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SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—Wealthy and highly placed in the Chicago business world, Benjamin Corvet is something of a recluse and a mystery to his associates. After a stormy interview with his partner, Henry Spearman, Corvet seeks Constance Sherrill, daughter of his other business partner, Lawrence Sherrill, and secures from her a promise not to marry Spearman. He then disappears. Sherrill writes Corvet has written to a certain Alan Conrad, in Blue Rapids, Kansas, and exhibited strange agitation over the matter.

CHAPTER II.—Corvet's letter summons Conrad, a youth of unknown parentage, to Chicago.

CHAPTER III.—From a statement of Sherrill it seems probable Conrad is Corvet's illegitimate son. Corvet has deserted his home and his contents to Alan.

CHAPTER IV.—Alan takes possession of his new home.

CHAPTER V.—That night Alan discovers a man ransacking the desks and bureau drawers in Corvet's apartments. The appearance of Alan tremendously agitates the intruder, who appears to think him a ghost and flees to the Miwaka. After a struggle the man escapes.

CHAPTER VI.—Next day Alan learns from Sherrill that Corvet has deserted his entire property to him. Introduced to Spearman, Alan is astounded at the discovery that he is the man whom he had found in his house the night before.

CHAPTER VII.—Alan tells no one of his strange accounts, were in a private interview takes Spearman with the fact Spearman laughs at and defies him.

(Continued from last week.)

"I've known for a good many years, Spearman went on, reluctantly, that Ben Corvet's brain was seriously affected. He recognized that himself even earlier, and admitted it to himself when he took me off my ship to take charge of the company. I might have gone with other people then, or I wouldn't have been very long before I could have started in as a ship owner myself; but, in view of his condition, Ben made me promises that offered me most. Afterward his malady progressed so that he couldn't know himself to be untrustworthy; his judgment was impaired, and he planned and would have tried to carry out many things that would have been disastrous for the company. I had to fight him—for the company's sake and for my own sake and that of the others, whose interests were at stake. Your father came to see that what I was doing was for the company's good and has learned to trust me. But you—you couldn't see that quite so directly, of course, and you thought I didn't—like Ben, and there was some lack in me which made me fail to appreciate him."

"No; not that," Constance denied quickly. "Not that, Henry?"

"What was it then, Connie? You thought me ungrateful to him? I realize that I owed a great debt to him; but the only way I could pay that debt was to do exactly what I did—oppose him and seem to push into his place and be an ingrate; for, because I did that, Ben's been a respected and honored man in this town all these last years, which he couldn't have remained if I'd let him have his way, or if I told others why I had to do what I did. I didn't care what others thought about me; but I did care what you thought; yet if you couldn't see what I was up against because of your affection for him, why—that was all right too."

"No, it wasn't all right," she denied almost fiercely, the flush flooding her cheeks; a throbbing was in her throat which, for an instant, stopped her. "You should have told me, Henry; or—I should have been able to see."

"I couldn't tell you—dear," he said the last word very distinctly, but so low that she could scarcely hear. "I couldn't tell you now—if Ben hadn't gone away as he has and this other fellow come. I couldn't tell you when you wanted to keep caring so much for your Uncle Benny, and he was trying to hurt me with you."

She bent toward him, her lips parted; but now she did not speak. She never had really known Henry until this moment, she felt; she had thought of him always as strong, almost brutal, fighting down fiercely, mercilessly, his opponents and welcoming contest for the joy of overwhelming others by his own decisive strength and power. And she had been almost ready to marry that man for his strength and dominance from those qualities; and now she knew that he was merciful too—indeed, more than merciful. In the very contest where she had thought of him as most selfish and regardless of another, she had most completely misapprehended.

"I ought to have seen!" she rebuked herself to him. "Surely, I should have seen that was it!"

"How could you see?" he defended her. "He never showed to you the side he showed to me and—in these last years, anyway—never to me the side he showed to you. But after what has happened this week, can you understand now; and you can see why I have to distrust the young fellow who's come to claim Ben Corvet's place."

"Claim?" Constance repeated. "Why, Henry, I did not know he claimed any-

thing; he didn't even know when he came here—"

"He seems, like Ben Corvet," Henry said slowly, "to have the characteristic of showing one side to you, another to me, Connie. With you, of course, he claimed nothing; but at the office—Your father showed him this morning the instruments of transfer that Ben seems to have left conveying to him all Ben had—his other properties and his interest in Corvet, Sherrill and Spearman. I very naturally objected to the execution of those transfers, without considerable examination, in view of Corvet's mental condition and of the fact that they put the controlling stock of Corvet, Sherrill and Spearman in the hands of a youth no one ever had heard of—and one who, by his own story, never had seen a ship until yesterday. And when I didn't dismiss my business with a dozen men this morning to take him into the company, he claimed occasion to see me alone to threaten me."

"Threaten you, Henry? How? With what?"

"I couldn't quite make out myself, but that was his tone; he demanded an 'explanation,' of exactly what he didn't make clear. He has been given by Ben, apparently, the technical control of Corvet, Sherrill and Spearman. His idea, if I oppose him, evidently is to turn me out and take the management himself."

Constance leaned back, confused. "He—Alan Conrad?" she questioned. "He can't have done that, Henry! Oh, he can't have meant that!"

"Maybe he didn't; I said I couldn't make out what he did mean," Spearman said. "Things have come upon him with rather a rush, of course; and you couldn't expect a country boy to get so many things straight. He's acting, I suppose, only in the way one might expect a boy to act who had been brought up in poverty on a Kansas prairie and was suddenly handed the possible possession of a good many millions of dollars. It's better to believe that he's only lost his head. I haven't had opportunity to tell your father these things yet; but I wanted you to understand why Conrad will hardly consider me a friend."

"I'll understand you now, Henry," she promised.

CHAPTER VIII.

Violence.

At half-past three, Alan left the office. Sherrill had told him an hour earlier that Spearman had telephoned he would not be able to get back for a conference that afternoon; and Alan was certain now that in Spearman's absence Sherrill would do nothing further with respect to his affairs.

Was there no one whom Alan could tell of his encounter with Spearman in Corvet's house, with probability of receiving belief? Alan had not been thinking directly of Constance Sherrill, as he walked swiftly north to the Drive; but she was, in a way, present in all his thoughts. As he approached the Sherrill house, he saw standing at the curb an open roadster with a liveried chauffeur; he had seen that roadster, he recognized with a little start, in front of the office building that morning when Constance had taken him downtown. He turned into the walk and rang the bell.

The servant who opened the door knew him and seemed to accept his right of entry to the house, for he drew back for Alan to enter. Alan went into the hall and waited for the servant to follow. "Is Miss Sherrill in?" he asked.

"I'll see, sir." The man disappeared. Alan, waiting, did not hear Constance's voice in reply to the announcement of the servant, but Spearman's vigorous tones. The servant returned. "Miss Sherrill will see you in a minute, sir."

Through the wide doorway to the drawing room, Alan could see the smaller, portered entrance to the room beyond—Sherrill's study. The curtains parted, and Constance and Spearman came into this inner doorway; they stood an instant there in talk. As Constance started away, Spearman suddenly drew her back to him and kissed her. Alan's shoulders spontaneously jerked back and his hands clenched; he did not look away and, as she approached, she became aware that he had seen.

She came to him, very quiet and very flushed; then she was quite pale as she asked him, "You wanted me?"

He was white as she, and could not speak at once. "You told me last night, Miss Sherrill," he said, "that the last thing that Mr. Corvet did—the last that you know of—was to warn you against one of your friends. Who was that?"

She flushed uneasily. "You mustn't attach any importance to that; I didn't mean you to. There was no reason for what Mr. Corvet said, except in Mr. Corvet's own mind. He had a quite unreasonnable animosity—"

"Against Mr. Spearman, you mean?"

"Yes, against Mr. Spearman, you mean?"

She did not answer.

"His animosity was against Mr. Spearman? Miss Sherrill, wasn't it? That is the only animosity of Mr. Corvet's that anyone has told me about."

"Yes."

"It was against Mr. Spearman that he warned you, then?"

"Yes."

"Thank you," he turned and, not waiting for the man, let himself out. He should have known it when he had seen that Spearman, after announcing himself as unable to get back to the office, was with Constance.

He went swiftly around the block to his own house and let himself in at the front door with his key. The house was warm; a shaded lamp on the table in the larger library was lighted, a fire was burning in the open grate, and the rooms had been swept and dusted. The Indian came into the hall to take his coat and hat.

"Dinner is at seven," Wassaquam announced. "You want some change about that?"

"No; seven is all right."

Alan went upstairs to the room next to Corvet's which he had appropriated for his own use the night before, and found it now prepared for his occupancy. When he came down again to the first floor, Wassaquam was nowhere about, but he heard sounds in the service rooms on the basement floor.

He went part way down the service stairs and saw the Indian in the kitchen, preparing dinner. Wassaquam had not heard his approach, and Alan stood an instant watching the Indian's tall, thin figure and the quick movements of his disproportionately small, well-shaped hands, almost like a woman's; then he scuffed his foot upon the stair, and Wassaquam turned swiftly about.

"Anybody been here today, Judah?" Alan asked.

"No, Alan. I called tradesmen; they came. There were young men from the newspapers."

"What did you tell them?"

"Nothing."

"Why not?"

"Henry telephoned I was to tell them nothing."

"You mean Henry Spearman?"

"Yes."

"Do you take orders from him, Judah?"

"I took that order, Alan."

Alan hesitated. "You've been here in the house all day?"

"Yes, Alan."

Alan went back to the first floor and into the smaller library. The room was dark with the early winter dusk, and he switched on the light; then he knelt and pulled out one of the drawers he had seen Spearman searching through the night before, and carefully examined the papers in it one by one, but found them only ordinary papers. He pulled the drawer completely out and sounded the wall behind it and the partitions on both sides but they appeared solid. He put the drawer back in and went on to examine the next one, and after that, the others. The clocks in the house had been wound, for presently the clock in the library struck six, and another in the hall chimed slowly. An hour later, when the clocks chimed again, Alan looked up and saw Wassaquam's small black eyes, deep set in their large eye sockets, fixed on him intently through the door. How long the Indian had been there, Alan could not guess; he had not heard his step.

"What are you looking for, Alan?" the Indian asked.

Alan reflected a moment. "Mr. Sherrill thought that Mr. Corvet might have left a record of some sort here for me, Judah. Do you know of anything like that?"

"No. That is what you are looking for?"

"Yes. Do you know of any place where Mr. Corvet would have been likely to put away anything like that?"

"Ben put papers in all these drawers."

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"You're a Chippewa, aren't you, Judah?" Alan asked.

ers; he put them upstairs, too—where you have seen."

"Nowhere else, Judah?"

"If he put things anywhere else, Alan, I have not seen. Dinner is served, Alan."

Alan went to the lavatory on the first floor and washed the dust from his hands and face; then he went into the dining room. Wassaquam, having served the dinner, took his place behind Alan's chair, ready to pass him what he needed; but the Indian's silent, watchful presence there behind him where he could not see his face, disturbed Alan, and he twisted himself about to look at him.

"Would you mind, Judah," he inquired, "if I asked you to stand over there instead of where you are?"

The Indian, without answering,

moved around to the other side of the table, where he stood facing Alan.

"You're a Chippewa, aren't you, Judah?" Alan asked.

"Yes."

"Your people live at the other end of the lake, don't they?"

"Yes, Alan."

"Have you ever heard of the Indian Drum they talk about up there, that they say sounds when a ship goes down on the lake?"

The Indian's eyes sparkled excitedly. "Yes," he said.

"Do you believe in it?"

"Not just believe; I know. Everybody knows that it sounds for those who die on the lake. I have heard it. It sounded for my father."

"How was that?"

"Like this. My father sold some bullocks to a man on Beaver Island. The man kept store on Beaver Island, Alan. No Indian liked him. He would not hand anything to an Indian, or wrap anything in paper for an Indian. Say it was like this: An Indian comes in to buy salt pork. First the man would get the money. Then, Alan, he would take his hook and pull the pork up out of the barrel and throw it on the dirty floor for the Indian to pick up. He said Indians must take their food off of the floor—like dogs."

"My father had to take the bullocks to the man, across to Beaver Island. At first the Indians did not know who the bullocks were for, so they helped him. When they found out the bullocks were for the man on Beaver Island, the Indians would not help him any longer. He had to take them across alone. Besides, it was bad weather, the beginning of a storm."

"He went away, and my mother went to pick berries—I was small then. Pretty soon I saw my mother coming back. She had no berries, and her hair was hanging down, and she was waiting. She took me in her arms and said my father was dead. Other Indians came around and asked her how she knew, and she said she heard the Drum. The Indians found my father's body."

"Did you ever hear of a ship called the Miwaka, Judah?"

"That was long ago," the Indian answered.

"They say that the Drum beat wrong when the Miwaka went down—that it was one beat short of the right number."

"That was long ago," Wassaquam merely repeated.

"Did Mr. Corvet ever speak to you about the Miwaka?"

"No; he asked me once if I had ever heard the Drum. I told him."

Wassaquam removed the dinner and brought Alan a dessert. He returned to stand in the place across the table that Alan had assigned to him, and stood looking down at Alan, steadily and thoughtfully.

"Do I look like any one you ever saw before, Judah?" Alan inquired of him.

"No."

"Is that what you are thinking?"

"That is what I was thinking. Will coffee be served in the library, Alan?"

Alan crossed to the library and seated himself in the chair where his father had been accustomed to sit. Wassaquam brought him the single small cup of coffee, lit the spirit lamp on the smoking stand and moved that over; then he went away. When he had finished his coffee, Alan went into the smaller connecting room and recommenced his examination of the drawers under the bookshelves. At ten o'clock, Alan stopped his search and went back to the chair in the library. He dozed; for he awoke with a start and a feeling that some one had been bending over him, and gazed up into Wassaquam's face. The Indian had been scrutinizing him with intent, anxious inquiry. He moved away, but Alan called him back.

"When Mr. Corvet disappeared, Judah, you went to look for him up at Manistique, where he was born—at least Mr. Sherrill said that was where you went. Why did you think you might find him there?" Alan asked.

"In the end, I think, a man maybe goes back to the place where he began. That's all, Alan."

"In the end! What do you mean by that? What do you think has become of Mr. Corvet?"

"I think now—Ben's dead."

"What makes you think that?"

"Nothing makes me think; I think it myself."

"I see. You mean you have no reason more than others for thinking it; but that is what you believe."

"Yes," Wassaquam went away, and Alan heard him on the back stairs, ascending to his room.

When Alan went up to his own room, after making the rounds to see that the house was locked, a droning chant came to him from the third floor. He paused in the hall and listened, then went up to the floor above. A flickering light came to him through the half-open door of a room at the front of the house; he went a little way toward it and looked in. Two thick candles were burning before a crucifix, below which the Indian knelt, prayer book in hand and rocking to and fro as he droned his supplications.

A word or two came to Alan, but without them Wassaquam's occupation was plain; he was praying for the repose of the dead—the Catholic chant taught to him, as it had been taught undoubtedly to his fathers, by the French Jesuits of the lakes. The intoned chant for Corvet's soul, by the man who had heard the Drum, followed and still came to Alan, as he

returned to the second floor.

He had not been able to determine, during the evening, Wassaquam's attitude toward him. Having no one else to trust, Alan had been obliged to put a certain amount of trust in the Indian; so as he had explained to Wassaquam that morning that the desk and the drawers in the little room of Corvet's had been forced, and had warned him to see that no one, who had not proper business there, entered the house. Wassaquam had appeared to accept this order; but now Wassaquam had implied that it was not because of Alan's order that he had refused reporters admission to the house.

Alan started and went quickly to the open door of his room, as he heard voices now somewhere within the house. One of the voices he recognized as Wassaquam's; the other indistinct, thick, accusing—was unknown to him; it certainly was not Spearman's. He descended swiftly to the first floor, and found Wassaquam standing in the front hall, alone.

"Who was here, Judah?" Alan demanded.

"A man," the Indian answered stolidly. "He was drunk; I put him out."

"What did he come for?"

"He came to see Ben. I put him out; he is gone, Alan."

Alan swung open the front door and looked out, but he saw no one.

"What did he want of Mr. Corvet, Judah?"

"I do not know. I told him Ben was not here; he was angry, but he went away."

"Has he ever come here before?"

"Yes; he comes twice."

"He has been here twice?"

"More than that; every year he comes twice, Alan. Once he came often."

"How long has he been doing that?"

"Since I can remember."

"Is he a friend of Mr. Corvet?"

"No friend—no!"

"But Mr. Corvet saw him when he came here?"

"Always, Alan."

"And you don't know at all what he came about?"

"How should I know? No; I do not."

Alan got his coat and hat. The sudden disappearance of the man might mean only that he had hurried away, but it might mean, too, that he was still lurking near the house. Alan had decided to make the circuit of the house and determine that. But as he came out on to the porch, a figure more than a block away to the south strode with uncertain step into the light of a street lamp, halted and faced about, and shook his flat back at the house. Alan dragged the Indian out on to the porch.

"Is that the man, Judah?" he demanded.

"Yes, Alan."

Alan ran down the steps and at full speed after the man. But when he reached the corner, he was nowhere in

from behind the obscuration of the buildings and below it a green speck—a starboard light. Information he had gained enabled him to recognize in these lights two steamers passing one another at the harbor mouth.

His thoughts turned to Constance Sherrill. Events since he had talked with her that morning had put them far apart once more; but, in another way, they were being drawn closer together. For he knew now that she was caught as well as he in the mesh of consequences of acts not their own.

He staggered, slipped, fell suddenly forward upon his knees, under a stunning, crushing blow upon his head from behind. Thought, consciousness almost lost, he struggled, twisting himself about to grasp at his assailant. He caught the man's clothing, trying to drag himself up; fighting blindly, dazedly, unable to see or think, he shouted aloud and then again, aloud. He seemed in the distance to hear answering cries; but the weight and strength of the other was bearing him down again to his knees; he tried to slip aside from it to rise. Then another blow, crushing and sickening descended on his head; even hearing left him and, unconscious, he fell forward on to the snow and lay still.

CHAPTER IX.

A Walk Beside the Lake.

"The name seems like Sherrill," the interne agreed. "He said it before when we had him on the table upstairs; and he has said it now twice distinctly—Sherrill."

"His name, do you think?"

"I shouldn't say so; he seems trying to speak to some one named Sherrill. There are only four Sherrills in the telephone book, two of them in Evans-ton and one way out in Minnoota."

"The other?"

"They're only about six blocks from where he was picked up; but they're on the Drive—the Lawrence Sherrills."

The interne whistled softly and looked more interestedly at his patient's features. "He'll be conscious some time during the day, there's only a slight fracture, and—perhaps you'd better call the Sherrill house, anyway. If he's not known there, no harm done; and if he's one of their friends and he should . . ."

The nurse nodded and moved off.

Thus it was that at a quarter to five Constance Sherrill was awakened by the knocking of one of the servants at her father's door. Her father went down stairs to the telephone instrument where he might reply without disturbing Mrs. Sherrill. Constance, kimono over her shoulders, stood at the top of the stairs and waited. It became plain to her at once that whatever had happened had been to Alan Conrad.

"Yes . . . Yes . . . You are giving him every possible care? . . . At once."

She ran part way down the stairs and met her father as he came up. He told her of the situation briefly.

"He was attacked on the street late last night; he was unconscious when they found him and took him to the hospital, and has been unconscious ever since. No one can say yet how seriously he is injured."

She waited in the hall while her father dressed, after calling the garage on the house telephone for him and ordering the motor. When he had gone, she returned anxiously to her rooms; he had promised to call her after reaching the hospital and as soon as he had learned the particulars of Alan's condition. It was ridiculous, of course, to attach any responsibility to her father or herself for what had happened to Alan—a street attack such as might have happened to any one—yet she felt that they were in part responsible. They had let him go to live alone in the house in Astor street with no better adviser than Wassaquam. Now, and perhaps because they had not warned him, he had met injury and, it might be, more than mere injury; he might be dying.

Something which had disturbed and



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excited Alan had happened to him on the first night he had passed in that house; and now, it appeared, he had been prevented from passing a second night there. What had prevented him had been an attempted robbery upon the street, her father had said, but suppose it had been something else than robbery.

She could not formulate more definitely this thought, but it persisted; she could not deny it entirely and shake it off.

To Alan Conrad, in the late afternoon of that day, this same thought was coming far more definitely and far more persistently. He had been awake and since shortly after noonday. The pain of a head which ached throbbingly and of a body bruised and sore was beginning to give place to a feeling merely of lassitude—a languor which revisited incoherence upon him when he tried to think. The man who had assailed him had meant to kill; he had not been any ordinary robber.

That purpose, blindly recognized and fought against by Alan in their struggle, had been unmistakable. Only the chance presence of passersby, who had heard Alan's shouts and responded to them, had prevented the execution of his purpose, and had driven the man to swift flight for his own safety.

A little before six Constance Sherrill and Spearman called to inquire after him and were admitted for a few moments to his room. She came to him, bent over him, while she spoke the few words of sympathy the nurse allowed to her; she stood back then while Spearman spoke to him. In the succeeding days he saw her nearly every day, accompanied always by her father or Spearman; it was the full two weeks the doctors had insisted on his remaining in the hospital before he saw her again.

(Continued Next Week.)

All University of Arizona students must sleep in the open air. As the climate is dry, mild and equable, it is possible to provide open-air sleeping quarters during the entire college year.

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