

The Case and The Girl by Randall Parrish

COPYRIGHT 1922 BY ALFRED A. KNOFF, INC.

(Continued from last week)

It was a cold-blooded proposition but neither face exhibited any regret...

Hobart's teeth exhibited themselves in a sarcastic grin. "That is our business, but you can bet she'll not interfere."

"You're about right there, Dave," she answered. "That was another mistake; the only chance I ever had of making it in high social circles...

He did; with one swift leap forward, the whole impetus of his body behind the blow, West drove his fist straight into the face confronting him.

"Not a move," the girl said telly. "Take one step, and I'll kill you."



"Not a Move."

pushed himself half-way up on his knees.

"Don't shoot unless he makes you, Del," he ordered grimly. "We don't want that kind of row here."

"He you?" he cried. "Come on out here. Now then, rough-house this guy!"

CHAPTER XVII

McAdams Blows In.

It was a real fight; they all knew that when it was finished. But it was three to one, with Hobart blocking the only open door, and engaging 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.

"It's a knock-out all right," Hogan declared. "That guy is good for an hour in dreamland. What's the dope?"

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

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.

"Sure it's right. I never was for the strong-arm stuff, Hogan. This is my graft, anyhow, and not one of you stiff 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 Coolidge 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 yourself, Del," some one said. "The bird never would have known the difference."

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 making it in high social circles...

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.

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, yet made no effort to move, even holding his breath in suspense.

There was a cautious movement; seemingly the slow advance of something across 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.

"What's moving back there?" he asked in a hoarse whisper.

"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."

"My G—d! McAdams, is that you?"

"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."

old boy," he blurted out, "I was afraid you'd gone down in that yacht last night."

"You were! How did you know 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 Municipal pier, and that you had gone 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 I arrived. There wasn't a d—n thing to take after it in, and, besides, just then, I didn't really know 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 somewhere. Say, I combed that pier, 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 a 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 trailer on him. The girl had disappeared; she'd been to a bank, and then to the Coolidge 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 did the banks. 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 hoodle 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 Hobart had just purchased two tickets for Patience. We hustled over, but were too late to catch that train, but learned the girl had accompanied him on the trip. We caught another rather two hours later, and got off at Patience, 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 constructed all I needed from the station agent. It seems this outfit was the summer sensation out here. We hooped 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 it—no smoke, no light; not a d—n sound. We laid out and waited, not sure what we were up against. Finally we jimmied 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 others."

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, poised and eager; then the doors were flung crashing back, and they leaped recklessly forward, out of the darkness into the light. 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 shrieking woman 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 an assailant in the arm; Hogan snatched up a chair and struck viciously at West, who leaped straight forward breaking the full force of the blow and driving his own fist into the man's face. It was all over within a minute's fierce fighting—the surprise turning the trick. Hobart went down cursing, the gun kicked out of his hand, his arm broken; Hogan, straggling still, but plumed 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 wiped his streaming face, and looked around with blood, the table overturned and broken, a blanket over one of the windows torn down, a smashed chair in one corner. The detective who had

been shot was still lying in front of the door. "Red" lay motionless, a ghastly cut over his eye, and Hobart, his arm dangling, sat propped up against the wall, cursing, malevolent, but helpless. On the other side stood Bennett 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-serviceman smiled grimly, well satisfied.

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

McAdams stared at them both, gulping in startled surprise, the visitor confronting him, unable to find words. Then his eyes fixed the revolver on the face of the speaker.

"What?" he burst forth. "You, Del? Great Scott! your name was Hobart, wasn't it? Why, I never once connected you two together. Is—this your father?"

"I don't know about that," Mac returned indifferently. "It is a matter of argument I believe. However, I don't, what's the odds now? I am the one you're after, Mister Fly-Cop; and here I am."

She walked forward, almost proudly, her eyes shining, and gazing fearlessly into his. He stepped back, a no hand extended.

"No, Del, this must be a mistake. I can't believe it of you, you—you are not a crook."

"Oh, yes I am," she snarled, but with a tremor in the low voice, "I've never been anything else, Bobby boy—I think, thanks to that thing down there."

Natalie still remained poised uncertainly in the doorway, scarcely 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, these are police officers."

"And that—that girl? She looked so much like me. Who is she? Do you know?"

West clasped her hands tightly, his voice sunk to a whisper.

"She is your sister, Natalie," he asserted soberly, "your twin sister." Her, unbelieve eyes swept to his face.

"My sister; my twin sister? But I had none."

"Yes, but you did," he insisted gently. "You never knew it, but Percival Coolidge did. This was his devilish scheme, plotted years ago when you were born. Now here is the end of it—the girl is your sister. There is no doubt of that."

"No doubt, you say! My sister!" Her head 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 I will go to her, Matthew West."

She loosened the clasp of her fingers and walked forward, her eyes moist with tears. Straight across the room she went, her hands outstretched to where the other shrank back from her in embarrassment—between them stood the gulf which lay over the bridge.

[THE END.]

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

"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 are?"

"Those I saw were Hobart, 'Red' Hogan, the girl, a big fellow they called Mark who was on the yacht—'Mark Bennett; he's Hogan's side-kick, 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 be 'Dago Dave.' That guy would cut 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 silently away 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 silently, 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 cowering behind him. There was scarcely the sound of a breath audible. The detective hesitated; 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 forward.

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 in.

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, poised and eager; then the doors were flung crashing back, and they leaped recklessly forward, out of the darkness into the light. 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 shrieking woman 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 an assailant in the arm; Hogan snatched up a chair and struck viciously at West, who leaped straight forward breaking the full force of the blow and driving his own fist into the man's face. It was all over within a minute's fierce fighting—the surprise turning the trick. Hobart went down cursing, the gun kicked out of his hand, his arm broken; Hogan, straggling still, but plumed 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 wiped his streaming face, and looked around with blood, the table overturned and broken, a blanket over one of the windows torn down, a smashed chair in one corner. The detective who had

been shot was still lying in front of the door. "Red" lay motionless, a ghastly cut over his eye, and Hobart, his arm dangling, sat propped up against the wall, cursing, malevolent, but helpless. On the other side stood Bennett 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-serviceman smiled grimly, well satisfied.

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

McAdams stared at them both, gulping in startled surprise, the visitor confronting him, unable to find words. Then his eyes fixed the revolver on the face of the speaker.

"What?" he burst forth. "You, Del? Great Scott! your name was Hobart, wasn't it? Why, I never once connected you two together. Is—this your father?"

"I don't know about that," Mac returned indifferently. "It is a matter of argument I believe. However, I don't, what's the odds now? I am the one you're after, Mister Fly-Cop; and here I am."

She walked forward, almost proudly, her eyes shining, and gazing fearlessly into his. He stepped back, a no hand extended.

"No, Del, this must be a mistake. I can't believe it of you, you—you are not a crook."

"Oh, yes I am," she snarled, but with a tremor in the low voice, "I've never been anything else, Bobby boy—I think, thanks to that thing down there."

Natalie still remained poised uncertainly in the doorway, scarcely 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, these are police officers."

"And that—that girl? She looked so much like me. Who is she? Do you know?"

West clasped her hands tightly, his voice sunk to a whisper.

"She is your sister, Natalie," he asserted soberly, "your twin sister." Her, unbelieve eyes swept to his face.

"My sister; my twin sister? But I had none."

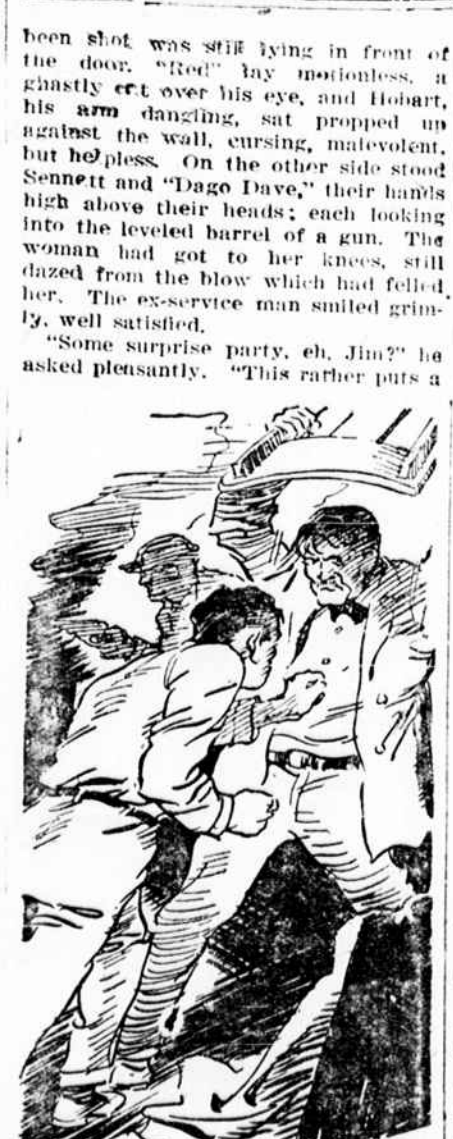
"Yes, but you did," he insisted gently. "You never knew it, but Percival Coolidge did. This was his devilish scheme, plotted years ago when you were born. Now here is the end of it—the girl is your sister. There is no doubt of that."

"No doubt, you say! My sister!" Her head 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 I will go to her, Matthew West."

She loosened the clasp of her fingers and walked forward, her eyes moist with tears. Straight across the room she went, her hands outstretched to where the other shrank back from her in embarrassment—between them stood the gulf which lay over the bridge.

[THE END.]

American Agricultural Chemical Companies FERTILIZERS HIGHEST GRADE Especially made for Cotton under Boll Weevil Conditions Mr. D. P. DOUGLASS Will be our Representative. If he does not see you, call on him. HOLLIS BROTHERS BENNETTSVILLE, S. C.



Hogan Snatched Up a Chair and Struck Viciously at West.

"All right, old top. She is in this house somewhere, and can't get out, so we'll look around a bit; try behind the curtains over there."

The officer stepped forward, but at the same instant the draperies parted, and two girls stood beside each other in the opening, framed against the brighter glare of light beyond—two girls, looking so alike, except for dress and the arrangement of their hair, as to be almost indistinguishable—Natalie white face, frightened, gazing with wide-open eyes on the strange scene before her; the other smiling and audacious, her gaze full of defiance. It was the voice of the latter which broke the silence.

"Am I the one you want, Mr. Bob McAdams?" she asked cheerfully. "Very well, I am here."

McAdams stared at them both, gulping in startled surprise, the visitor confronting him, unable to find words. Then his eyes fixed the revolver on the face of the speaker.

"What?" he burst forth. "You, Del? Great Scott! your name was Hobart, wasn't it? Why, I never once connected you two together. Is—this your father?"

"I don't know about that," Mac returned indifferently. "It is a matter of argument I believe. However, I don't, what's the odds now? I am the one you're after, Mister Fly-Cop; and here I am."

face. "My sister; my twin sister? But I had none."

"Yes, but you did," he insisted gently. "You never knew it, but Percival Coolidge did. This was his devilish scheme, plotted years ago when you were born. Now here is the end of it—the girl is your sister. There is no doubt of that."

"No doubt, you say! My sister!" Her head 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 I will go to her, Matthew West."

She loosened the clasp of her fingers and walked forward, her eyes moist with tears. Straight across the room she went, her hands outstretched to where the other shrank back from her in embarrassment—between them stood the gulf which lay over the bridge.

[THE END.]

SHERIFF'S SALE

Lots in Tract of Mt. Croghan

By virtue of a writ given in a Decree passed at Chesterfield Court of Common Pleas, by Judge S. W. C. Shipp, Presiding Judge, December 5th, 1922, in the case of Bank of Mt. Croghan vs. Lucy Hinson, C. D. Hinson, Sovie Morgan, Sallie Leonard, Charles Smith, Carrie Smith and F. M. Moore administrators of estate of W. G. Hinson, do I, I will sell to the highest bidder on sales day in January, 1923 within the legal hours of sale at Chesterfield Court House—

All that certain piece, parcel or lot of land, situated, lying and being in the State of South Carolina, County of Chesterfield, and in the Town of Mt. Croghan, more fully described as follows: Lots 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 the lots of the Gillespie survey and originally sold to C. P. Nicholson. Terms of sale—Cash. December 7, 1922. J. T. GRANT, Sheriff.

Bono Meal and Sheep Manure for Lawns. The Pure Seed Co., 41-52 Cheraw, S. C.