

and a huge dog came rushing toward him. Barely he snatched at the low-hung branches of a small tree and swung himself out of reach of the snapping jaws.

As he clung desperately to the swaying limbs he heard a voice calling off the dog. An instant later a huge man—almost a giant—came to the foot of the tree and peered upward at him. "Who are you?" he demanded, harshly. "And what do you want here?"

"I don't want anything," Ford tried hard to steady his voice, but found it difficult. "I don't want anything. I was passing quietly along the road when your brute rushed at me."

"That's what I keep him for." The man's voice was grim. He kept his hand in the collar of the still bristling dog. "Drop down and let me look at you. The dog won't hurt you."

Hesitantly but thankfully Ford dropped to the road. The dog made a leap toward him, but the giant dragged him back. "Down!" he ordered. Then he turned to Ford. "You don't look quite like a tramp," he

"Damn you! Damn you! Damn you!" he babbled.

The giant did not say a word. He simply reached out and took Ford by the collar and shook him. Ford's teeth rattled, his head snapped backward and forward, his limbs jerked like those of a marionette. He was helpless as a baby. When at last the giant released him he staggered dizzily for a few steps and then sat down abruptly by the side of the road.

WHEN his reeling senses returned, the giant was holding out the packet of stolen bills. Evidently he had picked them out of the dust. "Your property, mister?" he questioned.

Ford clutched at the bills. "Yes! Yes!" he stammered. "They're mine. Of course, they're mine. Whose should they be?"

"Humph! I don't know. * * Come in!" The giant gestured toward the house.

Ford dared no further demur. Clutching his packet he staggered up the path, followed by his insistent host. As he went he stared at the building they were approaching and noted that it was of stone, massive and rough-hewn, with narrow, deep-set windows, most of which were dark and blank, though two or three near the door emitted gleams of light. As Ford came opposite these he saw that they were barred.

The giant seemed to be watching for his start of surprise, for when it came he spoke quickly.

"First time you ever slept in a jail?" he asked, crudely.

Ford halted. "A jail!" he quavered.

The other chuckled. "I reckon it won't be the last time," he remarked, meaningly. "However, you needn't be afraid—yet. The county built a new jail ten miles from here and I bought the old building for a farmhouse. So you ain't in prison—yet. Walk in!"

Ford dared not refuse. He dared not even try to run, for the dog, though quiet, was trailing at the giant's heels, and Ford was

no match for either of them. He stepped through the doorway and his heart sank lower than ever as he saw his host swing shut the heavy grating and lock it. He was helpless and he knew it. If the giant had guessed that he was a fugitive from justice and intended to give him up he could do nothing to save himself.

Dully he looked about him. The room in which he stood had evidently been the office of the jail. It was large and bare, furnished only with chairs and a rough table bearing a lamp. A dwarfish man, long in the legs but short in the body, almost a hunchback, with long loose-hung arms and cunning eyes, was just putting a bottle and some glasses on the table.

The giant waved his unwilling guest to a chair. "Sit down," he ordered. Then as Ford sank thankfully into the seat, he pushed the bottle toward him. "Have a drink."

But Ford shook his head. "No, thank you," he said, wearily. "I can't stand spirits. But if you will give me a glass of water and something to eat I'll be glad."

"All right!" The giant sat down across the table. "Joe!" he said, addressing the hunchback. "Get the gentleman something to eat, and then get out of sight. The gentleman doesn't often see a pair like you and me and we're liable to spoil his appetite."

The fugitive did not protest. The statement was only too true. Silently he waited while the hunchback brought bread and cold meat and coffee and then effaced himself.



"Give me my money!" he roared, as the two went down upon the rails.

growled, appraisingly. "And yet—see here! This place is private property. This road does not 'pass' to anywhere. It stops here. Now what are you doing here?"

Ford hesitated. "I've lost my way," he muttered.

"Lost your way, eh? Where are you bound for?"

Ford did not know where he was bound for. He did not even know in which direction from the city the train had brought him. But he had to answer something. "I'm going to Roslyn," he answered, boldly. Roslyn was one hundred miles south of the city whence he had fled.

THE giant stared. Even in the moonlight Ford could see that he stared. "So you're going to Roslyn, are you?" His tones spoke incredulous irony; his eyes never left Ford's face.

"Yes! I'm going to Roslyn," Ford spoke doggedly. "Is it far?"

"Only about a hundred miles. It's too far to go tonight. Come in, I'll give you a bed." The man did not invite; he commanded.

But Ford shook his head. "No! I'll go on," he declared.

"You will come in." The man's voice was insistent. His hand wavered on the dog's collar and the animal bristled and growled threateningly. "You will come in!" The giant stood aside and waved his unwilling guest toward the house.

Ford's nerves gave way. "Damn you!" he shrieked. "Damn you. I'll see you in hell first." Impotently he shook his first in the other's face.



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