the face confronting him. The fellow reeled, clutched feebly at the smooth wall for support, dropped helplessly forward, and fell headlong. with face hidden in outstretched arms. The assailant sprang brek, and turned, in a mad determination to crash his way out through the locked door behind, but as suddenly stopped startled by the vision of a leveled revolver pointed at his head.

"Not a move," the girl said lelly, Take one step, and I'll kill you." Hobart lifted his head groggiy, and



pushed himself half-way up on his

"Don't shoot unless he makes you Del," he ordered grimly. "We don't want that kind of row here." He dragged himself painfully to the side door, and pressed it open. "Hey you!" he cried. "Come'on out

here. Now then, rough-house this guy !"

CHAPTER XVII

McAdams Blows In.

It was a reaf fight; they all knew that when it was finished. But it was three to one, with Hobart blocking the only open door, and enging them on, and the excited girl, backed into a corner out of the way, the revolver still gripped in her hand, ready for any emergency. The narrowness of the hall alone afforded West a chance, as the walls protected him, and compelled direct attack from the front. Yet this advantage only served to delay the ending. He recognized two of the fellows-"Red" Hogan and Mark-while the third man was a wiry little barroom scrapper, who smashed flercely in through his guard, and finally got a grip on his throat which could not be wrenched loose. The others pounded him unmercifully, driving his head back against the wall. Hogan smashed him twice, crashing through his weak attempt at defense, and with the second vicious drive, West went down for the count, lying motionless on the floor, scarcely conscious that he was still living.

"It's a knockout all right," Hogan declared. "That guy is good for an hour in dreamland. What's the dope?" "We got to keep him here, that's all; and there's goin' to be no get-

away this time!" "Do you want him croaked?"

"No, I. don't-not now. What the h-l's the use? It would only make things harder. We're ready to make our get-away, ain't we? After tomorrow all h-1 can't get onto our trail. This guy's life wouldn't help us none, so far as I can see.'

"Getting squeamish, ain't you?" "No, I'm not. I've got as much reaon to hate the fellow as you have, He certainly swiped me one.

Before we had the swag copped, I was willing enough to put him out of the running. That, was business, You sure did a fine job then, d-n you; now I don't think it is your time to howl. Listen here, will you? From all I learn, this bird amounts to something; he ain't just'a dago to be bumped off, and nobody care what's become of This guy has got friends. It won't help us any to be hunted after for murder on top of this other job.

If we cop the kafe, that's all we're after. Is that right, Del?" The girl seemed to come forward and face them defiantly.

"Sure it's right. I never was for the strong-arm stuff, Hogan. This is my graft, anyhow, and not one of you stiffs gets a penny of it unless I split with you. This fellow isn't going to be slugged-that's flat. It is only because he's fell in love with the Cooldge girl that he is here, and once we've skipped out, I don't wish the guy any bad luck."

"You ought to have caught him courself, Del," some one said. "The bird never would have known the dif-Ference.

She laughed, quickly restored to good humor.

"You're about right there, Dave," she answered. "That was another mistake; the only chance I ever had of marrying in high social circles. But h-1, I'll be a lady tomorrow, so let's let the poor devil go. Wrap him up, and lay him away out in the garage. the walls are two-foot solld stone; ie'll stay buried there, all right."

Hegan growled in derision, yet it was evident that she and Hobert would have their way. Some one brought a rope, which was deftly wound about Lim, West continuing to feign unconsciousness. He secretly hoped this condition might result in some carelessness on their part, in either speech or action. Anyway it would undoubtedly save him from further brutal treatment. He had no reason to suspect that his ruse was questioned. The fellows spoke freely making him secure, but he gained very little information from their conversation-not a hint as to where Natalie was confined, or how Then "Red" and Dave ugged his limp body through several ooms, out upon a back porch, finally lragging him down the steps and dong a cement driveway, letting him lie there a moment in the dark, while one of them unlocked the door. The next instant he was earelessly thrown nside, and the door forced back into place. He could hear Hogan swear outside, and then the sound of both men's feet on the drive as they de-

With a struggle West managed to sit up, but could scarcely attempt more, as his arms were bound closely to his sides. The darkness about him was intense, and, with the disappearance of the two men up the steps, all outside sounds had ceased. He knew he had been flung into the garage and was resting there on the hard cement floor. He could neither feel nor see any machine, nor was there probably the slightest prospect of his getting

bobleon tun What was that? He listened, for an instant doubtful if he had really heard anything. Then he actually heard a sound. He doubted no longer, yer made no effort to move, even holding his breath in suspense. There was movement of some kind back there-a cautious movement; seemingly the slow advance of something acress the floor, a dog perhaps, West's heart throbbed with apprehension; suppose it was a dog, he had no means of protection from the brute. Cold sweat tingled on his flesh; there was nothing he could do, no place where he could go. The thing was moving nearer; yet surely it could not be a dog; no dog would ever creep like that. He could bear the strain no longer; it was beyond endurance. "What's moving back there?" he

asked in a hoarse whisper. There was a moment of utter si lence; then, a man's voice said in low.

cautious tone. "The fellow ain't dead, Mac; anyhow he seems able to talk yet." "All right, we'll find out what he's

got to say-go on along," West sat up, his heart bounding with sudden remembrance.

"My G-d! McAdams, is that you?" "You have the name-who's speak-

"Matt West. Good G-.. d. but this is like a miracle. I'd played my last card Come here, one of you, and cut these strings. I cannot even move, or stand up. , Is it really you, Mac? Yes, yes, I am all right; they bruised me up a bit, of course, but that is nothing. Now I have a chance to pay them out. But who are with you? and kew did you

come to be here?" McAdams ran his knife blade through the lashings, feeling for them in the dark. Neither could see the other, but West realized that another man had crept up on the opposite side of him, and crouched there silently in

the blackness. "Need any help, Mac?" the latter

questioned in a whisper. "No, I've got him cut loose. This is the lad I told you about, Carlyn. You go on back, and, as soon as West gets limbered up a bit, and I hear his story, we'll join you there. Then we'll know how the ground lies."

The fellow crept away unseen, and McAdams gripped West's hand, "Bay, but this is mighty good luck. old boy," he blurted out, "I was afraid voc'd gone down in that yacht last

about it?" "Stumbled onto the story, the way most detectives solve their mysteries. That is, I stumbled on some of it, and the rest I dug out for myself. It won't take long to explain and perhaps you

better understand. They told me at the office when I got back about the Seminole being tied up at the Munici pal pier, and that you had gode down there. Well, I made it as quick as I could, but the yacht was three hundred yards out in the lake by the time arrived. There wasn't a d-n thing to take after it in, and, besides, just then, I didn't really knew any good police reason for chasing her. First thing I did was to try and find you, so we could get our heads together. But you wasn't there, and so I naturally jumped to the conclusion you must have got aboard someway. Say, Combed that pler, believe me, West, and finally I ran across a kid who put me wise. He saw you go across the deck, and into the cabin with two other guys. They came out again, but you didn't. I pumped him until I got pretty good description of both those fellows, and I decided one of them must be 'Red' Hogan, about the toughest gunman in Chicago. "It was Hogan."

"I made sure of that afterward. Then I got busy. If you was in the hands of that guy, and his gang, the chances was dead against you. But there wasn't a darn thing I could do. except to hunt up Hobart, wire every town along the North shore to keep an eye out for the yacht, and pick up a thread or two around town. I got a bit, at that, to wise me up. We found Hobart hid away in a cheap hotel out on Broadway, and put a traller on him. The girl had disappeared; she'd been to a bank, and then to the Cooldge lawyer and signed some papers; after that we lost all trace of her for awhile. Your man Sexton, out at Fairlawn, reported that she hadn't returned there. Then I got desperate and decided I'd blow the whole thing to the Coolidge lawyer, and get him to take a hand. I was afraid they were all ready for the get-away-see? I couldn't round 'em up alone; besides I'm a Chicago police officer, and have to keep more or less on my own beat."

"And you told the lawyer?" "Everything I knew, and some I guessed at. I thought the old guy would throw a fit, but he didn't. He came through game after the first shock. But say, that dame had sold him out all right. He never had an inkling anything was wrong; no more We went over and talked to the president of one of them -a smooth guy with white mutton chops-and the girl had signed up the preliminary papers already, and tomorrow the whole boodle was going to drop softly into her lap. Say, I felt better when I learned they hadn't copped the swag yet. But just the same I needed help."

"And you got it?" "Sure; those two duffers coughed up money in a stream. Called in a detective agency, and gave me three operatives to work under me. Got the chief on the wire, and made him give me a free hand. Then I had a cinch."

CHAPTER XVIII

A Bridge of Love. He paused, listening, but all remained quiet without, and he resumed his story.

"There is not much else to it, West.

A little after one o'clock the shadow

phoned in from the Union depot that Howart had just purchased two tickets for Pataene. We hustled over, but were too late to catch that train, but the girl had accompanied him on the trip. We caught another rattler two hours later, and got off at Patacne, which is about three miles west of here. It is not much of a job to gather up gossip in a small burg, and, inside of ten minutes, I had extracted all I needed from the station agent. It seems this outfit was the summer sensation out here. We hoofed it for reasons of our own, and came around by way of the lake shore, aiming to keep out of sight until after dark. That is how we discovered that Seminole boat hauled up on the beach, but with no yacht in sight. One of the fellows with me said Hogan did a boat-sinking job before and got away with it, and that is how I figured that maybe you was at the bottom of Lake Michigan-see? Well, we crept up here through the woods, but nothing happened. Didn't look as if the place had a soul within a hundred miles of tt-no smoke, no light; not a d-n sound. We laid out and waited, not sure what we were up against. Finally we jimmled open the back door of this garage, just to find out whether those guys had a car out here, or not. They had, but we no more than located it when those two fellows came dragging you out of the back door of the house, and flung you in here like a bag of old linen. We lay still, and let them go back, but we hadn't any notion it was really you; so we crawled up to find out. That's the story. Now what do you think we better do?" West moved his arms in an effort to

restore circulation.

"How many with you?" "Four altogether-hard boiled, too -five with you. Is there any fight left in you, old man?"

"I'll say there is; I'd certainly like to get in one clip at 'Red' before the fracas is over.'

"That-sounds vicious. Now, who is inside?" "I saw five, and there may be oth-

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ers. If the crew of the Seminole are here also, that would make quite a

"I don't think they are, Captain. The station agent said several men bought tickets to Chicago early this afternoon. It is the real gang we've got cornered. Do you know just who they

"Those I saw were Hobart, 'Red' Hogan, the girl, a big fellow they called Mark who was on the yacht-"Mark Sennett; he's Hogan's sidekick, and tough as they make 'em."

"And a wiry little black-haired devil by the name of Dave." "H-L is he in this too? That must

your throat for fifty dollars. Any others?" "Those were all I saw. No doubt Hobart's wife is in the house somewhere. guarding Natalia Coolidge

probably. "Six altogether, counting the women. "Yes, and you better count them, for

they will fight like tigers. The girl held me up at the point of a gun." "We've got to get the drop first, that's all. They're yellow, the whole outfit is yellow. Shootin' in the back is their style. Now, you know the lay inside the house; what is our best

chance?" West studied over the situation, his eyes staring into the darkness, and McAdams waited.

"Well, Mac," he said finally. "This Is a new job for me, but I'd put a man out in front, and then take the others in through the back door. We'd have to rush it, of course. I know the front door is locked, and it couldn't be broken down quickly. I listened when those fellows went back, and I heard no click, as though they had locked the door behind them. They don't know anybody has been after them except me, and they believe I am done for. They feel so safe out here, they are a bit careless. I'll wager something we can walk straight in on the outfit; how does that strike you?"

"As the only feasible plan. Let's crawl out of here."

The arrangements were quickly perfected; a short, whispered conference in the dark; then one man crept silentaway through the night toward the front of the house. McAdams added a few more words of instruction to the others, and, with West slightly in advance, revolvers drawn and ready, the five stole forward in the direction of the rear porch. The windows were either heavily curtained, or covered by outside shades, for no gleam of light was anywhere visible. West mounted the back steps sliently, with McAdams close at his heels. A second later the entire bunch of officers were grouped before the door, poised breathless, listening for any sound from within, Nothing broke the impressive silence, and McAdams' hand closed over the knob, which he turned slowly. The door opened quietly into a darkened interior. For an instant he bent forward, peering through the narrow crack, endeavoring to learn what lay hidden beyond, the others quivering behind him. There was scarcely the sound of a breath audible. The detective hesitated; such luck, such carelessness on the part of criminals seemed almost uncanny; he half suspected some trap. Then he became convinced that this was only the result of recklessness-the fellows felt so safe in this hidden hole in the woods as to neglect all precaution. He stepped cautiously inside, leaving the door ajar for the others to follow. Then they paused-straight ahead a double swinging door divided the kitchen in which they were from another room beyond. Through the center crack shone a single bar of light, barely visible, and forth through that same orifice came the sound of a voice speaking. McAdams flung up his hand in signal, and then crept silently for-

It was apparently a quarrel among thieves over the spoils, each fearful lest the other was double-crossing. Hobart and "Red" Hogan were doing most of the talking, although occasionally others chimed in, and once there was a woman's voice added to the debate. Seemingly the whole gang were present; a strong odor of tobacco smoke stole through the crack in the door, and both Hobart and Hogan swore angrily. Who was to remain out there on guard while Hobart and the girl returned to Chicago for the money was evidently the question, Hogan wishing to accompany them to make sure of his share. The woman sided with Hobart, the other men apparently ranged up with "Red," and some very plain talking was indulged

McAdams listened grimly, the light through the crack showing his lips curled in a smile of appreciation. He lowered his head, and with one eye at the slight opening gained a glimpse of the lighted room beyond. A moment, motionless, he stared in on the scene; then straightened up, and, with revolver in hand, signaled to the others to close in closer. They stood there for a tense instant, polsed and eager; then the doors were flung crashing back, and they leaped recklessly forward, out of the darkness into the fight. It was a furious fight-sharp, merciless, uncompromising. The thieves, startled, desperate, were hurled back by the first rush against the further wall, tables and chairs overturned, the shricking womar pushed headlong into one corner, and one of the fellows downed by the crashing butt of a revolver. But the others rallied, maddened, desperate rats caught in a trap, fighting as animals fight. Hobart fired, catching at assallant in the arm; Hogan snatched up a chair and struck victously at West, who leaped straight forward breaking the full force of the blow and driving his own fist into the man't face. It was all over within a min ute's flerce fighting-the surprise turn ing the trick. Hobart went down cursing, the gun kicked out of bit hand, his arm broken; Hogan, strug gling still, but pinned to the floor by three men, was given a blow to the chin which left him unconscious, while the other two threw up their hands and yelled for mercy. McAdams wiper his streaming face, and looked around

It was a shambles, the floor spotter with blood, the table overturned and broken, a blanket over one of the win dows torn down, a smashed chair is one corner. The detective who he

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been shot was still lying in front of the door, "Red" lay motionless. ghastly ent over his eye, and Hobart, his arm dangling, sat propped up against the wall, cursing, malevolent. but he pless. On the other side stood Sennett and "Dago Dave," their hands high above their heads; each looking into the leveled barrel of a gun. The woman had got to her knees, still dazed from the blow which had felled her. The ex-service man smiled grimly, well satisfied.

'Some surprise party, ch, Jim?" he asked pleasantly. "This rather puts a



Hogan Snatched Up a Chair and Struck Viciously at West.

crimp in your little game, I would say, old boy. Going to cop the whole boodle tomorrow, was you?" "Who the h-1 are you?"

"Well, if I answer your questions, perhaps you will answer mine. I am McAdams of the City Hall station, Chicago, and I know exactly what I am here after. So the best thing you guys can do, is cough up. Who's that girl who has been working with you?" Hobart glared sullenly, but made no

"You'll not answer?" "Oh, go to h-11"

response.

"All right, old top. She is in this i twouse somewhere, and can't get act.) had none." Samers, look around a bit; try behind the se curtains over there."

Ti w efficer stepped forward, but at the s: rute instant the draperies parted, and ty wairls stood beside each other in the spening, framed against the brighter ware of light beyond-wo girls, look as so alike, except for dress and the ar. Magement of their bair, as to be almos * Endistinguishable-Nata-He white face & frightened, gazing with wide-open eye wanthe strange scene before her; the vecher smiling and audacious, her gl: ter full of defiance. It e the latter which was the voice

broke the silence. want, Mr. Beb "Am I the one bett edearly. "Very McAdams?" she as. well. I am here."

htues both, gulbe McAdams stared at was the vision ing in startled surpri tito find words. confronting him, unable Then his eyes fixed the. Verlyed on the face of the speaker.

You. Del? "What!" he burst forth. visis, Hogart, Great Scott! your name wasn't it? Why, I never ence con-Es is this nected you two together. guy your father?"

"I don't know about that," turned indifferently. "It is a of argument I believe. Howeve v. Bab. C Shipp, Presiding Judge, December what's the odds now? I am the one you're after, Mister Fly-Cop; wad

She walked forward, almost pro ly, her eyes shining, and gazing t fe. irlessly into his. He stepped back, o. le hand extended

are not a crook."

"Oh, yes I am," she insisted, but with a tremor in the low voice. "I've side at Chesterfield Court Housenever been anything else, Bobby boy thanks, thanks to that thing down of land situate, lying and being in the there."

Natalie still remgined pelsed tuzcartainly in the door way, starcely realizing what was occurring before her: she saw suddenly a familiar face, and held out her hands,

"Oh, Matt. what is it?" she cried. "Is—is it all over?" "Yes, all over dear methese are police

"And that-that girl? She looks so much like me. Who is she? Dowyou

West clasped her handlestightly, whis voice sunk to a wasper, "She is your sister, Natalie," he asgently. "You never knew it, but Percival Coolidge did. This was his dev-

"My sister; my twin sister? But I

"Yes, but you did," he insisted

with scheme, plotted years ago when xer were born. Now here is the end of E-the girl is your sister. There as ne doubt of that." "Ne doubt, you say! My sister!" Her nead lifted, and there was a flame

of color in her cheeks. "My sister!" she repeated, as though she would thus make it seem more true. "Then will go to her. Matthew West." She loosened the clasp of her fingers and walked forward, her eves

misted with tears. Straight across the room she went, her hands outstretched to where the other shrank back from or in embarrassment-between them still the gulf which love must bridge. [THE END.]

SHERIFF'S SALE

Lots in Tawn of Mt. Croghan

By virtue of authority given in a Decree passed at Chesterfield Court of Common Pleas, by Judge S. W. 5th 1922, in the case of Bank of Mt. Creghen vs. Lucy Hinson, C. D. Hin-"ud- son Sorie Morgan, Sallie Leonard. Charles Sm. h, Carrie Smith and F. M. Mo ore aomen. strator of estate of W. "No. Del, this must be a mistal te. I G. Hinson, dor'd, I will sell to the -I can't believe it of you, you- you highest bidder or sales day in Jantary, 1923 within the legal hours of

All fanat certain piece, parcel or lot state of South Carolina, County of Che sterfield, and in the Town of Mt. Cros han, more fully described as follows: Lows known and numbered on plat of said town as lots seven (7) eight(8) twenty-five(25) and twenty-six (26), the same being four of of the lets of the Gillespie survey and rginally sold to C. P. Nicholson. Terms of sale-Cash. December 7, 1922. J. T. GRANT.

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serted soberly, "your twin sister." Lawn. Her, unbelieving even swept to his 42-52 Lawns. The Pure Seed Co...