

CHAPTER V

Confidential Agent

A deep, satisfied snore from within the cave seemed to answer Mr. Brent's decision and sent into his brain a flare of anger that grew with every second. He turned and looked into the darkness. His face was scowling. He shook a fist that palpitated with pent-up rage, and then like a turtle dropping from a log he let himself slide over the ledge and down the muddy foot path.

"I can't get any dirtier, I can't get any muddler, I can't get any wetter, so what's the difference where I land?" he growled as he bumped about here and there in his downward descent.

Now and then he would strike a tree or large rock which would hold him and allow him to steady himself for a moment. Then he would go slipping on again. At last he reached the bottom and began a groping, tortuous journey toward the railroad tracks a mile away.

"I might as well be lost down here as sitting up there on that ledge like a ninny," he grumbled. "I'll find that railroad track if it takes me all night. I'll-" He had bumped into a barbed

wire fence and was hanging there something like a quarter of beef on display in a butcher shop.

Dazedly he got his bearings, and gradually there showed before him the dark form of the railway "fill." Slowly he crawled over the fence and then, something after the fashion of a halfcareening sidewheeler, he touched his feet to the rock ballast and started on the long tramp to Dodson, the nearest railway station.

"The next time I listen to a doctor," he burst forth time and time again, "I'll-Ouch!" He had bumped his sore toe against a railroad tie, and further comment upon physicians and medicine were lost.

The storm had died down to a drizzle now-a cold drizzle, which made Mr. Brent uncomfortable and shivering. He rammed his hands deep into his pockets and hunched his head deeper in his shoulders and limped along staring moodily ahead at the faint strip of gray which told of the railroad's course through the darkness.

Suddenly he started. A shrieking whistle had come from behind and a



REFEREE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, That pursuant to an order of sale made and entered in the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for the County of Linn, Dept. No. 2, on the 28th Day of April, 1927, in that certain suit therein wherein Jesse B. Schroll, Annie M. Schroll his wife, and Clara L. Carlson and C. E. Carlson her husband, were plaintiffs, and Emory Wallace Schroll. Ruby Almon, H. L. Almon her husband, Pearl P. Sturgis, J. H. Sturgis her husband, and George W. Schroll and Ruth Schroll his wife, were defendants, and appointing and directing the undersigned as sole referee to sell the real property hereinafter described, I, the undersigned referee will. on Saturday, the 4th Day of June 1927, at the hour of One o'clock P. M of said day, at the front door of the courthouse at Albany in Linn County Oregon, offer and sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash in the manner required for sale of real property on execution, subject to confirmation of said court, all the following real property, to-wit:-All of Blocks 22, 39 and 40 of the City of Halsey in Linn County, Oregon; also beginning 60 Ft. West of the S. W corner of Block 38 in the City of Halsey in Linn County, Oregon, and running from thence North 720 Ft. to the county road; Thence West 123 Ft .: Thence South 720 Ft. to a point due W. of the place of beginning; and thence East 123 Ft. to beginning, as said blocks are numbered, designated and described on the maps and plats of said city of record in the office of the County Recorder of said County. Dated and first published May 5. 1927. FRANK RICHARD. Sole Referee.

Tursing & Tussing, Attys for Plffs. Hewitt & Sox,

Attys for Dfts, Emory Wallace Schroll et al.

Agency Hub Cleaning Works ABE'S PLACE

Headaches

Headaches, indigestion, sleeplessness and nervous troubles are often caused by eyestrain. An evestrain it caused by ot wearing the right glasses. Right glasses will relieve evestrain, and trouble due to eyestrain will disappear. The first thing to do is to have your eyes examined and know what gtasses wil e the right ones.

Quick Optical Repair Work. classes or spectacles broken? Guards ent out of alignment? Temples too ong or too short? Whatever your reuirements, our service is prompt and highly satisfactory. Bring your repair work to us. MEADE & ALBRO Optometrists, 312 First st , Albany, Ore.

NOTICE of Appointment of Ex ecutri

Notice is hereby given that, the nn lersigned, by an order of the County Court of Linn County, Oregon, has been appointed Executrix of the last will and testament of Richard C. Farwell, de ceased.

All persons having claims against said estate are required to present them within six months from the date of this notice, with the proper vouchers to the undersigned at her residence, about three miles east of Shedd, in Linn ounty, Oregon. Dated and first published this 28th

day of April, 1947 Grace Farwell, Executrix aforesaid.

Tussing & Tussing, Attys. for Exrx.

don't like 'em." Brent settled against the rocks again. His face was assuming the grouchy appearance which the

frog legs for a few minutes had driven away. His mind was working on business again.

"If I had a fellow like that Edwards, it wouldn't make so much difference," he was saying to himself. Scrottles doesn't know anything and I'll be blamed if I'm going back there and handle that business and kill my self. I'll stay out here and die first. I-'

There was a heavy roar from above ; a crash. Thomas Brent sent a glance upward to note nothing but blackness.

"Here comes my rain," averred Freck.

A flash. The branches of the trees swung lower than ever. The red of the fire paled momentarily in the greenish light. A'drop of rain sizzled in the fire; a roar. The lightning broke again.

Thomas Brent leaped to his feet "Back in the cave, Freck," he shouted. and the boy jumped with him. The rain had come-solidly, with the roar of a waterfall. They saw the fire flare, fall, and rise again before the onslaught of the enemy. They saw it flicker and fall. They were in dark-

There was nothing to do but si there and listen to the rain and the swishing of the branches without Nothing to do-nothing for Thomas Brent to do but sit there and reflect that rain would bring dampness, and dampness would bring rheumatism. possibly a cold, possibly pneumonia; if it were nothing else, it would be typhold fever, or some kindred ailment. In the horizon of Mr. Brent's thoughts there was nothing good. "A fine chance I've got," he mut tered again and again ; "a fine chance. Why, two weeks out here and they'll be taking me home in a wooden kimono. Huh! Why-" It was then that there came from

howl from a fat throat, a frantic clutching at nothing in particular, a scramble, grunts, imprecations and bumps followed in quick succession. Mr. Brent had slipped and now was traveling down the long, slippery bank toward the river.

"Demmit !" he gurgled, and grasped wildly. He caught two handfuls of mud and grass, and nothing else. "Woof!" He had bumped against a jutting rock, stopped, scrambled to his feet, slipped again and was traveling once more forcibly downward "Flump!" He had landed against a tree, grasped it with mud-greased arms, failed in his hold and gone on again. "Splush !" he was at the bottom, sitting vaguely in water, and gazing out to a broad rock in the middle of the stream, where the lightning had revealed two very fat and very much terrorized negro mammies. Mr. Brent grunted, attempted to rise, then sat back in the water. "What's the matter?" he asked, some what excitedly. "What are you standing out there for, huh?"

"How's we gwine he'p it?" shouted back. "We done get out heah an' de flah went out."

"Well, get off !" "How's we gwine get off, man, when

we doan know the way?" "Can you beat it?" Mr. Brent asked himself, splashing water with both hands to emphasize the state of his mind. "How're you going to get off? Why, you muttonheads, walk off !" "How's we gwine walk off, when they ain't nuthin' to walk on, man? Foh goodness sakes, come he'p us !" "I'll be dinged if I will," said Brent angrily. He was still thinking about the scramble down the hill.

"Den we'se gwine drown! We'se

"Going to do nothing of the kind! Shut up and stay there until daylight. Darn it, you've broken every bone in my body.

He suddenly ceased Another flash

tried to size up the burden that he must haul to the top of the hill. It was impossible in the darkness. Hemerely grabbed, managed to seize an arm and started.

A half hour later, a huddled, miserable figure of a man sat hunched in the darkness on the little ledge beyond the cave. The rain had changed to a drizzle now, but that, instead of helping, only made his clothing cling to him the more uncomfortably and clammily. He vaguely felt that his body was black and blue and purple. He knew that every muscle twitched and that rheumatism was beginning to get out its sledge hammers for classy work in various parts of his anatomy His stomach was craving for food that did not exist. His lungs were still sore from their puffing. His bare feet were bleeding. From within the cave were coming sleepy sounds: "How's yo' all, Lizzie Taylah?"

"Ah's all done wrapped up in dis vere blanket. How's yo'?"

"Ah's comft'ble. Ah done guess we'll have to call dat man de sailah cause he done kem out in his lifeboat an' saved ouah lives."

Outside the man of many bruises and discomforts snorted.

Again came the sounds from within. "Lizzie-" "Mm-hum-m-m."

"Dat sho is a luvable man; done

give up his cave lak dis yere.' "Sho is, Sallie."

"Know what Ah's gwine do? Ah'se gwine t' plump right out theah an' frow mah ahms eroun' him. He sho' wouldn't mind Ol' Mammy Bacon.' It was right at that moment when

Mr. Thomas Brent, former cave dweller, sent his hands spasmodically into the air. "Back to nature!" he ruminated angrily again as his prize sore toe bumped into a jagged stone on the downward descent. "Back to boyhood ! It's back to town for me !"

---- 81



Was

Suddenly He Started. A Shrieking

Whistle and a Circle of Light Shone

Upon Him.

circle of glaring light shone about him. Hastily he retreated from the track to stand in the dripping weeds and underbrush and gaze enviously as a comfortable, bright-lighted thing of steel and wheels whirled past him. Then with mincing steps over the rock ballast he took to the tracks again, shaking a trembling fist at the disappearing train.

"Fool!" he howled at himself. "Idiot! Maniac!" A mile dragged by. Two, three, four, five, and there showed before him the red and green lights of the station. He approached the door, reached for the handle, and then paused with an inarticulate howl on his lips. He had stubbed that favorite toe again. "Doggone it." he muttered "I'll--" He stopped.

From around the corner had come the sound of a voice that seemed familiar. More than that he had heard his own name. Thomas Brent suddenly began to take an interest in life. Quickly he slunk out of the circle of light made by the telegrapher's lamp and into the shadow of a loaded truck. He had not been seen, he knew that, yet someone had called his name. Again he heard the voice. Did the station agent know anything? It was a strange tone, yet one that seemed to carry a vague memory. Mr. Brent listened closely as the answer came.

"Yes. We're on the right track. But I think we'd better go up to the hotel and stay for the night and start our active investigations in the morning.'

Thomas Brent knew that voice. It was Philip Scrottles', and as he came to the realization the president of the Amalgamated Foundry company, wiggled his sore foe in pure excitement. Then he ceased the exertion that nothing might interfere with his hearing. The other man was talking now.

"Just what did you find out, Mr. Scrottles?"