

WANT ADS

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LEGALS

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ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE

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EXECUTOR'S NOTICE

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE... HARVELL, Executor for W. Mallard, deceased

CERTIFICATE OF DISSOLUTION

CERTIFICATE OF DISSOLUTION... Therefore, I Stacey W. Wade, Secretary of State

TESTINE SALE OF REAL ESTATE

TESTINE SALE OF REAL ESTATE... Therefore, I Stacey W. Wade, Secretary of State

NOTICE OF SUMMONS

NOTICE OF SUMMONS... Therefore, I Stacey W. Wade, Secretary of State

NOTICE OF SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

NOTICE OF SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION... Therefore, I Stacey W. Wade, Secretary of State

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS... Therefore, I Stacey W. Wade, Secretary of State

STORM MUSIC By DORNFORD YATES

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I began to tremble; my knees felt suddenly loose; my cousin's words came leering into my mind. 'I never liked blindman's bluff'...

It was the remembrance of Helena that put to shame my fear. I had heard her whip Pharaoh—here, in this very room; whip him before his fellows; cut him across the face, and the whip she had used was my courage.

At once I set out to find him, with my left hand stretched before me and my pistol all ready. I truly believe that my action saved my life, for Pharaoh passed me in the darkness and came upon me in the darkness and came upon me in the darkness...

So far the first time that night I saw my enemy's face. I think he must have known that I was his assailant, but the sight of me seemed to send him out of his mind. He fought no more like a serpent, but like the madman he looked, his face convulsed with passion and his eyes staring out of his head.

In a flash I had fired and had drawn his fire, for, before I could think, a bullet had flicked the sleeve of my pistol-arm. This showed me, once for all, that so far as snap shots were concerned, I stood no chance whatever against such a man. As I whipped to one side, I made up my mind I must not fire again until I knew for certain that my bullet was going to kill. In a word, if I was to win, I must come to close quarters with Pharaoh, if not to grips.

I dashed his hand on the massive plinth of the table, to break his wrist, and when his pistol had fallen I brought his hands together and got to my knees. And then I was clear of the table and had jerked him up to his feet. I let his broken wrist go, whipped out his second pistol and pitched it across the room.

Then I seized his throat with both hands, turned him back to the table, bent him across its corner and broke his back on the oak. Sitting on the bench by the fireplace, I wiped my face and my hands on Helena's black silk scarf. This had been wrung and creased, and I had no doubt that Pharaoh had used it to gag her, before he had carried her off.

Now that the business was over, I found it hard to believe. I looked at my watch. The time was twenty minutes past twelve. Not an hour had gone by since Pharaoh had 'talked' from the ramparts and Dewdrop had read his message to Rush and Bugle and me. And now they were all four dead, but I was alive.

The reflection brought me up to my feet. Alive, if you please; but I was shut in a chamber from which I could see no way out. For twenty minutes I sought that secret door. I shouted and beat upon the woodwork, using Helena's name—all in vain.

Helena was locked in the turret—my hand in my pocket fingered her master key; which I had taken from Rush, but the turret, no doubt, had embarrases, and she would be found and released so soon as she could make herself heard. She had, of course, heard the firing, but if the thieves were fighting what did that matter to her? Let Pharaoh revenge her escape upon Bugle and me. And now they were all four dead, but I was alive.

Now when Helena's release was effected and Geoffrey and the warden were found, the three would take counsel together upon her report. The position would be considered—but not for long. The thing was clear. To open the room would be madness. The council would surely decide that Pharaoh and his companions must be left to die where they were.

Somewhat dazedly I surveyed my surroundings. No windows, no doors. How did one get out of chambers that had neither windows nor doors? It was then that I thought of the fireplace. A grate must have a chimney; and if the chimney was wide...

I must have climbed forty feet when my hand encountered a ridge and I felt a current of air. And then I came to a fireplace. As I crawled out of that fireplace, I knew where I was. I had come to Helena's bedroom. Roughly I washed the filth from my head and my hands, but though I did what I could to wipe the soil

from my slopes, I very soon saw that until I could change my clothing, I should not be fit to move in a furnished room. And what clothes I had were at Plimuge. At once to get to the farm became my burning desire.

Before I did so, I must set Helena free. That was simple enough. I had her master key, and there was her private stair to bring me down to the hall. And yet I dreaded the duty. I did not want to see her—at least, not now. I dreaded the explanations which I should be required to give. I did not want her to know that I had been there, in that room; that I had seen Pharaoh break her, that I had heard her purchase my safety for ten thousand pounds a year.

I heard the whine of a dog and then the scratch of claws on the door that led to the ramparts. In a moment I had it open, and there to my joy was Sabre. I afterwards learned that, perceiving the bustle above him, the dog had declared, by barking, that he was down in the moat. His rescue was effected.

The great dog seemed pleased to see me, but none too pleased to see that I was alone. 'Come and find her, Sabre,' I said. 'I know where she is.'

The Alsatian started and stared. Then he bounded toward me, put his great paws on my shoulders and licked my face. One minute later we stood in the little hall.

With the master key in my hand, I turned to the turret door. For a moment I hesitated. Then I took a deep breath, fitted the key to the lock and pushed open the oak.

Helena was not to be seen. Neither, for that matter, was Sabre. He had gone to join his mistress at the head of the turret stair. I was wondering whether to follow or whether to wait where I was, when I suddenly saw that my duty to the lady was done.

The appearance of Sabre would show her that she was released. The way to her bedroom was open, and she had no need of escort, because the terror was laid.

Although I had come to regard with increasing apprehension the opening of Helena's eyes—to the truth, of course, that it was I and not Bugle that had stood in the secret chamber and listened to all she said—it had never occurred to me that, if only I held my tongue, neither she nor anyone else need ever suspect that I had entered the castle that Friday night. Yet before my cousin had spoken a dozen words, I saw that, if I was careful, my secret would keep itself.

He found me finishing breakfast in his room at The Reaping Hook. 'Well, you have missed something,' he said. 'Let that be your punishment for deceiving three simple souls. Not that I blame you—this time. My lady had no right to treat you like that. I told her as much in the coupe. But she wouldn't listen to me. But that's by the way. You've missed—in a way you've missed the most astounding show that ever was seen. Lady Helena saw a good bit—more than enough, I'm afraid.' He threw himself into a chair. 'Upon my soul, I don't know where to begin.'

'What do you know?' I said. 'I feel sure,' said my cousin, 'that you will be glad to hear that your failure to arrive at the castle knocked the three of us flat. We couldn't assimilate the fact that simple, honest John Spencer had laid himself out to deceive us—and done it so devilish well. You certainly got your own back. Lady Helena was wild. 'T'd never have believed it of him,' she raged.

'Well, now that she was safe in the castle, I was only too glad of an excuse to get out, and so I announced that Barley and I would seek you without delay. She insisted that we should take Sabre and gave the dog his orders before we left. It's right you should know that she was extremely worried.'

My cousin paused, to frown on his finger-tips. 'I hope, in the merciful course of time, to forget the way we employed the next two hours. We used Sabre exactly according to the instructions on the box. Should the dog display emotion, release him at once. Remain exactly where you were when he left you, until he returns. Then take hold of his collar and he will lead you to John.'

I began to shake with laughter. 'Quite so,' said Geoffrey. 'Quite so. After about an hour the dog displayed emotion and was released. After another hour Barley and I displayed much more emotion and withdrew to survey the mouth of the entrance drive. 'We hadn't been there ten min

utes when we heard the Carlotta coming—coming from the castle all out. By the use of our torches we stopped her, to find that she was manned by a flying squad. Watchmen, porters, grooms—all of them armed to the teeth. They were going to compass Yorick, travelling east; and the coupe was coming after, to travel west. The Countess Helena had been kidnapped. Yorick was plunged into darkness and my lady was gone. Let down in a sheer from the ramparts. Her handkerchief had been found on the draw-bridge and Sabre had been found in the moat.'

I felt that it was time to say something. 'But how,' I began. 'Don't interrupt,' said my cousin. 'Listen to me. Well, I let the Carlotta go, deciding that Barley and I would do better on foot. I sent him east and ran west—yes, ran, with my heart in my mouth. The idea was to find the Rolls... if the Rolls had not gone. 'I found her at a quarter to one, up a little track—and very near cried with relief. You see, that meant that my lady was yet in the park.'

'I rushed off and stopped the coupe, which was lapping for the twentieth time, told the chauffeur to go on patrolling, but to send me reinforcements and tell everybody he met. Then I went back to lay my ambush. I soon had plenty of men and I did the job well. Pharaoh simply hadn't an earthly. Though he didn't know it, that track had become the scaffold on which he and his little friends were going to die. 'At a quarter of two a wallah comes pelting with a message—we very nearly killed him, of course. But by the time he'd said his piece he was nearer death than before. The Countess Helena's compliments, and will Mr. Bohun come back to the castle at once.'

My cousin covered his face. 'I don't think I've ever felt such a blasted fool. But blasted... 'Well, I took the Rolls and drove back—to hear Lady Helena's tale. 'She was lying down on her bed when a gag was clapped over her mouth. Pharaoh, of course; but

'The obvious thing to do was to search the castle forthwith. I ought to have said that long before I got back the switchboard had been repaired and the lights had come on, and while my lady was talking, the staff which had been scattered was trickling back. Florin and I induced some sort of order before beginning the search. 'We began with my lady's bedroom. One look at the hearth was enough. There was soot all over the place. But nothing and nobody else. We left the watchmen there and my lady and Florin and I went down to the secret room. It was empty now, we knew, for Pharaoh and company were gone; but the door to the cellar was open and my lady wanted it shut.'

He took a deep breath. 'I'll tell you what we found. We found Pharaoh, Dewdrop and Rush—all three of them dead. 'Go on,' said I, incredulously. 'Fact,' said my cousin, shortly. 'I'm glad you weren't there to see it. It was a dreadful sight. Bugle had done the three in and then cleared out. I fancy there'd been some scrap. Pharaoh's back was broken; he had no wound. 'And here's my interpretation of this astounding find. 'In Pharaoh's absence Bugle and Rush between them let Lady Helena go. Warrantably fearful of the consequences of what they had done, Rush and Bugle quarrelled, and Bugle killed Rush. Afraid to face Pharaoh—such a dereliction of duty meant almost certain death—Bugle decided to kill him and Dewdrop, too. And so he did. Then he escaped by the chimney, with Lady Helena's master key. This let him out of the castle by the way by which he came in. Why he waited to let her out, I cannot conceive. Possibly some twinge of conscience—you never know. That's one of the points which we shall never clear up.'

'Then everything's over,' said I. 'The terror is laid.' 'The terror is laid,' said Geoffrey. 'Bugle remains, of course. But I very much doubt if we shall see Bugle again.' 'Thoughtfully I regarded my napkin. Was it five or six days before a corpse rose to the surface of the water in which it lay? 'Then everything's over,' I repeated. 'Except the interment,' said Geoffrey: 'which is fixed for to-morrow evening, as soon as it's decently dark. As you seem to have had a night off, I think you might help with that.'

Six days had gone by, and my precious secret was safe. This was hardly surprising. Only two beings knew that I had approached the castle that terrible night; and of these one was a dog and the other was dead. I had not used Barley's pistol; I had cleaned my cousin's knife; my filthy garments lay hid in the Plimuge woods. Nobody knew that in my notecase was Helena's master key. But another secret was safe. On the Sunday night Pharaoh, Dewdrop and Rush had been laid in a common grave, not far from the mouth of the tunnel that ran from the moat.

Though nobody knew it but I, Bugle had yet to appear. For some unaccountable reason the moat still withheld its dead. My cousin was painting Plimuge. Twice a day he visited Yorick; but I was not invited and would not go unasked. Neither would I go to Plimuge—although I longed to see her—because I was sure that Helena sat with my cousin and watched him at work. I had made up my mind to leave Annabel and to go and stay at Innsbruck which was a city I knew. My cousin was to follow with Barley in four days' time. And so I was sitting at Annabel, cursing life and regarding my half-packed trunks with a listless stare, when the host of the inn came bustling with a note in his hand.

Dear John: Your cousin tells me that you are leaving tonight. Before you go, will you be so good as to show me where young Florin lies? I would not ask you this favor, but I was fond of young Florin, and you are the only being who knows the site of his grave. I cannot believe you will refuse me, and so, if it will suit you, I will call for you today at a quarter to three. Please will you tell the bearer 'yes' or 'no.' HELENA

I went down to the door of The Reaping Hook to speak to the groom. 'Tell her ladyship 'yes,' I said. As the coupe stole into the forecourt, I descended the steps of the inn. Helena smiled and nodded and I took off my hat. 'Will you drive, please?' With a pounding heart, I took my seat by her side, perceived the glow of her presence, discovered her faint perfume...

The spot to which we were going lay 12 miles off, and, after leaving the car, we must walk half a mile through the forest to come to the dell. Be sure, I drove slowly enough. But though half an hour went by before we left the coupe, in all that time we never exchanged one word. (Continued Next Week)



A Gag Was Clapped Over Her Mouth.



My Pistol on the Carpet Before Me.

had thrown his weight to the left, in that instant my fingers had caught the wrist of his pistol-hand. For a moment he fought for his