



# ON TIPTOE

by Stewart Edward White

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## CHAPTER XIX

### Simmins, a True Knight

The campaign of asseverating went off with a bang. Grimstead's hostility melted easily. The impact of Davenport's identity as a famous author, instead of the mechanic he had believed him, was tremendous. The engagement finished him.

Davenport was an excellent match—he was a manly chap, and if Grimstead could arrange it—he was going to be immensely wealthy. Of course he had a lot of damn-fool idealistic notions, but an author was supposed to be eccentric.

Supper passed jovially enough. Then Grimstead caused the hearts of three of the party to skip a beat.

"Simmins," he commanded, "here is my coat to clean up a little. It's got an awful fish smell about it."

As he spoke he took off the garment and hung it on a stub, replacing it with a sweater. He removed nothing from the pockets, and all three of the conspirators could distinctly make out a corner of the bill fold showing from the inside pocket.

Simmins picked up the coat, and with it started toward the creek. "Hey!" called Grimstead after him. "Where you going? I don't want the thing washed!"

"No, sir; of course not, sir. Merely a trifle of sponging, sir," stammered Simmins at a loss.

"Well, go ahead. But there are some things in the pockets; look out you don't lose them. There's a tobacco pouch and a notebook in the side pocket, and my pocketbook in the inside pocket."

"Never fear, sir; I'll take the best of care," chattered Simmins, heaving a hasty retreat.

"You're not afraid to trust him with a pocketbook?" Larry ventured to suggest.

Grimstead laughed. "I wouldn't trust him with my roll, he agrees. But that pocketbook contains nothing but papers, and they can all be replaced. There's nothing there to interest Simmins."

Burton and Larry exchanged another glance. It was almost too good to be true.

After two minutes Simmins glided unobtrusively into the bright and hung the coat again on the stub.

"Here," Grimstead commanded at once, "bring me that pocketbook out of the inside pocket."

For a moment Simmins' limbs refused to work; but he succeeded in extracting the pocketbook and bringing it to his master. Contrary to expectation, Grimstead did not open it. He examined Simmins curiously.

"You're trembling like a leaf," he said. "What's the matter with you?"

Simmins muttered something about his being chilly by the stream.

"Well, bring me my small leather kn bag."

He opened the kn bag, fumbled down to the bottom, and tucked the bill fold beneath the flap.

"There! Shall stick fast enough there until we go. Take it, heek, Simmins."

"Yes, sir," said Simmins, "and if there is nothing more, sir, I ask permission of return to my camp to turn in."

"Well, take a drink before you go," offered Grimstead. "Here's the key. Your teeth are chattering."

Simmins gratefully swallowed the whiskey, returned the key and disappeared.

Larry and Burton wandered off toward the car and found Simmins waiting for them.

"Here, sir, here it is," he burst out, thrusting a paper into Larry's hands. "What is to happen when he discovers his loss, or I cannot be the life of his imagination?"

"Nothing! Don't worry, Simmins. If he finds a cot, I will take the blame. You have acted very ably in this matter. Neither Miss Burton nor myself will ever forget it."

"Indeed we shall not," Simmins added Burton; "you are a true knight!"

Simmins retired, his heart glowing.

The two young people made their way to the bank of the little stream, where they would be screened from the camp. There Larry lighted a match and cast a hasty glance of inspection at the document.

"It's all right," he assured Burton relievedly. "This is it! Blessed Simmins!"

He tore it into small pieces and cast them into the current.

"I feel as though the weight of worlds had been lifted!" he cried. "It does seem as though some one or something was helping us," said Burton soberly. "I think that we should be very thankful that things came about so easily."

## CHAPTER XX

### Discovered

The moment the young people were out of hearing Grimstead turned

on Gardiner with an almost savage intensity of manner.

"Listen here, Ross," he said rapidly. "The time has come for action, and we must get busy. Things are at touch and go with us and the stakes are the biggest ever played."

Gardiner looked at him blankly. "Never mind figuring it out. Listen to me, and take orders. This man Davenport is a fool, but he has brains. It was perfectly evident that the thought would soon suggest itself that if he could once get hold of the agreement he had signed, he could tell us to go whistle."

"But since he and Miss Burton—"

"Poppycock! Do you think that type of fanaticism ever becomes reasonable?"

"Then why—"

"A blind. It wouldn't fool a mudder, let alone a wise old cool like me. I'm an old bird; I can put two and two together. The first thing to try was obviously to get hold of it peacefully, by stealing it. If that didn't work, he was going to get it some how, if he had to hold us up or sandbag us. I know the type. He's a fanatic, and the most dangerous kind. He'd commit murder before he'd give in."

Gardiner was excited. "Get him before he gets us!" he suggested.

"I began to take my measure at once," Grimstead went on. "Obviously he'd try first of all to steal the bill fold. So I made it easy for him."

"Did you suspect Simmins?"

"Not at that time. But I figured Davenport would begin to manoeuvre to get hold of the coat or near it."

"A test," murmured Gardiner. "Precisely. Well, when he did not I began to think I might be wrong. Then Simmins came back scared as a rabbit, and I realized he was in it. I'll settle with him later."

"But the agreement—"

"Was not there, of course! I substituted the carbon copy."

"They'll detect the difference, it isn't signed."

"I signed it for him," grinned the older man. "It isn't a very good forgery, but all he'll do tonight will be to examine it with a match to see if it's what he wants."

"Clever work, chief," cried Gardiner. "But I don't see that it gets us far."

"It gets us until morning. And it corroborates my suspicions."

"Now, listen carefully, Ross," continued Grimstead, "for this is what you must do. You've got to take this agreement with you to the nearest recorder's and get it entered. That means you start tonight, just as soon as everybody has turned in."

Gardiner nodded. "So far, so good. But there's another thing. This man is absolutely capable of laying down on us, no matter what agreements we may have."

"What do you mean?"

"Refuse his formula."

"But you can ruin him."

"He'll stand that. He'll stand for anything now he's got his head set! That's the sort they used to use the thumb rack on without much success. Could you analyze this battery, if you had it, and reproduce the formula?"

"Certainly, if what he says is true, that the plates are a simple alloy and there is no further secret. It will vary be necessary to analyze them, measure their exact proportions, determine their specific gravity, and observe carefully and peculiarities of their shape and position."

"Remember, their distance from each other is important."

"That, of course, I see, your own. We are to steal the battery."

"It must weigh it bound," observed Gardiner. "Do we hide it somewhere?"

"No, you'll drive it out. The woods will now carry you; I've been watching them. Put the battery back in that rattletrap of his and drive it out."

Gardiner pondered.

"When we stop that self-starter it will be noticed," he objected, "and there'll be a lot of noise getting away. Simmins sleeps right next door. What do I do with him?"

"Simmins is already taken care of," said the pirate chief calmly. "He will continue to sleep. That drink I gave him will fix that."

"Doped?" surmised Gardiner.

"Just that. Morphine from the medicine case. And we'll feed Davenport a little of the same."

"Chief, you're a wonder! You think of everything!" cried Gardiner admiringly. "I'd suggest you tie him up after he goes under or he'll likely raise hell when he comes to."

"I expect to," said Grimstead. "Look out; here they come! You understand your job and remember, it's the biggest stake in the world!"

## CHAPTER XXI

### Punketty-Snivvel's Revenge

Events ran smoothly about the plan laid out for them by the pirate chief. Burton and Davenport returned shortly to the campfire. At a suitable time a night-cow was proposed and drunk. Soon after, with Burton in her darkened tent, and Davenport deep in stupor, the conspirators had the place to themselves.

Silence rushed in upon the dying clutter as into a vacuum. Gardiner paused long enough to look in on Simmins. That worthy had not stirred.

It was the work of but a few moments more to reinstall Davenport's strange storage battery in the other car.

Gardiner found the engine much more flexible than any gasoline car he had ever driven. For a few minutes he amused himself by bringing it almost to a stop and then picking up smoothly and positively by merely opening the throttle. He then started out and settled down to the sheer pleasure of driving as fast as his skill would permit.

He was a good driver, and he understood well how to pick up on the straightaways and just how much to check at the curves. And he was a safe driver, as genuine skill is usually safe.

But Gardiner was not alone in the car. No less a personage than Punketty-Snivvels occupied the seat next him, but the little dog's protective coloration had concealed him from Gardiner's notice.

Now Gardiner had once cuffed Punketty-Snivvels soundly when that personage had been left in his charge. So, crouched in his place, Punketty-Snivvels fixed his beady eyes in intolerance on his enemy, and worked up a fine bit of hate.

Gardiner flashed around a last glance to see ahead of him a straight bridge. The lights showed him its approach on a slight rise, and that it was built on a high trestle. Then the nose of the car touched the slight rise and the lights lifted.

At the same instant Punketty-Snivvels, whose hate had worked up to a point of action, reached out and bit Gardiner in the wrist!

Gardiner, who had not known of the dog's presence, jumped in surprise and alarm. The car swerved, but he was too cool a driver to permit it to leave the road. However, for those seconds his attention was deflected, and that time was sufficient to shoot the car on the plank of the bridge.

Gardiner saw all this with the corner of his eye and steered straight and true, while at the same time his direct vision was occupied in identifying the cowering little dog. Then he looked back to the front.

Before him yawned an abyss. The bridge had been carried away by the flood!

Even while he photographed clearly the jagged edges of the bridge, the opposite bank poked out clearly by the lights, and dimly far below a white and phosphorescent tumble of water hastening to the sea.

The brakes checked the momentum almost, but not quite enough. The car slithered off the edge, seemed for an instant to hover right side up like a bird.

Then down it plunged and the foaming, turbulent waters seized it and love it scurrying away.

## CHAPTER XXII

### And Rascalion Does His Stuff

By the campfire, Grimstead trained his ears to catch the faint sounds of Gardiner's departure. Things were going very well. They always did go well, he had found, when directed masterfully.

Burton, as he had foreseen, did not stir in her tent. She was young and slept soundly, especially in the first part of the night.

After a while he threw away his cigar, stretched and arose. First he leaned over Davenport for a moment, listening to his rather torturous breathing. Then he sauntered to the big red-roofed at whose base the kitchen had been made.

Here he deliberately unknotted a short piece of line that had been used to suspend a shading bit of canvas, and with it returned toward the sleeper. He was thoroughly satisfied, and was humming a little tune.

In his brief absence another had added himself to the scene. Rascalion had shared the tent with Burton. Now, however, urged by some vague restlessness, some telephonic uneasiness, some trickle from the current searching out a channel of his doggy mind, he had deserted the warm and grateful nest and had come forth to sit by his master.

Grimstead paid him no attention;

but, cord in hand, advanced upon the sleeper. Now the queer thing happened.

Rascalion was the most friendly of dogs, even polite and eager, whose experiences with humans had always been courteous. Also he was, of course, thoroughly familiar with Grimstead.

Now, however, he arose to stiff legs, his eyes blazing, the coarse hair of his back and neck erect, his lips snarled back. Grimstead paused.

"Here, Rap, you old fool!" he admonished in a low voice. "What ails you?"

And again stopped forward. Instantly Rascalion uttered two sharp and challenging barks.

The sleeper did not stir; no sound came from the tent. Grimstead stepped forward again.

Now Rascalion did not know what it was all about. Only his simple dog mind had received the impression that, unexpectedly and for the first time, the proximity of this large human meant trouble to master; and his simple dog code told him to stick tight, say as much as he could about it and, in extremity, to do his utmost.

If he had a private thought apart, which is improbable, it was a reflecting one of despair at relative sizes and powers; but it did not affect his course of conduct. He began again to bark rapidly and warningly.

As Grimstead continued to advance he bobbed forward and back a few inches as though propelled by a spring.

These things impressed Grimstead just so far as to cause him to pick up a heavy club-shaped billet of wood, a weapon that plainly outgunned the armament of a little red dog who fought at 15 pounds!

At this moment Burton appeared from the tent.

"Dad!" she cried, "what are you doing with that club and that rope? I'll keep him quiet!"

Her first sleepy thought was that the dog's barking had awakened Grimstead and exasperated him to the point of canicide.

As her mind cleared and focused, however, her eyes widened with terror. Davenport's immobility amid all this noise, Grimstead's day attire; what did it mean?

She dashed forward to Larry, and undeterred by Rascalion, fell on her knees at his side.

"What have you done?" What have you done?" she cried, terror-stricken.

"Nothing—nothing at all—he's perfectly all right!" cried Grimstead, whose one idea was to reassure her before she lost control of herself. "He's not hurt. He'll be as well as ever in the morning."

But by this time Burton had assured herself that Larry was lying and unharmed, and rose slowly to her feet. Her brow was puckered in thought.

"You have drugged him!" she decided at last. She pondered for a moment more, then raised her head.

"The engine has stopped—you have stolen the car!" she cried in sudden enlightenment. A deep scorn rose to the surface of her eyes. "And now you were going to tie him! You're afraid of what he might do!"

On the passing of the danger of hysterics, Grimstead became himself again. This was too big a matter to permit of sentiment. He spoke brusquely.

"This is not woman's business, Burton," said he, "and you must not interfere. No harm is intended to your young man. Indeed, I am saving him from himself, and in the future he will thank me for making him a rich man instead of permitting him to ruin himself by foolishness."

"He will never thank you, and I will never forgive you!" she cried passionately.

He shrugged his shoulders. Women always got over these things. Still a slight change in minor tactics seemed desirable. It would no longer be possible or desirable to restrain the young man by force.

"I leave him to you," he told Burton. "Try to get some common sense into him—if it's possible. But be sure to tell him one thing: That his interests are going to be scrupulously protected. He'll get every cent that is coming to him!"

He disappeared down the meadow. Burton looked after him, her bosom heaving with emotions too deep for reply. Then in a passion of mingled loyalty and anger she fell on her knees again beside the unconscious man.

(Continued Next Week)

## A Wise Husband

"Now, remember, dear, the outcome of your first quarrel establishes a precedent. Don't give in."

"I won't. But I think somebody must have given Henry the same advice."

## Seed Potatoes

Cooperating with the Department of Agriculture I am making arrangements to buy certified seed potatoes for all farmers in the county who may desire them. There seems to be a shortage of seed to supply the demands of Watauga farmers this year and those desiring seed should place their orders with me at once. I am not going into the business to make money but to assist the farmers and only want to buy a sufficient amount to supply the demand.

J. L. QUALIS

## About Your Health

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

By John Joseph Gaines, M. D.

### Your Physician

Pardon my reminding you of your best friend. Yes, I am writing "about your health," as well as your best aids in maintaining it, your good doctor ranking first.

There is something distinctive that is the family physician's only; the surgeon and the specialist may be expert in their lines of practice; they do things for which the family physician is not even prepared, and should not attempt. But, I would never select either for my family physician. Their fields are too narrow—too limited. I would summon either, only on the advice of my family doctor.

Your physician should be a broad, well-read, general practitioner. If that, he is far better posted in the management of your varied complaints, than the surgeon or the specialist. He has a far more extensive knowledge of the remedies needed for you than either. He will be a more capable diagnostician in systematic disease; and, he will know when you need a surgeon or specialist, better than any one else.

Your family physician is indeed an indispensable man in the community. He looks after sanitation,

and other community measures calculated to prevent disease; to lessen his chances for making a living. He is alert in medical investigation and research, knowing that he is working himself out of a job! Show me the faddist, the cultist or the "path" that is even attempting to be a humanitarian like that!

Finally, the family doctor is, to a large extent, what his community makes him; the idle, stupid, non-progressive neighborhood will attract just that sort of a physician. Prompt payment of bills often grows you a more willing and efficient health garden.



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