

THE MASTER KEY

(Continued from page 4.)

lately alone. Chance, the master of us all, delights in strange freaks. Now at this moment, when he felt hatred in his heart for his partner, when he knew that he had come on his final quest with a weakling to coddle along, Mistress Chance laid her quick finger on him and whispered, "Here!"



He Pulled Out His Revolver and Fired at the Man.

He heard that light whisper and dropped his gaze to the ground. A moment later he was furiously hammering at the outcropping of rock that threw its sharp shadow down the hill. Wilkerson turned sluggishly in his sleep.

"I wonder where the old man is," he muttered to himself. "He's always prowling round o' nights." What was that figure sinking around the bluff? Something in his partner's attitude as he stopped directly in the full sheen of the moonlight made him pause.

and saw him trace his furtive letters: "This will make you happy." That moment Gallon saw Wilkerson smiling at him.

Still with the blood lust in his heart, Gallon pulled out the picture of a little girl and passionately kissed it. "You look like your mother, Ruth," he whispered.

Under the stars he tramped on. As he saw their real world in miniature and their ideal world magnified, as we all do, the moon, flooding its light down upon his path, did not appear within his range of vision.

"I'll get him yet," he muttered thickly. The mere act of articulate speech died in his throat. He realized that he had no water, and the overpowering thirst burned in his very marrow.

CHAPTER II

Far away on the same dimly lit desert another man was seeking the same light. Thomas Gallon had realized that he was a murderer. What would happen to Ruth if he were convicted of killing his partner? This was the thought which drove him on—onward toward the little speck across the mesa.

There is a lot of silent influence in the mere sight of closed doors. Gallon looked down the street, and every door was closed except one. No hospitality. One single sign showed that law and order, always vigilant, held their sway.

of the end, would these men end by accident his gold? A moment later a curtain on the saloon across the street was lowered and the door opened.



"Get your horses, boys."

It clear across the mesa, emblem of his thirst, symbol of his undying desire. For the moment he did not know what to answer. Then he recovered himself and said quietly, "I was going to."

"If that's all you had Matias did not get much, and he is considered a pretty smart fellow," was the curt response. "Here comes the sheriff."

"At the foot of San Jacinto mountain, on the upper level," Gallon stammered. "Get your horses, boys," ordered the sheriff.

A stoney arm reached out and took Gallon's gun away from him. "I think I better keep this," said the sheriff, his dark countenance growing stern.

Half an hour later the posse was grouped about the dead fire, and the sheriff was staring at a blood stained blanket. "There has been trouble," he said abruptly. Then he turned on Gallon.

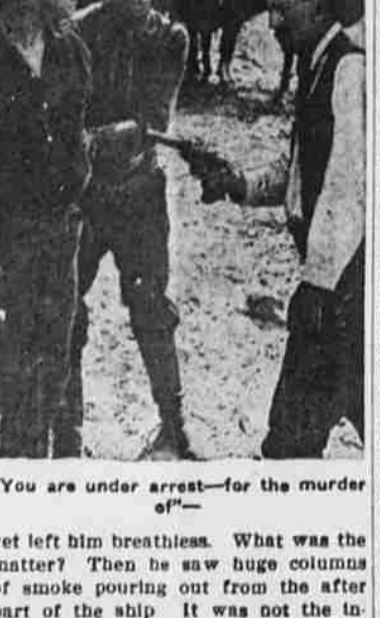
and bizarre shadows, the sheriff called a halt up the canyon. On one side of the gully on which they were camped the sheriff's men had built a fire. It was against a rock, which rose whitely under the moon.

"I'll bet they've lost the lode!" he thought to himself. He turned to a miner who was passing and asked, "Where is Mr. Gallon?"

When he reached his cabin Gallon stealthily took out from his pocket a folded paper and looked at it. He laid it on the white covering of the bunk and once more dipped into his jacket.

To him it was a sinister omen, and he stared for a moment, clutching at his breast. Then he gave way to the hysteria of the hunted and the haunted.

"You're got to put back to port," said a voice in an ugly tone. There was a fusillade of shots, and then the deck beneath him tilted slowly.



"You are under arrest—for the murder of—"

yet left him breathless. What was the matter? Then he saw huge columns of smoke pouring out from the after part of the ship. It was not the inexorable and avenging sea, but fire.

Sending to destruction far out on the horizon. 157, 28 west, 51, 27 north. But how to remember them? How to keep this precious information in his head. His groping fingers found the key. A moment later he was scratching the numbers on its soft surface.

"This," he said through his salt parched lips, "is the master key." He stared up at the blue sky, and then bowed his head in utter weakness.

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Table listing names and amounts for the Circuit Court, including J. O. Staats, Chas. Lakin, H. M. Hartnell, etc.

Table listing names and amounts for the County Court, including Jeppe Rasmussen, Elmer Dixon, Mrs. Claire Buchanan, etc.

Table listing names and amounts for various court positions, including Sheriff, Recorder, Treasurer, Assessor, etc.

LIFE-SAVERS DIE AS SCHOONER FLOUNDERS. SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 23.—Five members of a crew of livesavers trying to reach the steam schooner Hanalei were drowned early tonight.

DWIGGINS CHASES BURGLAR. A burglar in the yard of Guy Dwiggin in Gladstone left post haste for the tall timber east of the town late Saturday night when Mr. Dwiggin discovered the presence of the man

and started out in pursuit. The case was reported to Sheriff Mass Monday but no trace of the man could be found.

Klamath Falls Herald: A new way to while away time in the county jail has been put to use by L. G. Pimford and Al Meador, two men who are awaiting hearings before the grand jury.

Astoria mud flats are to be filled in by the dredge Columbia.

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