

The BLACK GANG

A Sequel to Bulldog Drummond.

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SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—To a gathering of anarchists in Harking, London suburb, Zaboloff, foreign agitator, tells of the operations of a body of men who have become a menace to their activities. He is interrupted by the men he is describing (the Black Gang), who break up the meeting, sentencing some of the participants to condign punishment and carrying away others. A memorandum found on Zaboloff gives an address in Hoxton, London, which the leader of the attacking party considers of importance.

CHAPTER II.—Sir Bryan Johnstone, director of criminal investigation, hears from Inspector Melver, sent to arrest Zaboloff the night before, of his discomfiture. He had been seized and chloroformed and his raid frustrated. Hugh Drummond, man of leisure and old friend of Johnstone's, arrives and tells of seeing the kidnappers and their victims. He becomes an unpaid agent of the police, to be under the direction of Melver, and takes up his duties at once.

CHAPTER III.—A "Mr. William Atkinson," ostensibly pawnbroker and money lender, really Count Zadowa, director of anarchy in England, does business in another London suburb. A mysterious stranger invades the premises. Count Zadowa, after a brief glimpse of the intruder, is strangely disconcerted.

CHAPTER IV.—Drummond, having knowledge of Atkinson's anarchistic activities, arranges to burgle the latter's office to secure evidence of the fact. While so engaged, with two companions, a bomb is hurled at them from an adjoining room.

CHAPTER V.—The explosion kills "Ginger Martin," expert burglar whom Drummond had employed to open Atkinson's safe. Drummond and his friend escape, taking with them a bag they find on the floor. Neither Drummond nor his companion at the time find out what it contains.

CHAPTER VI.—At a fashionable hotel Rev. Theodosius Longmoor and his daughter Janet are guests. "Longmoor" is really Carl Peterson, international crook, with whom Drummond has an old feud. Zadowa tells Longmoor and his daughter of the bomb he had hurled, which he believes killed the three invaders. Longmoor is enraged, pointing out that the diamonds (Russian crown jewels, of which Zadowa had known nothing) had been lost thru his action. Longmoor insists that Zadowa recover the diamonds, suggesting that they may be in the hands of the police, and warning his subordinate (Longmoor is addressed by Zadowa as "chief") that failure will be punished with death.

CHAPTER VII.—Drummond discovers that Longmoor, most cleverly disguised, is Carl Peterson. Janet, at the same time, recognizes in Drummond the leader of the Black Gang, and their old enemy.

CHAPTER VIII.—Drummond becomes convinced that Peterson knows he is head of the Black Gang. Zadowa also knows it.

CHAPTER IX.—Zadowa, impressed with the belief that Drummond has the diamonds, visits him and makes the proposition that Hugh restore the gems as an equivalent to Zadowa's agreeing not to divulge to the police the fact that Drummond is the leader of the Black Gang. Drummond, infuriated by the death of Martin and the despicable character of the man before him, thrashes his visitor severely and kicks him out of the house.

CHAPTER X.—Mrs. Drummond disappears, and Hugh recognizes Peterson's hand. Peterson summons Drummond to his hotel. He goes, and they come to an understanding. Peterson stipulates that the diamonds must be returned to him before Mrs. Drummond is released. Hugh agrees to the terms, and leaves to bring the gems.

CHAPTER XI.—Returning with the stones, Drummond is drugged and placed in an auto, which Peterson plans to be driven into the Thames. Drummond's consequent death being made to appear the result of an accident.

CHAPTER XII.—Drummond escapes from the river and, following his would-be murderers, reaches a house, Maybrick Hall, in which he has learned his wife is hidden. He effects her release.

CHAPTER XII

In Which Things Happen at Maybrick Hall.

HAD the Italian come up five minutes sooner—a minute even—all would have been well. As it was, at the very moment when Drummond's crashing blow took him on the point of the jaw with mathematical precision, another mathematical law began to operate elsewhere—the law of gravity. Something fell from the ceiling onto a table in the room below that ceiling, even as in the days gone by an apple descended into the eye of the discoverer of that law.

The two men seated in the room below the ceiling in question failed to notice it at first.

Then one started upward and gave a little cry of horror. Slowly spreading over the white plaster was a great crimson stain, whilst from a crack in the middle the steady drip fell onto the table.

"There's been murder done," he shouted hoarsely and dashed out of the room. Doors were flung open, and half a dozen men rushed up the stairs after him. There was no doubt which the room was, and headed by Yulowski they crowded in—only to stop and stare at what lay on the floor.

"It's the Greek," muttered one of them. "He was guarding the girl, and someone has severed the main artery in his arm."

With one accord they dashed across the passage to the room where Phyllis had been. In a second the door was broken in, and they saw the unconscious Italian lying on the bed.

"The Black Gang," muttered someone fearfully, and Yulowski cursed him for a cowardly swine. And it was his hoarse voice that Drummond heard shouting for the power to be switched on, as he turned and darted across the lawn.

his arm through hers he urged her forward, while behind him he heard a confused shouting which gradually died away under the peremptory orders of someone who seemed to be in command. And almost subconsciously he noticed that the thudding noise had ceased; only the faint humming of the engine broke the silence.

Suddenly in front of him he saw the fence which had caused him to wonder earlier in the evening. He was not five feet from it, when it happened—the amazing and at that moment inexplicable thing. For months afterward he used to wake in the night and lie sweating with horror at the nearness of his escape. For it would have been Phyllis who would have gone through first; it would have been Phyllis, who—But it did happen—just in time.

He saw a dark shape dart across the open toward the fence, an animal carrying something in its mouth. It reached the fence, and the next instant it bounded an incredible height in the air, only to fall backward onto the ground and lie motionless almost at Drummond's feet. It was so utterly unexpected that he paused instinctively and started at it. It was a fox, and the fowl it had been carrying lay a yard away. It lay there rigid and motionless, and completely bewildered he bent and touched it, only to draw back his hand as if he'd been stung. A sharp stabbing pain shot up his arm, as if he'd had an electric shock—and suddenly he understood, and with a cry of fear he dragged Phyllis back just in time.

"What is it, Hugh?" said Phyllis in an agonized whisper.

With terrified eyes she was staring at the body of the fox, stiff and rigid in death, and with its jaws parted in a hideous snarl.

Then suddenly she realized that her husband was speaking—quietly, insistently. "We can't climb through the fence, dear," he was saying calmly. "You see they've switched an electric current through the wires, and if you touch one you'll be electrocuted. So I'm going to throw you over the top."

In an agony of fear she clung to him for a moment; then as she saw his quiet, set face she pulled herself together and smiled. There was no time for anything except instant action. And being a thoroughbred, she was not going to hinder him by any weakness on her part. Of fear for herself she felt no trace; her faith and trust in her husband was absolute. And so she stood there silently watching while he measured height and distance with his eyes.

"Come, dear," he said after a moment's pause. "Put your knees close up to your chin, and try and keep like a ball until you feel yourself falling."

She doubled herself up and he picked her up. One hand held both her feet—the other gripped the waistband at the back of her skirt. Once he lifted her above his head to the full extent of his arms to free his muscles; then he took a little run and threw her up and forward with all his strength. And she cleared the top strand by two feet.

She landed unhurt in some bushes, and when she had scrambled to her feet she realized that he was speaking again—imperatively, urgently. "Get the gang, darling; somehow or other get the gang. I'll try and get you a good start. But—hurry!"

The next instant he had disappeared into the undergrowth. And then loud and clear the hoot of an owl thrice repeated. It was a message for her, she knew—not a senseless piece of bravado; a message to tell her that he was all right. But the call at the end was the urgent call of the gang, and though he was safe for the moment she knew there was no time to be lost. And, with a little prayer that she would choose the right direction, she broke into the steady run of the girl who beagles when she goes bounding, and doesn't sit on the top of a hill and watch. Hugh had never let her down yet: it was her turn now.

To what extent it was her turn, perhaps it was as well that she did not realize. Even Drummond was ignorant of the nature of the odds against him. He had not the slightest idea how many men were in the house—and while it remained dark he didn't much care. In the dark he felt confident of dealing with any number, or at any rate of eluding them.

But since the inmates were ignorant of what they were up against, they somewhat foolishly decided on instant action. They came streaming across in a body, and by so doing they played right into the hands of the man who crouched in the shadows close by them. Without a sound he faded away from the undergrowth ten yards nearer the house. Then with his collar turned up, and his shoulders hunched together, he joined the group. And a man-eating tiger in their midst would have been a safer addition to the party.

Slowly the line of shadowy men moved forward through the undergrowth, and creeping behind them came the man they were out to kill. And gradually he edged nearer and nearer to the wire fence, until he was following the outside man of the line. He saw him pause for a moment peering round a bush, with his revolver ready in his hand. And then the terror started. The beater next to the victim had a fleeting vision of a huge

black object springing through the darkness: a muttered curse and a gurgle—and a dreadful strangled scream. And the outside beater was no more. He had been hurled against the live-wire fence as if he was a child—and the exhibits were increased by one.

With a hoarse cry of fear the man who had been next him turned and ran toward the house, only to find himself seized from behind with a grip of iron. It was Franz, and as he stared into the face of the man whom he knew to be drowned he gave a squawk like a trapped rabbit. But there was nothing ghostly about the hands round his neck, and as he felt himself being rushed toward the fence of death he began to struggle furiously. But Drummond was insane at the moment, and though Franz was a powerful man he might have saved himself the trouble. A terrific blow hit him on the face, and with a grunt he fell back against the fence. The exhibits were increased by two, and through the darkness rang a cheerful laugh, followed by the hooting of an owl.

And now the line was broken, and men were crashing about in all directions, shouting hoarsely. Here, there, everywhere they heard the hooting of an owl: they formed into bunches of twos and threes for protection, they blazed away with compressed-air revolvers at harmless rhododendron bushes, and sometimes at their own purses. And every now and then a great black figure would leap silently out of the darkness onto some straggler: there would be a bellow of fear and pain—followed by an ominous silence, which was broken a second or two later by the hooting of an owl twenty yards away.

And at last they could stand it no longer. They had no idea how many men they were up against, and a complete panic set in. With one accord they rushed for the house, and a mocking peal of laughter followed them as they ran. For Drummond had gambled on that, and he had won. In the position of knowing that every man was his enemy, he had been at an advantage over the others, who were never sure who was a friend.

He began to thread his way swiftly and silently in the direction of the drive, reached the edge without incident, and started to skirt along it away from the house. At last he saw the gate, and turned deeper into the undergrowth. He wanted to examine it at leisure, before making up his mind as to what he would do. As far as he could see from the outline he could make out against the road, it was an ordinary heavy wooden gate,

such as may be seen frequently at the entrance to small country houses.

Drummond became aware that a car was approaching. Now was his chance, and with the quickness of the born soldier he acted on it. If the car was to come in they must open the gate; and since nothing blinds anyone so completely as the dazzle of strong headlights, he might be able to slip out unseen, just after the car had passed through. He skirted rapidly to one side of the drive beam; then he made his way toward the lodge, keeping well out on the flanks. And from a concealed position under cover of the little house he awaited developments.

If he was to bring it off it would be a matter of seconds and half seconds. Little by little he edged nearer to the drive, as a man with what appeared to be a huge glove on his hand approached the gate. There was a bright flash as he pressed down the catch and the circuit was broken, and at the same moment the headlights on the car went out, while an inside light was switched on.

And Drummond stopped dead—frozen in his tracks. The car was moving forward slowly, and he could see the people inside clearly. One was Count Zadowa—alias Mr. Atkinson; one was the Reverend Theodosius Longmoor. But the other—and it was the third person on whom his eyes were fixed with a hopeless feeling of impotent rage—the other was Phyllis herself. The two men were holding her in front of them, so that to fire was an impossibility, and Peterson was smiling out of the window with the utmost benevolence. Then they were past him, and he watched the red tail-lamp disappearing up the drive, while the gate was shut behind them.

Another flashing spark stabbed the darkness: the circuit was complete again. And with a feeling of sick helplessness, Drummond realized that it had all been useless. He was exactly where he had been half an hour before, with the vital difference that the events of the last half-hour would not be repeated. He was caught; it was the finish. Somehow or other the poor girl must have blundered right into the car, and probably asked the occupants for help. She wouldn't have known who they were; she'd just stopped the car on spec, and . . . He shook his fists impotently, and at that moment he heard a loud, powerful voice which he recognized at once speaking from the direction of the house.

"Unless Captain Drummond comes into the house within five minutes, I shall personally kill Mrs. Drummond."

And the voice was the voice of Carl Peterson.

(To Be Continued.)

CARD OF THANKS.

We desire to express our sincere thanks to all the friends and neighbors for their sympathy and help extended to us in the hour of sorrow; your kindness and tender ministrations we will never forget.

David H. Grabill.

Thos. E. Grabill and Family.

W. H. Grabill.

Oren G. Grabill.

A. T. Grabill.

Floyd O. Grabill.

Robert E. Grabill.

All Saints Episcopal Church: Sunday, March 14th, Sunday School at 9:45; morning prayer and sermon by Ven. Sidney W. Cressley at 11 o'clock.

POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENT.
I hereby announce myself a candidate for the office of County Commissioner, subject to the decision of the Republicans of Morrow county at the May primaries.

G. A. BLEAKMAN,
(Present Incumbent),
(Paid Adv.) Hardman, Ore.

The BULL'S EYE

Editor and General Manager
WILL ROGERS



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News Taken from the Daily Papers

A headline in the paper says "In their war China won't fight on rainy days." They don't mind getting shot, but they won't get wet.

Imagine a sign as you start to enter China: "RAIN. NO WAR TODAY." If that was the custom in this country, we could prevent all wars by announcing that all the fighting must be done in Portland, Oregon.

Another paper asks, "Where does a Florida Real Estate man go in the summer?" He goes to California to his all-the-year-round home.

A newspaper asks "Why does a President of a concern always talk at the Company's banquets?" It's an incentive to the workers, who say, "If that's all he knows I may be President some day."

Another paper suggests, "The cheapest way to enforce Prohibition is to have everyone that drinks watched." Who is going to do the watching?

An article in a Business Man's magazine inquires, "What business in this country has the largest turnover?" Cucumbers for supper have the largest turnover, with Fords a close second.

The Congressional Record speaking editorially, says, "Bull" Durham is the best Tobacco that ever entered these Stately Halls."

Will Rogers
P.S. There will be another piece in this paper soon. Watch for it.



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Ready Made Suits.

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() Please print, instead.

(Signed) _____
(Mark a cross (X) in space before preferred remark)



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