

Mark Stull By Rowland Chambers

BY ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.
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SECTION III.

BY THE end of the week Brandes had done much to efface any unpleasant impression he had made on the Ruhannah Carew.

The girl had never before had to do with any mature man. She was therefore at a disadvantage in every way, and her total lack of experience emphasized the odds.

Nobody had ever before pointedly preferred her, said her individual attention; no man had ever sought her, conversed with her, deferred to her, interested himself in her. It was entirely new to her, this attention which Brandes paid her. His white-faced, odd little friend had gone; he himself had taken quarters at the Gayfield house, where a car like the wrecked one was stabled for his use.

He had already taken her father and mother and herself everywhere within motoring distance; he had accompanied them to church; he had escorted her to the movies; he walked with her in the August evenings after supper, roved her about on the pond, fished from the bridge, told her strange stories in the moonlight on the veranda, but neither mother nor father interested in her.

For the career of Mr. Eddie Brandes was capable of furnishing material for interesting stories if carefully edited, and related with discretion and circumspection. He had been many things to many men—and to several women—he had been a tinhorn gambler in the southwest, a miner in Alaska, a saloon keeper in Wyoming, a fight promoter in Arizona.

He had taken a comic opera company through the wheat belt—one way; he had led a burlesque troupe into Arizona and had traded it there for a hotel.

Two of his friends motored over from Saratoga to see him, were brought to supper at the Carew's, and they gave him a clean bill of moral health. They were, respectively "Doc" Curfoot—suave haunter of Peacock Alley and gentleman "capper"—whom Brandes introduced as the celebrated specialist, Doctor Gilbert Curfoot, and Captain Harman Quint, partner in "Quint's" celebrated temple of chance—introduced as the distinguished navigating officer which he appeared to be. The steering for their common craft, however, was the duty of the eminent Doc.

They spent the evening on the veranda with the family; and it was quite wonderful what a fine fellow each turned out to be. The information, confidentially imparted to the Rev. Mr. Carew by each of the three distinguished gentlemen in turn, Brandes walked down to their car and then they were to leave.

money had told on Stull. His eyes were like two emears of charcoal on his pasty face; sourly he went about the business which Brandes should have attended to, nursing resentment—although he was doing better than Brandes had hoped to do.

Their joint commission from his winnings began to assume considerable proportions. It was a week later, one hot evening, that Brandes telegraphed to Stull in Saratoga.

"Find me a chauffeur who will be willing to go abroad. I'll give you 24 hours to get him here."

The next morning he called up Stull on the telephone from the drug store in Gayfield.

"Get my wire, Ben?"

"Yes, Ben!—"

"Wait a minute, postscript. I also want Parson Smawley. I want him to get a car and come over to the Gayfield house. Tell him I count on him. And he's to wear black and a white tie."

"Yes. But about that chauffeur you want—"

"Don't argue. Have him here. Have the car also. Tell him to bring a white tie. Understand?"



"For Heaven's sake!" he said. "What on Earth—"

It while he himself went into the Gayfield House to telephone Stull.

"What was it you went back for, Rue?" he asked.

"Don't you want another ice or something?" she asked.

"I'm trying to find out. He was to the races yesterday. He seen Doc. Of course Doc hadn't laid eyes on you for a year. Oh, no, indeed. He's crazy."

"I'm going out to the desk with the intention of registering and securing a room for the few hours before going aboard the steamer; but something halted him—some instinct of caution. No, he would not register. He sent their luggage to the parcels room, found a maid who took Rue away, then went on through into the bar, where he took a stiff whiskey and soda, a thing he seldom did.

telephone to Mr. Stull. It may take some little time. You don't mind waiting, do you?"

"No, she said.

"Don't you want another ice or something?" she asked.

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how nice she has been to me. By the way, Rue, whom did you marry?"

"Mr. Brandes?"

"No, New York—I think—"

"I'm trying to find out. He was to the races yesterday. He seen Doc. Of course Doc hadn't laid eyes on you for a year. Oh, no, indeed. He's crazy."

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swiftly and encountered the full, protruding eyes of Maxy Venem staring across a manly into his face.

From Brandes' cut lip blood was running down over his chin and collar; his face remained absolutely expressionless. The next moment his eyes shifted, met Ruhannah's stupefied gaze.

The woman who had struck Brandes now came up again beside Venem. She was young, very pretty, but deathly white except for the patches of cosmetic on either cheek. She pointed at Brandes. There was blood on her soiled apron.

"You dirty dog," she said unsteadily. "You'll marry this girl before I've divorced you, will you? And you think you are going to get away with it!"

"What's the idea, you fool!" he said in a low voice. "I'm not married to her."

But Ruhannah heard him say it. "You claim that you haven't married this girl?" she demanded loudly, motioning toward Rue, who stood swaying, half dead, held fast by the gathering crowd which pushed around them from every side.

"Did you marry her or did you fake it?" repeated Venem in a louder voice. "It's jail one way; maybe both!"

"He married her in Gayfield at 11 this morning," said the chauffeur. "Parson Smawley turned the trick."

Brandes' narrow eyes glittered; he struggled for a moment, gave it up, shot a deadly glance at Maxy Venem, at his wife, at the increasing throng crowding closely about him. Then his infuriated eyes met Rue's, and the expression of her face apparently crazed him.

Neeland's name, and pushed the electric button.

After a few seconds the door clicked and opened.

"Now, you're all right!" said Lil, peering into the lighted hallway. "I'll be coming through there isn't any elevator that I can see, so you keep on going upstairs till your friend meets you."

"Thank you so much for your great kindness—"

"Don't mention it. Good luck, dearie!" The door clicked behind her and Rue found herself alone.

The stairs, flanked by a massive balustrade of some dark, polished wood, ascended in spirals by a short series of landings, and then descended to the open door stepped Neeland's shadowy form, stark against the hall light behind him.

"For heaven's sake!" he said. "What on earth—"

The suitcase fell from her nerveless hands; she swayed a little where she stood.

The next moment he had passed his arm around her and was half-leading, half-carrying her through a short hallway into a big, brilliantly lighted studio.

AERONAUTIC CONGRESS BACKS MEASURE TO REGULATE FLYING

Problem of Airways Taken Up at Atlantic City; Preparations Are Made for 'Age of Air.'

QUESTIONABLY few, who have passed through the stone, brass, iron and steel ages, are now passing through the age of steam and gasoline, are entering upon a new age—the age of air," said an official of the Aero Club of America.

At present the fastest transcontinental train in the world, the new "Trans-Canada" express of the Canadian Pacific, goes from Montreal to Vancouver, a distance of 2885 miles, in 93 hours, 30 minutes.

THREE AIR ROUTES MAPPED

Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation Announces Plans.

BUFFALO, N. Y.—The Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor corporation announces that plans are being worked out for three air routes for passenger service.