

The JOY of LIVING

By **SIDNEY GOWING**
Illustrations by Ellsworth Young

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He dropped on one knee, opened the case, and switched the little electric torch over it.

Billy gave a stifled gasp. On a bed of cream silk velvet reposed a necklace of amethysts, ending in a loop of nine superb emeralds that shone with changing green fires under the torch's glow. Billy was not an expert in gems, but he guessed that these were such as a prince might be proud to own.

"This is the darnedest game I ever was up against," he said dazedly, returning the case carefully to his pocket.

He made a rapid examination of the Sphinx, and at once became aware of Calumity Kate's handiwork. In spite of the best intentions, however, that enterprising lady had overestimated the vulnerability both of Billy's skull and his motorcycle. She had done some damage, but had missed the more vital parts of the Sphinx. After ten minutes' work Billy's capable hands restored the machine to fair running order, and he rode away down the lane. Both lamps were out of action.

Any further pursuit of the thieves he put aside as a useless proposition. He had a vague idea that they had gone hours ago; in fact, however, he had not been unconscious more than a few minutes.

"There's only one thing to do," said Billy, "an' that's—"

A disconcerting thought flashed through his mind. The bumping of the jewel-case against his side suggested it.

"Gee!" he murmured, "I'm Little Boy Blue, all right. But if I was to run against the cops now, it'd take a heap of explanation before they slugged me. My story'd look pretty thin. Jewel-case—motorbike—it only wants one item to complete the outfit!"

He turned on to the high road, rapidly resolving on a plan of action as he rode. It was a good plan, but a few moments later it was hopelessly upset again. He was, as it happened, nearer to Stanhoe than to Jervaux abbey, and as he turned in the direction of the latter Billy became aware of someone running toward him along the road—a dark figure, with a peculiar moving gleam of whiteness about it. He stopped the Sphinx immediately and thrust out his feet to steady himself.

The dark figure checked in its stride, hesitated, and seemed about to bolt back again.

"Partner!" cried Billy in amazement. "Is that you?"

The reply was a wild gasp. Aimee, breathless, muddy, with an appreciable breadth of white cambric showing at the base of her skirt, rushed up to him and seized his arm.

"Billy! Oh, I'm so glad—I'm so glad!" she panted. "Billy, I—I'm in an awful mess! The absolute limit!"

"How! Why?"

"I was in a house—and it was burgled"—gulped Aimee, struggling for breath—"they thought it was me—I scooted—they're chasing me."

It was not a vividly lucid explanation. But Billy's intelligence department connected with it at once; it supplied the missing factors. Before he could answer, a pair of lights flashed into view far down the road, approaching at speed.

"Carl!" exclaimed Aimee, and with a note of panic—"Billy, suppose it's police? If so, they'll be looking for me!" She made a dash for the pillow of the Sphinx. "Get me out of this, Billy—start her quick!"

"Not on your life!" said Billy swiftly. "That's the last thing on earth for you now. Come with me."

He ran back fifty yards along the road to a field gate. In a few moments he had it open, thrust the Sphinx through, let her fall behind the hedge, and dragged Aimee with him into the ditch. They had hardly gained that cover when the car swept by with a roar, showing a glimpse of police helmets scudding past the low rampart of thorn fence. The majesty of law and order, sweeping inexorably through the night. A rattle, a hoot, and it was gone.

In the ditch there was painful silence. Billy mechanically felt his bulging pocket, glanced for a moment at the Sphinx, and then stared blankly at Aimee.

"Close call, partner," he observed. "I thought it must be they," said Aimee breathlessly. "I wonder they haven't called out the military as well. All the countryside seems to be chasing me! Billy!" she said, with a suspicious tremble in her voice, "you'll help me, won't you? I'll tell you about it. I—I've kept it from you, but I won't any longer. I—"

Billy laid a hand on her arm. "Amy," he said quietly, "just repeat this piece to yourself. Say: 'I'm safe, my partner's lookin' after me.' Got that? I'll see you through; you've nothin' to worry for at all. But we can't talk here. We've got to beat it." He picked up the Sphinx.

"Follow close after me, an' keep quiet."

He wheeled the machine along the field path at a run, passed through another gate, crossed a stretch of hentyher common-land, and made for a small copse at the foot of the slope. Aimee trotted behind silently, with an odd sense of relief and security. Billy would see it through. He had said so. He halted by the copse, and looked round to make sure of his bearings. "It ought to be close handy here," he said. "Yes—I've got it."

He pushed on to a small bosky dell which led into a series of old crag-pits, masked with brambles. Aimee wondered how he could find his way so confidently in the dark; she had not the remotest idea where she was. "Wait here a minute. I'll come back for you," said Billy.

He wheeled the Sphinx away along a scarcely visible path, and presently returned without it.

"I was fooling around here on an off day, first time I came to Stanhoe," he said, "an' I lit on something that's goin' to be mighty useful. The old Sphinx has got to disappear for a bit, an' you'll soon understand why. Follow behind; there's only room for one at a time."

He led the way through the brambles and, pressing ahead, turned on the light of his pocket torch cautiously. Aimee, close at his heels, presently found herself in the entrance of a sandy cave with a very small mouth, screened by rough creeper and brush.

(Continued next week)

IONE

Ione, Feb. 3.—Ellen and Oscar Bergstrom, who have been in Portland for the past several months, returned home on Sunday.

Masons and Eastern Stars are very busy planning a carnival, supper and dance, the proceeds of which will be applied on furniture for the lodge hall.

In the basket ball game played on Friday night between the Ione and Condon boys' teams the Ione boys won by a score of 22 to 19. The Ione high school girls played a game with the town team at the close of the

boys' game, which resulted in a victory for the town team.

Considerable donation and county work is being done on the Gooseberry road. The road is being treated with gravel and is greatly improved.

Bert Mason returned from a trip to Portland on Friday evening.

There are many cases of la grippe in town and more absence from school than at any time this winter.

The Ione basket ball boys returned Sunday from a trip to Condon and Fossil. They were defeated at both places.

Funeral services will be held on Sunday for George Miller, who died in Heppner on Saturday morning. The services will be under auspices of the Ione Lodge of Odd Fellows.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Stender were visitors in Ione Wednesday night.

A considerable number of farmers from this section attended the farm bureau meeting in Heppner on Saturday.

Orla Barlow was in the city Wed-

nesday from upper Eightmile. He states that the peach trees in his vicinity are well advanced and likely to suffer from the present cold weather.

Mrs. Wm. Barlow is visiting with her daughter, Mrs. Lee Howell. Mrs. Howell, who has been quite ill, is now somewhat improved in health.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Mason were shopping in the city on Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Lester Doolittle of Heppner were visiting Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Cotter of Ione and Mr. and Mrs. John M. Lundy on Rhea creek.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Griffith entertained at five hundred on Friday night. Prizes were won by Emil Swanson and J. W. Hawk.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mathison were in on Friday with a load of hen fruit from their ranch and poultry farm.

Mr. and Mrs. John Williams were in town on Saturday doing their shopping.

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The educational campaign in co-operative marketing is but a part of the well-rounded program of sixteen phases of projects conducted by the extension service of the Oregon Agricultural College in 1922, and reported in extension bulletin 354 just issued. The activities include

Writing an average of 123 letters a day during each working day of 1922; printing 100,000 copies of bulletins for distribution; conducting extension schools in seventeen counties; organizing 675 boys and girls in club work; assisting in reclama-

tion of many thousand acres of wet lands by drainage; demonstrating pruning, spraying, thinning and soil building methods in many orchards of the state; securing the adoption of better feeding and breeding practices and assisting in disease control among the herds and flocks of the state; determining cost of wheat, milk and alfalfa production; conducting gopher, squirrel and jackrabbit control campaigns; co-operating with the federal government in training wounded soldiers and sailors for successful farming.

Farmers and others interested may write for extension bulletin 354.

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