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INTRODUCING

BURR McINTOSH J. Rufus Wallingford
MAX FIGMAN Blackie Daw
LOLITA ROBERTSON Violet

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Wallingford Refuses to Take Pollet's Money

THE LILAC SPLASH.
"WHEN you put on this crushed emerald display, you'll make Gladys there look like orphan Maggie out in the cold," declared Blackie Daw, admiringly, as the plump blonde model swished haughtily past blue-eyed Violet Warden. "Girlie, bring it back."

Violet flushed prettily at the frank compliment, then she giggled; and the plump blonde model swanned back across the floor of the pink and gray saloon with the cold blank expression of a perfect lady. Violet, admiring the imported lavender creation, suddenly stooped and picked up the hem critically.

"It looks as if it might have been worn," she suggested, and, at that moment Monsieur Perigord danced into the room with his perpetual air of having almost remembered something urgent. Only the briefest flashing glance between Blackie and Violet. This was the man whom they had come to study.

"You didn't borrow this for the French model's ball did you, sister?" inquired Blackie loudly.

"No, monsieur," replied the girl in a rich East Side accent, and she cast one corner of her eye on Monsieur Perigord who was hurrying toward them.

Monsieur Perigord, a dark little man with black freckles and a kinky beard, was shocked to the very center of his being. "Impossible!" he cried, both hands aloft. "The house of Mondeaux does not permit it! The costume is new, it is exclusive, it is delicious! With Mademoiselle's exquisite color the effect is magnificent."

"The color harmony is a cinch," agreed Blackie, smiling to Violet. "But it looks to me as if this gown had paraded an oceanview piazza or so."

The distress of Monsieur Perigord was painful to observe. "Ah, Monsieur!" he piteously implored, "you do not know the house of Mondeaux! Americans always think first of clever little tricks!"

"That's a knock!" decided Blackie. "There's no money in clever little tricks. Grafting is a sport, not a business."

Perigord smiled wisely. "One year in New York and I have several thousand dollars—on the side—for Andre Perigord!" he exclaimed.

Another quick glance between Blackie Daw and his partner, J. Rufus Wallingford, had sworn to secure the members of the clique, for the beautiful orphans. Four names were already crossed off that list.

"Somebody'll catch you without your license number, Andre," warned Blackie dryly. "How about that lilac splash, Violet? Do you like it two hundred and seventy-five?"

"It's pretty," hesitated Violet. "Send it up," ordered Blackie lightly. "You can charge it to the expense fund."

Before the "lilac splash" came home, Violet and Fannie Warden were called hastily out of town by the illness of their Aunt Patty; and they were gone five weeks. On their return the girls made a bee-line for the shopping district, and Violet wore her exclusive Mondeaux creation. As they stepped out of the new stores of undying hats more already recovered, a large lady came up the avenue in a lavender walking costume which was an exact duplicate of the "splash," panels buttons and all, marked "\$185.00!"

In a Broadway shop, at noon, they saw a throng of stenographers admiring the central display of a big show window; a lavender walking suit with the familiar panels and buttons; \$23.50! They started back uptown in a hurry, and, as they crossed Fifty-third street, saw a large, flabby colored woman and a highly peroxide white woman pass each other with glances of undying hatred. They both wore cheap taffeta and lavender walking costumes, with the exclusive Mondeaux panels and buttons! In a show window on One Hundred-and-Twenty-fifth street was a lavender dress—same panels and buttons! It was made of stingham, and the price was \$4.85!

When Horace G. Daw and J. Rufus Wallingford called at the Warden home that evening they found Violet with a headache, and the demure Fannie sympathetically suppressing the twinkles of amusement in her brown eyes.

"If you make fun of me, I'll pour beans in your saxophones," warned Violet, as she handed Blackie a large, flat, pastebord box. "This is the 'lilac splash,'" and with bubbling indignation she told them all about it.

"Harpooned on the lavender lumen," grinned Blackie. "I guess the color blinded us." However it happened, though, I'll take this box down in the morning, and I'll bring you back your two hundred and seventy-five or old Paregoric's whiskers."

Wallingford had chuckled at first, but now he was thoughtful. "This may give us the lead we want," he speculated.

Moonlight flooded the Wallingford and Daw bungalow and poured in at the window where J. Rufus lay peacefully snoring. A long, lean hand reached into the patch of moonlight, and a finger tickled Wallingford's ear. Another snort, and the big sleeper turned over. Another tickle. A gurgling grunt and a flop.

Wallingford, slowly awakening, became aware that someone was whispering in his ear.

"Jim! Snore! Listen! Keep on snoring! I tell you, Jim! There's a burglar in the library. Snore! That's right. Now listen, and Blackie, like a tall, lean, gaunt ghost in his pajamas, carefully detailed his instructions.

Shorty Tucker, working industriously at the safe in the library, whirled suddenly and picked up his gun, and, with an unerring instinct for the direction of sound, covered the large gentleman who had appeared in the library door.

"Holler and I'll bore you!" hissed Shorty Tucker, pointing his revolver straight into Wallingford's scared eye. "Hands up!"

"All right," agreed Wallingford hastily, and stuck both plump palms straight up. "I haven't a holler in me."

"You better not," warned Shorty. "This trigger—Huh!"

That "huh" was jerked out of Shorty Tucker as a long, lean arm shot out from behind and snatched the gun from his right hand, while another long, lean arm wrapped itself in a vice-like grasp around Shorty's thick neck!

J. Rufus flashed up the library lights, and grinned at the spectacle of the thick burglar being bent irresistiably back into a library chair.

"Well," husked the burglar sulkily, estimating that his chances of a fight were worse than useless, with his own revolver in possession of the enemy.

"What are you going to do about it?" "Turn you up," replied Wallingford. "Let's give him an even break."

Blackie's restless eyes had rested on a deck of cards, and he picked them up with a sudden whimsical idea. "Criminal, I'll play you one hand of freeze-out to see whether you go on your neck, or wear handcuffs," and, sitting down opposite Shorty, he rapidly dealt five cards apiece. "Get some highball ice, Jim."

"All right," Wallingford, sleep returning heavily to him, walked numbly out into the dining-room, and Blackie's amused eyes followed his stumbling course. In that instant, Shorty Tucker, his freedom at stake, took a furtive glance at the top card of the deck.

His broad face brightened as he saw the card, and he hastily switched it into his own hand, dropping his discard into a tall ash jar.

"Cards," said Blackie briskly, picking up the deck.

"You're too conservative," Blackie cast a shrewd glance at his opponent. "Now, me, I'll take all this hand will stand; and if I improve it, culprit, I'll try to get you a cell on the sunny side, and he dealt himself two cards.

There was a moment of silence, then Shorty cleared his throat.

"I'd like to make a little side bet," he offered and dug into his pocket. He produced eight dollars and forty-five cents.

"Raise you a dollar fifty-five," accepted Blackie, opening the drawer of the table and throwing down a ten-dollar bill, grinning as he saw Shorty's regretful eyes glued on that drawer.

"I'm all in," Shorty looked at his hand sorrowfully. "That's a twenty-five dollar gun."

"Raise me the difference?" and Blackie, extracting the cartridges, laid it on the money. "I'll see that with this silver-decanter, and raise you a gold-mounted meerschaum pipe."

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A ring came off Shorty's finger. Blackie produced a stick pin and the kit of burglar's tools went up. Blackie threw off his pajama jacket and Shorty tossed down his coat and vest.

"Call you," he husked. "I got to keep my pants. Look at these!" and with triumph he tossed four jacks and a deuce.

Laughing gleefully, he reached forward to scoop in the assorted stakes and his freedom, but Blackie, holding out a restraining hand, calmly spread down four aces and a nine spot.

"All over, Jim," he called nonchalantly, as J. Rufus came into the room with the bowl of cracked ice. "Call the police."

"Aw, say!" Shorty Tucker was the picture of abject humiliation.

"If there's anything I can do for you says, you just call on Shorty Tucker."

"Sorry, sport, but we don't want any burgling done, do we, Jim?" "Not tonight," chuckled Wallingford. "It's a crude, undignified method of acquiring a profit on your energy, and—"

Suddenly the smile left Wallingford's face. He stopped and thought a moment, then his round, pink countenance beamed with joviality. "By George, we have a job for Shorty!" He walked over to the table, opened the drawer from which Blackie had extracted the loose money, pawed around for a little memorandum book, tore out a leaf and tossed it over to the worker of the night. "Do you suppose you could get us this gentleman's private papers?"

Shorty Tucker picked up the piece of paper and looked at it. It contained the home address of Monsieur Perigord!

Monsieur Perigord was deeply regretful that the beautiful Miss Warden's lavender creation had been so extensively copied. "It is because Mademoiselle is so striking—so attractive!" he suavely explained. "The clever American manufacturers have their designers everywhere."

"So that's the way it's done," mused Blackie. "What do you think of that for pure gall, Jim?"

Jim Wallingford's big shoulders heaved. "It sounds like the explanation for a black eye," he chuckled.

Monsieur Perigord was no longer polite, he was no longer grieved, he was no longer indignant; he was outraged! "I am insulted!" he charged, slapping himself on the breast and stopping to cough. "You insult also the house of Mondeaux! I shall be kind! I shall explain! Mademoiselle has worn the frock for five weeks. Do you not see? There has been plenty of time for your clever American manufacturer."

Blackie and J. Rufus looked at each other and chuckled.

"Jim, he's a corking good liar," commented Blackie admiringly.

Monsieur Perigord was no longer able to control himself. "It is too much!" he shrieked.

"Oh, hush, Andre," advised Blackie kindly. "I've nosed around and found two firms who get their designs through you; and besides, Miss Warden never flashed this dress until yesterday. Give me the money before I get rough."

The change in Monsieur Perigord was slow, but it was complete. His melted into smiling suavely, in a beautifully graded transition of about one minute. "Monsieur, I shall pay back the money for the frock like an honorable gentleman," he offered.

Wallingford, watching him with heavy-lidded eyes, smiled. "Is this a regular Mondeaux trick?" he asked.

"Mon Dieu, no!" laughed Perigord. "But the house of Mondeaux is in Paris, and I am here."

"And tossing the bunk both ways," into your customers, in one and the same operation; and working other grafts besides. And without investment."

"One becomes clever in America," boasted Perigord, with a self-satisfied smile. "I have learned the little trick to make money. Now I learn the little trick to invest with rapidness. With fifty-four thousand dollars to start—"

"Fifty-four thousand?" responded Blackie glancing at J. Rufus.

Wallingford, at the window, suddenly wheeled and came back looking at his watch. "I'm afraid I can't wait until you settle with Mr. Perigord," he stated.

"What's your hurry, Jim?" protested Blackie. "It won't take long now. When people pass money they part."

"I have to keep my eye on a certain rapid investment," said Wallingford impressively. "I'll see you tomorrow, and settle it over."

"Good day," said Wallingford, taking the money.

Monsieur Perigord looked after him in stunned perplexity. "Impossible!" he commented. "He invested a hundred and fifty dollars for you yesterday and today he gives you back a thousand."

"I don't care what you do with it," responded Wallingford gravely, producing a big red pocketbook. "My business is to pay you this thousand dollars in return for the hundred and fifty you invested with me yesterday," and into the hands of the astonished Blackie he counted a five-hundred-dollar bill and five one-hundred-dollar bills.

"How much will you invest tomorrow morning?"

"The wad," Blackie answered promptly, and started to hand back the money.

"You know better than that," Wallingford reprovingly reminded him. "A hundred and fifty is the limit in this pool, as I have often told you."

"Can't you let me go in for two hundred?" argued Blackie. "I don't like to play for a piker bet like this."

"Then stay out," retorted Wallingford. "I offered to let you in on a fifty-thousand-dollar pool once, and you failed to meet me at three-thirty, so now you take the little pools. Wait a minute, and he consulted a red memorandum book. "You can only have a hundred today."

"All right," agreed Blackie reluctantly. "Here's your hundred," and he handed it over.

"Good afternoon, Chinchilla," hailed Wallingford cheerily. "You got in for a hundred and fifty, didn't you? Well, here's \$1450. I'll have to cut you down to a hundred today."

"Sorry, sir," said Williams. "By the way, is Pollet dropped from the pool?"

"Yes," snapped Wallingford. "I'd like to take up his share."

"No," snapped Wallingford. "Just as you say," hastily responded Chinchilla Williams. "Lord, I don't want you to get sore at me, too."

"I guess I am a little grouchy," confessed Wallingford; "but every time I turn around somebody wants to hand me money. I'm tired of it!"

"I know," admitted Williams. "You have too much capital now. I guess if you dropped about half of us the rest of us could make more money."

"If I dropped, you all, I could make the entire profit for myself," Wallingford reminded him. "That's what I'm going to do on this next pool—take just one live partner with a hundred thousand dollars and split the profits."

"I'll dig you up a hundred thousand dollars in a minute," quickly offered Williams.

"Nothing doing, Chinchilla," bluntly refused Wallingford. "I have to have a partner I like. He must be generous, trustful, and agreeable, and you won't do. Good day, Williams."

"Good day, sir," returned Williams sadly. The bell rang as he came out with money in his hand.

"Mr. Meazen," announced the spider-legged boy. The red-necked man with the chewed

matter of fact, I hadn't thought of inquiring about it. He probably has only six or eight hundred dollars for me. "I'll just let it go."

"Ah, Monsieur!" protested Perigord. "Even if it is only a little money like that, to you who are so rich it should be taken. Perhaps Monsieur would like to give it to some friend."

"Very well," agreed Blackie, yawning. "Wallingford's office hours are from three to four. Would you like to go over with me?"

"I shall be transported!" exclaimed Monsieur Perigord, in a flutter of delight, this being the boon for which he had been eager to ask.

He ran. He brought his silk hat. He brought his gray gloves. He brought his little cane. He brushed his kinky beard. He tripped down the stairs two steps ahead of Blackie Daw. Only when they reached the office did he hang back timidly.

That was a brand new office, in a brand new skyscraper, and on the door was the legend, "J. Rufus Wallingford, Investments." Monsieur Perigord did not notice that the paint was still fresh, for Wallingford himself had carefully dusted and otherwise aged it. He had spent the morning on the job.

Inside was a small anteroom in which there sat waiting a totally bald-headed man, and a man with a bushy beard, and a large red-necked man with a mustache, one end of which had been chewed to a tassel. A spider-legged boy, guarding the entrance to the door of the private office, greeted Blackie with a nod and turned an unfriendly stare on Monsieur Perigord. Beyond the glass partition could be heard the loud and angry voice of that peerless investor, J. Rufus Wallingford.

"No, Mr. Pollet, you can't get on the preferred list," shouted the voice. "You have the draft of a burglar! I let you have a twenty-five-dollar-a-day corner in this little pool practically out of charity. You've made an average of from two or three hundred dollars a day out of your investment, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir," admitted Mr. Pollet. "The lowest you ever made me out of my \$25 was a hundred. But I want to go on your larger list. Nearly all your customers are allowed to invest from a hundred to a hundred and fifty dollars a day, and they make from four to six times as much as I do. It isn't fair."

"That settles it," roared Wallingford, at the limit of his patience. "You get out! Your place on the list is vacant!"

The door opened suddenly and out shot a chunky young man who wore thick spectacles. Monsieur Perigord noted that he had money in both hands. He turned in the middle of the anteroom.

"Go on out, you!" ordered the spider-legged boy, as J. Rufus Wallingford himself slammed the door of the private office.

Mr. Pollet walked slowly out of the room. The waiting investors looked nervous and apprehensive. A little bell rang sharply. The spider-legged boy darted into Wallingford's room. He bounced out again in a minute.

"W. O. Jones," he announced. "The totally bald-headed man shambled in, casting a jealous look at Monsieur Perigord."

"Hello, Onion Jones," greeted Wallingford suavely. "I have \$1100 for you. That leaves you a thousand clear profit. 'Pretty good, eh?'"

"Not the best day we've had, but I'm satisfied," laughed Jones. "I hear you're going to start a new pool, Mr. Wallingford."

"Next week," returned J. Rufus. "Any chance of my getting a share in it?"

"I think not, Jones," advised Wallingford. "I won't split that pool into shares. I plan to take in just one big investor."

"All right," agreed Jones. "I'm tickled with anything you do. How much can I get in for tomorrow?"

"One hundred," stated Wallingford. "Just give me that hundred-dollar bill."

"There you are," returned Mr. Jones contentedly. "Good day, Mr. Wallingford."

The bell rang. The spider-legged boy dashed in. Mr. Jones shambled out, with his hands full of money.

Andre Perigord's breath came quickly. "W. W. Williams," sang the boy. The full-bearded man went in.

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Perigord Gives His Money to Wallingford for Investment