



SYNOPSIS.

**CHAPTER I.**—In a New York jewelry store Philip Severn, United States consular agent, notices a small box which attracts him. He purchases it. Later he discovers in a secret compartment a writing giving a clue to a revolutionary movement in this country seeking to overthrow the Chilean government. The writing mentions a rendezvous, and Severn decides to investigate.

**CHAPTER II.**—Finding the place mentioned in the writing apparently deserted, Severn visits a saloon in the vicinity. A woman in the place is met by a man, seemingly by appointment, and Severn, his suspicions aroused, follows them. They go to the designated meeting place, an abandoned iron foundry.

**CHAPTER III.**—At the rendezvous Severn is accepted as one of the conspirators and admitted. He meets a stranger who appears to recognize him.

**CHAPTER IV.**—The stranger addresses Severn as Harry Daly. The incident plays into Severn's hands and he accepts it. His new acquaintance is a notorious thief, "Gentleman George" Harris. Concealed, Severn hears the girl he had followed address the conspirators. She urges them to hasten the work of revolution.

**CHAPTER V.**—Leaving the crowd to discuss the message she had brought, the girl discovers Severn listening. She accepts his explanation of his presence and makes an appointment to meet him next day. He tells her his name is Daly. Harris informs him of a scheme he has to secure a sum amounting to \$100,000, the revolutionary fund, and offers to "split" with him. Severn accepts the proposition.

**CHAPTER VI.**—Severn learns it was his new friend and a "Captain Alva" who had lost the box which started him on the trail. Harris tells him the woman is Marie Gessler. He arranges to meet Severn next day at Tom Costigan's saloon. Leaving the building, Severn notices a stalled automobile a few blocks away. Investigating, he finds the body of Captain Alva, stabbed to death with a hatpin dagger. Securing it, he remembers having seen it, or one like it, in Marie Gessler's hat.

**CHAPTER VII.**—Believing Marie left the foundry with Alva, Severn is forced to believe she is the slayer. He takes the dagger with him, leaving the body to be discovered later. At the address Marie had given him he finds she is unknown. He visits Costigan's and learns that Harris has disappeared. Costigan apparently has no doubt that Severn is really "Daly" and gives him his full confidence.

**CHAPTER VIII.**—At his hotel Severn finds a message asking him to phone the Hotel McAlpin. He does so and is invited to call. At the McAlpin he meets Marie Gessler. She refuses fully to explain her position, and he is unable to make up his mind as to whether she is guilty or innocent of Alva's murder. The presumption, however, is all against her, and Severn, on whom she has made a deep impression, is in a quandary.

**CHAPTER IX.**—With Marie, Severn visits Perond's cafe, an underworld resort, where the girl believes they may meet Harris and a Russian Jew, Ivan Waldron, a leading spirit in the scheme of robbery. At Perond's, Harris discovers Severn, and believing the latter has obtained the money after killing Alva, attacks him. Severn fights him and Waldron off, and with Marie, escapes. The girl refuses fully to explain her position in connection with the conspirators, insisting that Severn must give her his full confidence. With that he is forced to be content.

**CHAPTER X.**—After leaving the girl at the McAlpin, Severn finds that his room has been entered and the dagger stolen. Bewildered, he about comes to the conclusion that Marie has secured it as incriminating evidence. On a telephone call from Harris Severn visits Costigan's. There Harris, Costigan and Waldron confront him. They refuse to believe he has not got the money stolen from Alva, and after a fight Severn is left unconscious.

**CHAPTER XI.**—Returning to consciousness, Severn escapes from the room in which he is confined. He finds Marie in another room, and her partial explanation of her part in the tangled affair almost convinces him of her innocence. She explains her presence in the house by the fact that she and Ivan Waldron's wife had been girlhood friends. She has been deceived to the place by Harris in the hope that, having her in their power, the conspirators can induce Severn to share the money which they are convinced he and the girl had stolen from Alva.

**CHAPTER XII.**—Escaping from the house, Severn has a fight with Harris and Waldron. Harris is accidentally killed by Waldron and Severn and the girl get away. Severn meets a cab driver who gives him information turning his mind to Gasper Wine as the murderer of Alva. Wine was present at the meeting at the iron foundry.

**CHAPTER XIII.**—Severn visits the Colmar building, in which Wine has his office. In hiding, he is a witness to a meeting between Wine and Waldron and overhears enough to convince him that those two were the actual murderers, and that they have the money. Severn is discovered in his hiding place.

unknown invader who had escaped after knocking him senseless. Certainly he would never reveal the truth, unless compelled to do so. To do so would queer his whole game.

That is, it would if his game was anything as I had doped it out. If he, working alone, or with some accomplice, as now appeared more probable, had been concerned in the Alva murder, his main object at present would assuredly be to escape detection, and get a division of the spoils. His one desire would be to remain out of sight, and in order to do this he must shield me from arrest.

I awoke at eleven, rested and with a clear brain. Nothing had occurred to disturb me, and, as I looked at the watch and realized the hour, felt no longer a doubt but what Waldron had found some way in which to protect us both. Eager to look over the noon editions myself, I dressed rather hurriedly, and descended to the lobby. The paper secured was devoid of particulars, "Gentleman George" Harris, well known to the police, had been found dead in the hallway of a rooming house on Le Compte street, operated by Mrs. Sarah Waldron. It is believed to have been a thieves' quarrel from the evidence of those in the house, who heard the sounds of a struggle, and saw a strange man escape through the front door. There were no arrests, although the police were searching for certain parties who might be implicated.

So far so good; but now what about the Russian? He had evidently escaped suspicion, yet would be far from easy in his own mind. The situation in which he found himself would only serve to increase his desire to secure the money, and get safely away while the going was good. If he actually knew where such money was to be had, he would scarcely delay seeking it. If he had personally hidden that bag of currency taken from Alva, he would be after the stuff within twenty-four hours; while if another held it, he would as surely seek the fellow out, and demand his share. This gave me two lines to follow; I might locate Waldron, and shadow him; or I might see what discoveries I could make in the Colmar building. The better chance seemed to me lay in Broad street. I ate a deliberate lunch, planning how best to proceed, and hoping some bellboy would call me to the telephone. I finished the meal uninterrupted.

Both Wall and Broad streets were busy enough when I elbowed my passage through the shifting crowds of men hurrying in every direction, and, reached the edge of the curb, gazed upward at the ornamental front of the Colmar building.

I took an elevator to the twelfth floor, and walked slowly from end to end of the marble corridor, reading the names on the glass doors as I passed. I met but few people and attracted



So Far So Good; but Now What About the Russian?

no attention, passing down the stairway to the floor below. Growing more pessimistic as I proceeded, I had reached the fifth floor, when, as I turned at the front of the iron stairs, my glance rested on the letters stenciled along the frosted glass opposite—"Mutual Investment Company, Gasper Wine, Manager." I stopped still, my heart beating wildly, feeling that I had stumbled blindly on the very thing I had been seeking. Gasper Wine was the name of the man who, through accident, had opened to me the door leading into the Alva factory; the man who had left me alone in the entry while he disappeared to talk with Alva privately in the little side-room. Gasper Wine! For the first time I really believed the old hack driver was right—he had actually picked up just such a fare, lugging a bag with him, and driven the fellow to this place at midnight. I had never connected the crime with Wine before—yet why not? He was among those present; he had been alone with Alva; he doubtless knew of the transferring of the money; and he answered fully the description of the man the caddy had picked up near the Jersey docks.

I stood irresolute, undecided as to my next move. I felt convinced I was at last on the right trail but how could I verify my suspicion? There seemed to be but one sure method. Whoever had actually committed the murder and robbery, I still clung to the theory that Ivan Waldron knew him, and would demand his share as the price of a silent tongue. Nor would he, under present circumstances, be content to wait very long for such a division. He needed the money more than ever to escape from the observation of the police. If Wine had possession of the valise he would certainly be called upon to deliver a portion of its contents very shortly. My best course, then, was to keep an eye open for Waldron; if he came, there would be no doubt as to the exact nature of his errand.

The stairway gave me no advantage; it was open and doubtless frequently used. To be seen loitering there for any length of time would attract attention. I ventured to try the private door, but, as expected, found it securely locked, nor did I dare exert any force, not knowing who might be inside. The office remained quiet, no one either leaving or entering, nor did I observe any shadow on the frosted glass indicative of movement within. Baffled and uncertain, I had barely returned to my point of concealment, when an elevator stopped at this floor level, and three men stepped out into the corridor. Two of them attracted no attention, but the third was in his shirt-sleeves and wore a cap with some insignia upon it. He advanced briskly, and flung open the door leading into what had once been the "Railway Exchange," and motioned the others to enter. As the three vanished, I heard him explain that this was the only vacant suite on this floor, and then another voice said, dissatisfied, that it was altogether too small for their purpose. When they came out the agent closed the door carelessly and pressed the elevator button, saying he would show them something on the second floor above.

Even as they shot up out of sight I was across the corridor with hand on the knob. I feared a springlock, but was pleasantly disappointed, the door opening instantly, permitting me to slip inside. There were two rooms, both small, and littered with the fragments left by the late occupants. What struck me forcibly was that there was no connection between those rooms and the next suite; they were separated by a thick wall. I could hide here securely enough, and by slightly lifting the glass, gain good view of the corridor, but it would be impossible to overhear anything taking place in Wine's office. At that, the position was better for my purpose than the open stairway, and I unfastened the window sash, propping it open a crack so as to afford me a fair view. If Waldron appeared I would endeavor to discover some means of learning the object of his visit. Meanwhile I was safe enough, and able to observe every movement on the floor.

Suddenly, when I least expected it, the door of the investment office opened, and a young woman came out. She had her hat on, and I took note of a pencil stuck into her hair, and felt no doubt she was Wine's stenographer, who had finished her day's work and was departing for home. Then the man was probably still there alone. The girl disappeared down the elevator, and could scarcely have reached the lower floor, when a cage traveling in the opposite direction stopped and discharged a passenger. It was a woman who stepped out, glancing quickly about as though uncertain where to go, and I recognized Marie Gessler.

She started down the corridor, looking for the numbers on the doors, and then, discovering herself wrong, retraced her steps and approached Wine's door. Even then she appeared to doubt her next move, glancing around as though anxious to remain unobserved before venturing farther. Then, opening the door quickly, she disappeared within. In that moment, before the door closed, I caught the sound of a man's voice, startled, uttering a single surprised exclamation.

"You here! What does this mean?" Then a low spoken answer, the words inaudible, and ended by a click of the latch.

That closed door seemed to urge me to learn what was transpiring beyond; I could not fight back the temptation. But would it open? had it been left unlocked? The only way in which I could ascertain was to try. There was no one to witness my attempt, and, even if some office door suddenly opened, I could quickly find concealment in the nearby stairway. I crept out through a narrow crack, and approached on tiptoe the entrance to Wine's office. No sound reached me from within, and my fingers silently pressed the knob, which turned without resistance—the latch was off. A half inch at a time I opened the door, listening for any noise behind, my eyes peering through the narrow crack at what was revealed within. They perceived little, merely a small, unoccupied room, evidently an outer office, containing a cheap desk, two chairs and a typewriting stand, the machine covered. Two maps hung upon the walls; in one corner was a glass water-holder, and in the other a diminutive closet, the door ajar. That was all, except that indistinguishable voices were conversing somewhere beyond the partition and well out of view.

Encouraged to believe this I thrust my head far enough forward to make sure. A step to the left would doubt-

less have revealed Wine, but from where I stood the end of the partition interfered. By slipping to the right it would be quite possible for me to enter without being seen, and three cautious steps would bring me to the security of the closet. From there, with the door into the corridor closed, I might overhear all that passed between the two. I had ventured too far now to retreat, and, without a second of hesitation, I pressed through the narrow opening, and silently



Felt You Ought to Be Forewarned.

closed the door behind me. Confident that I had not been detected, I crouched into the narrow closet scarcely knowing whether to be ashamed or proud of my success.

I could clearly distinguish the words of conversation. At first these were hardly understandable, seemingly having no connection with any matter with which I felt concerned. The two were evidently discussing money to be sure, but in terms involving the payment of interest, and the impossibility of extending a loan. I overheard her say, quietly but firmly:

"I came to you, Mr. Wine, because of our connection in other matters. I overheard this discussion, and felt you ought to be forewarned."

"I appreciate your kindness," he answered, evidently surprised, "but simply cannot raise the amount today—it is too late."

"It does not have to be raised today, but before the closing of banking hours tomorrow."

"I can have it by then," desperately.

"I was sure you could, if I only explained the necessity."

She arose as though her purpose had been accomplished, but apparently the man was uneasy, and desired to know more.

"But I fail to understand your interest; why should you take the trouble to come here and tell me this?" She laughed lightly.

"Why? really it is easily enough understood. We are together, are we not? Now that Captain Alva is dead, it is generally believed you will be selected to lead in this work. Oh, yes it is; I have already been so informed. And in that case it is absolutely necessary that your bank connections be excellent. There are other funds already in this country."

"Other funds! I supposed this last payment was to be all."

"Assuredly not; the cause cannot stop for an instant merely because of this loss. Moreover, that will doubtless be recovered."

"Do you think so? Have the police found any clues?"

"The police! Hardly, but there are others searching, not so easily turned aside. We believe we know already who got the money."

"You—you think you—you know?" he could not keep the tremble out of his voice. "Was—that is one of us?"

"It could scarcely be an outsider, for the secret was guarded well. Only those of that circle knew the money was here even, while not more than two or three were aware of its having been passed over to Alva. I can't say any more at present, Mr. Wine. You knew Captain Alva very well, did you not?"

"Yes; that is, we were good friends. We had much in common."

"Are you a German?"

"By blood—yes, but born in Poland; Captain Alva's mother was also a Pole; this brought us closer together."

"And you have no suspicion of any one who could have known, and been guilty of this murder and robbery?"

"Why should I? Why you ask me that?" excitedly. "There were many there; perhaps all know except me. You not suppose I know he—he die?"

"Oh, no; I merely thought you might have some suspicion, that was all. It was a strange weapon he was killed with."

"A strange weapon! What you mean, a strange weapon? Do they know what it was that killed him?"

"Certainly; it was picked up in the bottom of the auto—a dagger hat-pin, such as women wear. See, it was just like this of mine."

She must have plucked the ornament from out her own hat and laid it on the desk, for I heard the faint click of its fall. There was a moment of intense silence, and I could vision the intense horror with which he was staring at the instrument, unable to command words.

"That thing!" he burst forth finally. "Killed with that!"

"No, not that; but one exactly like (Continued on page 7, column 1.)"

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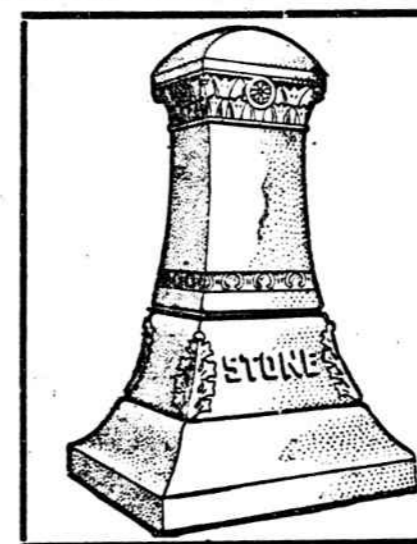
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