

The OUTER GATE

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SUNSHINE poured bravely in through the barred windows and traced a sinister pattern of parallel black lines on the concrete floor. It brought into sharp relief two faces—strikingly similar in their expression of stark knowledge, yet graven with lines which marked an age difference of 30 years.

Robert Gordon Terry—prisoner No 28179—stood facing the warden. In his right hand was the official document which had come to free him, yet his face exhibited no elation. Three years in the penitentiary had taught him the lesson of repression. He stood silent, motionless, agate eyes focussed on the corner of the warden's desk. He seemed shorter than his height, thanks to the slight stoop developed by three years of penal servitude, and his white prison clothes were ill-fitting and hung about his slender frame in grotesque folds.

From outside the office came prison sounds: the incessant, maddening whir of looms and spindles in the cotton mill, the jangle of iron-wheeler barrows, the clank of machinery and tools, and now and then the punctuation of a harsh-voiced order. For three years Bob Terry had known no other sound, save the ghostly repressed laughter of Sunday when all work ceased and the prisoners had nothing to do but sit around the prison yard and try to stare through the grim gray walls into the rich, verdant world beyond.

Bob Terry was free. The miracle which the warden had given him was not a pardon. It was far more than that—it was an acknowledgment from the state that the crime for which he had been tried and convicted had been committed by another man. The state was very regretful of the error which had swept the young man into the penitentiary for three years and formative years, and the state now granted him the liberty which it should never have taken from him. The soul of Robert Gordon Terry was twisted into an ironic laugh, but he had learned to keep such emotions from reflecting in his face.

The warden was puzzled—and not a trifle disappointed. In all of Simeon Mason's twenty-odd years of prison experience he had never seen a man who accepted freedom this way. Some men wept, some grew frankly hysterical. And some were openly belligerent. The tall, gray-haired official could not understand Terry's utter indifference. Instead of exultation—or even bitterness—the young man displayed no emotion whatever. The warden leaned forward and tapped on the desk top with long, tapering fingers.

"You understand what that means, Terry?"

The dead eyes looked up slowly.

"Yes, sir."

The warden spoke softly.

"Don't you care any more than you seem to?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"You are not sure?"

"No, sir."

Simeon Mason shook his head. Here was something new—and more than a little disturbing. But Mason was interested. In his simple, untutored way he was a keen student of psychology and he had a thousand human subjects in his laboratory.

His mind flashed back over Terry's record. Crime, embezzlement, sentence, five years; deportment in prison, fair; visiting friends, none; letters, none. From a prison standpoint a most excellent inmate—yet the warden knew that in the three years since the iron doors had swung open to admit this prisoner there had been a slow corrosion taking place in the young man's heart.

Three years of association in terms of equality with convicted criminals. Three terms during which ghastly impressions and fierce bitterness had been seared into the very soul of him—the more so because he was innocent of the crime for which he had been sentenced. For three years Bob Terry, high-strung and super-sensitive, had been a number, a thing to be pointed out to visitors, a lifeless, sexless thing deprived of everything save the privilege of thinking. And thought had only made things worse. The warden was speaking again.

"You should be glad my boy."

"Yes, sir."

"And you should realize that you are lucky. It is unfortunate that you were sent here unjustly. But it is also fortunate that the state discovered its mistake. The world knows already that you did not commit this crime."

"Yes, sir."

The prisoner's voice was flat and toneless. He stood rigid, immobile, eyes never leaving the corner of the warden's desk.

"You're taking it pretty hard, Terry. I can't say that I blame you. It would be absurd to claim that the state had been fair—it is ridiculous to promise that it can ever atone for this injustice. You have spent three years in his prison—and, unfortunately, prison—whether justly or unjustly imposed—has a way of leaving its mark on a man."

"You see, my boy, I understand certain things about you which perhaps you yourself do not know. I know that you are doubly bitter because you should never have been sent here in the first place.

I know that you are crammed with false ideas and thoughts which have been born in the prison atmosphere. But the state was not entirely at fault; occasionally it must do an injustice in its effort to be just. You have been the rare victim—and now the state is sorry and will do what it can for you. And I want to beg you to leave this bitterness behind."

The prisoner looked up, and while he spoke quietly, there was a tinge of satire in his words.

"The state is very kind to me. Simeon Mason bit his lip. "I'm afraid you don't understand."

"No, sir."

"We are anxious to help—"

"Yes, sir."

"And I personally—"

"I understand sir. I have appreciated your fairness. That is sincere, sir."

"Thank you, Terry. My job isn't an easy one; some wardens are too prone to forget that their charges are human beings. At times I think my weakness is that I am too conscious of that fact. But my problem isn't the thing of interest. I just wanted to give you this letter—and to tell you that any time the going gets a bit rough and you feel you'd like to talk things over—"

"Thank you, sir." They faced each other in silence. The warden was baffled. Until this moment no hint of emotion had been betrayed by the young man. Then, "May I go, sir?"

"Yes."

The young man turned away and Mason extended the letter which he held. "Just a second, Terry. This is for you."

"For me?" Bob Terry accepted the envelope gingerly. It was his first letter in three years. He glanced curiously at the address. Then he betrayed his first symptom of emotion.

His face darkened beneath the prison pallor, his once-powerful figure stiffened and his fingers involuntarily contracted. He tossed the letter on the desk.

"I don't want it!" he exclaimed harshly.

"You're not even going to read it?"

"No."

"It is from Peter Borden."

"I know it. The damned old hypocrite wants to say he's sorry. He wants to undo in a sentence or two the thing he did in action. To hell with him and his letters! Oh! Terry pulled himself together. The prison fear of three years gripped him. "I—I beg your pardon, Captain. I—I didn't mean to—"

Simeon Mason laughed. "Don't apologize. You're not a prisoner any longer."

"Yes, sir. I forgot."

"About the letter from Mr. Borden—"

"I don't want it, sir."

"Huh? You better read it?"

"I don't think so."

"I do. Come now, Terry—don't be foolish. Put this in your pocket."

"Very well, sir." The mask had settled on the prisoner's face once more. "I'll take it." Terry balanced the letter in his hand and shifted uncertainly. "When may I leave the prison, sir?"

The warden rose and dropped a friendly hand on the boy's shoulder. "Any time, Terry. Can't you understand? You are free."

Steam feathered from the siren, and instantly the clatter of machinery in the prison cotton mill was stilled. Then, in pairs and threes and fours, the prisoners trooped out of the mill; most of them in white, a few wearing the striped garments which denoted black marks on their records.

It was strangely like a city factory emptying for the lunch hour—and weirdly different. There was no laughter among these men, and no good-natured banter. Even in the vast, grassy courtyard separating mill from main building, they spoke in whispers, and their eyes were furtive. Most of them stopped long enough to roll cigarettes, light them and puff luxuriously as the human stream eddied from the mill and flowed across the high-walled courtyard, to disappear into the big steel-and-concrete building.

There was a striking absence of armed guards. They were there, of course, but not conspicuously in evidence. And as the men passed the mess hall they looked inside where the long bare tables were set with iron plates and tin pitchers, awaiting the influx of hungry humanity.

They entered the great building and were turned into the three-tiered cell blocks. There were six of these on each side of the main corridor, and between each two triple-decked lines of cells was a concrete hallway. Here the men lounged around on the floor, awaiting the summons to lunch. There were no chairs and they were not permitted to enter their cells. They threw themselves full length on the concrete and a few conversed in whispers, but for the most part they did not talk. It was as though they had forgotten how—or that there was nothing they cared to discuss.

Bob Terry walked down the main corridor and stopped at the barred door of his cell block. The stevedore entered the block with him and then unlocked the door of Terry's cell. Instantly the convicts near by grew rigid with interest. They knew what it meant; this giving a prisoner access to his cell before 4 o'clock in the

afternoon. They had seen it before, and it always immediately preceded the departure of one of their number for the outer world. They stared curiously at Bob. Some were envious, others—not even knowing Terry—were merely glad for him. But most of them did not care. They had learned that nothing which concerned the outer world was for them, and it was beyond their comprehension that there were people who could come and go as they pleased.

But there was one convict whose interest in Bob Terry's actions was keen and personal. This man raised his herculean frame from the floor where it had been stretched, and shuffled toward the young man and his escort.

Todd Shannon was a tremendous man, and a picturesque one. The sun, filtering in through the sinister bars of the cell block, illumined a fine, deeply graven face set with eyes in which there was little of evil and much of humor. But most particularly it lighted his shock of flaming red hair—hair which fell about his ears and treated a devil-may-care impression. It was only when one saw Todd Shannon in his moments of brooding that it was possible to understand why he was here.

Now there was nothing but radiant good cheer in the man's face, and Bob Terry, looking up to meet the jovial eyes of the huge convict, started forward with hands outstretched. Even now, however, the bonds of three interminable years were not to be cast aside and he spoke in a whisper.

"It's come, Todd."

"You're goin' out?" The big man's bone-crushing grip tightened on Terry's arms. "Are you honest, kid?"

"Yes. And I wish—"

"Well, dog-gone your hide! Kid, I'm happy about that. Pardon?"

Bob shook his head and a smile played bitterly about his oldish-youthful lips. "No. Freedom. They've discovered I wasn't guilty."

Shannon whistled softly. "Now didn't I always tell you things would work out thataway? Didn't I, huh? Boy! I'm glad for you. 'Wont' be so long before I'm out, too. And then—" He looked toward the open cell door and then turned pleadingly to the turnkey.

"Listen, Cap'n—please, sir. He's my buddy. Can't I go into the cell with him an' say good-bye?"

The guard, who was distinctly human at times, nodded cheerful assent and the friends—one brawny and huge and cheerful, the other ten years younger and smaller and hopelessly bitter—entered the cell. The other prisoners, trooping silently by toward the mess hall, glanced curiously inside the cell.

Bob Terry seated himself on the iron cot. He looked at his surroundings through new eyes. For three years he had occupied a room like this; for the past 14 months this very cubicle had been his home. And, queerly enough, it had not seemed so bad—until now when freedom was only a few minutes distant. Five beds in a row, each with a wooden chest against the foot; a wash basin, a toilet, two barred windows, a steam radiator—all rather better and cleaner and more comfortable than most prisons; but even more unbearable, for it was reminding

of the outside world. It was the vista from the cell that was beyond reason; a starting through bars to more bars, and then to still other bars beyond—and then the grim granite wall with its sentinel tower in which there were armed guards and machine guns.

Todd Shannon watched his young friend silently. There was genuine affection in his manner and concern was marked in fine lines about the corners of his mouth. They were as different as night and day, yet in three years a bond of friendship had been cemented between them. They had shared each other's whispered confidences, hopes and bitterness. But it was Todd who had been the more understanding because he was a philosopher and Bob Terry was too young and too bitter to be that.

It was Shannon who spoke first. "I'm sure glad, Bob; awful glad."

"I know you are, Todd. It seems kind of queer—"

"Sure. I remember when they let me out three months ahead when I done my first stretch; seemed like there was a trick in it somewhere and I'd be hauled back—but there ain't no catch in this thing of yours, kid. 'Taint even like a pardon."

"No." The boy laughed harshly. "When I tell people that I've been in the pen for three years, I'll also explain that I was innocent. Oh! What a damned rotten mess it is."

"Now, kid—that ain't no kind of a way to talk. There ain't no use makin' things worse than they are. You'll be leavin' here in a few minutes—"

"For what?"

"Well, I dunno. I ain't got any special ideas of how they'll treat a feller like you which has been in jail but never really done nothin' to be put there. Of course, if you had really been guilty, I could tell pretty well—and I'm admitting that it ain't made no way easy. But maybe with you they'll kind of hand you something on a silver platter. But anyway, Bob, you listen to this." Todd Shannon edged closer and dropped one tremendous hand on his cellmate's leg. "Things might be awful hard, I dunno. But I do say if you run into any snags there's one feller you can go to and see an' mention my name to, an' he'll turn things upside down to help."

"John Carmody?"

"Yeah. You've heard me talk about him, and you think you know something—but, kid, you don't." Shannon was speaking with reverential passion. "This Carmody is a wonder. He's not only got the city right in his fingers, but he can do most anything he wants in the state. And there ain't a criminal lawyer in the world no better than him."

"Did he defend you?"

"Now, Bob—quit! I know what you're drivin' at. Sure Carmody defended me—and sure I'm in prison. But I was guilty. They nabbed me red-handed, and what John Carmody done for me was to get me seven years instead of 20—and I'll be getting out in about six months on account of some work of his at the capitol. And if you find the going rough—"

"What makes you think I will?"

"I dunno, kid. I hope not, but you never can tell. Carmody will do a heap for you."

"Why?"

"Oh! Lots of reasons. For one thing he's a friend of any guy who gets it in the neck. That's his business, see; defending us guys that do something the law says we shouldn't do. And I guess just like any other business it pays him to be in strong with us. Get it?"

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"More or less. But I still don't see why Carmody should bother to listen to my troubles when he doesn't even know me."

"He will, though. He's that kind. There ain't anything too much trouble for that feller. He's politics, he is, and he knows where the votes come from. Don't ever hold no office himself, but he's the bimbo that says who does."

"Politician!—I've heard that."

"What you've heard about John Carmody don't go. The town's all full of two kinds of folks. One kind thinks he's wonderful an' a real human bein', an' the other kind regards him as a sort of a—a—whatchacallit?—leopard?"

Bob smiled faintly. "I understand. But I'm afraid I won't hunt up Mr. Carmody."

"You got to— Well, anyway, you'll meet him. That's sure."

"How is it sure?"

"On account of Kathleen."

"Your niece?"

"Uh-huh. She's Carmody's private secretary, and of course when she tells him that you and me are cellmates, he'll want to meet you."

"I see. Well, if it'll please you, Todd, I'll do it. I don't much like the idea, though, of hunting up your friends. I feel as though I want to get off by myself."

"Sure you feel thataway now, son. But wait 'til you get out and see folks all around you, talking and havin' friends an' being free an' 'easy.' That's when you'll want somebody to pas with. That's the time you'll yearn for some one to let off steam to. I know, kid, 'cause I've been there. And it's a good thing to let off steam, too, and not keep it bottled up inside. That's mostly why I'm sending you to Kathleen."

"I'll go. And I'll tell her what you told me."

"You do. She's a great girl, Kathleen. Not my kind. She's my brother's kid, see. Real cute, I think. And straight—but she understands that everything in the world ain't cake 'and ice cream. You and her will get along swell."

The barred door of the corridor swung back and the first of the convicts returned from their meal. They sat around on the floor and smoked cigarettes, and a group gathered outside the cell containing Bob Terry and Todd Shannon. They stared curiously, but asked no questions.

Terry rose and moved to his wooden cot at the foot of the bed.

"I'll get packed, Todd. You've missed your lunch—"

The face of the giant grew very soft for a moment.

"Yes," he said. "And I'm gonna miss you—an awful lot."

(To Be Continued)

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FOREST FIRE LOSS IN OREGON \$159,170

Timber Not Damaged To Any Great Extent; Camps Heaviest Losers

Aggregate loss of timber, logging equipment and improvements in forest fires which burned over 24,078 acres in 1927, was \$159,170, according to a revised statement completed by the state forester here Saturday.

The total loss in merchantable timber with no salvage value was estimated by the state forester at 1,737,000 board feet. This represented a net monetary loss of \$3653 to the owners. Of the total loss resulting from forest fires \$138,020 was in logging camps. Approximately 75 per cent of the loss was covered by insurance. The remainder of the loss from fires, exclusive of merchantable timber, was in connection with the destruction of improvements such as fences, buildings and farm property.

"Fire fighting costs were reduced to the minimum," read the state forester's report. "The total expenditures were \$53,965, of which \$43,203 was expended in the suppression of fires in logging camps. The remainder was expended on fires for which the regular patrol organizations accepted responsibility."

"Total expenditures for all patrol, improvements and fire suppression was approximately \$350,000. Of this amount the state expended \$60,000, while the remaining \$290,000 was borne by the owners of the timber."

"Lightning was responsible for 162 fires during the year. Of the man caused fires the incendiaries headed the list with 203 fires. Smokers caused 125 fires, campers 99 fires, logging operators 58 fires, land clearing 59 fires, railroads 4 fires, slashings 2 fires and miscellaneous 63 fires."

"State fire warden commissions were issued to 668 persons during the fire season. Of this number 307 were regularly paid wardens who were employed directly by the state forester's office or by associations which cooperated with the state forestry department. The remainder of the commissions were issued to voluntary wardens, wardens employed to look after logging camp fire protection and employees of the United States forest service."

"The small fire loss during the year 1927 was attributed to a favorable season and increased efficiency of the patrol organization. No serious fire weather occurred until July and by the middle of September sufficient rains had fallen so that the hazard was reduced materially."

"Owing to the absence of the fire hazard during the early part of the season, it was possible to use virtually the entire field force on improvement work and in re-

Snow Follows Freezing Weather in Washington

WALLA WALLA, Wash., Jan. 14.—(AP).—Freezing temperatures followed by snow here and in the Blue mountains last night and this morning checked floods in streams flowing from the mountains and permitted partial restoration of the train service crippled since last Friday.

The Union Pacific which last night sent passengers and mail for Portland, via Pendleton, announced reopening of the line to Walla Walla this morning. Both lines to Spokane were blocked. The Northern Pacific started a train to Pasco this morning preceded by a work train. It was expected that the Northern Pacific train from Seattle would arrive over its own tracks. The line to Walla Walla and Dayton also was open.

Hickman's Captors Went Only By A. P. Reports

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 14.—(AP).—The only help the captors of William Edward Hickman had in apprehending the kidnapers and murderer was an Associated Press dispatch, they said here today.

The captors, Tom Gurdane, chief of police of Pendleton, Ore., and C. L. (Buck) Llenallen, Oregon state traffic officer, who have just arrived here from Los Angeles, said that at least a score of persons were seeking the reward for Hickman's capture.

Many of the claimants have hired lawyers to press their claims. Llenallen said, "but I don't see how one of them rightfully has anything coming. The only help Gurdane and I had was an Associated Press dispatch saying Hickman was in Oregon."

The two men will appear at a local theater for a week, starting tonight. They arrested Hickman near Pendleton when he was traveling east in a stolen automobile,

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