

THE DARK KNIGHT

By WILLIAM T. SMITH

(Continued from Page Five)

toughs over the other night, it dawned on me that if there was anything you could do it was fight. Why



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not capitalize it? Why, by this fall you'd have money to enter school, and a lot more."

"Do you really think so, Martin?" Red asked more seriously.

"Nothing beats a trial but a failure." Martin quoted.

"Well, I'll talk with him, anyway," Rod consented, as he climbed out of his bed.

"Where did you say you were last night?" Martin asked, with seeming casualness.

"Why, I was out to Lyla's," Rod said innocently.

"All night?" Martin demanded incredulously.

"Of course not! I left her place about twelve."

"Well, what did you do the rest of the night, then," Martin persisted, as Rod donned his shirt.

"Oh, just out walking around looking at the stars," Rod told him airily.

"There were no stars out last night," Martin pointed out.

"Say, what are you trying to do—find out my secrets?" Rod asked wistfully, pretending anger. "Can't a chap have even a little secret?"

"Oh well, if you don't want to tell," Martin said shrugging his shoulders.

"You could at least snap into those clothes of yours."

"I'm ready, that is, all except putting on a tie," Rod placated.

At Martin's office they found a short, plump, swarthy, keen-eyed man awaiting them. He was dressed in a gray suit of obviously expensive material, and he wore his clothes with the air of a man who has been used to good things a long time.

"Oh," he cried smilingly, as the two entered the office. "So you did bring him back with you, eh?"

Martin introduced them, and Kling at once led Rod into Martin's private office. "Come with me, young feller," he commanded. "We got some talking to do you and me, eh?"

Seated behind Martin's desk, Kling stared keenly at Rod for an instant. Apparently satisfied, he offered Rod a cigar.

"Thanks, but I don't smoke," Rod told him.

"That's fine, that's very fine," Kling observed, as he lit one for himself. "Athletes should never smoke, but try and get them not to! Glad you don't! But say, Herrick, how much were you drinking the other night when you put on the fight with those bums at the Swamp Hut?"

"I guess maybe I talk like a Sunday School teacher," Rod said, "but I hadn't been drinking anything, because I don't drink!"

"Fine!" Kling cried joyously. "He doesn't drink and smoke, and he hits like a heavyweight already, and on his feet he is like a featherweight!" He leaned over the desk to pat Rod on the arm. "Boy, you are what I have been looking for a long time. How much do you weigh?" he asked

suddenly. "Oh, about 165, I guess," Rod told him.

"A natural middle weight!" Kling ejaculated. "Ever box any?"

"A little. No very much, I guess."

"Oh, well, we can teach you that," Kling assured him. "In fact, I'd rather take a good boy who doesn't know much about boxing than to try to unlearn a 'chump' who thinks he knows it all."

For a few minutes he was silent, peering up at the ceiling. "Well, how about signing up with me?" he asked with seeming indifference.

"I'm not sure I want to be a boxer," Rod demurred.

"Not want to be a boxer!" Kling echoed in amazement.

"Why feller I could make you a rich man if you got the stuff in you! Thousands of dollars I can get for you if you know your stuff. And let me tell you, it's not every fellow that'll sign to be in my boxing stables!"

"How soon would I start to make money?" Rod asked.

"Before he ever has a fight he wants to know about money!" Kling cried but a tiny twinkle in his eyes betrayed him. "I tell you Herrick, we will sign a contract where we will split forty-sixty."

He paused to regard Rod narrowly, and as the latter remained silent, he added, "Oh, well, I make it seventy-thirty."

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