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OVER FIRST NATIONAL BANK
Cottage Grove

RUNAWAY JUNE

By George Randolph Chester and Lillian Chester

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TENTH EPISODE. A Prisoner on the Yacht.

CHAPTER I.

RED WARNER, in front of the blazing windows of the New York cafe, stood as one in a daze. He saw again his lovely runaway bride being forced out of the cafe against her will by the man with the white mustache and that infernal scoundrel with the black Vandyke.

Too late! Too late for anything but his stupor. Bobbie ran around and brought his roadster. They drove up to the corner and turned down the street through which the limousine had disappeared, but where in all that wilderness of moving vehicles could the track of June be found? Nowhere! It was as if the earth had opened and swallowed her up.

It might as well, for June, in a swift motor boat with the gay party which had kidnapped her from the cafe, was then swiftly approaching a long, low yacht which loomed gracefully above them in the misty river.

June's struggles were useless in that heaving water, and her cries of protest were unheard in that lonely waste. Below her she heard the laughter of the three men who had abducted her, and with their laughter blended the shrill, high voice of that vivacious brunette, Tommy Thomas.

Mrs. Villard came in and dropped in a chair, while the vivacious Tommy danced over to the gold lacquered piano. Blye and the white mustached Cunningham and the heavy Edwards followed.

"Have a taste of this, dearie. It will soothe your nerves." The stewardess held to June's lips a glass of sherry, but June drew away from it and hurried away from the sumptuously fitted saloon. She did not know where that passageway led except that it led away from that hateful company. The stewardess followed her. "Right in here, dearie," and she opened the door of a magnificent stateroom. June hesitated, but down the passageway came Orin Cunningham, his eyes twinkling and the laughter of wine upon his lips. June darted into the magnificent stateroom, hastily shut the door and locked it.

In the crimson and gold salon were the popping of corks, gay laughter, in which even Mrs. Villard joined, and then the loud strains of swift dance music, pounded out by the nimble fingers of Tommy Thomas. Blye rose presently and tiptoeing down the gangway, stopped at June's door and listened. He could hear an occasional stifled sob as June sat amid the soft cushions of the couch.

"Ned! That brief sight of him had filled June's whole soul with longing.

There were the rattle of a donkey engine and the scraping of chains on the yacht Hilarity. The anchor was coming up, and there was an instant change in the easy rocking of the craft. June ran to the porthole and gazed out. The portholes were too small to let her shoulders through. She ran to the door and opened it stealthily, then closed it and held the knob as Tommy Thomas and Orin Cunningham danced past in the salon.

The alert ear of Gilbert Blye caught the click of that latch, slight as it was, and his eyes glowed; he motioned significantly toward the corridor, and Edwards, reaching up, said something in the ear of Mrs. Villard. A slight frown crossed her brow, but she rose instantly and went down the gangway to the door of June's stateroom. She knocked, but there was no answer. "June!" she called. "June, dear!" No answer. Mrs. Villard listened. No sound. She went back slowly to the salon. "You'll never make that child one of us," and shook her head.

While June pondered on what she should do Marie and Henri reached the city and stopped at a telegraph office. The door bell rang at Moore home in Brynport. Aunt Debby's voice was heard: "Why, it's Mr. Ned and Miss Iris." Stern John Moore listened with silent attention, while Mrs. Moore, her hand upon her breast, stifled the emotions to which Iris' blethering gave full play as the kidnapping was described. "It is a matter for the police," Ned declared and picked up the telephone.

CHAPTER II.

On the dock adjacent to the one from which the Hilarity's motor tender had departed there paced, almost imperceptibly, a nightwatchman, who consisted of an overcoat, a cap and two glints of eye. To him there came, as the docks intensified their loneliness, a brisk little chauffeur with a thin mustache and a woman with high cheek bones. "The Hilarity!" stated the little chauffeur, with an accusing tone, and with a sweeping gesture he pointed to that adjacent dock where stood a big hamper with the word "Hilarity" glaring white on its side. "She is gone!" "Yep," rumbled a frosty voice. "But her tender," objected Henri, "also is gone. Listen, my friend," insisted Henri. "The facts are like these: Mademoiselle has gone on board the Hilarity. Behold, here is the maid of the charming mademoiselle. She was also to have gone on board the Hilarity. How, then, shall she go?" "Dunno."

Henri had another idea. He drove to a nearby saloon and procured a bottle of whisky, which he offered to the man on the dock. "Thanks," the voice was one degree less frosty. The neck of the bottle disappeared into the slit of the overcoat collar, and the gleaming bottle turned heavenward. "Voilà!" Henri himself took a sip and stuffed the bottle into his pocket. "I shall go away, my friend, but I shall return." He hurried back to the touring car upon the street and drove away.

CHAPTER III.

In an ivory tapestried stateroom, as the Hilarity steamed slowly across the bay, June Warner suddenly rose and rang for the stewardess. That pucker person came with alacrity.

"Did you ring, dearie?" she whined as June opened the door.

"Yes," June studied the woman a moment speculatively. She could not confide in this creature. "You may

bring me some water, please."

"Yes, dearie." The stewardess whirled and hurried to the door of the crimson and gold salon, where Tommy Thomas sat between Cunningham and Edwards, with a hand on a shoulder of each. The stewardess with a sidelong glance at the quiet Blye in the corner, hurried over to the group on the bench. "She wants some water," she whispered.

"Oh yes. Say, I think she wants to escape."

Blye, with a frown, walked across and spoke to Cunningham. Orin went to the portable buffet, where he selected a Venetian glass. He filled it with ice. Then, while the others watched him he took from a locked case a tiny stone bottle. Now he emptied the ice from the beautiful goblet and poured into it a few blood red drops. Mrs. Villard half rose and looked toward Gilbert Blye; then, with a catch in her breath, she sat down and was silent.

Blye went to the door as the stewardess came up the gangway and called her in with a jerk of his head. Without a word Cunningham passed the glass to the stewardess, but between the two there passed a look which was full of meaning.

"I brought you the water, dearie," said the stewardess, entering June's stateroom.

"Oh!" An exclamation of delight from June at the beauty of the delicate Venetian goblet.

"That's something else I made for you in the pantry, dearie," explained the stewardess, in her coaxing whine, and bobbed her neck. "It's a fine stimulant and soothing to the nerves."

June took the sheer glass in her hand. It's fragile beauty had won her. She inhaled daintily. The fragrance was most appealing. She lifted the glass to her lips, and the tip of her tongue caught the delicious flavor. Suddenly as she tilted the glass to drink, she caught the pallid eyes of the stewardess fixed eagerly upon her.

With a flash of intuition June jerked her lips from the glass and threw it, crashing and splintering, into the fireplace.

"Why, dearie!" exclaimed the stewardess, and in great agitation she pushed the button at the side of the mantel.

June's eyelashes lowered for an instant, and her lips set; then, quietly she went into the little blue boudoir and sat thoughtfully upon the dainty upholstered settee.

The stewardess came pompously in.

"Well, you've done it again," he growled as he surveyed the splintered fragments of the Venetian glass.

"No, Percy," whined the woman and glared toward the boudoir door with her pallid eyes.

"That's you," snarled Wilkins.

"You always say it was a guest."

"How much?" whispered the woman in a sibilant hiss, which carried as it was intended to do.

"Them glasses is \$12 apiece, and it'll be taken from your wages. That comes out of my pocket!"

June bit her lips. Twelve dollars! It was a lot of money to a girl who had found dollars coming slowly and independence hard to win, but she picked up her purse. After all she had no proof that the woman meant anything but kindness.

"Is this breakage charged against you?" asked June.

"Why, yes, dearie."

"How much will it cost you?"

"Twelve dollars!" Sniffle.

"I do not wish you to lose the money."

And quite thoughtfully June counted \$12 from her slender store. She added another for the customary tip, and gave one to the man, and they both thanked her most obsequiously. As June turned to the boudoir their suppressed voices broke out again.

"No," protested the woman in that whining hiss; "that's my money—the dollar's mine anyway."

"Nothing's yours except what I give you," stated Percy Wilkins gruffly.

A startling thought came to June. Suppose she achieved her independence, suppose she earned her own money, so that she could go to Ned, asking him for nothing but love in return for her love, would he own what she had earned? If so, what would become of the principle for which she had run away? She paled at that thought, and then she laughed. She did not know the law in this matter but she knew Ned. Dear Ned! She hunted up her handkerchief in a hurry.

CHAPTER III.

The arrival of a messenger with an envelope rendered unnecessary the immediate need of police aid by the Moore family.

With fingers that trembled in spite of his habitual control, the father of June opened the telegram and read this strange message:

I am sorry I had a certain party tied and lost in Hunter's woods. Please find him and tell him I am sorry. I am going to join our darling. I will protect her until we meet again, when all will be happy. Your faithful MARY.

New plans were made accordingly.

The dock against which rocked and grated the swift little motorboat flashed the lonely overcoat and cap passed their almost imperceptible way. A touring car stopped on the street on the hill.

"It is cold my friend, is it not?" called Henri as he rushed forward, bottle in hand. "Shall we warm ourselves—yes?"

"Yep," rolled up the somber voice, with frosty cordiality, and the neck of the bottle disappeared in the slit of the overcoat collar.

"The motor tender from the Hilarity—it is not yet returned, eh?"

"Nope."

"Voilà!" Henri is even cheerful as he races up the dock. "I shall return, my friend Monsieur Frappe."

Left alone momentarily, June threw open the door which she had just locked and dashed back along the gangway toward the pantry. At the end of the companionway she found a passage that led her up to the deck. She rushed forward to the prow, taking in at a glance

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