Drawn Mater Co

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1928



open the drawer of the table. For And all at once it halted.

was in the drawer.

rowed it for the hunt today-"

him-"

with some terrible kind of passion, takes just before it springs. The effect that they had on Vilas was

where you got my father." "Sahib!"

"And I order you to get oc the floor. I'll kill you where you lie!"

the light on the little stand.

burned on the table. And I heard a answer, soft, whispered sigh from Alexander. "I'll tell you Ahnrad," he cried. "I'll

my ear, "Vilas called him by the right you said, and a fugitive from justice, words."

murdered before our eyes?"

"Hush-and watch."

We watched. A long time there beside the extinguished candle.

"What are you going to do?"

"Do, sahib?" The answer came at last, trembling with some unearthly kind of passion. "It is not well to be proofs. Ahmad! Let me go!" they return to see what remains here."

Vilas tried to meet the snaky eyes. "What do you mean?" he whispered. "They will come back soon, and

want to talk to their guest. One of Yesterday they bore him across the

Vilas leaned forward. "Strumburg? How dare you call me that? My

"Once Strumburg-then Roderick -then Hoyward-what does it matter, tiger had been most real and consahib? Names die when their bearers vincing at the edge of the dim and

I'm not-'

told me that. But consider again, and chandellers came down. Before us, see if you don't want to make me stripped of all delusion. Ahmad Das another answer."

"I'll never admit it."

sahib-just a minute into the darkness of length. Over him, in a rather in--and then I will return. I will want genious way, was thrown a great, your answer then. And there might tawny tiger skin. The four legs were be other things for you to tell me, fastened with some simple device to too, when I come into your presence his ankles and wrists, and the great a moment from now. You really had head, filled out with some light subno proofs that Shaib Southley is want- stance, rested on his. ed in prison."

"But I have! You can't scare me shoulders. out of it.'

"Both things you can answer when I return to the sahib's presence. It hoax couldn't have broken Hayward's will be just a little moment-"

Vilas half rose in his seat, ordering But Alexander wriggled out of my the servant to relight the candle. But grasp. Ahmad didn't obey. Rather he faded. The shadows hid him, and darkness ward's neck," he said. "The real closed round him.

pletely gone. I knew that he was wasn't written in the play. I've got waiting somewhere in the darkness the real murderer of Hayward, dead, just beyond-perhaps behind the cur. down in the boat." tains, posibly in the hall. I didn't was there, and in a moment more tions. There were more things to answer to his questions. A long mom- possibly learn, ent passed away. The house was looked at Vilas Hayward.

He had his head turned over his shoulder, and he was watching with was farther away from me. But yet at the sight of it. I was aware of the sense of something moving something half crawl,

at its interior; then he whirled toward come again. The candlelight was in. you don't know the history of Florida effective and dim, yet it showed the very well." "Where's my pistol?" he cried. "It outline plain. Even then I tried to tell myself it was some mental fallacy, "Perhaps one of the detectives bor a mirage or delusion that could not this-" possibly be true. I tried to say it Again Vilas flung into his chair, was the effect of light and shadow; Again Ahmad went back to his dust but the lie died before it came to my ing. His motions semed to grow more thought. It wasn't any use to try to sinuous, more silent. And now I looked deny the reality of the thing. There in vain for the cloth. He seemed to was the tawny hide, darkened, of course, by the shadow, the low-hung "Does the sahib wish to go look head, the great black stripes. The defor Sahib Southley?" he asked. "If tails were obscured; but my eyes he does, I will be glad to go with didn't need them to recognize the creature. It seemed to be lying close To me the words seemed charged to the floor, in the position a tiger

And I couldn't say it- wasn't true. not pleasant to see. The manhood It would not have been so convincing seemed simply to go out of him. His if Vilas had not seen it, too. And I lips were loose, his eyes protruded, knew by the suppressed gasp of the shaking hands reached for the chair great detective beside me that his eyes were also resting on the thing. "No, you devil!" he cried, his voice I think that he started to whisper rising. "You won't get me out there, some messages of wonder. But I didn't hear him. All I heard was Vilas' scream.

He backed up against the wall, his You're not working now. Get up, or fingers at his throat. There was no record left in my brain of the sounds Ahmad Das got up. He rose very he made and the words he said. Ahsoftly to his full height. He tiptoed mad Das had returned, ust as he had across the room. And he blew out promised, to get the answer to his questions. The transformation was The shadows deepened. There was complete—the tiger soul a last in its only one candle now, the one that own body. And Vilas was ready to

"The man's a devil," he breathed in tell you all. I'm Strumburg, just ts were." too. And I haven't anything against swered. "Then get up and save him," I an. Southley. Even my father couldn't swered. "Do you want to see Vilas have proved his claim in a test, and he's dead. Let me go, Ahmad! Don't raise your talons against me."

The wild flow of words died away, forward again.

"I tell you I'll go away, and never return again. We never had any real

improvident with candles. The detec-ander's breath against my ear. "You heard, didn't you, Long?" he whisper-

"Then the work's done."

I felt the stir as his arm reached up to an electric switch on the wall. He pressed it. Unknown to me, the water. You only remain, and you are paired. All the great chandeliers of the library flashed on at once.

The first impression was bilndness. But as my eyes, became adjusted to the sudden glare, I knew at least part of the truth at last. The form of the ineffective candle light. But it was "But I'm not Strumburg. I tell you no more terrible than the counterfeit giraffes that the clowns parade in a "I will remember, sahib, that you circus ring, when the glare from the rested on his hands and feet on the floor. He had held his body low, his "I will go from you for a minute, legs almost straight, to give the effect

I leaped and seized Alexander's

"Good Heavens!" I yelled in his ear "That's only part of it. That insane

neck!"

"Of course it didn't break Haymurderer of Hayward slipped one over Yet it wasn't as if he had com- on us-improvised some business that

Alexander Pierce spent most of the hear or see him. I simply knew he rest of the evening answering queswould come back into the light for the find out than ever I thought I could

First he took us down to the boat tense and still. And once more I beside the water, and lifted the tarpaulin that covered the thing in the bottom. A dead animal lay thereina creature large as the largest hound. fascinated horror something that ap- yellow, with spots of black. It was a proached him in the darkness. I powerful animal, long-clawed and couldn't see what it was at first. It white-fanged; and my breath stopped

"A tiger?" I demanded

"Tiger, nothing!" Alexander aning, half sliding toward the man in the swered. "You ought to be enough of chair. And then I saw an irregular a naturalist to know that a tiger has gray patch of shadow that was not stripes. This beast has spots. He quite so dark as the shadow around it. weighs two hundred pounds, and a

don't find tigers in Southern Florida. think it is true. I haven't any doubt an instat his frenzied hands thrust The Tiger of Southley Downs had It's plain to me, old Doc Long, that but that Southley's early life wouldn't

> "Evidently I don't. I don't remember reading about such a creature as

> "Please speak respectfully of him. him alive, but we'll need him for proof of that wild story we have to tell the coroner's jury tomorrow afternoon. If you remember, there was a time when felines.

I remembered that I had heard something about it.

"Most of them were exterminated find 'em in a few remote regions in that they were all gone here—even in British law would reach out for him. such a wild part of the state as this. Long, you see here what is probably the last of the Florida jaguars-a creature as heavy as a leopard, and one of the strongest jawed and shouldered felines in the world.

"And since you won't rest till I tell you the rest of it, I might as well say that this big cat was the base on which Ahmad and Southley worked jeguar.

"When Hayward and his son bore down upon them here-after tracing mands. them all the way from England-Southley and Ahmad saw a chance to take advantage of this big, tawny know by now what the Haywards

"Blackmailers, of course," I an-Alexander gritted his teeth.

"You've taken plenty long to guess Downs-his servant Ahmad Das. it, but you're right at last.

was silence. Ahmad Das stood still and for an instant the form in the They are crooks themselves. The natal influence. You say it's all bunk. shadow halted. Then it moved slowly elder Strumburg was a confederate Yet it is true that Ahmad Das's in crime in Southley's own youth. I mother was attacked by a tiger, that

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Vilas Hayward suddenly snatched -a patch which seemed to be moving, tiger twice as much. Besides, you use the word guardedly, Long, and I bear investigation. But that doesn't matter now. It's a joy, my boy, to come to the aid of one who has come to his own aid. Southley rose above that other life.

"I think he escaped after a particu-I'd have much preferred to have left larly reckless crime. It wasn't a crime that benefited him financially, he says; but yet the hue and cry that was raised scared him from his criminal ways. A man was shot, and though Southern Florida was still the home of there were extenuating circumstances, the jaguars—the greatest of American he certainly would have gone to prison for twenty years at least, according to the way men were sentenced in those days. First he went to India and Africa, and made his fortune. Then a good many years ago. You can still he came to America, as Andrew Lasson. And all the time he lived in Southern Texas. I supposed myself deadly fear that the long arm of the

"Then the elder Strumburg found him out. He adopted the name of Roderick, and sent out inquiries for this Andrew Lasson. He offered a huge reward to be paid a year after we found him, and of course Lassonor Southley as we call him now-was to pay the reward. He came here at last, with his vicious son, and the work of blackmail began. They told out their plot. They knew about this old Southley-in the gray twilight of his days-what to expect in case he didn't come through with their de-

"They said they had proof that would put him back in prison. The terror of his long years came back as creature in the swamp. I suppose you never before, and he didn't have the strength and judgment to fight it any longer. Old age was upon him. He gave way, again and again. And even today he wouldn't be free if it hadn't teen for the real hero of Southley

"Ahmad is a mystic. Lang, you're "Their real name is Strumburg. a doctor, and you don't believe in pre-

propensities toward creeping around "He knew he couldn't kill the Hayon his hands and knees. It all lent wards. That was murder, and would toward the effect. He's a mystic, 1

the creature died when Ahmad Das tell you-perhaps a believer in the was born-and it is true that Ahmad theory of reincarnation of souls; and has the most remarkable, natural, cat- that dark, oriental mind of his conlike grace of any man I ever saw. Of ceived an idea that I don't think most course he just pretended the rest-his Anglo-Saxons would have thought of.

(Continued on Page 6)

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HER face was deathly white. Her heart seemed to stop beating as she stared in horrified unbelief at the letter clutched in her trembling hand. A letter to Dave, her husband—from a strange woman asking for money! Oh, it couldn'tcouldn't be true!

And yet-who was this woman? Why had she written Dave this letter? Was there, after all, some romantic episode in her husband's life that he had kept hidden from her? Surely there had

mistake. Surely Dave could explain. But that night, when she quietly handed him the letter, Dave sat with bowed head, in stony silence—his face a mask, to hide-

been some terrible

October

Torn between love and suspicion, between hope and despair, between faith and disillusionment, she searched her breaking heart in a piteous attempt to learn what she had done to deserve this crucifixion. All she had loved and lived for seemed to lay in crumbling ruins at her feet. God knew she loved Dave, no matter what he had done. And yet-

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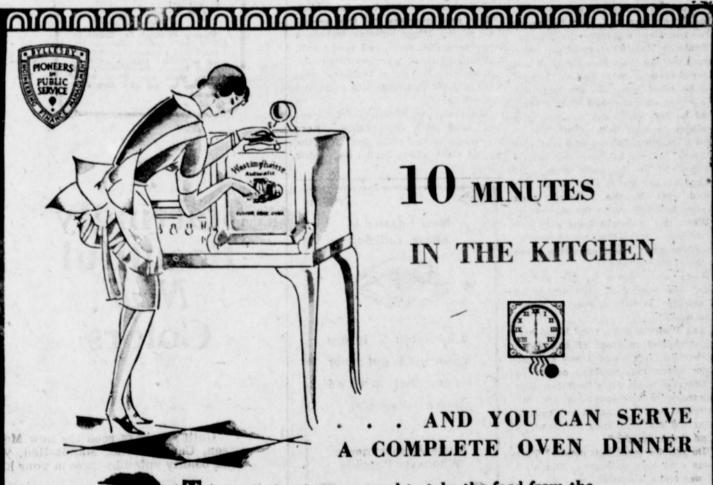
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