

# SERIAL STORY

## BLINDFOLDED

### A Mystery Story of San Francisco

BY

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#### SYNOPSIS.

Giles Dudley arrived in San Francisco to join his friend and distant relative Henry Wilton, whom he was to assist in an important and mysterious task, and who accompanied Dudley on the ferry boat trip into the city. The remarkable resemblance of the two men is noted and commented on by passengers on the ferry. They see a man with snake eyes, which sends a thrill through Dudley. Wilton postpones an explanation of the strange errand Dudley is to perform, but occurrences cause him to know it is one of no ordinary meaning. Wilton leaves Giles in their room, with instruction to await his return. Hardly has he gone than Giles is startled by a cry of "Help." Dudley is summoned to the morgue and there finds the dead body of his friend, Henry Wilton. And thus Wilton dies without ever explaining to Dudley the puzzling work he was to perform in San Francisco. In order to discover the secret mission his friend had entrusted to him, Dudley continues his disguise and permits himself to be known as Henry Wilton. Dudley, mistaken for Wilton, is employed by Knapp to assist in a stock brokerage deal. Giles Dudley finds himself closeted in a room with Mother Borton who makes a confidant of him. He can learn nothing about the mysterious boy further than that it is Tim Terrill and Darby Meeker who are after him. He is told that "Dicky" Nahl is a traitor, playing both hands in the game. Dudley gets his first knowledge of Decker, who is Knapp's enemy on the Board. Dudley visits the home of Knapp and is stricken by the beauty of Luella, his daughter. He learns the note was forged. He is provided with four guards, Brown, Barkhouse, Fitzhugh and Porter. He learns there is to be no trouble about money as all expenses will be paid, the hire of the guards being paid by one "Richmond." The body of Henry Wilton is committed to the vault. Dudley responds to a note and visits Mother Borton in company with Policeman Corson. Giles Dudley again visits the Knapp home. He is fascinated by Luella and bored by Mrs. Bowser. Slumming tour through Chinatown is planned.

#### CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"I'd trust ye," she said. "Well, there was a gang across the street to-night—across from my place, I mean—and that sneaking Tom Terrill and Darby Meeker, and I reckon all the rest of 'em, was there. And they was runnin' back and forth to my place, and a-drinkin' a good deal, and the more they drinks the louder they talks. And I hears Darby Meeker say to one feller, 'We'll git him, sure!' and I listens with all my ears, though pretendin' to see nothin'. 'We'll fix it this time,' he said; 'the Old Un's got his thinkin' cap on.' And I takes in every word, and by one thing and another I picks up that there's new schemes afoot to trap ye. They was a-sayin' as it might be an idee to take ye as you come out of Knapp's to-night."

"How did they know I was at Knapp's?" I asked, somewhat surprised, though I had little reason to be when I remembered the number of spies who might have watched me.

"Why, Dicky Nahl told 'em," said Mother Borton. "He was with the gang and sings it out as pretty as you please."

This gave me something new to think about, but I said nothing.

"Well," she continued, "they says at last that won't do, fer it'll git 'em into trouble, and I reckon they're argy-fying over their schemes yit. But one thing I finds out."

Mother Borton stopped and looked at me anxiously.

"Well," I said impatiently, "what was it?"

"They're a-sayin' as how, if you're killed, the one as you knows on'll have to git some one else to look after the boy, and mebbe he won't be so smart about foolin' them."

"That's an excellent idee," said I. "If they only knew that I was the other fellow they could see at once what a bright scheme they had hit upon."

"Maybe they ain't a-goin' to do it," said Mother Borton. "There's a heap o' things said over the liquor that don't git no further, but you'll be a fool if you don't look out. Now, do as I tell you. You just keep more men around you. Keep eyes in the back of your head, and if you see there's a-goin' to be trouble, jest you shoot first and ax questions about it afterward. They talked of getting you down on the water-front or up in Chinatown with some bogus message and said how easy it would be to dispose of you without leaving clues behind 'em. Now, don't you sleep here without three or four men on guard, and don't you stir round nights with less than four. Send Porter out to git two more men, and tell him to look sharp and see if the coast's clear outside. I reckon I'll slide out if no one's lookin'."

"I've got some men on the next floor," I said. "I thought it would be

just as well to have a few around in case of emergencies. I'll have two of them out, and send Porter to reconnoiter."

"Who told you to git your men together?"

"A little idea of my own."

"You've got some sense, after all."

The reinforcements were soon ready to take orders, and Porter returned to bring word that no suspicious person was in sight in the street.

"I reckon I'd best go, then," said Mother Borton. "I don't want no knife in me jest yit, but if there's no one to see me I'm all right."

I pressed Mother Borton to take two of my men as escort, but she sturdily refused.

"They'd know something was up if I was to go around that way, and I'd be a bloody ghost as soon as they could ketch me alone," she said. "Well, good night—or is it mornin'? And do take keer of yourself, dearie." And, so saying, Mother Borton muffled herself up till it was hard to tell whether she was man or woman, and trudged away.

Whatever designs were brewing in the night-meeting of the conspirators, they did not appear to concern my immediate peace of body. The two following days were spent in quiet. In spite of warnings, I began to believe that no new plan of action had been determined on, and I bent my steps to the office that had been furnished by Doddridge Knapp. I hardly expected to meet the King of the Street. He had, I supposed, returned to the city, but he had set Wednesday as the day for resuming operations in the market, and I did not think that he would be found here on Monday.

The room was cold and cheerless, and the dingy books in law-calf appeared to gaze at me in mute protest as I looked about me.

The doors that separated me from Doddridge Knapp's room were shut and locked. What was behind them? I wondered. Was there anything in Doddridge Knapp's room that bore on the mystery of the hidden boy, or would give the clue to the murder of Henry Wilton? If vengeance was to be mine; if Doddridge Knapp was to pay the penalty of the gallows for the death of Henry Wilton, it must be by the evidence that I should wrest from him and his tools. I had just secured the key that would fit the first door I had taken the impression of the lock and had it made without definite purpose, but now I was ready to act.

With a sinking heart but a clear head I put the key cautiously to the lock and gently turned it. The key fitted perfectly, and the bolt flew back as it made the circle. I opened the door into the middle room. The second door, as I expected, was closed. Would the same key fit the second lock, or must I wait to have another made? I advanced to the second door and was about to try the key when a sound from behind it turned my blood to water.

Beyond that door, from the room I had supposed to be empty, I heard a groan.

I stood as if petrified, and, in the broad daylight that streamed in at the window, with the noise and rush of Clay street ringing in my ears, I felt my hair rise as though I had come on a ghost. I listened a minute or more, but heard nothing.

"Nonsense!" I thought to myself; "it was a trick of the imagination."

I raised my hand once more to the lock, when the sound broke again, louder, unmistakable. It was the voice of one in distress of body or mind.

I listened with all my ears. Then there came through the door the low, stern tones of a man's voice speaking earnestly, pleadingly, threateningly, but in a suppressed monotone.

Then the groan burst forth again, and it was followed by sobs and choked sounds, as of one who protested, yet, strangely, the voice was the same. There was one man, not two. It was self-accusation, self-excuse, and the sobs seemed to come in answer to self-reproaches.

Then there was sound as of a man praying, and the prayer was broken by sobs; and again I thought there were two men. And then there was a noise of a man moving about, and a long smothered groan, as of one in agony of spirit. Fearful that the door might be flung open in my face, I tipped back to my room, and silently turned the key, as thoroughly mystified as ever I had been in the strange events that had crowded my life since I had entered the city.

#### CHAPTER XVII. In a Foreign Land.

The groans and prayers, if they continued, could be heard no longer through the double doors, and I seated myself by the desk and took account of the events that had brought me to my present position.

Where did I stand? What had I accomplished? What had I learned? How was I to reach the end for which I struggled and bring justice to the slayer of my murdered friend? As I passed in review the occurrences that had crowded the few weeks since my arrival, I was compelled to confess that I knew little more of the mysteries that surrounded me than on the night I arrived. I knew that I was

tossed between two opposing forces. I knew that a mysterious boy was supposed to be under my protection, and that to gain and keep possession of him my life was sought and defended. I knew that Doddridge Knapp had caused the murder of Henry Wilton, and yet for some unfathomable reason gave me his confidence and employment under the belief that I was Henry Wilton. But I had been able to get no hint of who the boy might be, or where he was concealed, or who was the hidden woman who employed me to protect him, or why he was sought by Doddridge Knapp.

How long I sat by the desk waiting, thinking, planning, I knew not. One scheme of action after another I had considered and rejected, when a sound broke on my listening ears. I started up in feverish anxiety. It was from the room beyond, and I stole toward the door to learn what it might mean. Burning with impatience, I thrust aside the fears of the evil that might follow hasty action. I had drawn the key and raised it to the slot, when I heard a step in the middle room. I had but time to retreat to my desk when a key was fitted in the lock, the door was flung open, and Doddridge Knapp stepped calmly into the room.

"Ah, Wilton," said the King of the Street affably, "I was wondering if I should find you here."

There was no trace of surprise or agitation in the face before me. If this was the man whose prayers and groans and sobs had come to me through the locked door, if he had wrestled with his conscience or even had been the accusing conscience of another, his face was a mask that showed no trace of the agony of thoughts that might contort the spirit beneath it.

"I was attending to a little work of my own," I answered, after greeting. If I felt much like a disconcerted pick-pocket I was careful to conceal the cir-



"DID THE CAMPAIN REOPEN?" I ASKED.

cumstance, and spoke with easy indifference. "You have come back before I expected you," I continued carelessly.

"Yes," said the King of the Street with equal carelessness. "Some family affairs called me home sooner than I had thought to come."

"Mrs. Knapp is not ill, I trust?" I ventured.

"Oh, no."

"Nor Miss Knapp?"

"Oh, all are well at the house, but sometimes you know women-folks get nervous."

Was it possible that Mrs. Knapp had sent for her husband? What other meaning could I put on these words? But before I could pursue my investigations further along this line, the wolf came to the surface, and he waved the subject aside with a growl.

"But this is nothing to you. What you want to know is that I won't need you before Wednesday, if then."

"Does the campaign reopen?" I asked.

"If you don't mind, Wilton," said the Wolf with another growl, "I'll keep my plans till I'm ready to use them."

"Certainly," I retorted. "But maybe you would feel a little interest to know that Rosenheim and Bashford had gathered in about a thousand shares of Omega in the last four or five days."

Doddridge Knapp gave me a keen glance.

"There were no sales of above a hundred shares," he said.

"No—most of them ran from ten to fifty shares."

"Well," he continued, looking fixedly at me, "you know something about Rosenheim?"

"If it won't interfere with your plans," I suggested apologetically.

The Wolf drew back his lips over his fangs, and then turned the snarl into a smile.

"Go on," he said, waving amends for the snub he had administered.

"Well, I don't know much about Rosenheim, but I caught him talking with Decker."

"Were the stocks transferred to Decker?"

"No; they stand to Rosenheim, trustee."

"Well, Wilton, they've stolen a march on us, but I reckon we'll give

'em a surprise before they're quite awake."

"And," I continued coolly, "Decker's working up a deal in Crown Diamond and toying a little with Confidence—you gave me a week to find out, you may remember."

"Very good, Wilton," said the King of the Street with grudging approval. "We'll sell old Decker quite a piece of Crown Diamond before he gets through. And now is there anything more in your packet?"

"It's empty," I confessed.

"Well, you may go then."

Doddridge Knapp followed me to the door, and stood on the threshold as I walked down the hall. There was no chance for spying or listening at key-holes, if I were so inclined, and it was not until I had reached the bottom stair that I thought I heard the sound of a closing door behind me.

As I stood at the entrance, almost oblivious of the throng that was hurrying up and down Clay street, Porter joined me.

"Did you see him?" he asked.

"Him? Who?"

"Why, Tom Terrill sneaked down those stairs a little bit ago, and I thought you might have found him up there."

Could it be possible that this man had been with Doddridge Knapp, and that it was his voice I had heard? This in turn seemed improbable, hardly possible.

"There he is now," whispered Porter.

I turned my eyes in the direction he indicated, and a shock ran through me; for my eye had met the eye of a serpent. Yes, there again was the cruel, keen face, and the glittering, repulsive eye, filled with malice and hatred, that I had beheld with loathing and dread whenever it had come in my path. With an evil glance Terrill turned and made off in the crowd.

"Follow that man, Wainwright," said I to the second guard, who was close at hand. "Watch him to-night and report to me to-morrow."

I wondered what could be the meaning of Terrill's visit to the building. Was it to see Doddridge Knapp and get his orders? Or was it to follow up some new plan to wrest from me the secret I was supposed to hold? But there was no answer to these questions, and I turned toward my room to prepare for the excursion that had been set for the evening.

It was with hope and fear that I took my way to the Pine Street palace. It was my fear that was realized. Mrs. Bowser fell to my lot, while Luella joined Mr. Carter, and Mrs. Carter with Mr. Horton followed.

Corson was waiting for us at the City Hall. I had arranged with the policeman that he should act as our guide, and had given him Porter and Barkhouse as assistants in case any should be needed.

"A fine night for it, sor," said Corson in greeting. "There's a little celebration goin' on among the haythens to-night, so you'll see 'em at their best."

Looking across the dark shrubbery of Portsmouth Square and up Washington street, the eye could catch a line of gay-colored lanterns, swaying in the light wind, and casting a mellow glow on buildings and walks.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### WOMAN WHO IS APPRECIATED. She of Sunny, Cheerful Temperament Always Popular.

The woman who is appreciated is generous not so much with money as with large-heartedness and thoughtfulness and sympathy. The world loves the one who can find a redeeming quality, even in the greatest of sinners, one who forbears to strike a defenseless soul. The sunny, hopeful woman is ever in request. Every door flies open to her who has a cherry, pleasant word and a bright smile. She is the woman who is always considerate of the rights of others and never attempts to monopolize the conversation or to make herself the center of attraction. She realizes that money will not buy love. That though a woman may enjoy every comfort and luxury obtainable, her home may be absolutely cheerless because of love's absence. She knows that there is no woman living who, deep down in her heart, does not appreciate being cared for, admired and loved by those she comes in contact with.

#### Compensation.

When Wilson Hobart married Hetty Lewis there were many people who predicted domestic troubles, even tragedies, but they were mistaken, says the Youth's Companion. The Hobarts were to all appearances, an unusually happy couple. "I reckon Hetty must have learned to keep her temper better than she used to," remarked one person, to whom this state of affairs was inexplicable. "You don't look a bit older than the day you were married, Wilson." "I don't know as she has," said Mr. Hobart, with a slow smile. "I tell her I guess she's got enough on hand to last her; she needn't save any to accommodate me. And I can tell you," he added, with enthusiasm, "it would take more than any temper ever I saw to sour Hetty's bread or her cream pies!"

#### AT THE GRAVE OF MANSFIELD.

Thousands Visit Last Resting Place of the Great Actor.

New London, Conn., has this season a new point of interest for summer visitors. The grave of Richard Mansfield is the lure for many at near-by resorts. In the midst of all the merry-making the dead actor is remembered, and persons in automobiles, in carriages, on bicycles and on foot make a pilgrimage of devotion to the little cemetery where he is buried. Every conductor on the Ocean Beach trolley line can give minute instructions for finding the Mansfield home and the Mansfield grave, and very often they are required to furnish it. Having left the car line and climbed a hill on Edgewood avenue, there still is a hot, dusty walk ahead on Ocean avenue before the cemetery is reached, but many a Mansfield admirer trudges over it uncomplainingly. In the lawns of the big estate gardeners are at work who speak but little English, but all know the name of Mansfield, and all can muster enough of the language to direct the way to the Mansfield house and the graveyard opposite.

The gates of the cemetery never are locked. He who will may wander among the few headstones near the roadside, then back to the far corner where Mansfield lies. There is no stone there. A double row of dwarf evergreens marks the boundaries of the plot. In the center is the grave. It lies level with the earth, thick-growing pansies cover it, and at the head is a bowl of cut flowers which are renewed each day. In that quiet spot memories of Beau Brummel, of Dr. Jeckyll, of Peer Gynt live again, and make the trip, even for the traveler on foot, well worth while.

#### Too Much.

There had been a small bank failure in an Iowa town, and the bank had gone into the hands of a receiver. The receiver proved to be dishonest, and had absconded with what remained of the funds of the institution. Expert detectives were, however, on his track, and he was run down in a neighboring state and taken back to the scene of his financial exploits.

It was about midnight that the detectives arrived with their prisoner, and a Mr. Collins, the principal depositor in the bank, and, therefore, the principal loser, was awakened at his home and informed by telephone of the capture.

He expressed his gratification and went back to bed.

Shortly afterward he was aroused to receive another telephone message to the same effect, from a different source.

This sort of thing continued to such an extent that Collins grew very wrathful; so that, when he answered the 'phone bell for the last time, he was in anything but an amiable frame of mind.

"Hello, Collins," came over the wire.

"Yes. What do you want?"

"Collins, this is Deputy Sheriff Myers. We've caught that runaway receiver. Is there anything you'd like to have me do, personally, in the matter?"

"Yes!" roared Collins, "hang up the receiver!"—Illustrated Sunday Magazine.

#### The Next Real Necessity.

George Oakley Totten, Jr., of Washington, one of the American delegates to the international congress of architects at Vienna, delivered an address at the convention, in the course of which, speaking of the development of skyscrapers as a result of conditions in the United States, he said: "Conditions are likely to arise which will greatly influence the architecture of the future. To sail through the air is no longer a mere picture of the imagination, and the day may not be far distant when the architect will have to devote his attention to beautifying not only the fronts of buildings, but the roofs as well, so that they may not offend the eye of the aesthetic traveler through the sky."

#### Might Be True.

"Dad," said Teddy, "it isn't true, is it?"

"What isn't true, my son?" asked his father.

"Why, this about the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Is it true that he could play on his pipes so fascinatingly that the rats would come out of their holes and drown themselves?"

"Well, I dunno," said Teddy's father. "It might be. Your Uncle Tom can play the cornet so that it will frighten a cow into the river and make all the dogs within five miles growl. Yes, I dessay it's true."—Stray Stories.

#### Honestly.

De Lush—Van Stoo isn't drinking any more.

McSosh—Gee! Has he sworn off?

De Lush—No—he's actually quit!—Cleveland Leader.

#### Special Occasions.

It is only when they are nominated for office that some men care whether anybody knows which church they attend.—Washington Post.