

The BLIND MAN'S EYES

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SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—Gabriel Warden, Seattle capitalist, tells his butler he is expecting a caller, to be admitted without question. He informs his wife of danger that threatens him if he pursues a course he considers the only honorable one. Warden leaves the house in his car and meets a man whom he takes into the machine. When the car returns home, Warden is found dead, murdered, and alone. The caller, a young man, has been at Warden's house, but leaves unobserved.

CHAPTER II—Bob Connelly, conductor, receives orders to hold train for a party. Five men and a girl board the train. The father of the girl, Mr. Dorne, is the person for whom the train was held. Philip D. Eaton, a young man, also boarded the train. Dorne tells his daughter and his secretary, Don Avery, to find out what they can concerning him.

CHAPTER III—The two make Eaton's acquaintance. The train is stopped by snowdrifts.

CHAPTER IV—Eaton receives a telegram addressed to Lawrence Hillward, which he claims. It warns him he is being followed.

(Continued from last week.)

She pulled back the chair beside her enticingly, and Eaton accepted it.

"Good morning, Mr. Avery," he said to Miss Dorne's companion formally as she sat down, and the man across the table murmured something perforce.

As Eaton ordered his breakfast, he appreciated for the first time that his coming had interrupted a conversation—or rather a sort of monologue of complaint on the part of Standish addressed impersonally to Avery.

They engaged in conversation as they breakfasted—a conversation in which Avery took almost no part, though Miss Dorne tried openly to draw him in; then the sudden entrance of Connelly, followed closely by a stout, brusque man who belonged to the rear Pullman, took Eaton's attention and hers.



"Mr. Eaton," she smiled, "wouldn't you like to sit with us?"

"Which is him?" the man with Connelly demanded loudly.

Connelly checked him, but pointed at the same time to Eaton.

"That's him, is it?" the other man said. "Then go ahead."

Eaton observed that Avery, who had turned in his seat, was watching this diversion on the part of the conductor with interest. Connelly stopped beside Eaton's seat.

"You took a telegram for Lawrence Hillward this morning," he asserted.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because it was mine, or meant for me, as I said at the time. My name is Eaton; but Mr. Hillward expected to make this trip with me."

The stout man with the conductor forced himself forward.

"That's pretty good, but not quite good enough!" he charged. "Conductor, get that telegram for me!"

Eaton got up, controlling himself under the insult of the other's manner.

"What business is it of yours?" he demanded.

"What business? Why, only that I'm Lawrence Hillward—that's all, my friend! What are you up to, anyway? Lawrence Hillward traveling with you! I never set eyes on you until I saw you on this train; and you take my telegram!" The charge was made loudly and distinctly; every one in the dining car—Eaton could not see every one, but he knew it was so—had put down fork or cup or spoon and was staring at him. "What did it do for? What did you want it for?" the stout man blared on.

"You think I wasn't on the train?"

"It was palling as he was uttering smaller man. He the passengers he could the smaller tables—'ed his explanation anting; the others done the same, at him with a ph.

"Section Three's getting up?" he asked.

"No, Mistah Connelly—not yet," the porter answered.

"What did he ring for?" Connelly looked to the dial, and the porter came out of the washroom and looked at it also.

"Fo' the lan's sake. I didn't hear no ring, Mistah Connelly. It mus' have been when I was out on the platform."

"Answer it, then," Connelly directed.

As the negro started to obey, Connelly followed him into the open car. He could see over the negro's shoulder the hand sticking out into the aisle, and this time, at sight of it, Connelly started violently. If Dorne had rung, he must have moved; a man who is awake does not let his hand hang out in the aisle. Yet the hand had not moved. The long, sensitive fingers fell in precisely the same position as before, stiffly separated a little one from another; they had not changed their position at all.

"Wait!" Connelly seized the porter by the arm. "I'll answer it myself."

He dismissed the negro and waited until he had gone. He looked about and assured himself that the car, except for himself and the man lying behind the curtains of Section Three, was empty. Walking briskly as though he were carelessly passing up the aisle, he brushed hard against the hand and looked back, exclaiming an apology for his carelessness.

The hand fell back heavily, inertly, and resumed its former position and hung as white and lifeless as before. No response to the apology came from behind the curtains; the man in the berth had not roused. Connelly rushed back to the curtains and touched the hand with his fingers. It was cold! He seized the hand and felt it all over; then, gasping, he parted the curtains and looked into the berth. He stared; his breath whistled out; his shoulders jerked, and he drew back, instinctively pressing his two clenched hands against his chest and the pocket which held President Jarvis' orler.

The man in the berth was lying on his right side facing the aisle; the left side of his face was thus exposed; and it had been crushed in by a violent blow from some heavy weapon which, too blunt to cut the skin and bring blood, had fractured the cheekbone and bludgeoned the temple. The proof of murderous violence was so plain that the conductor, as he saw the face in the light, recoiled with staring eyes, white with horror.

He looked up and down the aisle to assure himself that no one had entered the car during his examination; then he carefully drew the curtains together again, and hurried to the forward end of the car, where he had left the porter.

"Lock the rear door of the car," he commanded. "Then come back here."

He gave the negro the keys, and himself waited to prevent anyone from entering the car at its end. Looking through the glass of the door, he saw the young man Eaton standing in the vestibule of the car next ahead. Connelly hesitated; then he opened the door and beckoned Eaton to him.

"Will you go forward, please," he requested, "and see if there isn't a doctor—"

"You mean the man with red hair in my car?" Eaton inquired.

"That's the one."

Eaton started off without asking any questions. The porter, having locked the rear door of the car, returned and gave Connelly back the keys. Connelly still waited, until Eaton returned with the red-haired man. He let them in and locked the door behind them.

"You are a doctor?" Connelly questioned the red-haired man.

"I am a surgeon; yes."

"That's what's wanted. Doctor—"

"My name is Sinclair. I am Douglas Sinclair of Chicago."

Connelly nodded. "I have heard of you." He turned then to Eaton. "Do you know where the gentleman is who belongs to Mr. Dorne's party?—Avery, I believe his name is."

"He is in the observation car," Eaton answered.

"Will you go and get him? The car-door is locked. The porter will let you in and out. Something serious has happened here—to Mr. Dorne. Get Mr. Avery, if you can, without alarming Mr. Dorne's daughter."

Eaton nodded understanding and followed the porter, who, taking the keys again from the conductor, let him out at the rear door of the car and reclosed the door behind him. Eaton went on into the observation car.

Without alarming Harriet Dorne, he got Avery away and out of the car. "Is it something wrong with Mr. Dorne?" Donald Avery demanded as Eaton drew back to let Avery precede him into the open part of the car.

"So the conductor says."

Avery hurried forward toward the berth where Connelly was standing beside the surgeon. Connelly turned toward him.

"I sent for you, sir, because you are the companion of the man who had this berth."

Avery pushed past him, and leaped forward as he looked past the surgeon. "What has happened to Mr. Dorne?"

"You see him as we found him, sir," Connelly stared down nervously beside him.

Avery leaned inside the curtains and recoiled. "He's been murdered!"

"It looks so, Mr. Avery. Yes; if he's dead, he's certainly been murdered," Connelly agreed. "You can tell—"

Connelly avoided mention of President Jarvis' name—"tell anyone who asks you, Mr. Avery, that you saw him just as he was found."

He looked down again at the form in the berth, and Avery's gaze followed him; then, abruptly, it turned away. Avery stood clinging to the

curtain, his eyes darting from one to another of the three men.

"Will you start your examination now, Doctor Sinclair?" Connelly suggested.

The surgeon, before examining the man in the berth more closely, lifted the shades from the windows. Everything about the berth was in place, undisturbed; except for the mark of the savage blow on the side of the man's head, there was no evidence of anything unusual. It was self-evident that, whatever had been the motives of the attack, robbery was not one; whoever had struck had done no more than reach in and deliver his murderous blow; then he had gone on.

Sinclair made first an examination of the head; completing this, he unbuttoned the pajamas upon the chest, loosened them at the waist and prepared to make his examination of the body.

"How long has he been dead?" Connelly asked.

"He is not dead yet. Life is still present," Sinclair answered guardedly. "Whether he will live or ever regain consciousness is another question."

"One you can't answer?"

"The blow, as you can see," Sinclair touched the man's face with his left finger-tips—"fell mostly on the cheek and temple. The cheekbone is fractured. He is in a complete state of coma; and there may be some fracture of the skull. Of course, there is some concussion of the brain."

Any inference to be drawn from this as to the seriousness of the injuries was plainly beyond Connelly. "How long ago was he struck?" he asked.

"Some hours. Since midnight, certainly; and longer ago than five o'clock this morning."

"Could he have revived half an hour ago—say within the hour—enough to have pressed the button and rung the bell from his berth?"

Sinclair straightened and gazed at the conductor curiously. "No, certainly not," he replied. "That is completely impossible. Why did you ask?"

Connelly avoided answer. But Avery pushed forward. "What is that? What's that?" he demanded.

"Will you go on with your examination, Doctor?" Connelly urged.

"You said the bell from this berth rang recently!" Avery accused Connelly.

"The pointer in the washroom, indicating a signal from this berth, was turned down a minute ago," Connelly had to reply. "A few moments earlier all pointers had been set in the position indicating no call."

"That was before you found the body?"

"That was why I went to the berth—yes," Connelly replied; "that was before I found the body."

"Then you mean you did not find the body," Avery charged. "Someone, passing through this car a minute or so before you, must have found him!"

Connelly attended without replying.

"And evidently that man dared not report it and could not wait longer to know whether Mr.—Mr. Dorne was really dead; so he rang the bell!"

"Ought we keep Doctor Sinclair any longer from the examination, sir?" Connelly now seized Avery's arm in appeal. "The first thing for us to know is whether Mr. Dorne is dying."

Connelly checked himself; he had won his appeal. Eaton, standing quietly watchful, observed that Avery's eagerness to accuse now had been



"You See Him as We Found Him, Sir."

replaced by another interest which the conductor's words had recalled. Whether the man in the berth was to live or die—evidently that was momentarily to affect Donald Avery one way or the other.

"Of course, by all means proceed with your examination, Doctor," Avery directed.

As Sinclair again bent over the body Avery leaned over also; Eaton gazed down, and Connelly—a little paler than before and with lips tightly set.

CHAPTER VI

"Isn't This Basil Santoloni?"

The surgeon, having finished loosening the pajamas, pulled open and carefully removed the jacket part, leaving the upper part of the body of the man in the berth exposed. Conductor Connelly turned to Avery.

"You have no objection to my taking a list of the articles in the berth?"

Avery seemed to oppose; then, apparently, he recognized that this was an obvious part of the conductor's duty. "None at all," he replied.

Connelly gathered up the clothing, the glasses, the watch and purse, and laid them on the seat across the aisle.

Sitting down, then, opposite them, he examined them, and, taking everything from the pockets of the clothes, he began to catalogue them before Avery. He counted over the gold and banknotes in the purse and entered the amount upon his list.

"You know about what he had with him?" he asked.

"Very closely. That is correct. Nothing is missing," Avery answered. "The conductor opened the watch."

"The crystal is missing."

Avery nodded. "Yes; it always—that is, it was missing yesterday."

Connelly looked up at him, as though slightly puzzled by the manner of the reply; then, having finished his list, he rejoined the surgeon.

Sinclair was still bending over the naked torso. It had been a strong, healthy body; Sinclair guessed its age at fifty. As a boy, the man might have been an athlete—a college track-runner or oarsman—and he had kept himself in condition through middle age. There was no mark or bruise upon the body, except that on the right side and just below the ribs there now showed a scar about an inch and a half long and of peculiar crescent shape. It was evidently a surgical scar and had completely healed.

Sinclair scrutinized this carefully and then looked up to Avery. "He was operated on recently?"

"About two years ago."

"For what?"

"It was some operation on the gall-bladder."

"Performed by Kuno Garrt?"

Avery hesitated. "I believe so."

He watched Sinclair more closely as he continued his examination. Connelly touched the surgeon on the arm.

"What must be done, Doctor? And where and when do you want to do it?"

Sinclair, however, it appeared, had not yet finished his examination. "Will you pull down the window curtains?" he directed.

As Connelly, reaching across the body, complied, the surgeon took a matchbox from his pocket, and glancing about at the three others as though to select from them the one one most likely to be an efficient aid, he handed it to Eaton. "Will you help me, please? Strike a light and hold it as I direct—then draw it away slowly."

He lifted the partly closed eyelid from one of the eyes of the unconscious man and nodded to Eaton: "Hold the light in front of the pupil."

Eaton obeyed, drawing the light slowly away as Sinclair had directed, and the surgeon dropped the eyelid and exposed the other pupil.

"What's that for?" Avery now asked.

"I was trying to determine the seriousness of the injury to the brain. I was looking to see whether light could cause the pupil to contract. There was no reaction."

Avery started to speak, checked himself—and then he said: "There could be no reaction, I believe, Doctor Sinclair."

"What do you mean?"

"His optic nerve is destroyed."

"Ah! He was blind?"

"Yes, he was blind," Avery admitted.

"Blind!" Sinclair ejaculated. "Blind, and operated upon within two years by Kuno Garrt!" Kuno Garrt operated only upon the all-rich and powerful or upon the completely powerless and poor; the unconscious man in the berth could belong only to the first class of Garrt's clientele. The surgeon's gaze again searched the features in the berth; then it shifted to the men gathered about him in the aisle.

(Continued Next Week.)

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