

A Few Whispered Words Prevent a \$20,000 TRAIN ROBBERY

By RODD MYAR

The small but elegantly furnished room in the Id-an-ha Hotel was littered with cigaret butts. These were everywhere, on the dresser, on a small stand table, on a large book table, on chair bottoms, and even on the wide window sills.

For two days and two nights Dwight (Fat) Moody, the venerable colored porter at the hotel had been a prisoner virtually, in that room, and had even had his meals served there.

The lack of his accustomed exercise, the fervid air laden with cigaret smoke, the lying in wait of this tiger ready to spring, bore heavily upon the health of the big man who had volunteered his services to the Hock Railroad interests, but lifted him up considerably in the esteem of many influential people.

Fat had come into his own and was willing to pay the price of ill health that might follow the strain he had undergone. He was willing in fact, to risk his life, to execute his plan, which was to prevent a \$20,000 train robbery.

It was all his own, this opportunity, and he was resolved that nobody should prevent its realization. He had heard the magic message delivered by a new arrival at the hotel to an older guest, and knew that a nefarious piece of business was being planned. Having secretly warned the authorities, he was appointed to fill the capacity of house detective, and to further his own scheme, he had moved into this small room.



DWIGHT MOODY

This man's detective ability prevented a big train robbery, and his fighting ability helped to make possible the capture of the daring bandits.

A world of information there, indeed, the fruits of his two days of unbroken vigilance. If he never made another step toward thwarting the conspiracy, the fact that he had accomplished the part of obtaining the information was a noble and all-important deed.

However, he didn't intend to stop there. "I've gone this far," he declared energetically, "and I'm going further. I'll be right there when the guns start to bark." And he was.

The authorities thought it better to let the bandits go ahead and kidnap the girl dispatcher, then they would rescue her when the right moment came.

And the king of the outlaws, Ray Spears, resourceful, who was known throughout the state of Missouri, as well as in California where he spent five years in prison, saw that his henchmen had rendered a faithful job in the kidnapping of Martha Hobbs.

The petite blonde telegrapher did not know what was going on, and had little time to devote thought to

the subject. She suddenly felt the muzzle of a pistol being thrust into the small of her back, knew that she was being held in a pair of powerful hands, and that her clothes were being stripped from her wholesome young body, then she was bound and gagged. Left helpless to strike back or to cry out, she was then thrown onto the floor, nude, under the table upon which were the telegraph instruments, and left there.

She saw the three men and made a mental note of their looks, determined to remember them if the occasion ever came when her memory would aid in their capture. She was not excited, feeling that by some miraculous happening, her life would be saved as well as the fast express, which was thundering its way towards the little station down there in the southeast Missouri hills.

There were no houses in Kaiser with the exception of the section house, and the closest town was twenty miles away.

With a violent shaking of the unsubstantial building, the train swept down upon the shack, the headlight on the enormous engine cutting a solid yellow path in the blackness of the night. A deafening sound of the whistle which seemed to split the world wide open, the roll of heavy steel wheels against steel rails, thunder, flashing of countless lights, a long dark shadow, and the train pulled to a stop with a screeching of protesting and lamenting brakes.

The conductor ran into the station for his orders, followed by the brakeman, and were met by the steady pistol barrels in the hands of the bandits. Thrust into the ticket office, and locked in there, these men of the train crew were as powerless to help themselves as the helpless girl under the table. She hesitated to make herself known to them because of her state of nakedness, realizing that they were bound to see her when they unfastened the ropes that made her a prisoner.

The girl was certainly in an unfortunate predicament and for a long time debated with herself as what was best to do. However, she eventually gave in to the wisest plan which was to make her presence known. She then began to beat the floor with her heels, thud-



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ding out a message of appeal for help.

The outlaws, headed by the dangerous Ray Spears and his formidable assistants, cut the engine off from the express car, ran it down the track to the water tank, held up the express messengers, and blew open the safe. All this took place with neatness and dispatch.

The bandits were old hands at the business, and it was only a few minutes until they had obtained the twenty thousand dollars, shoved it into a burlap sack, and were running towards the engine on which they planned to ride to a point far down the line where they had concealed an automobile in a clump of trees near the track.

But — things went wrong when they reached the engine.

Fulgent instruments of death appeared in the dark velvet of the night. One of these was the revolver in Dwight Moody's hand. He cut down the leader of the outlaws, his bullet going straight home. Then began a pitched battle between the two remaining outlaws and the half-dozen officers, in whose midst was Dwight Moody, who, really, was the hero of the occasion.

Bullets whanged and sang, slugs tore holes in the black curtain; there were flashes of fire, sparks from the hot muzzles of whipping weapons, groans, curses, sounds of bodies dropping like lumps of coal against the ground, and when the smoke cleared away, the last one remaining of the bandit gang had crumpled to the earth with a bullet in his lung.



The hero's children, playing in the yard of their home—a little unkempt, but happy.

Dwight Moody was commended for his valorous deed. He was praised, dined, wine, and feted to no inconsiderable extent, and the newspapers made much of his fine, glorious accomplishment.

But as soon as he could escape from all that, he went hurriedly home to the little woman who was still patiently waiting, who had trusted him to come back, and who had gone on believing that God would enable him to come back, just as safely as any husband had ever come back to a waiting and trusting wife to make her happy.



The beautiful home of the hero of the would-be train robbery.

The reason of this step was this: Just a short piece across a narrow court was an open window. Passing to and fro in front of this opening there was, not infrequently, men with sawed-off shotguns, pistols and burglar tools. All these things Dwight saw, and more. He overheard some of the words that were being banded between them. They were grim bandits, conspiring, arranging the details for an extraordinary train robbery, with twenty thousand dollars as the stake.

Dwight Moody learned enough from crouching down beside the sill at his window to enable him to outwit the trio of smooth law violators. When, at length, the time came for him to leave his dungeon — it had really become like that to him — he drew a deep sigh of relief. But he didn't pause. Swiftly he made his way home, to the miniature vine-covered cottage where his trusting and patient wife awaited word of the results of his bold venture. He immediately took her in his arms, kissed her affectionately, grabbed a pistol which he shoved into an expensive holster, and after bidding his frau good-bye, ran hurriedly from the house. She did not ask him when he was coming back; she just seemed willing to trust him to come back, to trust him and — God.

She was that type of loyal woman. For twenty years she had lived with Dwight Moody, and during those twenty years she had learned to trust her man, something many women never learn to do.

Dwight's information to the railroad officers was adequate. "They are figuring on kidnapping the girl dispatcher at Kaiser and meeting the train there. They will cut the engine loose from the express car, run it down the track to the water tank, and kill the fireman and the engineer. The robbery will take place as soon as 108 reaches Kaiser."