

SATAN'S HENCHMAN—

By
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Widely-Known Author

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

Bolton Concocts A Wicked Blackmailing Scheme

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE—

Theodore Ashton, tall, handsome, broad-shouldered, and athletic, the ideal of his widowed mother, has by hard labor, done much to build the success of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, and holds the responsible position of cashier. Theo is engaged to Clarice, the daughter of James O. 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 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. Elmer Oliver's second and young wife, Daisy, 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 knocks the bandit down and captures him.

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 really entertained by the Oliver's 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 the applications for fifty thousand dollars worth of 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 seduces Theo in a closet, and Terry insists upon her fleeing with him. When she refuses, he attempts to attack her.

Theo springs out of the closet and knocks Terry out when the man attempts to attack Marcia. He then escapes out of the rear door as Bolton arrives.

Theo, leading the opposition, loses his fight to prevent issuance of the Bolton policies. He also loses the fight to defeat Bolton's election to the board of directors. Bolton executes a shrewd coup by introducing Marcia, his ward, into society at a magnificent reception. But Theo is worried and puzzled. Jenny, Bolton's former housekeeper, has been replaced. Terry has disappeared and Bolton attains the zenith of his power in social and financial circles.

Theo is rejected by Clarice as her escort, but substitutes his mother as a companion at the debut reception and he is practically ignored by Marcia during the festivities. In a despondent mood, he seeks a secluded balcony but is immediately joined by Elmer, President Oliver's wife, who again proposes a clandestine friendship which Theo rejects. Just as her husband appears and faces them, a heretofore unseen figure steps from the shadows to Theo's side.

The unseen figure proved to be Theo's mother, Mrs. Ashton, whose presence prevents a scene.

Theo is ignored by his fiancée, Clarice, and by Marcia, to whom he had given his heart, during her debut party.

A few days later, Bolton's wishes the exchange of some securities after the time said had been looked and judged upon Theo's holding the new ones until the following day. Working overtime that night and alone, Theo is watched and receives a call that the office is to be robbed. He discovers the wires have been cut and he pockets an official looking packet and leaves. At the curbing he is kidnapped, put into a car and robbed of the packet.

Pis out of the bandit car, Theo stumbles upon Terry and Jenny Gilman, Bolton's confederate and his former mistress, sitting in the park, and overhears their plot against Marcia. He follows them and discovers the secret entrance to Foo Chang's den. At this office the next morning Theo, in the presence of Oliver, relates the hold-up to the police.

When Bolton arrives he is informed of the robbery and holds Theo to be blame for the theft of the bonds. Theo hands him the bonds that he had received and informs him that the packet of which he had been robbed contained only blank envelopes, and that Bolton's bonds were still in his desk and were false documents.

Two detectives enter the office. After explaining how he had deceived the bandits and returning Bolton's false bonds to him, Theo accompanied the detectives to Oliver's residence to interview Clarice. The bandit's car number turns out to be Oliver's car, and Clarice confesses that the car had been parked for several hours in front of a resort which she visited with Bolton. In the meantime the bandits had evidently used and returned the car.

At the company's annual charity ball and masquerade, Theo is induced by a girl to enter a secluded nook, and discovers the girl to be Marcia. She pleads for his loyalty, explaining her past conduct, and warns him that something is going to happen. As they separate from their short but renewed tryst, Theo is approached by police officers and arrested.

Booked and cast into jail on a charge of embezzlement, Theo spends a week in prison before being admitted to bail. At his home he finds Marcia and his mother hap-



The Sensual Half-caste Woman

Then he released her, adjusted the radio and served another round of drinks. Slowly the nearly nude girl moved into a rhythmic dance, gyrating, turning and twisting. She smoked and drank in motion. She made love, fascinating her host with her sinuous inviting motions. The dance became a medley of famous characterizations, emulating Salome with the head of John; Cleopatra, seducing Antony.

INSTALMENT IX

The glaring, ominous headlines in the paper staggered Theo Ashton's sense of reason. His usually keen and alert mind seemed to cease its rational functioning. He couldn't think, and the words "Marcia disappeared—elopement hinted," seared his brain. He turned about and retraced his steps toward home. He wanted his mother's cool assurance and confidence in his ability to successfully weather this crushing blow.

Elopement a Fake

Back at the apartment he found Harry Bruce, who had already seen the newspaper, and hastened to confer with his chum on the situation. His mother's face was tense with the apprehension she felt, and together they discussed the incident.

"What do you think of this affair,

Theo?" Harry asked.

Theo sat in a deep study. His handsome features were contracted with the anxiety under which he labored. When he answered it was with the definite decision he had reached, and that determination which had been his since birth. "Harry—the elopement part is pure bunk,

and once and forever that phase is entirely eliminated from the case. That — is Bolton's propaganda. You know there are just two weeks remaining to his official and legal guardianship. That's that."

"What are you going to do, son?" asked his mother, in her quick, expectant manner for she knew the meaning of that set jaw.

"Every waking moment of my life is henceforth dedicated to her return and the banishment of her enemies. I shall leave no stone unturned in looking for her, and — I pity the parties responsible for this damnable treachery. I blame Bolton, and I am going to work with him as the objective and round up his infernal

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NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY