

Jane Cable

By
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Author of "Beverly
of Graustark," etc.

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CHAPTER XVII—(Continued)

...on his knees be-
...and wept with all the
...and misery that was
...will be afraid to
...Not a word left his lips
...her hand in his hair—a
...hand. It was then that
...forth his cry for for-
...with a groan he checked
...for Jane another
...talk about Jane. Another
...he cried. "I must
..."



...himself on his knees beside the
...bed.
...you for me? I don't
...nothing else in the
..."

...the nurse came in a few min-
...was sitting upon the
...bed holding her hands in
...faces were radiant.
...stay out," he said, almost
..."

...a little while, his wife
...hesitated a
...and then left the room.
...Cable told him Jane's his-
...as it was known to her.
...daily.
...I'll see to know her true par-
...side in the end.
...suppose not," said he, looking
...window.
...understand, don't you, David,
...said feebly. "How I dread
...you learn the truth after
...years, and above all, how I
...Jane might never know!
...very means in my power to
...Bansemers silence." She
...had shamefully in her
...for a moment she went out
...to love his son, but his
...an animal gives the off-
...would destroy. And yet
...whispers him."
...quite sure that Graydon is
...to your father?"
...to Jane."

...to be sure of it. He is not a
...of his father's schemes. If
...Bansemers has not already told
...the server will. It is not his
...to do so. His only object has
...to get me into submission.
...will all come out right in the
...end. You'll forgive me?"
...let this man, and David
...talk with emotion as he spoke,
...to answer to me. There
...more to fear," he said res-
..."

...to crush him as I would
...you must not."
...worry," he broke in. "I'll at-
...him and see that no harm
...to any one. That man has
...among honest people."
...David, I was not honest with
...confessed.
...was a long time ago, and
...wonder how she is now.
...the odds now? It's a fact
...but it can't be helped." It
...that the man whose anger
...hours before had led him
...crime now readily absolved
...him.
...poor child!" she moaned.
...break her heart. She is so
...so happy."
...proud. There is good
...here. I don't wonder now that
...think she was such a mar-
...not just the same sort of
...we are. Take it as you
..."

...to find it out, dear.
...other tell. It will be easier
...Bansemers' fangs must be
...harmless forever. He shan't
...her. She'd better hear the story
...and not from him."
...Graydon? She'll lose him. Da-
..."

...sure of it. She's worthy
...love, and we must know
...loves her. I'll trust
...power of all, we must put it
...in any shape of form.
...I was after him—Graydon
...—he'll know that there
...is a wall.
...David, I'll take
...think well, dear. I can't
...of the story that will
...me for years and years.
...people think of me? What

will they say?" she almost wailed.

"Frances," said he, his voice tense and earnest, "that is between you and I. I intend to say to the world, if occasion demands, that I have known from the first that Jane was not our child. That will be—"

"Oh, David, you can't say that," she cried hoarsely.

"I shall say it, dear old partner. I shall say that you took her from the womb of my own mother. There is only James Bansemers to call me a liar, and he will not dare!"

"That old man Droom, David—his clerk. The man who saved me—he knows."

"He is in the house with his master. He did save you, though. I'll spare him much for that. And I'll be more to fear from him than you think. Frances, I am sure he saw me right before last down there at the sea wall. He knows, Jim morally certain, that you were not attacked by a robber."

"But, David, I was robbed. My rings and my pendant were taken by some one. If Droom was the first man at my side after you—then he must have taken them."

"I can't charge him with the theft," groaned Cable. "He saved your life and he might ruin mine. I would give anything I have to know just how much he saw of the affair. I can't account for his presence there. It seems like fate."

"It is impossible for him to accuse you, David."

"It is not impossible, I'm afraid. He may have seen me plainly."

"But I have described my assailant to the police. You do not answer the description in any particular."

In the next ten minutes the nurse came in twice to caution him against overtaxing his nerves, politely hinting that he should depart at once. There was no medicine, no nursing, no care that could have done her so much good as this poor wretched husband.

"It hurt me more than I can tell you, David, when I saw that you were jealous of him. I could see it growing in you day after day, and yet I could not find the courage to make anything clear to you. Oh, how could you have suspected me of that?"

"Because I am a man because I love you enough to care what becomes of you. I was wrong, I am happy to confess. Forgive me, dear. Can't tell you how terrible the last month has been to me. I can't tell you of the bitter thoughts I have had nor the vicious deeds I have planned. I was almost insane. I was not accountable. I have much to pay to you in the rest of the years that I live. I have much to pay to my own conscience, and I also owe something to James Bansemers. I shall try to pay all these different debts in the coin that they call for."

"We owe something, you and I, to Jane," said she as he arose to leave the room.

"A confession and more love than ever, Frances. I love her with my heart. When you are stronger we will tell her that she is not our child. We have loved her so long and so well that she can ask for better proof of our devotion. That terrible thing at the sea wall must remain our secret, dear. Tomorrow I shall begin pulling James Bansemers' fangs."

He found Graydon downstairs with Jane. A sharp look into the young man's eyes convinced him that his questions concerning Mrs. Cable and the latest news concerning the efforts to take the band were sincere. She held his hand for a long time; the firm, warm grasp was that of an honest man. As he stepped out into the night for a short walk over the garden, with a great pain in his heart, if Graydon, Bansemers would turn from Jane when he heard the truth concerning her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IT'S Harbert," said Elias Droom.

learn the truth about you. If you stay, you will be in jail before you are a week older. And, Mr. Bansemers, you've got to decide quick."

Bansemers looked his accuser straight in the eye, a faint smile of derision touching his lips, but not his eyes.

"Mr. Harbert, the first thing you have to learn in connection with your patient's father is that he is not a coward. I refuse to run, sir. I am innocent of any intentional wrong, and I'll stand by my ground. My son will stand beside me, too. His that sort. Go back to your committee and tell them that Bansemers will not go to Europe for his son's health. Good day, sir!"

"Nonsense, Bansemers!" exploded Graydon. "You know we've got you fast enough. Why be a fool as well as a knave? You haven't a ghost of a chance. I'm trying to do you a good turn."

"A good turn? Mr. Harbert, I am neither a fool nor a knave. If I were a fool, I'd kill you where you stand. I would be justified in killing the man who represents a crowd of blackmailers. That's what you are, sir. I refuse to pay your price. If I were a knave, I'd pay it. I want you to understand one thing. I shall stand my ground here. If you persecute me I'll not stop flaying you until death ends my endeavors. We'll see what justice can give me in exchange for your bulldozing. I will have restitution, remember that. Now, I've nothing more to say to you. Get out!"

"Get out!"

"By George, you're a wonderful bluffer."

"Do you expect me to throw you out, sir?"

"It isn't necessary. I've had a change of heart in the last minute. Mr. Bansemers, I withdraw my proposition. By all that's holy, I intend to go after you now without pity. Hang your son's feelings! You won't take my advice. I didn't give it as a friend, because I detest you. It was done in a weak spirit of fairness toward your son and toward the girl he is to marry. Now, I put them out of my consideration. They—"

"Get out!"

Harbert, red in the face, slammed the door after him and strode angrily through the outer office into the corridor. Droom immediately entered the consultation room.

"What is it?" demanded Bansemers.

"What did he want?"

"He invited me to go to Europe for an indefinite stay. I refused. We'll fight it out, Droom. We have covered our tracks better than he thinks. They can't convict me. I'm sure of that. They have nothing but conjectures, and they won't go in court."

"I'm afraid of him, just the same. You're bull-headed about it. Every criminal thinks his tracks are covered until it is too late to cover them properly."

"Oh, slip of the tongue on my part. Do you know who is down there in Rigby's office with those fellows?"

"An officer, I dare say."

"No, David Cable."

"Cable? Then his wife has told him everything. Well, I've something to tell too. The Lord Harry, Elias, there will be several sensations in high life."

"You don't mean that you'll tell all there is to tell about the girl?"

"No, that's just it! That is one thing I won't tell. If you tell whose blood she has in her veins, I'll kill you like a dog. But I'll see that Miss Cable is dropped by Chicago society inside of a week. I'm mad, Droom—do you understand?"

"But Graydon loves her."

"He won't love her long. I was a fool to let him go this far—a blind, loving fool. But I'll end it now. He shan't marry her. He has no—"

"I haven't much of a heart to botch up Bansemers, but I beg of you not to do this thing. I love Graydon. He doesn't deserve any pain or disgrace. Take my advice and leave the city. Let me call Harbert back."

"No! They can't drive me out! Telephone over and ask Graydon to stop here on his way up this afternoon."

The opening and closing of the outer door attracted their attention. Droom peeped forth. In spite of himself, Bansemers started and his eyes widened with sudden alarm. A glance of apprehension passed between the two men.

"It's that Deever boy from Judge Smith's," reported Droom.

"Tell him to get out," said Bansemers, with a breath of relief.

"I thought it might have been"— began Droom with a wry grin.

"Nonsense!"

"It is a bit too soon. I haven't had time."

As Droom left the room Bansemers crossed to the window and looked down into the seething street far below. He saw that his hand trembled and he tried to laugh at his weakness. For a long time he stood there, his unseeing eyes focused on the hurrying masses, his ears alert for unusual sounds from the outer office.

"If it were not for Graydon," he was muttering between set teeth. "God, how I hate to have him know!"

Droom had told Eddie Deever to "get out," but Eddie was there to talk and be talked to, so he failed to take his hint.

"Say, I haven't seen you since you played the hero up in the fashionable part of town. Gee, that was a starter! I'll bet old man Cable rewards you in some way. What's your theory about the holdup?"

Droom looked up sharply. For the first time there shot into his mind the thought that the breezy boy might be a spy.

"How'd you happen to be over there just at that time?"

"I haven't time to talk about it. Please don't bother me. It happened three days ago, and I've really forgotten about it. Don't throw that cigarette into the wastebasket. Haven't you any sense?"

"Gee! You don't suppose I'm going to throw it away, do you? There's half an inch left. Not me! Say, I've heard your boss has quite a case of Mrs. Cable. How about it?" He almost whispered this.

"You shouldn't talk like that."

"Oh, you mean that gag about people living in glass houses? Gee! Don't worry about that. Chicago is a city of glass houses. A blind man could throw rocks all day and smash a hole in somebody's house every crack. I believe the holdup was a case of those strikers who have been out of jobs all winter. Smith thinks so."

"Who?"

"Judge Smith."

"That's better."

"Did you see his face?"

"What are you, bub—a detective?"

"Rosie Kenting says I'd make a better policeman than lawyer. She's sore at me for taking Miss Throckmorton to Mam' Gail's the other night. Fellow stood on the piano and sang the dearest song I've ever heard. But, gee! I don't think Miss Throck was she didn't seem to notice, I mean. Say, on the dead, do you think you could identify that fellow?"

"Look here, boy, if any one ever asks you whether I'd know that man's face if I saw it again you just say that I'd know it in a thousand. I saw it plainly."

Eddie gulped suddenly and looked more interested than ever.

"Do you think they'll get him?"

"They will if he talks too much."

"I hope so. Say, how's that new patent coming on?"

"I'm not making a patent. I'm making a model. It's nearly completed."

The outer door opened suddenly, and an old gentleman entered.

"Mr. Bansemers here?" he asked, removing his silk hat nervously.

"Yes, Mr. Watts. I'll tell him you are here."

Watts, the banker, confronted Bansemers a moment later, an anxious, hunted look in his eyes. John Watts was known as one of the meanest men in the city. No one had dared him in a transaction of any kind. As hard as nails and as treacherous as a dog, he was feared alike by man and woman.

Watts, perhaps for the first time in his self-satisfied life, was ready to bow knee to a fellow man. A certain young woman had fallen into the skillful hands of Counselor James Bansemers, and Mr. Watts was jerked up with a firmness that staggered him.

"Mr. Bansemers, I have come in to see if this thing can't be settled between us. I don't want to go into court. My wife and daughters won't understand that it's a case of blackmail on the part of the woman. Let's come to terms."

Bansemers smiled coolly. It was impossible to resist the temptation to toy with him for a while, to humiliate this man who had destroyed hundreds in his juggernaut ride to riches. Skillfully he drew the old man out. He saw the beads of perspiration on his brow and heard the whine come from his voice. Then in the end he sharply changed his tactics.

"See here, Watts, you've got a wrong impression of this affair. I don't like your inferences. I am not asking you for a cent. I wouldn't take it. You have just offered me \$25,000 to drop the affair. That's an insult to my integrity. I've investigated this girl's claim pretty thoroughly, and I believe he is trying to do me. I have given up the case. None of that sort of thing for me. She'll go to some unscrupulous lawyer, no doubt, but I am out of it. I don't handle that kind of business. You have insulted me. Get out of my office, sir, and never enter it again."

"Give me that in writing," began the wily banker, but Bansemers had called to Droom. Eddie Deever was standing near the door, almost doggedly curious.

"Show Mr. Watts the door, and if he ever comes here again call the police. He has tried to buy me."

Watts departed in a dazed sort of way, and Droom closed the door.

"Are you still here?" he demanded of Eddie Deever in such a manner that the young man lost no time in leaving.

"There goes \$25,000," said Bansemers, with a cold grin.

"I guess you can afford to lose it," muttered Droom. "It was sick, I suppose, but it's probably too late to help."

"Have you telephoned to Graydon?"

"Not yet."

"Change of mind?"

"Change of heart?"

"That's so. You haven't any heart."

manner of that astute young man. With a boldness that astonished himself—and he was at no time timid—he asked if Harbert intended to remain in Chicago for any length of time. After he had gone away lightly rubbed his forehead in a bewildered sort of way and marveled at the nerve of the man.

The day passed slowly, but late in the afternoon the suspense became so keen that he found it difficult to keep himself from making inquiries of the office officials as to whether affidavits had been filed by Harbert or any other person. His hand did not shake now, but there was a steady pain at the back of his head.

"Droom, I think I'll go home. If I don't appear in the morning you'll know I'm at some police station. Good day."

"Goodbye!" said Elias, with correcting emphasis. Bansemers laughed heartily.

"I believe you'd like to see me judged."

"Not unless you could be convicted. I'll have to remain in your employ until then, I suppose."

"I've often wondered why you don't quit of your own accord—it seems so distasteful to you."

"I'm working for you from force of habit."

"You'll turn state's evidence if I'm arrested, no doubt."

"If my word counted for anything," and he raised his hand, "I'd say, 'So help me—I shan't!'"

"I've never been able to understand you."

"I guess you've always understood my feelings toward you."

"You hate me?"

"I'm no exception to the rule."

"But hang you, you're faithful."

"Oh, I'll pay for it, never fear. You won't hesitate to sacrifice me if it will help you in any way. But let me tell you something. Elias Droom has been smart enough to cover every one of his tracks, even if he hasn't been able to cover yours. I can't perform miracles. You don't seem as keen to bring about the family explosion as you were, I observe."

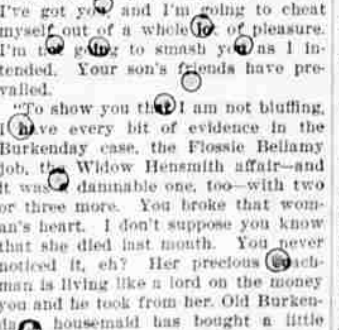
"By heavens, I can't bear the thought of that boy—oh, well, close up the office as soon as you like."

After he was safely out of the office Droom gazed into the private office, drew forth his bunch of keys and opened his employer's desk. A big revolver lay in the top drawer. The old clerk quickly removed the five cartridges and as deftly substituted a new set of them at their stead. The



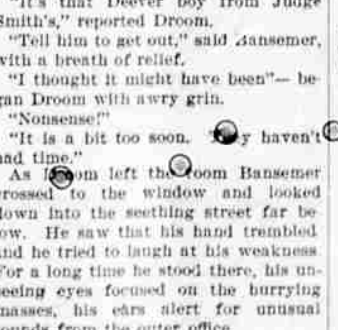
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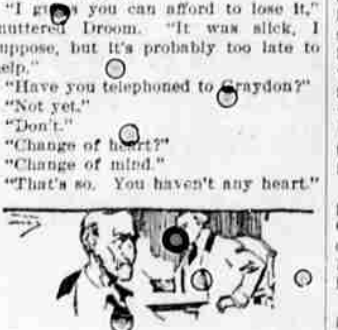
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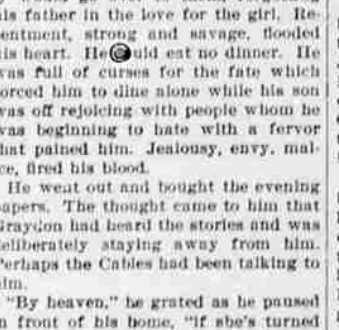
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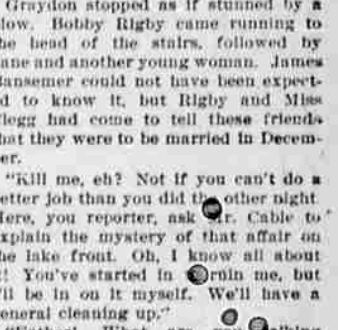
CHAPTER XIX.

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(Continued Next Saturday.)

Small alarm clocks at Watts' if