

The Girl in the Mirror

By ELIZABETH JORDAN

CHAPTER XI—Continued

"She didn't look lak no lady what was goin' on no excu'sion," he muttered, darkly.

Laurie rushed back to his rooms with pounding heart and on the way opened and read at a glance his first note from Doris. It was written in pencil, seemingly on a scrap of paper torn from the pad he had seen on her desk.

"Long Island, I think. An old house, on the Sound, somewhere near Sea Cliff. Remember your promise. No police."

That was all there was to it. There was no address, no signature, no date, the writing, though hurried, was clear, beautiful, and full of character. In his rooms, he telephoned, the garage for his car, and read and reread the little note. Then, still holding it in his hand, he thought it over.

Two things were horribly clear. Shaw's plan had matured. He had taken Doris away. And this was the staggering phase of the episode—she seemed to have gone willingly. At least she had made no protest, though a mere word, even a look of appeal from her, would have enlisted Sam's help, and no doubt stopped the whole proceeding. Why hadn't she uttered that word? The answer to this, too, seemed fairly clear. Doris had become a fatalist. She had ceased to hide or fight. She was letting things go "his way," as she had declared she would do.

Down that dark avenue she had called "his way" Laurie dared not even glance. His mind was too busy making its agile twists in and out of the tangle. Granting, then, that she had gone doggedly to meet the ultimate issue of the experience, whatever that might be, she had nevertheless appealed to him, Laurie, for help. Why? And why did she know approximately where she was to be taken?

Why? Why? Why? Again and again the question had recurred to him, and this time it dug itself in. Despite his love for her (and he fully realized that this was what it was), despite his own experience of the night before, he had hardly been able to accept the fact that she was, must be, in actual physical danger. When, now, the breath of this realization blew over him, it checked his heart-beats and chilled his very soul. In the next instant something in him, alert, watchful, and suspicious, addressed him like an inner-voice.

"Shaw will threaten," this voice said. "He will fight, and he will even choke you. But when it comes to a showdown, to the need of definite, final action of any kind, he simply won't be there. He is venomous, he'd like to bite, but he has no fangs, and he knows it."

The vision of Shaw's face, when he had choked him during the struggle of last night, again recurred to Laurie. He knew now the meaning of the look in those projecting eyes. It was fear. Though he had carried off the rest of the interview with entire assurance, during that fight the creature had been terror-stricken.

"He'll have reason for fear the next time I get hold of him," Laurie reflected, grimly. But that fear was of him, not of Doris. What might not Doris be undergoing, even now?

He went to the little safe in the wall of his bedroom, and took from it all the ready money he found there. Oh, if only Rodney were at home! But Mr. Bangs had gone out, the hall man said. He also informed Mr. Devon that his car was at the door.

The need of consulting Rodney increased in urgency as the difficulties multiplied. Laurie telephoned to Bangs' favorite restaurant, to Epstein's office, to Sonya's hotel. At the restaurant he was suavely assured that Mr. Bangs was not in the place. At the office the voice of an injured office boy informed him that there wasn't never nobody there till half-past nine. Over the hotel wire Sonya's colorful tones held enough surprise to remind Laurie that he could hardly hope that even Rodney's budding romance would drive him to the side of the lady so early in the morning.

He hung up the receiver with a groan of disgust, and busied himself packing a small bag and selecting a greatcoat for his journey. Also, he went to a drawer and took out the little pistol he had taken away from Doris in the tragic moment of their first meeting.

Holding it in his hand, he hesitated. Heretofore, throughout his short but varied life, young Devon had depended upon his well-trained fists to protect him from the violence of others. But when those others were the kind who went in for chloroform—and this time there was Doris to think of. He dropped the revolver into his pocket, and shot into the elevator and out on the ground floor with the expedition to which the operator was now becoming accustomed.

His car was a two-seated "racer," of slender and beautiful lines. As he took his place at the wheel, the machine pulsated like a living thing, panting with a passionate desire to be off. Laurie's wild young heart felt the same longing, but his year in New York had taught him respect for its traffic laws and this was no time to take chances. Carefully, almost sedately, he made his way to Third Avenue, then up to the Queensboro bridge, and across that mighty runway to Long Island. Here his stock of patience, slender at the best, was exhausted. With a deep breath he

pealed to a casual tourist who was passing through, and who had dropped into the station and there had suddenly realized the extreme beauty of Sea Cliff. The girl laughed. She was a nice girl, he decided, and he smiled back at her; for now she was becoming helpful.

Yes, there was the Varick place, a mile out and right on the water's edge. And there was the old Kleh place, also on the Sound. These were close together and both for rent, she had heard. Also, there was a house in the opposite direction, and on the water's edge. She did not know the name of that house, but she had observed a "To Let" sign on it last Sunday, when she was out driving. Those were all the houses she knew of. She gave him explicit instructions for reaching all three, and the interview ended in an atmosphere of mutual regard and regret. Indeed, the lady even left her ticket office to follow the gentleman to the door and watch the departure of his chariot.

Laurie raced in turn to the Varick place and the Kleh place. Shaw, he suspected, had probably rented some such place, just as he had rented the East side office. But a very cursory inspection of the two old houses convinced him that they were tenanted. No smoke came from their chimneys, no sign of life surrounded them; also, he was sure, they were not sufficiently remote from other houses to suit the mysterious Shaw.

The third house on his list was more promising in appearance, for it stood austere remote from its neighbors. But on its soggy lawn two soiled children and a dog played in carefree abandon, and from the side of the house came the piercing whistle of an underling cheerily engaged in sawing wood and shouting cautions to the children. Quite plainly, the closed-up, shuttered place was in charge of a caretaker, whose offspring were in temporary possession of its grounds. Laurie inspected other houses, dozens of them. He made his way into strange, new roads. Nowhere was there the slightest clue leading to the house he sought.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon when, with an exclamation of actual anguish, he swung his car around for the return journey to the station. For the first time the hopelessness of his mission came home to him. There must be a few hundred houses on the Sound near Sea Cliff. How was he to find the right one?

Perhaps that girl had thought of some other places, or could direct him to the best local real estate agents. Perhaps he should have gone to them in the first place. He felt dazed, incapable of clear thought.

As the car swerved his eye was caught by something bright lying farther up the road, in the direction from which he had just turned. For an instant he disregarded it. Then, on second thought, he stopped the machine, jumped out, and ran back. There, at the right, by the wayside, lay a tiny jagged strip of silk that seemed to blush, as he stared down at it.

Slowly he bent, picked it up, and, spreading it across his palm, regarded it with eyes that unexpectedly were wet. It was a two-inch bit of the Roman scarf, hacked off, evidently, by the same hurried scissors that had severed the end in his pocket. He realized now what that cutting had meant. With her hare-and-hounds' experience in mind, Doris had cut off other strips, perhaps half a dozen or more, and had undoubtedly dropped them as a trail for him to pick up. Possibly he had already unseeingly passed several. But that did not matter. He was on the right track now. The house was on this road, but farther up.

He leaped into the car again and started back. He drove very slowly, forcing the reluctant racer to crawl along, and sweeping every inch of the roadside with a careful scrutiny, but he had gone more than a mile before he found the second scent. This was another bit of the vivid silk, dropped on a country road that turned off the main road at a sharp angle. With a

diagonal. It requires strong teeth to bite a piece out of one of them and eat it, according to white men who have tried it. The food is wholesome and nutritious, but rather tasteless.

Poisonous Root Made Available for Food

Farinha, a bread made from a poisonous root, the mandiocca, is the staff of life of the wild Indians of interior Brazil and also of the Brazilians. The mandiocca root, which resembles somewhat the parsnip, is poisonous, but the natives know how to pull its "fangs." Each Indian family in the Amazon basin has a section of tree trunk made slightly concave on one side. This shallow trough is studded with pieces of flint or with large fish teeth set in the pitch-surfaced board. The women shred the mandiocca root on this primitive grater, and pack the white stuff resulting in long woven mat tubes. After soaking the tubes in the water the contents are suspended from a tree limb to drain and pressure is applied to them on the principle of the tourniquet. This operation, which washes out the poison, must be repeated several times before the farinha can be used as a coarse flour for bread. For convenience in transportation the farinha is made into cakes a half-inch thick and a foot in

heartfelt exclamation of thanksgiving, he turned into this bypath. It was narrow, shallow-rutted, and apparently little used. It might stop anywhere, it might lead nowhere. It wound through a field, a meadow, a bit of deep wood, through which he saw the gleam of water. Then, quite suddenly, it again widened into a real road, merging into an avenue of trees that led in turn to the entrance of a big dark-gray house, in a somber setting of cedars.

Laurie stopped his car and thoughtfully nodded to himself. This was the place. He felt that he would have recognized it even without that guiding flame of ribbon. It was so absolutely the kind of place Shaw's melodramatic instincts would lead him to choose.

There was the look about it that clings to houses long untenanted, a look not wholly due to its unkempt grounds and the heavy boards over its windows. It had been without life for a long, long time, but somewhere in it, he knew, life was stirring now. From a side chimney a thin line of smoke curled upward. On the second floor, shutters, newly unbolting, creaked rustily in the January wind. And, yes, there it was; outside of one of the unshuttered windows, as if dropped there by a bird, hung a vivid bit of ribbon.

Rather precipitately Laurie backed his car to a point where he could turn it, and then raced back to the main road. His primitive impulse had been to drive up to the entrance, pound the door until some one responded, and then fiercely demand the privilege of seeing Miss Mayo. But that, he knew, would never do. He must get rid of the car, come back on foot, get into the house in some manner, and from that point meet events as they occurred.

Facing this prospect, he experienced an incredible combination of emotions—relief and panic, recklessness and caution, fear and elation. He had found her. For the time being, he frantically assured his trembling inner self, she was safe. The rest was up to him, and he felt equal to it. He was intensely stimulated; for now, at last, in his ears roared the rushing tides of life.

CHAPTER XII

The House in the Cedars

Less than half a mile back, along the main road, Laurie found a country garage, in which he left his car. It was in charge of a silent but intelligent person, a somewhat unkempt and haggard middle-aged man, who agreed to keep the machine out of sight, to have it ready at any moment of the day or night, and to accept a handsome addition to his regular charge in return for his discretion. He was only mildly interested in his new patron, for he had classified him without effort. One of them college boys, this young fella was, and up to some lark.

Just what form that lark might take was not a problem which stirred Henry Burke's sluggish imagination. Less than twenty hours before his seventh had been born; and his wife was delicate and milk was seventeen cents a quart, and the garage business was not what it had been. To the victim of these obsessing reflections the appearance of a handsome youth who dropped five-dollar bills around as if they were seed potatoes was in the nature of a miracle and an overwhelming relief. His mind centered on the five-dollar bills, and his lively interest in them assured Laurie of Burke's presence in the garage at any hour when more bills might possibly be dropped.

While he was lingeringly lighting a cigarette, Laurie asked a few questions. Who owned the big house back there in the cedar grove, on the bluff overlooking the sound? Burke didn't know. All he knew, and freely told, was that it had been empty ever since he himself had come to the neighborhood, 'most two years ago.

Laurie strolled out of the garage with a well-assumed air of indifference to the perplexities of life, but his heart was racked by them. As he hesitated near the entrance, uncertain which way to turn, he saw that behind the garage there was a tool shed, and following the side path which led to this, he found in the rear of the shed a workman's bench, evidently little used in these cold January days. Tactfully, it invited the discoverer to solitude and meditation, and Laurie gratefully dropped upon it, glad of the opportunity to escape Burke's eye and uninterruptedly think things out. But the daisied path of calm reflection was not for him then.

Theoretically, of course, his plan would be to wait until night and then, sheltered by the darkness, to approach the house, like a hero of melo-drama, and in some way secure entrance. But even as this ready-made campaign presented itself, a dozen objections to it reared up in his mind. The first, of course, was the delay. It was not yet two o'clock in the afternoon, and darkness would not fall until five, even unwisely assuming that it would be safe to approach the place as soon as darkness came. In three hours all sorts of things might happen; and the prospect of marking time during that interval, while his unbridled imagination ran away with him, was one Laurie could not face.

World Is "Thin Shell"
"It is wholesome for proud man to look upward on a bright day at some pretty citrus cloud, to consider that it is composed of ice spicules, that it floats in arctic cold, that it signals to us what hothouse creatures we are. If the roof of air were removed we should all be frozen to death in a moment. Just above the roof is deadly cold, and just below the crust of earth is deadly heat. Only within the thin shell that separates these two regions can the human race strut about and congratulate itself on its great powers."—Henshaw Ward, in "The Whirlpools of the Weather," in Harper's Magazine.

Laziness is not patience.

Improved Uniform International Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. F. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of Day and Evening Schools, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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Lesson for November 14

CALEB'S FAITHFULNESS REWARDED

LESSON TEXT—Josh. 14:6-16
GOLDEN TEXT—I wholly followed the Lord my God.
PRIMARY TOPIC—The Brave Spy Rewarded.
JUNIOR TOPIC—The Reward of Service.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Caleb, the Courageous.
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Blessings That Follow Whole-hearted Obedience.

1. Elements of Caleb's Character.
1. Independence of spirit (Num. 13:30).

Though the multitude clamored to follow the report of the ten, Caleb determined to stand alone. This is an element in human character which is highly important. One should stand for what he knows to be right, regardless of the sentiment of the crowd.

2. True to convictions (Josh. 14:6, cf. Num. 14:6-9).
What Caleb knew and felt he spoke out. He did not wait for the opinion of others and then modify his to suit the populace. A true man and one who can be trusted will be loyal to his convictions.

3. Unselfish (14:12).
He did not ask for some easy place. He did not wish to thrust someone else into the place of difficulty. He wanted to go into the place where it would require fighting in order to drive out the giants which were in the land.

4. Courageous (Josh. 14:12, cf. 13:30).

This courage he displayed when he insisted that they were able to go up from Kadesh-Barnea and take possession of the land. Forty-five years have elapsed since that time. He would be considered an old man now, but still he desired that place for an inheritance which would require some fighting. He said, "I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me, as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war."

5. Loyalty to God (Josh. 14:8, cf. Num. 14:24).

He served God with a whole-hearted devotion; indeed, this is the way to his character.

11. Caleb Laying Claim to His Inheritance (vv. 6-12).
Caleb did not come alone to make his claim. He came in the presence of the children of Judah, lest he be suspected of taking advantage. He did not wish to wait until after the lot was cast, for God had already given a certain portion to him. It were useless to ask God to decide a matter which He had already determined. The basis of his plea was:

1. The ground of his service (vv. 6-8).

He had endangered his life in spying out the land—had gone to Hebron when the giants were there. He brought back a true report when his brethren were all against him. He bore his testimony and insisted that they go up and take the land though to do so incurred the displeasure of his brethren and necessitated his standing practically alone.

2. On the ground of the oath of Moses to him (v. 9).

Joshua had respect for Moses, and was bound to follow the counsels of his faithful master whom he had succeeded. This plea was effective.

3. On the ground of God's providential dealing with him (vv. 10-12).

God had preserved him in bodily health. Though he was now eighty-five years old, his natural forces were not abated. He said, "I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me, as my strength was then even so is my strength now for war."

111. Joshua Giving the Inheritance to Caleb (13:14, 15).

1. Joshua blessed Caleb (v. 13).

He not only acquiesced in Caleb's claim, but bestowed the blessing of God upon him in it.

2. The inheritance given (vv. 13, 14).

Hebron was the name of the inheritance. The name Hebron means fellowship. It was given because Caleb had fully followed the Lord. Only those who fully follow the Lord can enjoy fellowship with Him. Though Caleb now legally possessed Hebron, it was necessary for him to fight to drive out the giants who infested it. In Christ we have an inheritance which God has given us. We, too, must fight because the enemy is unwilling to relinquish his claim upon it.

Believing in Christ
Many men do not believe in Christ because they do not want to do what Christ demands of them. Their doubts are not intellectual, as they pretend, but practical. They deny Christ so as to escape obligation and effort.—Young People.

Praying for Others
I have been benefited by praying for others; for by making an errand to God for them I have gotten something for myself.—Rutherford.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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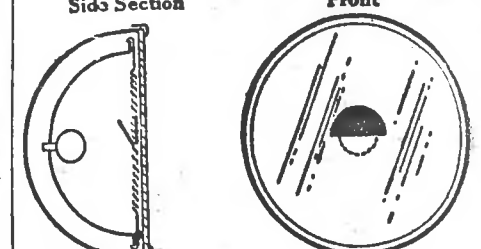
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