

GUNMAN'S BLUFF

BY Edgar Wallace

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FIFTH INSTALMENT

"A friend of yours wishes to see you," she said. "He says he knows you."

Luke frowned.

"A friend?" he repeated. "I am sure he's mistaken me for somebody else."

"No, he particularly asked for you. He said the man who was stabbed; of course, I didn't tell him your name was Luke, because it isn't."

"Oh, yes, it is, sister—I'm profoundly curious; let him come in."

The man who came in had never been seen before. His shabbiness was relieved by a collar of such surprising whiteness that Luke guessed it had been bought for the occasion, as also had the violent necktie. He was a man with a very small face, sharp features; his heavily lidded eyes glanced furtively left and right before he came stealthily to the bed.

"All right, sister." His voice was high and husky (Luke remembered that Lewing's voice was that way, and wondered if this was a relative).

trustee of the fund, is making me a sufficient allowance."

He could only gaze at her, dumfounded. All his fine schemes had been blown away as a feather of steam is blown by a gale. She saved him the trouble of speaking and gave him time to recover himself, for she went on:

"Luke has never been in Paris since he went away—some interested person must have sent that wire. I almost feel as though I willed it to be sent, to give me some excuse for the terrible way I treated Luke. She smiled. "I should be awfully uncomfortable if I thought my money made any difference to you in your scheme. Danton. Happily, you're a rich man."

Danty nodded slowly. He had that morning received a warning letter from his bank, and losing large sums at his favorite gaming house in the faith that his financial position would soon be unassailable.

With an effort, he recovered his balance and forced his voice into a

her husband. The thought made him wince; he was beginning to understand how his place this girl had made for herself in his life. It was not like Danton Morrell to allow any woman a foothold in the cold thing he called a heart; but insensibly, and for some reason he could not understand, she whom he had intended as a dupe had become a factor. It was almost unbelievable.

And with this came another realization that momentarily left him agast. She was in love with her husband!

He had opened his lips to speak when there came a discreet knock at the door and the maid entered.

"There's a gentleman wishes to see you, madam—A Mr. Haynes."

Had Margaret been looking at him, she would have seen Danty's face go pale.

"He says he knows Mr. Maddison slightly," the girl went on, "and he wants particularly to see you."

Danty gaped at her.

"You didn't tell him I was here, did you?" he began and saw the look of astonishment in Margaret's face.

"Do you know him?"

He nodded and glanced significantly at the girl.

"Just wait a moment outside, will you?" said Margaret, and when the maid had gone and the door was closed: "Who is he?"

"He's a man I don't wish to see and I don't think you ought to see. He's a criminal, the fellow who was arrested that night at the Carlton. If you take my advice you'll send him away."

She hesitated.

"If he knows Luke," she began.

"He doesn't; that's just a trick to see you. He'll probably want money, and he's a pretty dangerous man."

"Then you'd better be here when he comes," she said and saw by his consternation that this was not an acceptable suggestion. "I'd better see him," she said. "Wait you wait in the little drawing room."

Margaret in that mood he could not combat; he agreed sulkily to her suggestion and was in the drawing room when he heard the quick step of the Gunner pass the closed doors.

Margaret was unprepared for the type that came into the drawing room. The tanned hawk face had a strength and a certain refinement which she had not expected.

"Are you Mrs. Maddison?" drawled the visitor, and she inclined her head slightly. "My name's Haynes—the police know me as Gunner Haynes. I'm a jewel thief among other things," he said.

"His tone was as calm as though he were announcing himself the member of an honorable guild.

"I met your husband once; he tried to do me a service—I should like to do him one, Mrs. Maddison."

Again she nodded.

"Mr. Danton Morrell is a friend of yours, isn't he?" he asked.

"Yes," she said coldly. "Why?"

She saw his lips twitch.

"I was wondering—Mrs. Maddison, would you think I was impertinent if I asked you why your husband left you?"

Her steady eyes met his.

"Do you think you would be?" she asked quietly, and saw that faint smile of his.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

HINTS FOR MOTORISTS

People who load the running board with heavy camping equipment when going on a trip shouldn't be surprised if the brackets that support the board break before they get back home again.

Adjustable seats won't work properly, nor will seat cushions settle in place, if rags, tools or the old trousers you use when changing a tire, stick up from the compartment under the seat. Pack things neatly and don't carry more than the compartment will hold.

Most of the better service stations are displaying a tool which can be used to repair the inside or the outside threads of a valve stem, smooth down the mouth of a valve stem, remove or insert a valve inside, and deflate a tube quickly. It is a useful and inexpensive accessory.

AUCTION SALE!

—OF—

C. L. Greene Property

LOCATED NEAR REESE POST-OFFICE IN THE BEAVER DAM SECTION

Saturday, March 22nd

BEGINNING AT 10 O'CLOCK A. M.

Property consists of between 125 and 150 acres of valuable land, divided into three tracts, practically all in timber; well watered. No buildings on property.

Property will absolutely be sold to the high bidder, for satisfaction of estate, rain or shine, at CORNETTS MILL 2 miles from Reese Postoffice, on the date specified above.

TERMS OF SALE—One-fourth cash; balance in six and twelve months.

Raleigh Wilson, J. R. Eggers, Executors of the Will of C. L. Greene



"You've given back all the money he gave you?" he stammered.

"Is this your friend?" asked the nurse.

The man nodded.

"That's him all right, miss."

The nurse disappeared, and the man bent over the bed. He smiled musty and unsavoury, as though his clothes had been stored in a damp place.

Joe says that as you didn't squeak he's going to make things right for you."

"Didn't what?" asked Luke.

"Squeak. Don't be funny. When you come out, say how. He slipped a dirty piece of paper under the pillow, and Luke heard a well-remembered rustle. "There's a five there for you, Joe says he'll look after you."

"God bless him!" said Luke soberly. "For if ever there was a man who wanted looking after, it's me!"

He left the hospital on a sunny afternoon, and said walk out with out assistance, for he had earned no badge. He was strong enough to walk, for he had taken an appreciable amount of exercise on the terrace of the hospital; but he had lost weight and his clothes hung loosely upon him. The mysterious man had told him to go to Mrs. Fraser, at 329 Ginnert Street.

He pushed open the door, a cracked bell clanged, and after a while there emerged through a door leading to the shop parlor a sharp-featured woman with brassy hair, who greeted him with all the superficial unfriendliness which he discovered was the normal attitude of the small tradesman in this neighborhood.

"I am Mrs. Fraser," she said.

"I was told to call and see you," he began, when she interrupted him quickly.

"Are you the man from the hospital, Smith?"

Luke sniffed and nodded. She lifted the flap of the counter.

"Come in, will you?" Her tone was respectful, almost fawning. "I thought you wasn't coming till tomorrow."

She led the way into a frowsy little parlor and closed the door communicating with the shop carefully.

"It's lucky I had the room done up for you today," she said. "I'm a rare one for getting things done in time. Will you come this way, Mr. What's-your-name?"

Curiosity impelled him to follow her. At the first sight of that dingy shop he had been tempted to turn back, to find a new foothold to life; but now he went after the woman almost snail.

For that was the woman's in-eradicable weakness of Luke Maddison: a consuming curiosity to see what would happen next.

At some time or other there had been built a small annex to the house, the floors were firmer and the doors seemed heavier. She opened one of these and showed him into a room, the comfort of which was rather staggering. He expected to see something particularly uninviting, and it is possible that had this been the case, he would have declined the lodging and gone elsewhere. But the bed was neat, the sheets spotless, the furniture, though plain, was ample, and a small fire burned in the grate. "To air the room," she explained, almost apologetically, and led him to understand that this luxury was impermanent.

Danty looked at Margaret in horrified amazement. His consternation was almost comic.

"You've given back all the money he gave you?" he stammered.

"Why shouldn't I? I have enough to live on," she said. "Mr. Stiles, as

tone of indifference.

"I'm not sure you're wise. Did you consult your lawyer?"

She shook her head.

"In matters of conscience one does not consult lawyers," she said quietly. It was difficult enough even to make intelligent conversation. Her attitude was a dead wall built across his easy path, and at the moment it seemed unscalable. He had to play for time now; his native cunning told him that so long as he had her on his side there was no reason why he should lose hope. He had dreamed of hundreds of thousands; he had been certain of tens of thousands; there was still an odd thousand or two for the picking and possibly a greater haul if he played the game shrewdly.

"When do you expect to leave for Ronda?"

"In two days' time," she said quickly—so quickly that he realized she had worked it out to the hour. "As soon as I am certain that Luke is in Ronda I shall go to him."

"Exactly what will you say to him?"

He could not resist asking this question, though he realized even as he spoke the words that he was guilty of a tactical error.

He saw her stiffen; that cold look came back to the beautiful eyes.

"That is entirely a matter between Luke and me," she said. "I have made this mess, I am afraid, and I must get out of it."

In his desperation he blundered again.

"You owe something to Rex's memory," he said. "I don't know what you're feeling about Luke, but there is a fact that can't be blinked. Luke could have saved your brother's life; instead, when he found he was in a condition of ruin, he hounded him still further into the mire. His god is money—"

"Yet he gave me everything," she said quickly, "and when I refused him money, he went away without a word. Don't you realize, Danton, that had he gone to the courts—had he done anything—I must have given him the money back, not because he had any legal right to it, but because I would not have dared to face a public inquiry. He may have been mean, he may have been terribly cruel, but I cannot right one wrong with another. That is the consideration which made me give back the money to Mr. Stiles," she went on in a voice, less tense, more agreeable, almost friendly. "We shall have to thresh out this business of Rex—it's very ugly and painful, and I can't think of it calmly even now. Luke may have some explanation; there may be a very excellent reason why he refused any further help to poor Rex. At any rate, it's my job to find the truth."

He was almost livid with a fury he could hardly disguise. His lips curled in a sneer.

"It seems to me that the result of your reconciliation—I suppose that's what it is coming to—will be to leave me in the lurch and put me wrong with anybody. Financially it may ruin me. Luke had a big influence in the City, and even now the mere suggestion that I was antagonistic to him is making a big difference."

To his surprise she laughed.

"Danton," she said, almost gaily, "you're making me feel a pig! You don't imagine I would allow a friend of Rex's to suffer because of the he tried to give me?"

Danton Morell was puzzled. Why was she so cheerful? And then he remembered—she would be in Ronda in a few days, would be united with

C. M. T. C. ENROLLMENTS BEGIN MARCH FIRST

Major General Frank R. McCoy, commanding the Fourth Corps Area, announces that applications to the total of 1,400 for attending next summer C. M. T. Camps will be accepted, beginning Saturday, March 1st. He states that the camp for this area, begin June 13th, will be held at Fort Bragg, N. C., near Fayetteville, designated as South Field Artillery.

Less than half of the young men applying for these camps in the Southeast last year could be accommodated. Funds and facilities were available for only 4,400, 8,989 applied. Louisiana, the first State in the Union to exceed its quota, went over the top one day after enrollment began. Florida appointments were exhausted in five days. All eight South-eastern states comprising the Fourth Corps Area filled their quotas a month or more before camps opened, the Fourth Corps Area leading all others in the country. For the thou-

sands disappointed last year, only early application this year will secure for them an appointment.

Any young man of acceptable character and between the ages of 17 and 24 may apply for the Basic Course. If he can pass the required physical examination and is of good moral character, as certified to by a reputable citizen who knows him, he may attend these camps.

Attendance at these camps means no obligation for future military service. Those who attend are no more likely to be called to the colors in time of war than any other man. However, if they volunteer or are selected for service they are more likely to secure rapid advancement and be able to defend their country more effectively and with greater safety to themselves. Military training is not the primary object. The training at these camps stresses citizenship, self-reliance, initiative, good fellowship and how to work and play hard and effectively. The moral and religious influences are kept at

high standards.

All necessary expense covering transportation, camp facilities, food, clothing, laundry, medical examinations and attendance and services of instructors is furnished free by the Government. It could not be duplicated by private enterprise for less than several hundred dollars for each member and it is an offer, as a purely business proposition, unequalled by any Government at any time.

The young men from the twelve western counties of North Carolina will be sent to Fort Oglethorpe, Ga., while those from the rest of the State go to Fort Bragg.

Application for the thirty-day course may be made to any regular army officer, State civilian aide, or county representative, who will furnish blanks or information, or write directly to the C. M. T. C. office, Headquarters Fourth Corps Area, Oakland City Station, Atlanta Ga. North Carolina's district chief is Col. James M. Little, 128 R. J. Reynolds Building, Winston-Salem, N. C. The civilian aide for North Carolina is Albert L. Cox, Raleigh, N. C.

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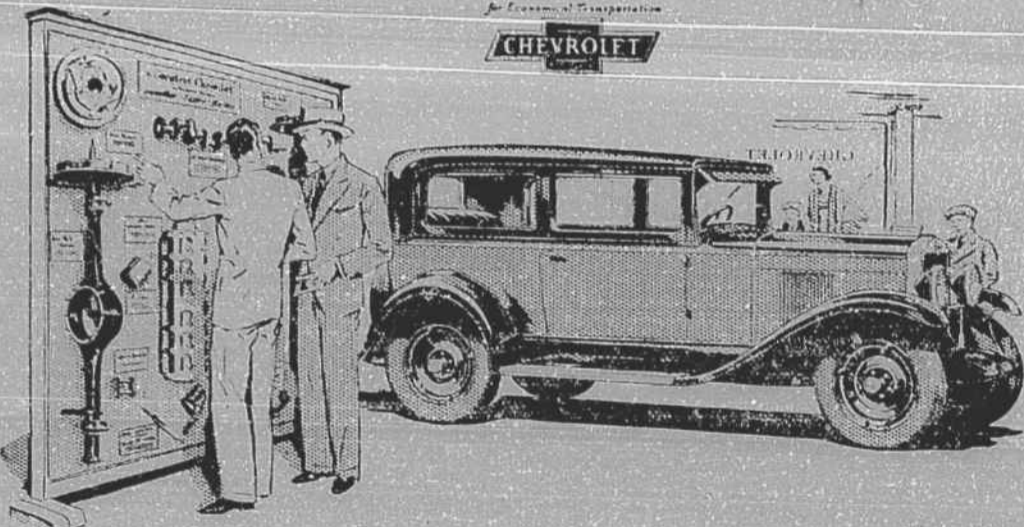
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