

TELLING SANTA CLAUS HIS WANTS



A CHRISTMAS DREAM

By J. A. WALDRON.

I DREAMED a dream on Christmas eve that no one, surely, will believe. All will discredit it because in it I was with Santa Claus and witnessed many things so queer I hesitate to tell them here.

Old Santa had just filled his sack and made it ready for his back. It holds a million things or more from Santa's rare and endless store, and like some basket magical, though taken from 'tis always full.

Though I saw Santa plainly, he seemed not at all to notice me. He sat in silence with a map spread out upon his ample lap to mark his course over land and sea while waiting for his evening tea.

His cook—he has no wife, you know—came in and said she meant to go. She said her job did not quite suit and he must find a substitute. Cooks everywhere just grump and gad, and with most folks get in bad.

Well, Santa's smile quick left his face and he ripped up a dress of lace perhaps intended for this cook, who gave him then a wrathful look; and



when she put the teapot down I saw her slip from under her gown and drop into the teapot quick some sort of dope with movement slick.

"I would take much more than this, I think, to drive old Santa Claus to drink; that is to say, to run, perhaps, though sometimes he may like his schnapps. Full many a cup of tea he quaffed. The more he drank the

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The Million Dollar Mystery

By HAROLD MAC GRATH

Illustrated from Scenes in the Photo Drama of the Same Name by the Thanhouser Film Company

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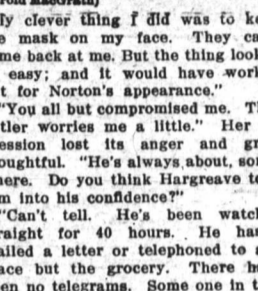
CHAPTER III.

The Safe in the Lonely Warehouse.
The princess did not remain long after the departure of the police with the bogus detectives. It had been a very difficult course to wriggle out of, all because Braine had added to his plans after she had left the apartment. But for the advent of the meddling reporter the coup would have succeeded, herself apparently perfectly innocent of complicity. That must be the keynote of all her plans: to appear quite innocent and leave no trail behind her. She had gained the confidence of Florence and her companion. And she was rather certain that she had impressed this lazy-eyed reporter and the stolid butler. She had told nothing but the truth regarding her relationship. They would find that out. She was Katrina Pushkin's cousin. But blood with her counted as naught. She had room in her heart but for two things, Braine and money to spend on her caprices.

How long has your highness known Mr. Braine? asked the reporter idly, as he smoothed away all signs of his recent conflict.
"O, the better part of a year. Mr. Hargreave did not recognize me the other night. That was quite excusable, for when he last saw me it was not more than twelve. My child," she said to Florence, "build no hopes regarding your mother. She is doubtless dead. Upon some trivial matter I do not know what it was—she was confined to the fortress. That was seventeen years ago. When you enter the fortress at St. Petersburg, you see to be."

"That is true enough."
"I did not recall myself to your father. I did not care at that moment to shock him with the remembrance of the past. Is not Mr. Braine a remarkable man?" All this in her charming broken English.
"He is, indeed," affirmed Norton. "He's a superb linguist, knows every body and has traveled everywhere. No matter what subject you bring up he seems well informed."
"Come often," urged Florence.
"I shall, my child. And any time you need me, call for me. After all, I am nearly your aunt. You will find life in the city far different from that which you have been accustomed to." She slipped down to her limousine. In tripping up Norton he had stepped upon her foot heavily.
"She is lovely!" cried Florence.
"Well, I must be on my way, also," said Norton. "I am a worldly-wise man, Miss Florence. So is Jones here. Never go any place without letting him know; not even to the corner drug store. I am going to find your father. Some one was rescued. I'm going to find out whether it was the aviator or Mr. Hargreave. And his eyes drew for a moment. At the door he spoke to the reporter.
"What do you think of that woman?"

"I believe that she told the truth. She is charming."
"She is. But for all her charm and truth I cannot help distrusting her. I have an idea. I shall call up your office at the end of each day. If a day comes without a call, you will know that something is wrong."
"A very good idea," Norton shook hands with everyone and departed.
"What a brave, pleasant young man!" murmured Susan.
"I like him, too; and I'd like him for a friend," said the guileless girl.
"It is very good to have a friend like Mr. Norton," added Jones; and passed into the kitchen. All the help had been discharged and upon his shoulders lay the burden of the cooking till such time when he could reinstate the cook.
"There was a stormy scene between Braine and the princess that night."
"Are you in your dotage?" she asked vehemently.
"There, there; bring your voice down a bit. Where's the girl?"
"In her home. Where did you suppose she would be, after that botchwork of letting me go to do one thing while you had in mind another? And an ordinary pair of cutthroats, at that!"
"The thought came to me after you left. I knew you'd recognize the man and understand. I see no reason why it didn't work."
"It would have been all right if you had consulted a clairvoyant to mean by that?" Braine demanded roughly.
"I mean that then you would have learned your friend the reporter was to arrive upon the scene at its most vital moment."
"What, Norton?"
"Yes. The trouble is with you, you have been so successful all these years that you have grown overconfident. I tell you that there is a desperately shrewd man somewhere back of all this. Mark me, I do not believe Hargreave is dead. He is in hiding. He may be near by. He may have dropped from the balloon before it left land. The man they picked up may be Orta, the aeronaut. The five thousand might have been his fee for rescuing Hargreave. Here is the greatest thing we've ever been up against; and you start in with every day methods!"
"Little woman, don't let your tongue run away with you too far."
"I'm not the least bit afraid of you, Leo. You need me, and it has never been more apparent than at this moment."
"All right, I fell by the wayside this trip. Truthfully, I realized five minutes after the men were gone. The chess player and a wonderful amateur billiardist. Perhaps Jones, the tactician and inscrutable, had not told him all he knew regarding his master's past. Well, well; he had in his time untangled worse snarls. The office had turned him loose, a free lance, to handle the case as he saw fit, to turn in the story when it was complete.



"I Am Not Afraid of You, Leo."

But what a story it was going to be when he cleared it up! The more mystifying it was, the greater the zest and sport for him. Norton was like a

gambler who played for big stakes, and only big stakes stirred his cravings. The captain of the tramp steamer Orient told him the same tale he had told the other reporters; he had picked up a man at sea. The man had been brought aboard totally exhausted.

"Was there another body anywhere?"
"No."
"What became of him?"
"I sent a wireless and that seemed to bother him. It looked so that he did not want anybody to learn that he had been rescued. The moment the boat touched the pier he lost himself in the crowd. Fifty reporters came aboard, but he was gone. And I could tell them just what I'm telling you."
"He had money?"
"About five thousand."
"Please describe him."
"The captain did so. It was the same description he had given to all the reporters. Norton looked over the rail at the big warehouse.

"Was it an ordinary balloon?"
"There you've got me. My Marconi man says the balloon part was like any other balloon; but the passenger car was a new business to him. It could be driven against the wind. Did you tell this to the other chap?"
"Don't think I did. Just remember that. Probably some new invention; and now it's at the bottom of the sea. Two men, as I understand it, went off in this contraption. One is gone for good."
"For good," echoed the reporter gravely. Gone for good, indeed, poor devil! Norton took out a roll of bills. "There's two hundred in this roll."
"Well!" said the captain, vastly astonished.
"It's yours if you will do me a small favor."
"If it doesn't get me mixed up with the police. I'm only captain of a tramp; and some of the harbor police have taken a dislike to me. What do you want me to do?"
"The police will not bother you. This man Hargreave had some enemies; they want either his life or his money; maybe both. It is a peculiar case, with Russia in the background. He might have laid the whole business before the police, but he chose to fight it out himself. Add to tell the truth, I don't believe the police would have done any good."

"Heave her over; what do you want me to do for that handsome roll of money?"
"If any man or woman who is not a reporter comes to pump you tell them the man went ashore with a packet under his arm."
"I'll do it."
"Say that the man was gray haired, clean shaven, straight, with a scar high up on his forehead, generally covered up by his hair."
"Norton? What's brought you here?"
"Say that you saw him enter your warehouse, and later depart without his packet."
"That's all," Norton gave the captain the money. "Good-by and many thanks."
"Don't mention it."
Norton left the slip and proceeded to the office of the warehouse. He approached the manager's desk.
"Hello, Grants, old top!"
The man looked up from his work surly. "Then his face brightened. "Norton? What's brought you here?"
"O, yes; that balloon business. Sit down."
"What kind of a man is the captain of that old hooker in the slip?"
"Shifty in gun running, but otherwise as square as a die. Looks funny to see an old tub like that fixed up with wireless; but that has saved his neck a dozen times when he was running it into a noose. Not going to interview me, are you?"
"No, I'm going to ask you to do me a little favor."
"They always say that. But spin her out. If it doesn't cost me my job, it's yours."
"Well, there will be a person making inquiries about the mysterious

The Gift That Tipped the Scales

By LILLIAN DUCEY

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As long as Calista's money held out she went gayly about her Christmas shopping. When she found that her tiny purse was empty, she stopped buying—wherein she showed greater wisdom than many grown-ups—and with a soul replete with satisfaction she left the store.

"I've got pretty much most everything, I guess," she said to herself, hugging her bundles close as she tripped along the country streets. "But I'll know for sure when I get home."
And when she reached home the very first thing she did was to array the gorgeous gifts upon the white spread of her little bed. Christmas was two days away. Therefore it was imperative that she begin that very moment to put them in order. Then like an emboldened cyclone she burst into her elder sister's room, intent upon tissue paper and seals and all the other necessities for making beautiful Christmas bundles.

What Calista saw there made her freeze in her tracks, as if the high wind of Destiny, which had borne her thus far, had suddenly become a dead calm. Margaret, her beautiful, lovely sister, was standing with tightened lips that twitched and quivered. In her hand, which hastily dropped to her side, but not before Calista had seen, she clutched a photograph. And the whispered words on her lips repeated themselves over and over in Calista's mind, while unaccountably her hand trembled. "It grows worse, the ache—worse as the days go by." Not until Calista had interpreted the meaning of those words did she find her voice; then she said blandly:

"I came for— I'm wrapping up my Christmas bundles." Seeing what she wanted lying on Margaret's desk, she went for them.
Meanwhile, a brave control touched the quivering lips of the elder girl. She was indeed fortunate, she thought, that it was only Calista who had discovered her momentary aberration. For that was what it was. How could it be anything else? What girl with any pride would allow herself to be seen in such a position? The man did not live, who could make her weep for him.
"You'll return what you don't need, Calista, dear," she said, sweetly.
"Yes," answered Calista briefly, and went.

And then, just to prove to herself that she had regained her sanity, Margaret Wesley looked again at that picture in her hand—looked, and felt a quick contraction of the throat, a sudden piercing sting upon her eyeballs. And down upon the picture dropped a tear.
Calista, on the other side of the door, was saying to herself:
"Hello! I'm crying. Her eyes were teary. It was Jasper's picture she was trying to hide." And then, childlike, in spite of her surprise the gathering forces of her sympathy were completely overwhelmed to the demands of Christmas. And why not? After all, Calista's mind was too young to be so deeply concerned about lover's quarrels and broken engagements and such things. And she had made such marvelous purchases.

Indeed as they lay spread out on the bed it did seem as if only a genius or a little girl could have reached such decisions. "There was a really lovely box of handkerchiefs, embellished with the pinkest of pink paper, for mother. That gift had put a tremendous hole in her pocketbook. And a pair of suspenders for daddy. These two presents were the first purchased, and while Calista still held the leash in her fancy. Afterward, led the sad truth be revealed at once (but then Calista was such a little girl, how could she be expected to prove bigger minded and stronger than grownups?), she succumbed to this intoxication of glittering, gleaming, glowing displayed wares.

"For brother Jim—that nice green tie," Calista hummed softly to herself—a tune improvised for the occasion. "For sister Nell—that story book. I hope she reads it all to me. And baby boy can have that rattle. Uncle Fred that nice glass pitcher." She paused and added sotto voce: "I got it in the beautiful Ten Cent store. And he's going to be married, so he can use it." Then the song went on: "And Auntie Midge that box of soap." That was from the Ten Cent store also, but then each cake was done up in shiny red paper, and there were three cakes in a box. "And sister Kate a string of beads. 'Once more the song reverted to everyday speech: 'Maybe she'll lend them to me one in a while 'cause I gave them to her.'"
"And sister Margaret— Calista paused again. The one thing that had not been apportioned was a tin set of dishes—also from that beautiful Ten Cent store. She looked over the gifts. Some were already wrapped, for all the while she sang her nimble fingers had been busy. But her genius solved the problem.

"Well," she said reflectively, "she can use them for an ornament on her desk maybe, and I'll promise to dust them for her. I like little dishes."
"But having cleared that hurdle as to the dishes, she almost immediately, on a flooding onset of memory Calista remembered that she had fully intended when she started out to

A Nautical Christmas Tale



A ship came in from the Land of Nod, Its deck was white as snow. It bore no tow'ring masts above, No anchor chains below. Its small, spring-bottomed mattress-hull Was laden high with wealth, Which strangely had been placed aboard En voyage—hisi!—by stealth.

The skipper of this freighted craft Was quite a careless sort. The cargo he did not spy, Till he hove into port. And then upon the portside bow, In raptures he did kneel. For Santa Claus is no mere dream, And Christmas toys are REAL! —GENE MORRAN.

got something for Jasper—the proudest that was to have been, but now wasn't to be, as she explained it to her mind. For in Calista's loyal little heart burned a steady flame of liking for the man who could treat little girls with the consideration he had bestowed upon her.

This was a dilemma. And for the moment Calista actually thought of robbing her real brother Jim of the glorious green tie. Jim, just two years older, was a "pig" to her sometimes. But then she remembered that Jasper never wore any but black ones on account of his red hair, as he had explained to her at one time. It was indeed a perplexing problem to say the least. For had it been any one but Jasper she might confide in some one—her mother, or even Margaret—and negotiate a loan.

"I guess he'll have to go without," she concluded almost sadly. And curiously a dusk of dreams crept into her blue eyes. "Unless—unless I give him something of my own." But a mental review of her most cherished possessions failed to reveal anything suitable for a big grown-up man. Then even as she gave up the problem her despairing musing awoke to life with a delighted, "Oh!" As she pondered she had been gazing directly at the framed picture of Margaret which stood on her little dresser.

Calista was nothing if not masterful in the manner in which she reached ultimate decisions—and then lived up to them. Less than a minute after she had allotted Jasper that forgotten-but-framed face, she was also promising him a note. For Calista really had a fellow feeling of understanding for the man—especially about that picture.

"Dear brother Jasper, that was to have been," her letter ran. "I am sending you for a Christmas present the picture of Margaret which you returned when you sent back the other presents she gave you. I know you will like to have it again. I know how you feel. Just most like the day I threw the peanuts at Kitty Marshall's head when she put them in my lap and I was mad at her. Only being a big man and not a little girl you can't do 'exactly what I did. Of course I was mad—but I did want the peanuts. So after she was gone and nobody was looking I picked them up again. Nobody'll know you got the picture, 'cause I won't tell. Anyway Margaret's got one of yours she didn't send back. I guess 'cause she ain't such a maddy cat as we. It's our red hair."
"Your faithful and loving, "CALISTA."

"P. S. A merry Christmas! If you want to send me a present send it to Margaret instead. Without being unfaithful to her, I will close by just saying her ache grows worse with the days."
The gift and the letter were done up and duly delivered the next morning. Amid the stress of holding preparations Calista did not experience the necessity of being secretive. She walked up to the Hemingway's door, a little girl bursting with the season's joy, and said to Jasper's mother:
"It's—it's my Christmas present to Jasper! No reason—is there?—why I shouldn't give my dear Jasper one?"
"With a shy little laugh she scampered off."
And then the wheels of Fate spun round and round, having been given a very vigorous start by Calista.
Christmas morning dawned clear and white-bloom. The drifting cloud banks had left the heavens during the night and settled with feathery lightness on the earth, had made Calista's world a beautiful amphitheater, snow-buffed to an echo, wherein sleigh bells tinkled merrily and joyous voices rang gleefully. It was an ideal Christmas Day. And perfect it proved to Calista.

Calista was steeped in bliss. But not any more so than if she had received but two or three of the many, many gifts heaped upon her by adoring relatives. And it was not until afternoon that her mass of joy began to take on coherency, and she began to link in her mind the gifts to their donors. Then it was that she remembered her sister's former betrothed. "Did you receive anything from Jasper, Margaret?" she blurted out. Fortunately they were alone, the rest of the family having gone to Aunt Midge's house for a little visit. But since Calista had a cold, Margaret



That's Funny.

had touched her. But the next moment, as if remembering that this seeing must be endured, she answered sweetly:
"No, dear."
"That's funny," Calista had noted the start and now was taking up the thread. "I didn't either. And I thought he'd give one of us a Christmas present."
Margaret added nothing to prolong this conversation, and apparently Calista was too intent upon going her own way in thought to continue it, for silence fell between them.

And it was into this silence that the telephone tore vehemently.
"Let me! Let me!" shouted Calista. And before Margaret could utter a word of protest she had the receiver. Then assuming an important air of grown-upness she attended to the affair in hand.
"Hello! Yes, this is 4237 J. Yes, this is Calista. Oh! Did you like it? Did you? I—yes. I thought you would!"

For a moment she slipped her very proper telephone manner and became the eager little girl. The next she was back again doubly dignified of tone.
"I suppose you didn't give any Christmas presents this year. Margaret says you didn't give her any—I asked her—and you didn't send me anything."
"Calista!" It was Margaret's voice, quivering, questioning, "Who?"
"Calista was intent on the phone. "Yes," she was saying, "you saw them going to Auntie Midge's. Yes, all but Margaret and me. Yes, of course she'll talk to you—when I get through. Now! You can't wait to hear her voice! I must say Jasper Hemingway that you're very rude and impolite. I wanted to tell you about all the Christmas presents I got. Yes, I will be mad. I am. But I'll tell her."

Meanwhile a white face waited at Calista's side. From great tear-washed eyes stared incredulously.
"Here—" Calista was oblivious to the insistent tide of human emotion surging about her, as she held the receiver toward Margaret. "He says to tell you he was in the wrong and he's ready to go down on his knees to ask you to forgive him. And he says to emphasize the 'down on your knees.'"
Margaret put out a hand. It was a wild yearning gesture with which she bent to hear that voice. And Calista, going into the next room, noted the sudden light that flew to her face. Incredibly transformed she was from the dream-haunted girl of a few moments ago. And without really understanding how she, a little girl, had made a hot-tempered man ashamed of himself, Calista yet knew that she had tipped the scales of chance.

"I did it," she whispered to herself. "My Christmas present made him glad again."
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