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Regular communication Elkin Lodge No. 454 A. F. and A. M., on second and fourth Saturday nights 7:30 p. m. Members urged to attend. Visitors cordially invited.

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GUNMAN'S BLUFF
By Edgar Wallace
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"Before I tell you why I've come," she said. "I think it is only fair that you should know I have left instructions that unless I am back in my house in three-quarters of an hour my butler will ring up Mr. Bird and tell him where I have gone." He frowned at this.

"What's the idea?" he asked harshly. "That's an extraordinary way to behave—why the dickens shouldn't you be back in three-quarters of an hour?"

"Where are the remainder of those checks you stole from my check book when you called the other day?" she asked.

"She saw his face go red.

"I don't know what you mean he said loudly. 'I steal checks? What nonsense you're talking—'

"You came into my house and you were in my sitting room long enough to extract ten checks. One of them was brought to the bank today, made out in Luke's name and signed by himself. On my instructions the check was not honored."

The color left his face.

"Not honored?" he stammered, and in his embarrassment he betrayed his share of the guilt.

"I'm less interested in the check than in my husband," she said quietly. "Where is he?"

He strove in vain to recover his self possession had forced a smile.

"Really my dear girl—" he began.

"You'll address me as Mrs. Maddison, if you have to address me as anything," she said. "I want you to return those checks I want you to also tell me exactly where Luke is."

"As far as I know, he's staying with a convicted thief named Haynes," the man answered roughly, and to his surprise she nodded.

"I thought so too. I went down to see him—but he had gone. I think Mr. Haynes was surprised to find that he had gone, and I'm only now understanding that Luke did not go of his own free will. Then I thought he may have wandered out by himself in order to escape association with Mr. Haynes. But the check explains a good deal. Where is Luke?"

He shook his head.

"I don't know."

"In that case I am going to do what I was trying to avoid," she said. "I am going to the police, and I shall charge you with stealing the blank checks, and leave it to Mr. Bird to connect you with Luke's disappearance."

She half turned to the door, but her caught her by the arm.

"For God's sake, Margaret consider what you're really doing!"

She saw that he was really alarmed; his voice was tremulous his whole air suggested panic.

"I swear to you I don't know where Luke is—he was on a barge."

"Connor had him there. The swine didn't tell me that Maddison had signed a check. All he told me was that he jumped in to the river and got away or was drowned—I don't know which. That's the truth. I knew nothing about it until Connor had found him. I swear to you this is the truth!"

"Where is Connor?" she asked.

"I don't know. He was here Luke getting away. That's all this morning, and told me about the information I have. I didn't see him, and probably it's a lie he told me."

He saw she was undecided and eagerly sought to turn her away from her intention. He had no doubt that she meant what she had said.

She did not know what to do.

"Could you find Haynes for me?"

"Find Haynes?" he almost shouted. "You don't imagine I would communicate with that fellow, do you? He's a dangerous man, Margaret."

"Mrs. Maddison," she said coldly.

"He's dangerous—you should not have any dealings with him." He did not attempt to deny the theft of the checks.

"You don't know where Mr. Maddison is at all?"

He accepted the correct relationship without murmur.

"No, Mrs. Maddison, I've no idea. Connor's been looking for him all night."

When she returned home she found the Sparrow waiting for her on the doorstep. The sight of a large kitbag at his feet surprised her, and when he carried it into the house and into the little study on the ground floor she was to have a shock. She did not recognize the crumpled clothes he took from the bag.

"These clothes were found in

the possession of a river thief, who was trying to sell them this morning," he said. "He didn't know that your husband's name was stitched in the inside pocket."

"My husband's name?" she gasped, turning pale. "Where did he get them?"

"That's what I want to know. The yarn he tells is that last night he picked up a man who was wet through and who had come out of the river, and took him to the house. We've since verified that—though from the description I've had it couldn't possibly be Mr. Maddison, who is still abroad I presume?"

Was there a note of sarcasm in his voice? She thought she detected it, and very wisely did not answer.

"The man said the clothes were given to him, but that of course the usual yarn. I have stolen while the owner was in bed. Can you throw any light upon reason to believe that they were on them?"

She shook her head. It was a pitiful confession, but she knew she could not even recognize an old suit of clothes worn by her husband. It was the suit which he had changed when he broke into his flat.

"What do you make of that Mrs. Maddison?"

She shook her head hopelessly.

"It couldn't be a suit your husband gave away, because the date it was delivered was written on the tab, and it must have been new a month ago." He looked at her keenly.

"There's a sort of mystery about this husband of yours, Mrs. Maddison, and I think you're in some kind of trouble. I'd like to help you if I could."

She was going to speak but he held up his hand to stop her.

"Don't tell me anything until I have told you just how much I know," he ticked off the facts on the fingers of his hand. "I know your husband disappeared the day after your marriage. I know that there was a burglary at his flat and that when the police arrived they recognized the man who had been concerned in a theft among the things stolen robbery that afternoon. I know his servant subsequently, and he was a passport—I interviewed told me there was a passport in one of the drawers of the desk. Now if there is any chance—and it seems one of those fantastic theories that writers make a lot of money from that—that this man is Mr. Maddison, the best people to help him are the police. I know him well enough to be sure he wouldn't hold up Taffany's. If it's a question of impersonation—we can be more than useful. Won't you tell me, Mrs. Maddison?"

She was silent. With a shake of his head the detective took his departure carrying with him the suit of clothes and a very deep seated conviction.

It was a curious coincidence that he should have brought those crumpled garments to the house when neatly packed away in her bedroom was the change of garments she had arranged for Luke.

She had puzzled as to the arrangements she could make to make them most convenient. She decided ultimately upon leaving the suitcase at a railway cloak-room. The ticket could be sent to Luke as soon as he was discovered. She waited for the night to come to carry this plan into effect.

That night brought its problems for Danty Morell. That afternoon after Margaret Maddison left him, he made a discovery which turned him sick with apprehension. He had lost his hold on Margaret; at any moment she might go to the police, and just then he was not anxious to renew his acquaintance with Scotland Yard. Things had gone badly with him; he owed a very large sum of money which had to be paid in the City on the following day; and now with the possibility of police intervention, his position was perilous.

Danty Morell was in some ways a careful man. However extravagant he might be, he had reserved for himself a fat nest egg in cash which, in spite of all temptation, he had never touched. He had collected the money that day from two or three accounts which he had run in an assumed name. Nothing was needed now but to follow the line of retreat he had carefully planned. There was a small serodrome on the outskirts of London, from which exhibition flights were given. Danty had found it expedient to finance the

small company which owned the airplanes, and by telephone he arranged his flight. This was facilitated by the fact that the company had recently acquired a big rebuilt monoplane which was capable of a long flight. Danty who had decided upon Switzerland for the first hop, gave orders for the storage of petrol and necessities for the journey. He certainly did not anticipate taking a companion with him, but he was not the only pauc stricken man in London.

Danty made a very quick search for the papers which left behind, might have awkward consequences, and his first attention was directed to the little box in which he kept the most dangerous of his correspondence. He brought this into the dining room before he discovered that the lock had been forced. With an exclamation he threw the lid took out the contents—The one pack of letters that he had been mad to keep was gone! And the little telephone slip—that also had disappeared.

His hands were shaking so that he could hardly hold the papers he was examining. There was no need to speculate upon the identity of the man who had forced that box. The Gunner had been seen in the neighborhood; PI Coles had told him that and it had been he Gunner who had made this search and found the documents. Danty Morell saw death grinning at him: hypnotized into sheer inaction. When there came a knock at the door he leaped from his chair, a shivering wreck of a man, not daring to open to the visitor.

He calmed himself sufficiently to go to the door and demand who it was there, and when he heard Connor's voice he could have cried aloud for joy.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Connor, when they were back in the room.

"I've had a bit of a shock and I'm not particularly well. You know they're after those kites?"

Connor himself was not particularly happy-looking.

"I know they've stopped a check I sent to the bank and half the buses in London are looking for him. They know who it is too—that's the worst of it. You're in this Danty."

"Were both in it, aren't we?" snarled the other. "I'm getting out of London tonight."

Connor laughed rascally.

"You've got a fine chance of getting out of London, unless you take a rattler," and then suddenly: "How are you going?"

It was on the tip of Danty's tongue to invent a method of escape, but just now he needed the association of Connor. Connor was not above using a gun at a pinch, and, moreover, he hated Gunner Haynes.

"I'm going by airplane from Elford," he said. "We've got the Gunner to thank for this. He squealed."

"He's never stopped squealing," said Connor without heat. "Where do you land in your flying machine?"

Danty told him his destination.

"That'll do for me," said Connor.

"Having a burn-up?" he asked pleasantly, and then: "How much stuff have you got?"

Here Danty lied. He could not tell the truth about money.

The conference was a brief one. They agreed to visit the airport that evening and make final preparations for their journey. The journey through the suburbs into outer London was a silent one; now and again Danty lifted the flap at the back of the hired car in which they were traveling and peered along the darkening road.

"What's the matter with you?" growled Connor.

"There's a car following us," "Why shouldn't it?" he demanded. "Do you want the road to yourself?"

A few minutes later when Danty looked back, the little car had disappeared.

The preparations for the night's journey were not easily made. The pilot had only just been communicated with. He was on a holiday in the Midlands.

"It's a good job we came, or we might have been in Queer Street," said Connor as they were driving back. "What time did you say you'd be here?"

"About midnight."

"What are you looking for," asked Connor ten minutes later. "The little car?"

He pushed his companion aside and peered.

"There's a motor lorry; has that got anything on us?" he demanded.

Danty said nothing. No man could know the terror that was in his heart. Behind him stalked

the grim shadow of vengeance, and every second he expected to see the hawk-like face of the Gunner peering into his from the darkness.

Danty did not go near his flat.

They met in park, PI bringing He telephoned of PI Coles and with him an overcoat and wrap which were to be Danty's sole luggage. His servitor he rewarded liberally. There was nothing to do now but pass away the few hours which intervened before he left London forever.

Concluded next week.

Beaufort county farmers will try the hogging-down method of feeding corn to hogs this season. The animals will be weighed in and out of the field to get actual figures on the results.

Fifteen dollars a crate for bloodtested eggs sold to a hat-Elkin.

chery and \$6 a crate for eggs sold on the market is a difference reported by Mrs. R. C. Harris of Wilkes County.

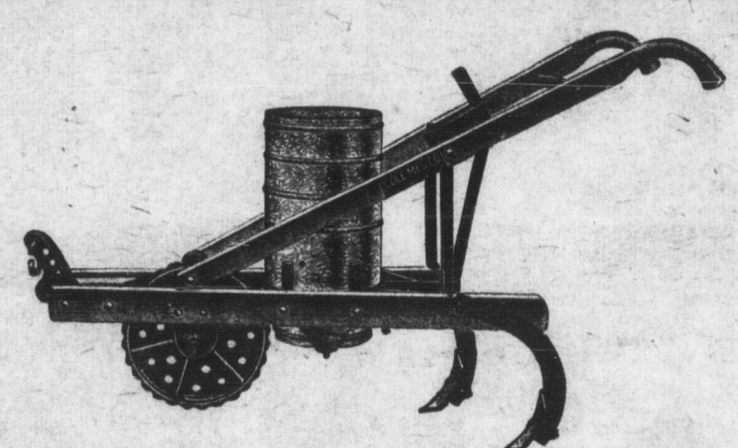
Mr. B. F. Giles of North Wilkesboro spent the week-end in

ADDITIONAL CO. NEWS

Marriage licenses were issued the past week to W. F. Shelton, to Lucy Jones, Both Mt. Airy; Henry Parris to Mary Cobler, both Mt. Airy.

The Young Peoples Missionary Society of the Methodist church held an interesting meeting Friday evening with Miss Loree Hemmings. The president Miss Julia Comer was present and presided. Miss Mae Martin coner. Participating in the program ducted the devotionals. Miss Mazie Comer was program leader. Misses Viola Snow, Mazie Comer, Lois Folger, Jazabel Fowler and Loree Hemmings. Miss Viola Snow was chosen a delegate to represent the society ing which will be held at High at the Annual Conference meet-Point in the near future. At the conclusion of the business session a social hour was enjoyed during which time the hostess served tempting refreshments.

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NOTICE!

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May 1, 1930

AND A PENALTY WILL BE ADDED ON ALL DELINQUENT TAX LISTERS. WILL BE AT E. & D. METAL COMPANY EACH DAY IN APRIL EXCEPT APRIL 16 AT I. A. ELDRIDGES' STORE. APRIL 17— STATE ROAD. COME IN EARLY AND AVOID THE RUSH.

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