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RUNAWAY JUNE

By George Randolph Chester and Lillian Chester

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Fourth Episode.

CHAPTER I.

"SHANKS' M'Gee, carrying one soiled newspaper for a bluff, collecting money for the newsboys' home for another bluff, suddenly paused in his absorbing effort to whistle through a broken tooth as he saw coming up the dingy side street toward the Hotel Daniel a beautiful young girl. A man was following her and he was dodging along from tree to tree and from doorway to doorway, and every time he saw the girl look back he ducked.

Shanks M'Gee stood petrified, then took a long deep breath and hurried up to the corner. He flattened his already flat nose against the broad plate glass window of the modest Hotel Daniel.

Seven men who had been morbidly eyeing their respective cuspidors immediately straightened up and looked their handsomest.

"A room with a bath, please," she requested.

"Any luggage, miss?"

"My maid will be here presently with my clothes." The voice was soft and sweet.

"Certainly, Miss," and the clerk whanged a bell which sounded like a fire gong.

"Front!" The clerk, without moving his body or his neck or his head, craned forward to watch the signature, Mrs. J. G. Day.

A moment later the black-vandyked man stroled in, looked at the register and walked into the bar. Then along came Marie with a bundle of clothes.

"Mrs. Day's maid!" the clerk observed, inspecting the clothes piece by piece from under his eyelids and ringing for front.

"She's expecting you."

"Marie, tell June I want her!" cried a voice.

"Sir," she said, "I do not know you."

"Why—er—Ned stammered; then he grabbed the clothes from the maid's arms. "Now you lead me to June."

"Sir, how dare you!" Marie said and turned appealingly to the clerk.

"These are my wife's clothes!" declared the young man. "She's here. I want her."

"What's her name?" the clerk demanded.

"Mrs. Ned Warner."

"Not here."

"June Moore!"

"Oh, come off!" observed the clerk.

"Gone!" protested Blye and leaned forward to look over the register.

"Why, she came in only about an hour or so ago. She is—"

"Now don't tell me who she is. I don't know whose wife the lady may be and I don't want to know. She's gone."

In that same moment Sneaky Tavis caught up with the electric coupe and scrambled on the step and hung his thick arms in at the door.

"Huh—huh—huh—huh!" Sneaky inhaled her, strangling for breath and puffing his arms out of the car.

"I say, what do you want?" insisted Honoria.

Sneaky pointed backward with his thumb. "Your huh—huh—husband!" he husked, sucking in all the air in the car. "Daniel!" And again he pointed backward with his thumb.

Honoria Blye without a word grabbed her cut glass flower vase and cracked her expert detective on the knuckles. With a parting gasp he dropped off backward.

Where was June while so many people were so busy about her? In a horse cab, with Marie and the clothes, far down near the East River, they found a slice of a house, so narrow that it should have had a weather vane to keep it headed into the wind. It was three stories high and blackened with age, but there were geraniums in the windows. This was where the elevator boy's mother lived, and it was as clean inside as it was grimy without. She had a floor to let, furnished, two rooms and a real bath, tin, and considerably dented but kept fresh painted in spotless white.

"You say you want it quiet?" said she, "and my son, Sammy, sent you here? Well, my husband, before he died, was the most popular policeman on the force, and the whole department, darlin', is your friends."

CHAPTER III.

FOR A MOMENT June hesitated before the door of an employment agency next day. She turned the knob with sudden boldness and opened it; then she smiled at her own sensitiveness as she stood before a pleasant faced woman in the corner of whose eyes, however, there was a veiled sharpness which June did not see.

A very pretty woman came in as June turned to go away, and with her was a little girl of great beauty. June hesitated as she heard the word "governess." The woman at the desk smiled at June. The newcomer followed that smile and herself smiled at June. The little girl had been studying June frankly out of round eyes.

"I like you," she said, with startling candor, then the employment agency woman laughed, and pretty Mrs. Wiles laughed. June dimpled.

"I like you, too," she acknowledged. The employment agency woman rose. "Mrs. Murdock is listed as a governess," she observed, and June winced at her new name. How queer this all seemed!

"Perhaps you would like to have a little chat."

Mrs. Wiles and June Moore Warner Justin Day Murdock were both agreeable to that suggestion, and when June rose she was engaged. Mrs. Wiles was a most appealing woman.

All three were perfectly happy as they left the office and rode in Mrs. Wiles' victoria up Fifth avenue to one of those wide, clean streets which lead off from Central Park.

A duplex apartment. June had never seen one before and its utility was a puzzle to her then, as it was for many a long day afterward.

After luncheon a nap for Dolly, and then for a romp in the park. Roller skating. June's foot was nearly as small as Dolly's, and the child, after she had thoroughly exhausted herself, insisted that June try. It was a pretty little deceit which was put upon Dolly.

"I'll produce the young woman at once," agreed the clerk. "But if there is going to be a rumor, it'll have to be on the sidewalk on the other side of the street."

He called for 44. He called again. There was no answer. The room was searched.

It was empty.

Sammy, the boy with the angelic smile and the blue eyes and the white teeth was the finest liar in the hotel. He had had a quarter and one of her compelling smiles from June and a glance from her lovely eyes, and he had run them down through the basement and out through the rear servants' entrance and had told them a place to go where no one would ever find them.

"This is the limit!" declared the clerk to one and all as strong porters and agile bell boys headed his way.

"Get 'em out Mike."

Quite a little crowd had collected when suddenly a policeman appeared from around a corner and dispersed the mob, including Honoria Blye.

That vigorous lady had barely turned the corner, headed for the avenue, when a brilliantly lighted, luxurious limousine stopped in front of the Hotel Daniel. Shanks M'Gee's eyes began to stretch as he saw the occupants, and he whistled in a complete circle in his efforts to locate without loss of a second Bill Wolf and Blinky Peters and Sneaky Tavis. They were trudging up the street in singlefile, heads down, hands in pockets. Even Blinky Peters had lost interest in the stars. The smacking footsteps of Shanks M'Gee aroused them.

"Gee!" exploded Shanks. "Cripe! Gilbert Blye has doubled back with another swell Jane! Beat it to de Daniel! An' one of youse hotfoot it after de electric showense and get de old woman!"

Wolf turned a commanding eye on Tavis. "Hit 'er up!" he ordered.

"Sneaky drew a long jerking breath and pulled his belt around him, cast a despairing look up the side street to where the little electric was twinkling, took the center of the car track and began laboriously to "hit 'er up."

In the meantime Gilbert Blye and Tommy Thomas had walked confidently up to the desk. The clerk without the flicker of an eyelid bent forward politely.

"Is Mrs. J. G. Day stopping here?" inquired Blye with great suavely.

"No, the lady is gone."

"Gone?" protested Blye and leaned forward to look over the register.

"Why, she came in only about an hour or so ago. She is—"

"Now don't tell me who she is. I don't know whose wife the lady may be and I don't want to know. She's gone."

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After luncheon a nap for Dolly, and then for a romp in the park. Roller skating. June's foot was nearly as small as Dolly's, and the child, after she had thoroughly exhausted herself, insisted that June try. It was a pretty little deceit which was put upon Dolly.

June strapped on the skates and was timid and helpless and altogether charming until Dolly had laughed herself weak and then June suddenly straightened up and skated away like the expert she was, whereat Dolly was more pleased than ever, and a voice from the roadway, a suave and pleasant voice, called "Bravo!"

Gilbert Blye! He was smiling. June was confused. She whisked off the skates.

"You seem to have all the accomplishments," went on Gilbert Blye, stepping down from his luxurious limousine.

"Hello, young lady!" He held out his hand to Dolly Wiles. "What a lovely car!" she exclaimed, putting it on its smooth swelling side. "Just the kind that mother wants, but daddy says we can't afford it."

Blye laughed lightly. "Would you like a spin around the park in it?"

Dolly, jumping up and down, was already tugging at the handle of the door and Blye, laughing, opened it for her. Dolly gave a cry of joy as she saw the rich interior, and she was among the soft cushions in an instant.

"You haven't much choice," said the low voice of Blye, and he held the door open for June.

"This once," And she looked him squarely in the eye. He smiled.

They made their adieux rather hastily to Mr. Blye, for their time was a little more than up.

Just before dinner was called Mr. Wiles came home, and June happened into the library. Mrs. Wiles—she called her Woolly—was sitting on the arm of her husband's chair, her arm around his neck and his chin in the palm of her hand. With the other hand she was twisting a lock of his hair over and over her finger, and she was most dis-

tingly and obviously wheedling him for money. His voice was low and protesting with as much sternness as a man can use when he is being charmed into docility. Woolly Wiles was locking the money in her little inlaid desk when June saw her next.

They were going out after dinner. There was some talk about ordering a car, and it needed but one word to give Dolly a start. The luxurious limousine of the black-vandyked man was the whole of her text. She rattled on and on about it, and as she talked the pretty face of Mrs. Wiles grew more and more distressed.

"Harry, dear," she said, "Dolly and I want a limousine! Please!"

"Get thee behind me Woolly." The man still laughed, but he began to look very seriously at his charming wife.

"You'd get anything out of a man!"

Pretty Mrs. Wiles accepted that compliment prettily, but June, as she went out of the library, unobserved, was hurt for the woman, for herself, for her kind, as her face betrayed.

Ned and his detectives on that day were down in the neighborhood of the Hotel Daniel scouring the district inch by inch, as it were, for some trace of the runaway bride, and wherever they went a small, flat-nosed boy with one soiled newspaper under his arm sleuthed after them.

Little Dolly Wiles awoke in the night to become aware of a light in the lower floor of the duplex apartment. Daddy! He was at work in the library, as he always was late at night here recently. Dolly felt herself privileged to say good night to daddy, so she slipped out, put on her bedroom slippers and her pretty little lounging robe and tripped downstairs.

June heard her go and dressed in like fashion. Harry Wiles had his books spread out before him and a pen behind his ear.

"Daddy, are you going to get mother a limousine?"

The man glanced over at his books and ran his hand across his brow.

"Well, I promised mother tonight," he admitted with reluctance, and his face grew grave.

"Goody!" The little girl clapped her hands.

Mrs. Wiles in a stunning negligee stood in the library door.

"You want Dolly, of course," she said to June. "She's a born prowler, I think."

Dolly smacked her father a parting kiss.

"Daddy says it won't be a big limousine, mother, but it'll have silk tassels, and it'll be a limousine, anyhow."

"Really, Harry, I've been wondering if it isn't a waste of money to buy as cheap a limousine as that. I'd rather wait until you can afford one that will be more substantial."

"I know your tricks," commented her husband. "Really, Woolly, I positively cannot afford an expensive car."

"Harry!" That wheedling tone echoed in June's ears as she skipped up stairs with Dolly, and she knew that the cheap little Beaver car would not stand in front of the Wiles' door.

Mrs. Ned Warner was made tremendously thoughtful by the affairs of the little Wiles family.

Mrs. Wiles affected even to herself that her husband's constant resistance toward expenditure was the normal attitude of man toward the domestic spending of money. It was the woman's business to get all she could and the man's to resist.

The crash came sooner than June had expected. On the next evening after the limousine had come home there walked into the house a grim-jawed hard-eyed man of forty-five, on whose suit case there were pasted foreign labels.

"Hello, Baker," exclaimed Wiles, with cordiality.

"A little personal business." And Baker seated himself.

"How's the London branch?" asked Wiles by way of making conversation.

"Doing very nicely," was the curt reply, and Baker shook hands with Dolly.

By and by the voices of the men rose and they became more interested in their conversation, and there floated up to June an emphatic speech of Baker's which she could not help hearing.

"You've spent it!" Baker's words were clean cut. "In my absence of a year and a half you've overdrawn your account \$50,000. Fifty thousand dollars was the exact amount of your investment. That makes us quits. I'll trouble you to turn over your share of the business to me immediately."

"But that leaves me without a cent, without an income!" worried Wiles. He had no blame for his partner, nor was he as much crushed as he had expected to be. "I have a wife and a

child, you know, Baker. I could no more refuse them anything than I could refuse bread to a starving child."

"That's the trouble." Baker's voice was not harsh. It was simply cold. "You've spoiled them. A wife should be a help to a man, and most of them would if they were given a chance. You made a toy of yours."

The next morning Mrs. Wiles came up to June. She had been crying, but there was a light in her eyes which was good to see.

"I'm verry sorry," she said simply. "We've had a business reverse, and we shan't be able to keep you. The fact of the matter is that we don't happen to have a cent in the house. I took all of Harry's money yesterday, and I spent it yesterday afternoon. I—I—that isn't quite the truth," she suddenly blurted out. "We are absolutely broke. We haven't any money at all."

It hurt June to part with them. She had liked them all, and when the little girl hung around her neck they cried together, all three—June, Mrs. Wiles and Dolly.

Halfway up to the avenue June, walking along and dabbing her eyes occasionally, was confronted by someone. Blye!

"Which way?" he asked.

"To the employment office," she replied, and showed him her little purse with a laugh.

"It's a shame that a pretty girl like you should have to worry about money." He tried to detain her. Catching her gently by the arm he tried to urge her to enter his car, using all the persuasiveness of his eyes and his smile and his suave courtesy, but she was obdurate.

Suddenly he jumped into his limousine and whirled away. He was at the employment agency before June reached it, and he had a cordial chat with the employment agency woman. He handed her an address and went away.

June was delighted when she secured an opening quickly and started out immediately to find the place. For a moment she felt an intense dislike to the

ugly looking house at the address given and all that it might contain; then laughing at her fancies, she strode up the steps and rang the bell. The door swung open silently, but no one appeared. Wondering, June walked in, and the door slammed behind her.

Two minutes later Gilbert Blye went up the steps, took a key from his pocket, inserted it in the lock and smiled.

(To be continued.)

A Law Ignored.

The Bend Bulletin calls attention to a law (Section 6317, Lord's Oregon Laws) making mandatory the erection of plainly lettered guideposts at every crossing of public roads in the state.

The law further provides that until such signs are properly placed the supervisor can draw no pay from the county treasurer for any services rendered. Such signs must have upon them the distance to the next town or public place on such public highway, with such other information as is necessary. The Bulletin says:

"Under those provisions we believe there is not a single road supervisor in Crook County who is entitled to his pay from the county court. And with our road situation as it is we believe the court would be doing a real service to the public if it hereafter enforces to the letter this section."

Crook County officials are not alone in dereliction as to this law. Every road traveler can point to places in other counties where such signs are badly needed, but are not in evidence. In fact some road supervisors ignore the law entirely, much to the inconvenience and annoyance of travelers. Yet these supervisors have their bills audited and paid regularly by the county court. Hence these officials are as guilty as the supervisors.—The Oregonian.

Grants Pass—Twohy Bros. have contract to complete railroad to Crescent City, Calif., to cost \$5,000,000.

Western Union Telegraph Co. installing substations on Oregon Electric system.

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