



CHAPTER VII—Continued

It was twenty minutes later, on the skirts of Annabel village, that Barley stood by the Rolls and told us his tale.

We dared not return to the castle before ten minutes past one, for Lass was 12 miles from Yorick. We had, therefore, ten minutes to spare—much against our will, for that Pharaoh was racing for Yorick we had not a shadow of doubt. Still, to be uneasy was foolish; that day I had done the journey as Pharaoh was doing it now. If Pharaoh had the luck of the devil, we might expect to see him at half-past one.

So, as we had time to spare, Barley stood by the Rolls and told us his tale.

"A wire come on Monday, sir, a little later than usual, about ten o'clock. 'Return at once,' it said and it bore your name. Well, we left as sharp as we could—for Villach, of course; but when we get out at Villach, there ain't no car to meet us, let alone no Rolls. 'That's queer,' says Mr. Bohun. 'I don't understand it,' he says. 'If Mr. Spencer could wire, he could send a car. It may be all right, but we'd better go careful, Barley, from this time on.' Well, we 'ired a car at Villach, and stopped four miles from the farm. Then we enters the woods on foot. It was just about half-past four when we sights the house. Everything looks as usual—sleepy an' peaceful, you know, sir, an' no one about. But Mr. Bohun's uneasy. 'Mustn't rush in,' he says. 'You stay an' watch out,' he says, 'while I go round to the back. He hadn't hardly spoken before Rush comes out on the apron, as bold as brass.

"I give you my word, sir, that shook us. We made sure they'd got you all right. But of course we couldn't do nothing until it was dark. Then we crept in and 'ad a close-up.' He drew in his breath. 'Those two—Rush and Bugle—they're simple, that's what they are. They're like a turn on the 'alls. You could walk right in between them, before they'd know you were there. For 'alf an hour that evening we listened to what they said, and of course we very soon knew that Pharaoh'd got his foot in the castle and you was away.

"Well, we had to have quarters somewhere, so Mr. Bohun comes here. 'The last place they'll look,' he says, 'and the best I know.' Then we starts in watchin' the castle and visitin' Plumage at night. And that was all we could do, for to look for you was hopeless—we didn't know where to begin. But we knew where Pharaoh was, and we made up our minds to get him, for once he was out of the way, all roads were clear."

Barley closed his eyes and pushed back his hat.

"D'you think we could get that man, sir? We could have had the others time and again. Bugle, and Rush, I mean—though we could have had Dewdrop, too. But Mr. Bohun says, 'No, Bugle and Rush,' he says, 'is our information bureau. So we won't do them in,' he says; 'if there's any news goin' they'll have it.' But you wouldn't believe how we've laid an' laid for Pharaoh—and missed him every time. Look at tonight, sir. I'd been lyn' there where I met you since half-past six. Keepin' observation, I was, for Mr. Bohun's at Salzburg—I've told you that. To beat up his quarters, he said, in case you'd called. Well, I thought I had got him tonight, when the Rolls slowed down. I was ready to blow his head off—an' then it turns out that it's you. I don't believe in charmed lives, but if ever a blackguard had one, Pharaoh's him."

"You wait, Barley," said I, and got into the car. "When d'you expect Mr. Bohun?"

"Tomorrow morning, sir. About seven o'clock."

"What could be better?" said I. "Tell him to expect me for breakfast at about a quarter to nine. And that after that, if he likes, we'll run along to Plumage and close the information bureau."

As I let in the clutch—

"Good-by, Barley," cried Helena.

"Do what you can for his lordship and ask Mr. Bohun to forgive me for making free with his room."

But Barley made no answer. I think he was incapable of speech.

We were back at the castle within a quarter of an hour.

As the warden stepped out on the wicket, Helena spoke.

"Has anyone entered the castle since I've been here?"

The porter replied:

"No one at all, my lady."

Helena was addressing the warden. "He's not been to the station, Florin. Unless he's here, he must have gone somewhere by car."

"His lordship's not here, my lady. And the Adelaide postern was open which shows that he went that way."

I drove the Rolls under the archway and into the small courtyard. As the leaves were closed behind us, "Out of sight of the wicket," said Helena.

Helena turned to the warden, who had opened the door by her side.

"The porter is to put out the lights, but stay in his lodge. He is to open to no one, until you return. Mark that. To no one at all. And in five minutes' time you and all the night-watchmen will come to the library."

"If your ladyship pleases," said Florin.

Helena left the car, and I followed her up the stairs. . . .

As I closed the library door, my lady took off her hat, pitched it on to a sofa and moved to the hearth.

"What are you going to tell them?"

For a moment she did not answer, but stood with her eyes on the flames. Then—

"That the man that murdered young Florin is coming to the castle tonight; that three hours ago he did his best to kill you, because he knows you can prove that he took young Florin's life; that they know him as 'Captain Fanning,' but that I know him as 'Pharaoh'—a very dangerous felon, who is wanted for at least four murders in England alone." She turned to set her hands on my shoulders. "You must forgive me, darling, for playing this hand alone. But now you must stay in the background until we're through. They must not begin to believe that I'm acting on your advice. Tomorrow—this afternoon you'll stand on another footing, for everyone in the castle will know I'm to be your wife."

I could not answer her, but I put my arms around her and kissed her lips.

And then the light in her face went out.

The lips I had kissed were moving, but no word came. . . . and her little hands were trembling. . . . and the blood was out of her face.

She was looking over my shoulder—not so much with horror as dully, as though the battle were hopeless and she was tired.

As I let her go and swung round—

"Don't move, Mr. Spencer," said Pharaoh. "The triggers they give these things are absurdly light."

"This thing" was an automatic pistol, pointing in my direction, about six paces away.

CHAPTER VIII

I Bear a Message.

I CONFESS that I was dumb-founded, and several seconds went by before I could find my tongue.

"That's so much bluff," said I. "This isn't the forester's cottage. If you fire on me here—"

"I most frankly admit," said Pharaoh, "that the feelings with which I should kill you would be extremely mixed. To be still more frank, I don't want you to force my hand. Not that I value your life. In fact, you're rather a nuisance. But if I were to—er—abate you, I should probably have to withdraw—and that would suit my book even less. And so, if you move, I shall fire."

With his words a knock fell upon the door. . . .

"Ah," said Pharaoh. "The trusty warden, no doubt. 'With his white hair unbanned, the stout old sheriff comes; behind him march the halberdiers. . . . I think you were going to tell him something, Lady Helen. Well, do have him in. But perhaps I ought to remind you that Mr. Spencer's life will depend upon what you say."

The pistol slid into his pocket; but though he withdrew his left hand, his right hand stayed where it was.

Again the warden knocked, and Helena raised her voice and cried to him to come in.

The warden entered the room.

As his eyes lit upon Pharaoh, he started, as though in surprise; but when he closed the door behind him and turned to where Helena stood.

My lady moistened her lips.

"I'm not at all satisfied, Florin, with the watch that is being kept.

Here's Captain Fanning returned, but he was never challenged or—

"I found a postern open," said Pharaoh. "To save the porter trouble, I entered by that."

"He should have been seen," said Helena, "crossing the bridge." The warden looked greatly concerned.

"There is something amiss," said Helena. "Double the watchmen, Florin, and stop all leave. Two porters are to stay in the lodge and to keep a list of all persons that use the bridge. No postern is to be opened without permission from me. Why were the servants abed when I came in?"

"By his lordship's orders, my lady."

"Those orders are canceled—until his lordship returns. And now rouse his lordship's valet and let him prepare the room in the east-ern tower—the room above mine. Mr. Spencer will sleep there tonight. And rouse Rachel, as well. She will make my room ready and wait till I come. One thing more." She drew out her master key. "Here is my key, Florin. You may as well keep it for me until I need it again."

The warden bowed and took it. "Will your ladyship speak to the men?"

"Not tonight. I've changed my mind. But please see that they do their duty. I've a definite feeling

"If you think—"

The sentence ended in a manner which I should like to forget. I yelped with pain, leaped from my seat on the table and swung about, smarting and furious, to face Dewdrop's leveled pistol some three feet away.

The Jew had pricked my buttock with the blade of his knife.

I hesitated, trembling with rage and desperately weighing the chances of an immediate attack. Fire upon me they dared not.

Helena's arm was about my shoulders, and her cool, slim hand on my wrist.

"Not that way, my darling, I beg you. Let me play the hand."

"I entirely agree," said Pharaoh. "All right," I said thickly. "You play it. I'll manage to bide my time."

The clasp on my shoulders tightened, but that was all.

"What terms," said Helena, quietly, "do you suggest?"

"Your word that you will do nothing before midday. That at that hour you two will be here, to take up the same positions you now lay down. That you will give no orders and make no sort of statement which might correct the impression that I am your guest. In a word, I desire your parole—the parole of you both."

"I give it," said Helena, quietly. "And Mr. Spencer?" said Pharaoh.

"I pledge his word," said Helena. "That's good enough," said Pharaoh. "Allow me to wish you good night." He bowed and turned to the door. "Come, Dewdrop," he said.

. . . .

Half an hour had gone by, and I was sitting, brooding, on the side of my bed. I was clad in the Count's pajamas and was wearing his dressing-gown. I had cleansed myself in the bathroom and stanchied my wound. This, of course, was nothing, but because it was deep, it had bled a deal more freely than I had supposed. It certainly ached a little, but I was more hungry than hurt.

I needed food very badly—to help me, body and soul. Sleep was out of the question. Besides, I did not feel tired. . . .

I wondered how Helena was faring. I had handed her over to Rachel, herself again; but we had arranged no meeting and she had not so much as spoken, except to bid me good night and advise me to bar my door.

I began to see the secret of Pharaoh's success. Once it was known that to call his bluff was fatal, the man could win game after game with the acme of ease.

Some one was knocking—tapping, but not on the door.

As I started up, the sound ceased.

It had come from the direction of the bathroom. Perhaps, if I waited—

The tapping began again.

For a moment I stood still, listening. And then I was proving the panelling close to the bathroom door. The sound came from behind the woodwork.

In vain I sought for some handle, while little bursts of tapping demanded an answer that I was not ready to give.

Suddenly I thought of the bathroom.

cause you have scruples you are weighed clean out of this race. You see, I am not so embarrassed—I never am. Now take tonight. Placed as you were, once I was back in the castle, nothing this side of hell would have got me out. Yet the Count would have disappeared. Now there's a little problem—which I will resolve. I assume he was drunk—forgive me, but he usually is by ten. Well, they say blood's thicker than water, but I never found it so. I should have dropped him gently into the meat. . . . Perhaps you think I'm bluffing. Let me tell you what happened tonight. I wanted a car—badly, and I took the first that came by. Well, that was against the law. By taking that car I offended the law and order—two inconvenient gods. They therefore had to be sidetracked. . . . What is left of that car is lying on its side in a gully, it's still burning—with the man it belonged to inside."

This recital was dreadful enough, but Pharaoh lent it a horror that made my blood run cold.

He glanced at his watch. "Dear, dear, a quarter to two. It's far too late to discuss my mission tonight. If you'll promise me one or two things—well, I daresay your room is ready"—he raised his eyes to the ceiling—"and the room above yours."

"You insolent swine!" I roared. "If you think—"

The sentence ended in a manner which I should like to forget. I yelped with pain, leaped from my seat on the table and swung about, smarting and furious, to face Dewdrop's leveled pistol some three feet away.

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(TO BE CONTINUED)

France's North American Claims

The only territorial possessions of France in North America are St. Pierre and Miquelon, two small rocky islands about ten miles off the southern coast of Newfoundland. These islands which are surrounded by a number of islets, are the sole remnant of the colonial empire France once had in Canada. Their aggregate area is less than a hundred square miles and they are inhabited by only a few thousand sturdy fisherfolk of Breton and Norman stock. The proximity of the islands to the Great Banks makes them an important center for French cod fisheries in the North Atlantic.

All Around the House

Twine will tie bundles much tighter and will not slip when knots are made if it is dampened before using.

Iodine stains may be removed from white cotton or linen if stains are soaked in a solution of ammonia and water, a teaspoon of ammonia to a pint of water.

If fruit cake becomes very hard it can be wrapped in a cloth saturated with orange or spiced peach juice and stored in an air-tight box.

Place a hot water bottle in the clothes basket when hanging out and taking in clothes in cold weather. It will keep the hands warm.

Never set cut flowers in a draft. If you do you will find they will soon wilt.

When maple sirup becomes cloudy set it over the fire until it boils, then take it off the fire and let cool.

If woolen stockings shrink while washing, put them through the water again and while still wet put them on a stocking stretcher.

Always use canned pineapple in gelatin mixtures. If fresh pineapple is used the mixture will not congeal.

A few bright colored flower pots, with a narcissus bulb planted in each, set on the window sill in the living room will, when the bulbs

Beveled Chopping Block

According to a Wisconsin woodworker, kuddling may be cut on a beveled block without danger of an injury from flying pieces of slivers, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. An ideal block for this purpose is a short piece sawed from the end of a large log with one side beveled, leaving a projection on which to rest one end of the work.

blossom, give color and decoration to the room.

If cake is very hard it can be made into a delicious pudding by steaming 30 minutes in double boiler, and serving hot with any desired sauce—hard, creamy, foamy or fruit.

Don't beat fudge as soon as it is taken from the fire. You will find it will be much creamier if first put into a cold bowl, and then beaten.

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Opportunity May Knock, but More Likely She'll Pass By

It is a dangerous thing to wait for opportunities until it becomes a habit. Energy and inclination for hard work ooze out in the waiting. Opportunity becomes invisible to those who are doing nothing, or looking somewhere else for it.

It is the great worker, the man who is alert for chances, that sees them.—O. S. Marden.

Here's Very Fast Way to "Alkalize" Acid-Indigestion Away

Amazingly Fast Relief Now from "Acid Indigestion" Over-Indulgence, Nausea, and Upsets



If you want really quick relief from an upset or painful stomach condition—arising from acidity following over-eating, smoking, mixtures of foods or stimulants—just try this:

frequent sufferer from "acid stomach," use Phillips' Milk of Magnesia 30 minutes after meals. You'll forget you have a stomach!

When you buy, see that any box or bottle you accept is clearly marked "Genuine Phillips' Milk of Magnesia."

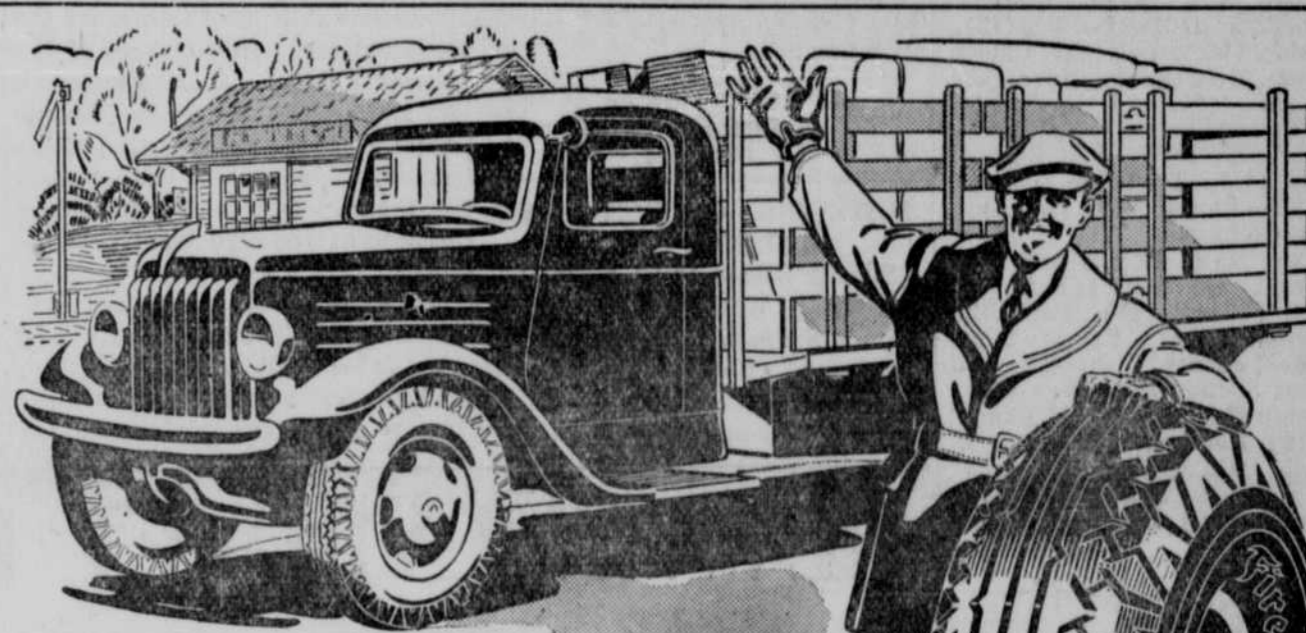
Take—2 teaspoonfuls of Phillips' Milk of Magnesia in a full glass of water. OR—2 Phillips' Milk of Magnesia Tablets, the exact equivalent of the liquid form.

This acts almost immediately to alkalize the excess acid in the stomach. Neutralizes the acids that cause headaches, nausea, and indigestion pains. You feel results at once.

| SIGNS WHICH OFTEN INDICATE "ACID STOMACH" | |
|---|---------------|
| PAIN AFTER EATING | SLEEPLESSNESS |
| FEELING OF WEAKNESS | INDIGESTION |
| NAUSEA | MOUTH ACIDITY |
| LOSS OF APPETITE | SOUR STOMACH |
| FREQUENT HEADACHES | |

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