



ON TIPTOE

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WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY

LARRY DAVENPORT, author, invents an electric battery of startling power.

GRIMSTEAD, a capitalist, whom Larry meets while he is stranded on a California mountain side by the breakdown of his car, induces Davenport to sign an agreement by which he and the capitalist make and market the battery.

ROSS GARDINER, Grimstead's second-in-command, draws up the agreement. He and Grimstead are overheard by Larry as they discuss the manner in which they will profit from the battery and ignore Larry's idealistic aims for it.

BURTON GRIMSTEAD, the capitalist's daughter, has fallen in love with Davenport, impressed by his strange power of prophecy. She suggests that he "dissemble" so that Grimstead will think he agrees to his plan for handling the battery.

SIMMINS, butler-chauffeur, friendly toward Davenport, is persuaded to try to steal the signed agreement from Grimstead's bill-fold. Burton and Davenport's plan is apparently successful, but Grimstead, undetected, launches a counterplot. Grimstead drugs Simmins and Davenport and Gardiner runs away with the latter's car and battery—only to plunge through a broken bridge.

CHAPTER XXII

None!

Nothing further happened now until shortly after sunrise the next morning.

Then Burton, who has fallen into an uneasy slumber after some hours of futile watching to see that dear Larry did not die of an overdose without her knowing it, awoke and aroused him.

"What is it, dear?" he cried. "What are you doing here?"

Her story did not take long in the telling.

The narrative finished, he rose to his feet, fumbled in his pack, drew forth a revolver and holster, which he strapped to his belt.

"What are you going to do?" she asked anxiously.

"I'm going to follow the car." "You can't hope to catch it afoot!"

"The chance is very slim," he acknowledged, "but it's the only one, and it should be taken. Luck might play with us. The car might get stalled. Who knows? And in any case I've got to get on the wires to the lawyers right away."

He was methodically bestowing small necessities in a rucksack.

"Please have Simmins take care of my other things," he requested. "Goodby, dear."

He opened his arms and she crept into them. They clung together for a moment.

"Be careful," she begged. "You must come back to me. Don't—don't be rash, will you?"

He laughed.

"You mean the gun? No; I'm not going forth to slay. That's just in the remote case I need a convincing argument. This is a lawyer game now, and a game of get there first."

He kissed her again and strode away.

"Come back to me soon!" she called after him. "The soonest ever!" he cried back.

After his departure Burton, whose education had been coming on, made herself some coffee. About two hours later Simmins appeared, very apologetic over his tardiness.

The absence of the little car Bur-

ton had expected; but she was at first puzzled to hear that the extra cooking utensils had disappeared; as also a small quantity of provisions.

Then she realized that her father was hiding out, and Burton had a shrewd suspicion that he would continue hiding out. Even a pirate chief has, if not tender feelings, at least love of mental ease, and Burton realized that even this stern parent might be just as well satisfied if he did not have to face his child while things were too fresh in her mind!

Simmins' report that Grimstead's fishing tackle had been taken confirmed her opinion.

"You and I will probably have to wait here some days," she said, and told him what had occurred.

Shortly after noon they were astonished to see Davenport returning. Burton ran to meet him with a cry of mingled gladness and curiosity.

He replied curtly. His eye was savage, his lips compressed. She looked at him, then fell silent. As they entered camp she made an imperative gesture to Simmins of warning that he should not speak.

Larry strode to the fireside and threw down the rucksack with a slam, then turned to Burton.

"I followed the car for six or eight miles to the place the road crossed the Deep Barranca on a trestle. Part of the trestle had been carried off by the flood. Gardiner had driven the car off into the abyss."

"Killed?" cried Burton, horrified.

"Gone; swept away, disappeared completely. The stream is wide and swift and fast. I climbed down, of course, but no trace whatever remained except one seat cushion that had been thrown clear. I followed down the stream of the chance that the car might have stranded; but in that force of water it probably broke to pieces almost at once. It was of very light construction."

"What a tragedy!" cried Burton. "Poor Ross Gardiner!"

Davenport shut his lips grimly and let this pass. After a decent moment or so Burton ventured a comment.

"But there is this to say: The present problem is solved. The agreement is gone, the whole scheme headed off. You can build another battery!"

"That's just it!" cried Davenport. "I'm not sure I can do anything of the sort. All my notebooks of formulas were in that car, every scrap of paper I had in the world that had anything to do with this."

"You can copy your other battery," she pointed out.

"Oh! the first was crude. It was dismantled long ago."

"You will work it out again," she comforted. "It may be a slow task but you'll get it."

He looked at her with something like fright in his eyes.

"I do not know!" he almost whispered. "I thought that at first, and I did not really care very much. But then all at once when I sat down to think about it I discovered that I had not one shred of memory of how to make a start at it. It's gone."

"Why, Larry!" she cried. "I hardly know you. It isn't like you to be discouraged. What does it matter if it does take time? You'll get it."

He shook his head.

"No, I'm not a quitter," he disclaimed. "I know it sounds like it. But this has become a certainty to me. It has come to me in the same way that all these other things have come to me. Perhaps it is the last of these beautiful certainties from the current of wisdom. It was given to me, and now I feel that it has been taken away. I never was more sure of anything in my life."

She stared at him, aghast.

"Such things cannot happen!" she cried, all afake.

He shook his head. In his uplifted face was not discouragement, only the sorrow of regret.

CHAPTER XXIV

Simmins Writes a Note.

Unnoticed, a lank figure had crossed the meadow from the road and now appeared among them.

"Hullo, folks," said he, casting a curious eye about him. "Campin' for fun, or get stuck yere by the storm?"

"Caught by the storm," replied Burton.

"I'm the stage driver between Eureka and Tecolote," he volunteered. "but I don't see no way of gettin' through now. That there redwood tree's got the road blocked for keeps. Say, she must have made some crash when she came down!"

"She did," replied Burton. An idea was forming in her brain. "Are you going back to Eureka?" she inquired.

"Sure. Only place to go."

"Have you got room for two?"

"I got only the United States mails aboard. What's the idea?"

"Our car is broken," she explained rapidly. "If you will wait 10 minutes, we'll be ready."

"Lots of time," rejoined the stage driver, and sauntered over to engage the excellent Simmins.

"It is the only thing," she urged Larry, as soon as the other was out of hearing. "Can't you see it? We cannot stay here. Don't you see it?" she implored.

"I want to get out before he gets back," replied Larry bluntly. "You are right; I'll go."

"I'm going with you," she said steadily.

"What! You cannot do that!"

"You are going to need me; I know," she insisted. "It is part of my wisdom, as you call it."

The hunted, hurt look in his face softened.

"Come," he cried, almost exultantly. "There must be people who marry people up here! The world and its power and its troubles can go hang!"

"All aboard!" called Davenport to the stage driver. "Ready when you are."

"Simmins" ordered Burton, "you take care of things. We will send someone out from a garage."

But Simmins, at the thought of being left alone with a marooned and exasperated Pirate Chief, lost all his pose and poise and became thoroughly human.

"Oh, Miss Burton!" he cried.

"Don't leave me here all alone!" "Afraid of the woods, Simmins?" asked Larry, mischievously.

"Yes, sir," rejoined Simmins. "I am afraid of the woods; and I am afraid of Mr. Grimstead."

Larry glanced at Burton, who nodded.

"All right; come along," he agreed.

"One moment, sir," begged Simmins.

He produced a pad and pencil and wrote thereon.

"I don't want to pry; but if that note is to Grimstead—" suggested Davenport.

"It is only my resignation, sir," replied Simmins.

"You are right," said Davenport. "What would you consider the proper procedure for a young lady eloping. Should she also leave some sort of written communication?"

"I took the liberty of explaining in my note that I was leaving to enter your service, sir, and that of Miss Burton; and that it is intended to send a garage man immediately," answered Simmins.

"You relieve my mind, Simmins," murmured Larry, and hastened to join Burton and the stage driver. She looked at him with pleased surprise.

"Good!" she cried. "You're more like yourself!"

"It's Simmins!" Larry exploded with suppressed laughter. "He's a joy and a jewel and he's untwisted me from all my knots. Dear, never must we lose Simmins! We'll pawn the family jewels before we let him go."

The little party, carrying the few pieces of baggage, and followed solemnly by Rapscallion, crossed the meadow to where waited the stage.

Ten minutes later Grimstead, who had heard the racket made when the long vehicle backed and filled in turning around, came curiously to see what was happening. He found himself alone with the wrecks he had made.

Across the episode now slowly the dark curtains closed. A great vision had been given one man; a vision that in its due and proper time will lift from mankind one of its greatest pressures. But that time had

not yet arrived. When thus it too evidently appeared that from the gift would come strife, not freedom, then the great Invisible Intelligence whose pressure is the carrying on with the wisdom of our little world, in sadness reached forth their hands. From the soul of that man the vision was erased. Of all its breadth and greatness remained only one little thing: an idea for this story. But sometime, in the remote future, somewhere, to some soul, the vision will come again.

THE END.

-Smiles-

Tid: If a burglar should break into the basement, would the coal chute? Bit: Naw, but the kindling wood.

Curled in her hair as an airdale's coat And black as printer's ink. Her eyes are brown as oozy mud or Oysters fried I think. Her lips are red as a baby's toe, Her voice as soft as a mush. That is the girl with whom I go— On whom I have a crush.

Riff: "Does this road go to Durham?" Raff: "Yes."

Riff: "Well, when does it leave?"

"One more crack like that and you're through," murmured the fellow on shore as he watched the ice crack under the skater.

"Officer, you can't bluff me. I'm an A. E. and an A. M."

"Fine. Now we'll give you the third degree."

With spikes and pincers, files and hooks My dentist lately tortured me. While close his ugly head he poked, And smiled at me with horrid glee. Thereon I vowed revenge to have. To make him curse his adverse fate; Next time before I called on him,



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