

BLACKSHEEP

By Meredith Nicholson

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SYNOPSIS

Archibald Bennett, wealthy baron, travels constantly in the interest of his wealth. He meets Isabel Perry, who recommends a life of crime, adventure, romance and excitement as a cure for his nerves. Archibald goes to Bailey Harbor to investigate a summer house for his sister. A heavy storm forces him to spend the night there. During the night he is awakened by footsteps, and in an encounter with the intruder, who sees Archie's figure reflected in the mirror and shoots. Archie fires in return, wounding the intruder, who makes his escape. Archie plans flight to evade publicity. He finds congeniality on foot in the night. At dawn he is stopped on a lonely country road by "The Governor," master criminal who mistakes him for a fellow criminal. Archie, being afraid to tell the truth, falls in with "The Governor," who whisked across country in a stolen car. News story in newspapers of killing at Bailey Harbor and freighted, he decides to say nothing but stick with his strong friend and await developments at "Governor's" N. H. Archie comes upon Isabel Perry at the hotel desk but she refuses to recognize him. "The Governor," by a clever plan, switches stolen money for good money. Archie used as decoy—making love to niece of agent sent to meet eccentric Congdon here next day.

CHAPTER VI

When they reached the dining room at the best morning this found Seebrook and Walters, just finishing breakfast. Miss Seebrook was sitting at the head of the table. Her father, explained. He responded to Archie's polite inquiry.

"We're hoping to get away this afternoon," he continued. "I will take only a few minutes to transfer my business when you are waiting for me, and after an hour or two I shall be back again. But when you get home, please say to the waiter in the hall that I have been out, and the gentleman would be very sorry to see you."

"An you are very tired?" said the governor, then he turned to the waiter and said, "I want you to get a glass of beer and a glass of soda water, and when you get them, please bring them to my father. I want to see him when he gets up."

"The Governor" turned to Archie and said, "I want to see you when you get up. I want to see you when you get up. I want to see you when you get up."

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There seemed to be no escaping from the Congdon and here was the father of Putney, held, publisher to the whole state of North Carolina, his fear that his son had been murdered.

The concentration of the note, upon the transfer of Mr. Congdon's luggage to his room, left the Governor and Archie to manage the removal of their own effects to the waiting car. Seebrook and Walters obligingly assisted, laughing at various eccentricities.

Seebrook asked the Governor, "Do you have the sixty thousand dollars and carried it out to the car. The night of it in Seebrook's, and gave Archie sensations of nausea that were not relieved by the stimulant detected on the Governor's face. Within an hour or two at most the substitution and robbery would be discovered and the country would ring with the demand for their detection. But the Governor was carrying off the departure with his usual gaiety. It was clear that he had made the most favorable impression upon Seebrook and Walters; and in the cordial handshaking and expressions of hope for future meetings, Archie joined with the best spirit he could muster. A cherry goodby caused him to look up. Miss Seebrook with a red nose, if her hand waved to him from her windows.

As he lifted his car his dropped, the nose with a peculiar wobble of the arm.

"Take the old stage coach," cried the Governor, addressing Archie's father.

He turned into the machine and Archie scanning him. Archie, but impressive of the man was not a man of a warm handshake. He left Miss Seebrook's.

"We are a society, my boy," said the Governor, turning to Archie. "I want to see you when you get up. I want to see you when you get up. I want to see you when you get up."

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CHAPTER VII

With all his outward candor the Governor had, Archie found, reserves that were quite unacceptable. He let fall allusions to his past in the most nature fashion, with an incidental air that added to their plausibility, without ever tearing aside the veil that concealed his origin or the manner of his fall, if indeed, a man who so jubilantly boasted of his crimes and seemed to find an infinite satisfaction and delight in his turpitude, could be said to have fallen. Having mentioned Brattleboro as the point at which they were to forger with Red Leary, the Governor did not refer to the matter again, but chose routes and made detours without explanation.

It was on the second afternoon out of Governor that the Governor suddenly told Archie whom he encouraged to drive much of the time, pause at a gate.

"We'll stop here, May I suggest that you take note of the man on the horse. He is an honest dairyman to all intents and purposes, but really an old crook who has been dodging sheriffs and magistrates and bought this farm. A sober, industrious family man, you will find him, with a wife and one daughter. This is one of the best stations of the underground railroad, safe as a mother's arm, and you will never believe you've met the fairest guest of a weekend party. Walter's an old hand of Leary's. They used to cut up in the most reprehensible fashion. Walter was in old times. You've probably wondered what becomes of the crooks. Walter is of course an unusual specimen. You'll know when the writing was good, and having stolen away a nice little fortune accumulated in excess, holding the walls here in peace and passing the hat at the meeting house every Sunday. You may be dead sure that he'll be the aristocrat of our profession in the eyes of Walker's."

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"Just run the machine tight in," he called.

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The man appeared at a window, lifted his bare arms, as if he still and smilingly saluted them with a cheery "Hello, boys!"

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