

SATAN'S HENCHMAN—

By
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Widely-Known Author

A Fast Stepping, Romantic Story Depicting the Operations of an Unscrupulous Crook

Theo is Depressed by Mrs. Bolton's Clandestine Advances.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE—

Theodore Ashton, tall, handsome, bronze ex-soldier and athlete, the idol of his widowed mother, has by hard labor, date much to build the success of the Negro Life Insurance Company, and holds the responsible position of cashier. Theo is engaged to Clarice, the daughter of James C. Oliver, president of the insurance company. He admits to his mother that she has asked him to marry her.

J. Francis Bolton, a newcomer in the city, and suddenly popular because of his supposed wealth, calls with a friend at the office and applies for two twenty-five thousand-dollar policies for himself and ward. President Oliver is enthusiastic over Bolton, but Theo wins Bolton's hatred by his insistence that the policies be handled in the regular way, and not be rushed through.

Theo had that morning received an anonymous letter warning him to be careful. Bruce, the bookkeeper, discovers a discrepancy in the records. Ethel, Oliver's second and young wife, hating Clarice, her step-daughter, makes advances to Theo.

At the end of the day, counting up the receipts with thousands of dollars in sight, Theo turns to face a gun in the hands of a bandit, and the command "Stick 'em up!"

Theo discovers he is being constantly shadowed.

Harry Bruce, his friend, and the bookkeeper of the Life Insurance Co., informs Theo that a shortage of ten thousand dollars shows on the company's books.

Bolton is royally entertained by the Olivers at dinner and the theatre.

While Theo and Harry visit Foo Chang's "Paradise," a notorious black and tan cabaret, they observe Edward Terry, Bolton's friend in attendance with the released bandit captured at the attempted holdup of the company. Bolton arrives with Clarice and succeeds in getting Clarice partially intoxicated. The lights go out and Theo rescues Clarice and takes her home. The following day Theo visits Bolton's residence to investigate his applications for fifty thousand dollars insurance and is preceded by Jenny Gilman, Bolton's housekeeper and mistress.

Theo enters and finds Jenny threatening death to a beautiful girl, but Jenny falls in a stupor from dope. The girl proves to be Marcia Anson, Bolton's ward, who has long admired Theo and informs him of Bolton's treachery. It is love at first sight, and as Theo is leaving, Edward Terry enters. Marcia secrets Theo in a closet, and Terry insists upon her seeing with him. When she refuses, he attempts to attack her.

without knowing who struck him.

Marcia Bravely Remains
"Marcia, don't you think you had better get ready and come with me?" Theo asked, as he drew her willing form in his arms.

"Oh, dear! How I wish I could go with you forever. But I can't. You must remember we have no real proof, and Bolton won't dare mistreat me yet. Only by staying here can I hope to get the evidence and proof that will gain me my independence and freedom. But it won't be long, dear. And I do promise you that I shall come to you the minute that great danger threatens. Now you must go, and don't worry about me. Do you promise?"

"Yes," replied Theo, kissing her adieu. But as he was about to open the front door, Bolton drove up to the curb in his expensive car.

"Come, out the back door, quick!" breathed Marcia, as she hastily guided him to the rear and saw him disappear. Then noiselessly, she fled up the back flight of stairs, reached her room, and locked the door.

With the return of President Oliver some few days later, the directors of the Negro Life Insurance Company were precipitated into a factional battle over the issuance of the Bolton policies, which Theo had succeeded in delaying. It was the first time the young and diligent cashier had ever taken exceptions to President Oliver's conduct, and his brilliant oratory all but killed the motion to grant. A compromise amendment ordering the

his apparently unjustified opposition.

Bolton Triumphs
But the fight was not over. After a lull in the activities, J. Francis Bolton made application to the company for sufficient stock to elect him to the directorate, in a chair made vacant by a recent death. The action was railroaded through the board, and the stock issued, for which Bolton deposited cash, bonds and guarantees based upon his policy value.

Theo again led the opposition, but with less effect than his previous effort, and this again paved the way for Bolton's election to the board, which was carried by an overwhelming majority. With his power and influence in the ascendancy, Bolton rose steadily in both financial and social circles.

The new director's suave and courteous treatment of his new colleagues won for him their respect. Even Theo, his principal opponent, was treated with more than ordinary attention, and the cashier was forced to admit that there was no real proof against Bolton to justify his open defiance. On the other hand, J. Francis seemed to favor and respect his business acumen.

With Theo's request to Clarice for release from his engagement, the debutante very emphatically refused, and continued to shower her affection upon her handsome fiancé. But rumors, vague and subtle, persisted in connecting her name with that of the new director, and coming social leader. Frequently Theo re-

as they would, neither Harry Bruce the bookkeeper, nor Theo could make any headway toward unravelling the mysterious shortage in the company's accounts. A succession of transactions occurred which seemingly covered up the deficit, and now, the entry and distribution of the Bolton funds and credits complicated matters further.

Bolton Behaves Strangely

With his usual shrewd judgment and forethought, J. Francis Bolton came forward with a brilliant ally, calculated to rout his critics and to forever dispell all gossip relative to his ward and his home life. Invitations, printed in New York and distributed with careful meditation amongst the social elite, announced the debut of Marcia Mignon Anson, at the heretofore inaccessible home of her guardian, J. Francis Bolton.

During the intervening period before Marcia's debut, communication between the recently pledged lovers dwindled almost to a state of suspension and suspense. Marcia confessed her complete mystification at Bolton's actions. Her every moment was occupied with shopping, fitting and preparation, and his conduct toward her was above reproach in every particular.

In considering the turn of affairs, Theo was somewhat relieved at Marcia's improved situation. Bolton had removed Jenny Gilman, his former housekeeper and mistress, and replaced her with a competent woman. Edward Terry had apparently vanished. There also was a new cook, a Chinese, and a maid. Surveillance of his own movements suddenly ceased.

Society went into a feverish state of anticipation as the date for the debut grew near. And the interest was quickened by the circulated report of Bolton's purchase of Edgemont, one of the finest estates of the exclusive Negro summer colony at Sunset Haven.

Clarice Refuses Theo's Bid

Although his engagement to Clarice had waned from its former intensity, Theo still acquiesced in her insistent demands for much of his attention. And, following out the social custom, he requested her company at the coming debut. But Clarice rejected his plea, not suspecting the great relief it gave him, due to the fact that she would be in attendance early and in the receiving line. Thus Theo was left free to escort his mother.

On the eventful night, the boulevard early became choked and traffic was blocked in all directions. Special police details were on duty. Crowds of curious onlookers milled about the vicinity of the Bolton residence, attempting to gain a glimpse of the arriving four hundred of Negro aristocracy. The mansion-like residence, the former home of a millionaire, fairly teemed with activity. An expensive caterer prepared a score of assistants in preparation for a sumptuous repast. Maids and valets were in attendance in the dressing rooms, and no one could remember having witnessed such a display of extravagant entertainment.

Immaculate in evening clothes and by far the most attractive member in all of that brilliant assemblage, Theodore Ashton, accompanied by his handsome, stately mother, passed along the receiving line to receive an introduction to the new bud and debutante of select society. There were beautiful women and distinguished men. Jewels flashed and décolleté gowns revealed alluring contours.

Theo and his mother were greeted most cordially by the Olivers, and even more so by J. Francis Bolton, who represented the last word in congenial hospitality. The very atmosphere around him seemed permeated with wealth and affluence. Clarice Oliver, charming in a coquette creation, vied with her equally attractive young step-mother. Her greeting was much less effusive than usual, and all eyes were centered upon the young cashier, who, gossip claimed, would lose his fiancée to his more substantial rival, J. Francis Bolton.

The Theo Recognition
When Theo beheld Marcia his heart skipped a beat and the blood

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INSTALLMENT IV

From his hiding place in the closet, Theo watched Terry, and listened with rising indignation to the man's proposal to Marcia, that she flee with him until he could marry her six months later. He knew what the answer would be, and his heart swelled with pride as he realized that this beautiful girl, who had silently admired him for so long, had gladly accepted his proffer to make her dreams come true. It was her beauty and appeal that aroused him to the fact that he had never loved before.



He felt the coils of some sinister fate creeping about him . . . His silence was misconstrued by the young matron, who slipped her arm about his broad shoulders and attempted to draw him into her longing embrace. Her hot breath fanned his face and her lips reached up to his.

With her love bestowed upon him, and secure in her faith that his pledge would protect and befriend her, Marcia stood poised in all the beauty of her glorious young womanhood, ready to repulse a muscle would-be ravisher. Not a muscle twitched as Terry crept toward her.

Confronted by the fact that he must act, yet hoping he could avoid jeopardizing her safety by his presence,

Theo quickly tied a handkerchief over his mouth and nose and pulled his hat low over his eyes. With nerves taut, he watched Terry step around the still recumbent figure of Jenny and advanced toward Marcia. As he passed the closet door, Terry's advance was suddenly interrupted, for Theo, masked, faced him, and with one of his lightning-like blows to the jaw, Terry went down and out

immediate examination of the applicants, won for the opposition.

When Doctor Worford checked the health of the applicants, the policies were immediately issued, and Theo was forced to accept defeat, together with a noticeable change in Oliver's attitude. The members who had followed Theo seemed to regret their actions, and various sentiments were expressed relative to

ceived communications from Marcia, and upon several occasions he had met her secretly. Her warm love, and growing beauty filled his every waking thought. For her and his worshipped mother he worked, doggedly, day and night. Continually shadowed, he was ever alert, prompted and abetted by Marcia's secret espionage and revelations.

The one cloud upon the horizon remained immovable, apparently. Try