

believe we will have the complete story of this amazing tangle of events."

As he spoke the door opened and Bart Kendall, perfectly attired, entered and bowed low over the hand of Miss Holiday.

"Pardon my delay," he said easily, "I stopped to make a purchase."

He glanced quickly at Gordon and smiled at Miss Holiday.

"Oh," said the girl, her color mounting, "we did not intend to announce it until later."

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A LAUGH, followed by hearty congratulations, greeted her naive admission, and Kendall, bowing his congratulations, handed her a magnificent gem.

"But the setting!" the girl exclaimed, drawing back; "what is it?"

"It is a memento," said the gambler. "Part of the mystery in which we all have been tangled."

The party was seated. The shadow of crime and tragedy that hung over them served to modify their jubilation over the Greens' victory and restrain the happiness even of the young people.

"Events have moved rapidly since I became ill," said Mr. Holiday. "The master criminal of the generation has worked against us and failed. I have asked you all here to discuss the evidence—to see what legal proof we have that may be used to convict Professor Terpening of these crimes. We can convict him of kidnaping my daughter, but can we prove he murdered Lester?"

"Let each tell what he knows," suggested Paulin. "I seem to have been the prize boob; I confess now that I have suspected Lester, both the Metzlers, Mr. Holiday, Gordon and Mr. Kendall, and never Professor Terpening."

"Let us start with the beginning," said Kendall. "Metzler, you first."

"I was in Boston in August," said the actor. "A man whom I now know was Terpening offered me a large sum to carry a package to Cleveland and give it to Victor Lester. I delivered the package. Lester said an old crank in Boston wanted him to try an experiment. He was worried and told me the man had paid him a large sum to do a small thing—that he was in the man's power. When the Greens started to lose I asked Lester about it. He admitted to me that he had done as the man directed, and feared he had hurt the team. The man was pressing him for money and Lester was desperate. He told me he had tried to return the package to the fellow, but he had refused to accept it, and insisted that he continue the experiments. Lester did not understand what the nature of the thing was, and was reading and studying to find out. The notes and books Gordon found after his death were a clue to what he had learned."

"My story should be first," said Arthur Metzler. "I got homesick and returned from Europe without father's consent. I did not then know why he was so anxious for me to remain in Europe and thought him unjust. I was broke and my sister could not help me much. In this dilemma Terpening came to me. He wanted me to find out whether father had a certain small box in his possession. He said that box contained something very valuable to science, but not to Mr. Holiday. He offered me money to find out whether the box was in father's possession. I tried to learn from my sister about the box, but she was frightened by my questions. She accused me of spying and seeing the box. I told Terpening the box was in father's possession. On Aug. 29 he gave me a black box, told me to take it to a certain broker and hand it to him. The broker took from the box a large sum of money and said it was all right."

"That was the money that was bet that the Greens would lose," said Kendall dryly. "No wonder I could not find out who placed the bets."

"After I had done this I grew alarmed and accused the man of robbing Mr. Holiday. He turned upon me and told me I was in his power—I owed him money. He

told me he could ruin me and ruin Lester. The night Lester was murdered we both were desperate. When Lester won that money gambling he said he had enough to buy his freedom from the man and that he would force him to take back the accursed box. He showed me the box—and it was exactly like the one in which I carried the money. I told him to open it, and he declared Terpening told him that to open it would be certain death."

"Terpening, then, was in New York when Lester was killed?" asked Mr. Holiday.

"Yes. Lester was to meet him. When Lester was killed I thought he had opened the box despite orders and been killed."

"I saw no more of the man until the night I disappeared. I sneaked around the house to see my sister, met the man face to face, and knew no more until I found myself prisoner in the basement of Terpening's house in Cambridge."

"You all know my story," said Miss Holiday. "I knew of the existence of the box—feared it had disappeared, feared Arthur had stolen it, so did not tell father. I suspected Professor Terpening. I determined to tell Mr. Gordon about it and sent for him. I was waiting for him, heard him coming and arose to go downstairs, and at the door met the professor. I started to scream, but instead became unconscious, and when I awakened I was in his house in Cambridge, in a basement room, where Fred—Mr. Gordon found me. On the night before the professor took me into his laboratory he seemed crazy. He told me that vengeance was his. He showed me a machine by which he said he could project wireless telephone messages. I begged to be released, and he grew furious and pushed me back into the basement. He forgot to lock the door. I crept into the laboratory, found the machine, and tried it—and the message was received."

She smiled down upon Gordon.

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MY WHOLE story is of suspicions," said Gordon. "I suspected Terpening because he lied clumsily in saying he did not know baseball. I saw Lester's picture in his home and knew it was not by chance he had picked Les as his victim. My suspicions were diverted again and again, but came back each time. I believed he alone could be working with the mysterious rays—and that he was pretending to help us in order to use them more effectively. When I received the wireless message from Helen I hurried to Terpening's house, and by forcing a basement window secured entrance and rescued Helen. By accident I also stumbled upon Arthur, and he helped us get away."

"I will spare Mr. Holiday the pain of telling his story," said Kendall gravely. "Terpening was working for revenge as well as wealth. He sought to ruin Mr. Holiday by stealing his lump of radium and using it to bring suspicion upon its real owner. He knew of the existence of

this radium for years, and had searched for it in vain until he discovered that Mr. Holiday, instead of hiding it in some obscure corner, kept it always at home and close to him. He wished to ruin me financially as much for revenge as for gain. He owed me a grudge."

"You think—you think?" Mr. Holiday half rose from his chair and stood staring at the gambler.

"Yes," said Kendall brusquely, "Terpening is not Terpening—he is Metzler, the master criminal of the world, the man who wrecked the life of his wife, the man who hid for years from my vengeance, the father of Arthur Metzler, the man we thought died in the mine years ago."

"I feared it," groaned Mr. Holiday. "The night my daughter disappeared a strange message came—a message from Metzler—and it was the shock and horror of discovering that he lived that staggered my brain."

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HE BOWED his head on his hands for an instant, then straightened up and exclaimed:

"He must not escape this time—justice must be done! The world is not safe with this man at large!"

"Calm yourself," said Kendall quietly. "I have had the house surrounded since before daylight. Metzler is inside and gives no sign of knowing he is watched. Warrants have been issued charging him with the murder of Lester, with kidnaping Miss Holiday and with robbing Mr. Holiday. The detectives are waiting for word from us to serve them. Let us go."

Half an hour later two automobiles flashed through Cambridge and swung to the curb in front of the grim house of mystery. Gordon, eager and excited, sprang from the first, and the others hastened after him up the leaf-littered walk. He was hammering upon the great door before the others mounted the porch steps. The grim, unsmiling ogress that had met them on preceding occasions opened the door. Gordon, expecting resistance, lunged forward, ready to force an entrance, but to the surprise of all the woman, smiling sardonically, threw open the door and bowed to them with mock courtesy.

"We wish to see Professor Terpening," said Kendall, controlling his emotions better than the others were able to do. "Is he in?"

"He is in the laboratory," said the woman metallically. "You may see him there."

Her manner had led to the sudden fear that the master criminal had escaped, and the words of the woman relieved the anxiety. Gordon pushed forward quickly.

"Careful, Gordon," said Kendall quietly. "We are dealing with a dangerous man. I will bring two of the detectives. Watch out for tricks. Metzler is most dangerous at bay."

The party, following the woman, passed through the library, the detectives walking with Gordon and Kendall.

China. Grand Canal--Dawn

By A. Ware

BYOND the faint blue lines of eastern hills

The thin, gray dawn is blotting out the stars;

The moon, a fading crescent, dies away Before the wind that ushers in the day.

Sweet comes the breath of poppies o'er the plains,

Sweet, thickly-stirring groves of bamboo trees,

Where fronds of ferns are reaching toward the morn

And crimson lilies, wet with dew, are born.

From far deep-shadowed, weed-strewn inlet mounts

The thin, clear ripple of a boatman's call;

The highest cloud-threads catch the coming light

And sift pale color through the graying night.

Now from the water-gate of white-walled town

The shadowy comorant-boats are dimpling out;

So strange, elusive, phantomlike, it seems

The web-spun imagery of lightest dreams.

Ah, for the morning on the Grand Canal—

The washing of the water in the reeds,

The growing wonder of the flaming sky,

The crimson pools, the fields that quiet lie,

The singing laborers who early go

Across the plains calm-stretched in light below!

The woman, who had preceded them, threw wide the door to the laboratory.

At a long table, littered with strange instruments, sat the archcriminal. He arose slowly, his hand resting upon a small lanternlike instrument from which four lenses peered in four directions.

"Ah, gentlemen," he said, smiling. "Ah, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Holiday, and you, my dear friend, Mr. Kendall, and, ah, my young relations, to what do I owe the honor of this not entirely unexpected call?"

His tone was mockery, his callous smile an insult.

"Metzler, you damned murderer, you cold blooded hound, you—" Mr. Holiday, unable to stand the mockery, lunged forward. Metzler, his hand raised as if in surprised protest, gave back half a step.

"Finish it, boys! Seize him—quick!" Kendall uttered the final word sharply, and the two detectives and Gordon sprang toward Terpening from three sides.

He stood towering, his face transfixed with a leering smile, and as Kendall shouted "Quick!" his fingers turned just a trifle.

Gordon and the two detectives, hands extending, groping into thin air, recoiled in amazement. The others fell back, staring and stunned.

The spot where Terpening had stood was vacant! Before their eyes he had disappeared!

The master of crime had vanished into thin air!

[The End]

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THE ROBE OF THE RED VIRGIN

(Continued from Page 8)

beneath the baleful glare of the massive idol.

I heard a rustling of the woollen robes, and the Red Virgin hurried them from her and stood forth transfigured. She lifted her proud head and joined in that strange liquid chant of the stars. Her voice rose with the swelling chorus a mile below. It trilled forth into the shimmering pearl dust glory of the night, until the very flaming planets of the milky way seemed to tremble in consonance with the melody.

She turned and ran swiftly along the cliff. The robe of rubies glittered in the white light like a flame, and her hair streamed palely behind her like the sacred fire of the Temple of Silence.

A fierce fear gripped me and I called to her and ran after her, struggling over the rough granite and crashing against great bowlders. On she sped, heedless of my entreaties, and so lightly and silently that she seemed to float.

I saw her poised for an instant against the star-spangled velvet void of the sky. She lifted her round, white arms to the stars and chanted eerily the liquid, wordless hymn of an aged creed. Then out into the space she leaped, turning over and over in the molten silver light, the robe of rubies trailing scintillant sparks and the glorious red-gold hair streaming after like a ghost comet.

The voice of the worshippers rose in a grand crashing conclusion, a roaring crescendo that drowned out my shriek and the distant wailing scream of the Red Virgin. Below me red sparks fell forth from the pale gold hair like meteors from a dying comet.

And on the ledge, staring reproachfully at me with its scarlet eye, rested a single ruby, like a drop of blood from a new-rent heart.

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I rode alone from the dead gray ashes of the last camp fire kindled by old Lao Fu. The ratty horses turned their dejected noses toward distant Khotan. About me wailed the winds from the Gobi desert, whispering into my unheeding ears the dead secrets of dead centuries.

[The End]

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