

# The BLIND MAN'S EYES

BY WILLIAM MACHARG & EDWIN BALMER.  
Illustrations by R. H. Livingstone

## 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, but considers the only honorable one. Warden leaves the house in his car and arrives at a garage, where he finds a man whom he takes into the machine. When the car returns home, Warden is found dead, murdered, and alone. The car, a young man, has been at Warden's house, but leaves unobserved.

**CHAPTER II**—Bob Connery, conductor, receives orders to hold train for a party. Five men and a girl board the train. The father of the girl, a doctor, is the person for whom the train was held. Philip D. Eaton, a young man, also boards the train. He 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 Hilliard, which he claims. It warns him he is being followed.

**CHAPTER V**—Passing through the car, Connery notices Dorrie, a band leader, outside the berth. He ascertains Dorrie's name has recently rung. Parturbed, he investigates and finds Dorrie with a skull crushed. He calls a surgeon, Dr. Sinclair, on the train.

**CHAPTER VI**—Sinclair recognizes the injured man as Basil Santoline, who, although blind, is a peculiar power in the financial world as an adviser to "big interests." His recovery is a matter of doubt.

**CHAPTER VII**—Circumstances point to Eaton as Santoline's assailant.

**CHAPTER VIII**—Eaton is practically blind under arrest. He refuses to make statements as to his previous movements before Eaton. He is admitted to the hotel where he was the man who called on Warden the night the financier was murdered.

**CHAPTER IX**—Eaton pleads with Harriet Santoline to withhold judgment, telling her he is in serious danger, though innocent of the crime against her father. He feels the girl believes him.

**CHAPTER X**—Santoline recovers sufficiently to question Eaton, who refuses to reveal his identity. The financier requires Eaton to accompany him to the Santoline home, where he is in the position of a semi-prisoner.

**CHAPTER XI**—Eaton meets a resident of the house, Wallace Blatchford, and a young girl, Mildred Davis, with whom apparently he is acquainted, though they conceal the fact. Eaton's mission is to secure certain documents which are vital to his interests, and his being admitted to the house is a remarkable stroke of luck. The girl agrees to aid him. He becomes deeply interested in Harriet Santoline, and she in him.

**CHAPTER XII**—Harriet tells Eaton she and Donald Avery act as "eyes" to Santoline, reading to him the documents on which he bases his judgment. While walking with her, two men in an automobile deliberately attempt to run Eaton down. He escapes with slight injuries. The girl recognizes one of the men as having been on the train on which they came from Seattle.

**CHAPTER XIII**—Santoline questions Eaton closely, but the latter is reticent. The blind man tells him he is convinced the attack made on him on the train was the result of an error, the attacker having planned to kill Eaton. Santoline tells Harriet she is to take charge of certain papers connected with the "Latron properties," which had hitherto been in Avery's charge.

(Continued from last week.)

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"You know polo?" she questioned

him, as she saw the expression of appreciation in his face as a player daringly "trotted off" an antagonist and saved a "cross." She put the question without thought before she recognized that she was obeying her father's instructions.

"I understand the game somewhat," Eaton replied.

"Have you ever played?"

"It seems to deserve its reputation as the summit of sport," he replied.

He answered so easily that she could not decide whether he was evading or not; and somehow, just then, she found it impossible to put the simple question direct again.

"Good! Good, Don!" she cried enthusiastically and clapped her hands as Avery suddenly raced before them, caught the ball with a swinging, back-hand stroke and drove it directly toward his opponent's goal. Instantly whirling his mount, Avery raced away after the ball, and with another clean stroke scored a goal. Everyone about cried out in approbation.

"He's very quick and clever, isn't he?" Harriet said to Eaton.

Eaton nodded. "Yes; he's by all odds the most skillful man on the field, I should say."

The generosity of the praise impelled the girl, somehow, to qualify it.

"But only two others really have played much—that man and that."

"Yes, I picked them as the experienced ones," Eaton said quietly.

"The others—two of them, at least—are out for the first time, I think."

They watched the rapid course of the ball up and down the field, the scurry and scamp of the ponies after it, then the clash of a mallet.

Two ponies went down, and their riders were flung. When they arose, one of the least experienced boys limped apologetically from the field. Avery rode to the barrier.

"I say, any of you fellows, don't you want to try it? We're just getting warmed up."

Avery looked over to Eaton and gave the challenge direct.

"Care to take a chance?"

Harriet Santoline watched her companion; a sudden flush had come to his face, which vanished, as she turned, and left him almost pale; but his eyes glowed. Avery's manner in challenging him, as though he must refuse from fear of such a fall as he just had witnessed, was not enough to explain Eaton's start.

"How can I?" he returned.

"If you want to play, you can," Avery dared him. "Furden"—that was the boy who had just been hurt—"will lend you some things; he'll just about fit you; and you can have his mount."

Harriet continued to watch Eaton; the challenge had been put so as to give him no ground for refusal but finality.

"You don't care to?" Avery taunted him defiantly.

"Why don't you try it?" Harriet found herself saying to him.

He hesitated. She realized it was not timidity he was feeling; it was something deeper and stronger than that. It was fear; but so plainly it was not fear of bodily hurt that she moved instinctively toward him in sympathy. He looked swiftly at Avery, then at her, then away. He seemed to fear alike accepting or refusing to play; suddenly he made a decision.

"I'll play."

He started instantly away to the dressing rooms; a few minutes later, when he rode onto the field, Harriet was conscious that, in some way, Eaton was playing a part as he listened to Avery's directions.

Avery appointed himself to oppose Eaton wherever possible, besting him in every contest for the ball; but she saw that Donald, though he took it upon himself to show all the other players where they made their mistakes, did not offer any instruction to Eaton. One of the players drove the ball close to the barrier directly before Harriet; Eaton and Avery raced for it, neck by neck. Eaton by better riding gained a little; as they came up, she saw Donald's attention was not upon the ball or the play; instead, he was watching Eaton closely. And she realized suddenly that Donald had appreciated as fully as herself that Eaton's clumsiness was a pretense. It was no longer merely polo the two were playing; Donald, suspecting or perhaps even certain that Eaton knew the game, was trying to make him show it, and Eaton was watchfully avoiding this. Just in front of her, Donald, leaning forward, swept the ball from in front of Eaton's pony's feet.

For a few moments the play was all at the further edge of the field; then the ball crossed with a long curving shot and came hopping and rolling along the ground close to where she stood. Donald and Eaton raced for it.

"Siedman!" Avery called to a teammate to prepare to receive the ball after he had struck it; and he lifted

his mallet to drive the ball away from in front of Eaton. But as Avery's club was coming down, Eaton, like a flash and apparently without lifting his mallet at all, caught the ball a sharp, snacking stroke. It leaped like a bullet, straight and true, toward the goal, and before Avery could turn, Eaton was after it and upon it, but he did not have to strike again; it bounded on and on between the goal-posts, while together with the applause for the stranger arose a laugh at the expense of Avery. But as Donald halted before her, Harriet saw that he was not angry or discomfited, but was smiling triumphantly to himself; and as she called in praise to Eaton when he came close again, she discovered in him only dismay at what he had done.

The practice ended, and the players rode away. She waited in the clubhouse till Avery and Eaton came up from the dressing rooms. Donald's triumphant satisfaction seemed to have increased; Eaton was silent and preoccupied. Avery, hailed by a group of men, started away; as he did so, he saluted Eaton almost derisively. Eaton's return of the salute was openly hostile. She looked up at him keenly, trying unavailingly to determine whether more had taken place between the two men than she herself had witnessed.

"You had played polo before—and played it well," she charged. "Why did you want to pretend you hadn't?"

He made no reply. As she began to talk of other things, she discovered with surprise that his manner toward her had taken on even greater formality and constraint than it had had since his talk with her father the day before.

The afternoon was not warm enough to sit outside; in the clubhouse were gathered groups of men and girls who had come in from the golf course or from watching the polo practice. She found herself now facing one of these groups composed of some of her own friends, who were taking tea and wafers in the recess before some windows. They motioned to her to join them, and she could not well refuse, especially as this had been a part of her father's instructions. The men rose, as she moved toward them, Eaton with her; she introduced Eaton; a chair was pushed forward for her, and two of the girls made a place for Eaton on the window seat between them.

As they seated themselves and were served, Eaton's participation in the polo practice was the subject of conversation. She found, as she tried to talk with her nearer neighbors, that she was listening instead to this more general conversation which Eaton had joined. She saw that these people had accepted him as one of their own sort to the point of jesting with him about his "lucky" polo stroke for a beginner; his manner toward them was very different from what it had been just now to herself; he seemed at ease and unembarrassed with them. One or two of the girls appeared to have been eager—even anxious—to meet him; and she found herself oddly resenting the attitude of these girls. Her feeling was indefinite, vague; it made her flush and grow uncomfortable; to recognize dimly that there was in it some sense of a proprietorship of her own in him which took alarm at seeing other girls attracted by him; but underneath it was her uneasiness at his new manner to herself, which hurt because she could not explain it. As the party finished their tea, she looked across to him.

"Are you ready to go, Mr. Eaton?" she asked.

"Whenever Mr. Avery is ready."

"You needn't wait for him unless you wish; I'll drive you back," she offered.

"Of course I'd prefer that, Miss Santoline."

They went out to her trap, leaving Donald to motor back alone. As soon as she had driven out of the club grounds, she let the horse take its own gait, and she turned and faced him.

"Will you tell me," she demanded, "what have I done this afternoon to make you class me among those who oppose you?"

"What have you done? Nothing, Miss Santoline."

"But you are classing me so now."

"Oh, no," he denied so unconviningly that she felt he was only putting her off.

Harriet Santoline knew that what had attracted her friends to Eaton

was his difference. Was it some memory of his former life that seeing these people had recalled to him, which had affected his manner toward her?

Again she looked at him.

"Were you sorry to leave the club?" she asked.

"I was quite ready to leave," he answered indifferently.

"It must have been pleasant to you, though, to be among the sort of people again that you—you used to know," Miss Furden—she mentioned one of the girls who had seemed most interested in him, the sister of the boy whose place he had taken in the polo practice—"is considered a very attractive person, Mr. Eaton. I have heard it said that a man—any man—not to be attracted by her must be forewarned against her by thought—or memory of some other woman whom he holds dear."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand."

The mechanicalness of his answer reassured her. "I mean, Mr. Eaton"—she forced her tone to be light—"Miss Furden was not as attractive to you as she might have been, because there has been some other woman in your life—whose memory—or the expectation of seeing whom again—prettified you."

"Has been? Oh, you mean before."

"Yes, of course," she answered hastily.

"No—none," he replied simply. "It's rather ungalant, Miss Santoline, but I'm afraid I wasn't thinking much about Miss Furden."

She felt that his denial was the truth, for his words confirmed the impression she had had of him the night before. She drove on—or rather let the horse take them on—for a few moments during which neither spoke. They had come about a bend in the road, and the great house of her father loomed ahead. A motor whizzed past them, coming from behind. It was only Avery's car on the way home; but Harriet had jumped a little in memory of the day before, and her companion's head had turned quickly toward the car. She looked up at him swiftly; his lips were set and his eyes gazed steadily ahead after Avery, and he drew a little away from her. A catch in her breath—almost an audible gasp—surprised her, and she fought a warm impulse which had all but placed her hand on his.

"Will you tell me something, Miss Santoline?" he asked suddenly.

"What?"

"I suppose, when I was with Mr. Avery this afternoon, that if I had attempted to escape, he and the chauffeur would have combined to detain me. But on the way back here—did you assume that when you took me in charge you had my parole not to try to depart?"

She was silent for a moment, thoughtful. "Do you mean that you have been considering this afternoon the possibilities of escape?"

"It would be only natural for me to do that, would it not?" he parried.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't mean that you might not try to exceed the limits Father has set for you; you might try that, and of course you would be prevented. But you will not" (she hesitated, and when she went on she was quoting her father)—"sacrifice your position here."

"Why not?"

"Because you tried to gain it—or—

if not exactly that, at least you had some object in wanting to be near Father, which you have not yet gained." She hesitated once more, not looking at him. What it was that had happened during the afternoon she could not make out; instinctively, however, she felt that it had so altered Eaton's relations with them that now he might attempt to escape.

They had reached the front of the house, and a groom sprang to take the horse. She let Eaton help her down; as they entered the house, Avery—who had reached the house only a few moments before them—was still in the hall. And again she was startled in the meeting of the two men by Avery's triumph and the swift flare of defiance on Eaton's face.

She changed from her afternoon dress slowly. As she did so, she brought swiftly in review the events of the day. Chiefly it was to the polo practice and to Eaton's dismay at his one remarkable stroke that her mind went. Had Donald recognized in Eaton something more than merely a good player trying to pretend ignorance of the game? The thought suddenly checked and started her. For how many great polo players were there in America? Were there a hundred? Fifty? Twenty-five? She did not know; but she did know that there were so few of them that their names and many of the particulars of their lives were known to every follower of the sport.

She halted suddenly in her dressing, perplexed and troubled. Her father had sent Eaton to the country club with Avery; there Avery, plainly, had forced Eaton into the polo game. By her father's instructions? Clearly there seemed to have been purpose in what had been done, and purpose which had not been confided to herself either by her father or Avery. For how could they have suspected Eaton would betray himself in the game unless they had also suspected that he had played polo before? To suspect that, they must at least have some theory as to who Eaton was. But her father had no such theory; he had been expending unavailingly, so far, every effort to ascertain Eaton's connections. So her thoughts led her only into deeper and greater perplexity, but with them came sudden—and unaccountable—resentment against Avery.

At seven Harriet went in to dinner with her father. The blind man was

alone; he had been awaiting her, and they were served at once. All through the dinner she was nervous and moody; for she knew she was going to do something she had never done before: she was going to conceal something from her father. She told of Eaton's reception at the country club, and of his taking part in the polo practice and playing badly; but of her own impression that Eaton knew the game and her present conviction that Donald Avery had seen even more than that, she said nothing. She watched her father's face, but she could see there no consciousness that she was omitting anything in her account.

An hour later, when after reading aloud to him for a time, he dismissed her, she hesitated before going.

"You've seen Donald?" she asked.

"Yes."

"What did he tell you?"

"The same as you have told, though not quite so fully."

She was outside the door and in the hall before realization came to her that her father's reply could mean only that Donald, like herself, had concealed his discovery of Eaton's ability to play polo. Why Donald had not told, she could not imagine; the only conclusion she could reach was that Donald's silence in some way menaced Eaton; for—suddenly now—it came to her what this must mean to Eaton. All that had been so careful to hide regarding himself and his connections must be obtainable by Avery now, and Avery, for some purpose of his own, was withholding betrayal to make use of it as he might see fit.

She moved once more to return to her father; again she stopped; then, swiftly, she turned and went downstairs.

She looked hurriedly about for Avery. She did not find him, nor at first did she find Eaton either. She discovered him presently in the music room with Blatchford. Blatchford at once excused himself, tired evidently of his task of watching over Eaton.

Harriet caught herself together and controlled herself to her usual manner.

"What shall it be this evening, Mr. Eaton?" she asked. "Music, billiards?"

"Billiards, if you like," he responded.

They went up to the billiard room, and for an hour played steadily; but her mind was not upon the game—nor, she saw, was his. Finally, as they ended a game, he put his cue back in the rack and faced her.

"Miss Santoline," he said, "I want to ask a favor."

"What is it?"

"I want to go out—unaccompanied."

"Why?"

"I wish to speak to a friend who will be waiting for me."

"How do you know?"

"He got word to me at the country club today. Excuse me—I did not mean to inform Mr. Avery; he was really most vigilant. I believe he only made one slip."

"He was not the only one observing you."

"I suppose not. In fact, I was certain of it. However, I received a message which was undoubtedly authentic and had not been overseen."

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