

BULL-DOG DRUMMOND

The Adventures of A Demobilized Officer Who Found Peace Dull

by **CYRIL McNEILE**
"SAPPER"
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Slowly Lakington sank back in his chair, a hard, merciless smile on his lips; and for a moment or two there was silence in the room. It was broken by the unkempt man on the sofa, who, without warning, exploded unexpectedly.

"A truce to all this fooling," he burst forth in a deep rumble; "I confess I do not understand it. Are we assembled here tonight, comrades, to listen to private quarrels and stupid talk?"

A murmur of approval came from the others, and the speaker stood up waving his arms.

"I know not what this young man has done: I care less. In Russia such trifles matter not. He has the appearance of a bourgeois, therefore he must die. Did we not kill thousands—aye, tens of thousands of his kind, before we obtained the great freedom? Are we not going to do the same in this accursed country? Kill him now—



"Kill Him Now—Throw Him in a Corner and Let Us Proceed."

throw him in a corner and let us proceed."

He sat down, amidst a murmur of approval, in which Hugh joined heartily.

"Splendid," he murmured. "A magnificent perforation. Am I right, sir, in assuming that you are what is vulgarly known as a Bolshevik?"

The man turned his sunken eyes, glowing with the burning fires of fanaticism, on Drummond.

"I am one of those who are fighting for the freedom of the world," he cried harshly, "for the right to live of the proletariat." He flung out his arms wildly. "It is freedom; it is the dawn of the new age."

Hugh looked at him with genuine curiosity; it was the first time he had actually met one of these wild visionaries in the flesh. And then the curiosity was succeeded by a very definite amazement: what had Peterson to do with such as he?

For the moment his own deadly risk was forgotten: a growing excitement filled his mind. Could it be possible that here, at last, was the real object of the gang; could it be possible that Peterson was organizing a deliberate plot to try and Bolshevize England? He looked up to find Peterson regarding him with a faint smile.

"It is a little difficult to understand, isn't it, Captain Drummond?" he said, carefully flicking the ash of his cigar. "I told you you'd find yourself in deep water." Then he resumed the contemplation of the papers in front of him.

Hugh half closed his eyes, while a general buzz of conversation broke out round the table.

Fragments of conversation struck his ears from time to time. The intimidated rabbit, with the light of battle in his watery eye, was declaiming on the glories of workmen's councils; a bullet-headed man was shouting an inspiring battle cry about no starvation wages and work for all.

contemptuous laugh.

Too surprised to speak, the Russian sat staring at him; and it was Peterson who broke the silence with his suave voice.

"Your distress, I am glad to say, is not likely to be one of long duration," he remarked. "In fact, the time has come for you to retire for the night, my young friend."

He stood up smiling; then he walked over to the bell behind Hugh and rang it.

"Dead or mad—I wonder which," he threw the end of his cigar into the grate as Hugh rose. "While we



He Opened the Door and Stood There Smiling.

deliberate down here on various matters of importance we shall be thinking of you upstairs—that is to say, if you get there. I see that Lakington is even now beginning to gloat in pleasant anticipation."

Not a muscle on the soldier's face twitched; not by the hint of a look did he show the keenly watching audience that he realized his danger. Lakington's face was merciless, with its fiendish look of anticipation, and Hugh stared at him with level eyes for a while before he turned toward the door.

"Then I will say 'Good night,'" he remarked casually. "Is it the same room that I had last time?"

"No," said Peterson. "A different one—specially prepared for you. If you get to the top of the stairs a man will show you where it is." He opened the door and stood there smiling. And at that moment all the lights went out.

TWO.

The darkness could be felt, as real darkness inside a house always can be felt. Not the faintest glimmer even of greenness showed anywhere, and Hugh remained motionless, wondering what the next move was going to be. Now that the night's ordeal had commenced, all his nerve had returned to him. He felt ice-cold; and as his powerful hands clenched and unclenched by his sides, he grinned faintly to himself. Then very cautiously he commenced to feel his way toward the door.

At that moment someone brushed past him. Like a flash Hugh's hand shot out and gripped him by the arm. The man wriggled and twisted, but he was powerless as a child, and with another short laugh Hugh found his throat with his other hand. And again silence settled on the room.

Still holding the unknown man in front of him, he reached the foot of the stairs, and there he paused. He had suddenly remembered the mysterious thing which had whizzed past his head that other night, and then clanged suddenly into the wall beside him. He had gone up five stairs when it had happened, and now with his foot on the first, he started to do some rapid thinking.

If, as Peterson had kindly assured him, they proposed to try and send him mad, it was unlikely that they would kill him on the stairs. At the same time it was obviously an implement capable of accurate adjustment, and therefore it was more than likely that they would use it to frighten him. And if they did—if they did... The unknown man wriggled feebly in his hands, and a sudden unholy look came on to Hugh's face.

"It's the only possible chance," he said to himself, "and if it's you or me, laddie, I guess it's got to be you."

With a quick heave he jerked the man off his feet, and lifted him up till his head was above the level of his own. Then clutching him tight, he commenced to climb. His own head was bent down, somewhere in the region of the man's back, and he took no notice of the feebly kicking legs.

Then at last he reached the fourth step, and gave a final adjustment to his semi-conscious burden. He pressed his head even lower in the man's back, and lifted him up another three inches.

"How awfully jolly!" he murmured. "I hope the result will please you."

"I'd stand quite still if I were you," said Peterson suavely. "Just listen."

As Hugh had gambled on, the performance was designed to frighten. Instead of that, something hit the neck of the man he was holding with such force that it wrenched him clean out of his arms. Then came the clang beside him, and with a series of ominous thuds a body rolled down the stairs into the hall below.

"You fool!" He heard Lakington's voice, shrill with anger. "You've killed him. Switch on the light..."

But before the order could be carried out Hugh had disappeared, like a great cat, into the darkness of the passage above. As luck would have it the first room he darted into was empty, and he flung up the window and peered out.

A faint, watery moon showed him a twenty-foot drop onto the grass, and without hesitation he flung his legs over the sill. And at that moment something prompted him to look upward.

It was a dormer window, and to an active man access to the roof was easy. Without an instant's hesitation he abandoned all thoughts of retreat; and when two excited men rushed in to the room he was firmly ensconced, with his legs astride of the ridge of the window, not a yard from their heads.

Securely hidden in the shadow, he watched the subsequent proceedings with genial toleration. A raucous bellow from the two men announced that they had discovered his line of escape; and, in half a minute the garden was full of hurrying figures. One, calm and impassive, his identity betrayed only by the inevitable cigar, stood by the garden door, apparently taking no part in the game; Lakington, blind with fury, was running round in small circles, cursing everyone impartially.

"The car is still there." A man came up to Peterson, and Hugh heard the words distinctly.

"Then he's probably over at Benton's house. I will go and see."

Hugh watched the thick-set, massive figure stroll down toward the wicket gate, and he laughed gently to himself. Then he grew serious again, and with a slight frown he pulled out his watch and peered at it. Half-past one... two more hours before dawn. And in those two hours he wanted to explore the house from top to bottom; especially he wanted to have a look at the mysterious central room of which Phyllis had spoken to him—the room where Lakington kept his treasures. But until the excited throng below went indoors, it was unsafe to move. Once out of the shadow, any one would be able to see him crawling over the roof in the moonlight.

At times the thought of the helpless man for whose death he had in one way been responsible recurred to him, but he shook his head angrily. It had been necessary, he realized: you can carry someone upstairs in a normal house without him having his neck broken—but still... And then he wondered who he was. It had been one of the men who sat round the table—that he was tolerably certain. But which...? Was it the frightened bunny, or the Russian, or the gentleman with the blood-shot eye? The only comfort was that whoever it had been, the world would not be appreciably the poorer for his sudden decease. The only regret was that it hadn't been dear Henry... He had a distate for Henry which far exceeded his dislike of Peterson.

"He's not over there," Peterson's voice came to him from below. "And we've wasted time enough as it is." The men had gathered together in a group, just below where Hugh was sitting, evidently awaiting further orders.

"Do you mean to say we've lost the young swine again?" said Lakington angrily.

"Not lost—merely mistaid," murmured Peterson. "The more I see of him the more do I admire his initiative."

Lakington snorted. "It was that d—d fool Ivolsky's own fault," he snarled; "why didn't he keep still as he was told to do?"

"Why, indeed," returned Peterson, his cigar glowing red. "And I'm afraid we shall never know. He is very dead." He turned toward the house. "That concludes the entertainment, gentlemen, for tonight. I think you can all go to bed."

He disappeared into the house, and the others followed slowly. For the time being Hugh was safe, and with a sigh of relief he stretched his cramped limbs and lay back against the sloping roof. If only he had dared to light a cigarette.

THREE.

It was half an hour before Drummond decided that it was safe to start exploring. First he took off his shoes, and tying the laces together, he slung them around his neck. Then, as silently as he could, he commenced to scramble upward.

slip and nothing could have stopped him sliding down and finally crashing into the garden below, with a broken leg, at the very least, for his pains. In addition, there was the risk of dislodging a slate, an unwise proceeding in a house where most of the occupants slept with one eye open. But at last he got his hands over the ridge of the roof, and in another moment he was sitting straddlewise across it.

A sudden rattle close to him made him start violently; only to curse himself for a nervous ass the next moment, and lean forward eagerly. One of the blinds had been released from the room, and a pale, diffused light came filtering out into the night from the side of the glass roof. He was still craning backward and forward to try and find some chink through which he could see, when, with a kind of uncanny deliberation, one of the panes of glass slowly opened. It was worked on a ratchet from inside, and Hugh bowed his thanks to the unseen operator below. Then he leant forward cautiously, and peered in...

The whole room was visible to him, and his jaw tightened as he took in the scene. In an armchair, smoking as unconcernedly as ever, sat Peterson. He was reading a letter, and occasionally underlining some point with a pencil. Beside him on a table was a big ledger, and every now and then he would turn over a few pages and make an entry. But it was not Peterson on whom the watcher above was concentrating his attention; it was Lakington, taking a red velvet box out of a drawer in the desk. He opened it lovingly, and Hugh saw the flash of diamonds. Lakington let the stones run through his hands, glittering with a thousand flames, while Peterson watched him contemptuously.

"Baubles," he said, scornfully. "Pretty baubles. What will you get for them?"

"Ten, perhaps fifteen thousand," returned the other. "But it's not the money I care about; it's the delight in having them, and the skill required to get them."

Peterson shrugged his shoulders. "Skill which would give you hundreds of thousands if you turned it into proper channels."

Lakington replaced the stones, and threw the end of his cigarette into the grate.

"Possibly, Carl, quite possibly. But it boils down to this, my friend, and you like the big canvas with broad effects; I like the miniature and the well-drawn etching."

"Which makes us a very happy combination," said Peterson. "The pearls, don't forget, are your job. The big thing—he turned to the other, and a trace of excitement came into his voice—"the big thing is mine."

(To be Continued)

NOTICE OF HEARING ON FINAL ACCOUNT

In the matter of the estate of Frank Rivers, deceased.
Notice is hereby given that Paul C. King, administrator of the estate of Frank Rivers, deceased, has made and filed with the Clerk of the County Court of Deschutes County, Oregon, his final account of his administration of said estate and that the Judge of the above entitled court has designated the 12th day of August, 1921, at the hour of 2 o'clock in the afternoon of said day, at the Court Room in Bend, Deschutes County, Oregon, as the time and place of hearing said final account and of the settling of said estate, and all persons interested are cited to appear at said time and place and show cause, if any there be, why said account should not be allowed and said estate closed and settled.
Dated this 7th day of July, 1921.
PAUL C. KING,
Administrator of the estate of Frank Rivers, deceased. 23, 35, 41, 47c.

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