

FISTS OF CLAY

KID BRADY MAKES A HIT AND A MISS

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"Say, ain't she a bute, a bute from Montana, huh?" whispered Kid Brady

IN THE FIRST PLACE, Miss Gladys Luther should never have attempted to "do" Chinatown unescorted. In the second place, to forbid anything to such wealth and beauty was to invite its accomplishment. And in the third place, where Miss Gladys went, a radiant shadow in the shape of her satellite, Hilda Wright, always followed. To trace the route, geographical or mental, that finally brought them to a questionable guide on Dupont street would be a long, tortuous and unprofitable trail that no doubt had its origin in some obscure remark or incident forgotten in the birth of the idea. Be that as it may, a certain evening found them supposedly disguised in the plainest, most unpretentious dresses, bargaining for the underground tour. Gladys did all the talking; she always did, for Hilda's most characteristic remark was an echo, and she did it in a manner that made the shifty-eyed, sinister-faced guide sit up and take notice. The outcome of the conversation was the closing of a bargain whereby the guide was to show them Chinatown for two dollars and a half, they paying the tips, which he

assured them were quite necessary, and for which Gladys was to advance one dollar. She produced a plump purse on which the guide fixed covetous eyes as her slim fingers fumbled for the transient silver. With these preliminaries satisfactorily concluded, they set out to see the Chinese underworld.

IT so chanced that on that particular night Kid Brady of the South Side Athletic Club, having broken training after a series of most successful engagements in the roped arena, bethought to take a well-earned night off, and to enjoy the fruits of his victories. A necessary, but at times inconvenient, trainer might have offered some objections had the matter been broached to him, and so young Mr. Brady, who abhorred argument, did not confide his plans to that tyrannous official, but carefully avoiding several sporting resorts where the faithful trainer would be apt to look for him, arrived by a circuitous route upon the outskirts of Chinatown. The successive refreshments that had cheered him along the way lent an additional color to the attractiveness of the neighborhood, and the monotony of his training diet aroused his appetite for foreign diversions. Recollecting a certain chop suey parlor most favorably spoken of by some of his associates, The Kid hied him forthwith in that direction to regale his palate and to stimulate the gastronomic imagination with celestial culinary mystery.

The restaurant was on the beaten track of sight-seers, where the slant-eyed denizens cater to them with the tiny bowls of tea and the insipid, candied sweetmeats of the East, and as The Kid manipulated his chop sticks and vaguely speculated upon the possible composition of his epicurean debauch, the "hop-head" guide with his two dainty charges in tow sailed in and came to anchor at the table opposite. Immediately chop suey as a speculative mystery or a satisfaction to the inner man lost all attraction to The Kid, when such a feast was presented to his eyes, and he began to devour in detail the contour and coloring of the vision that Miss Gladys presented. His speculation, aroused and stimulated by his repast, promptly turned to the guide and his fair charges.

"Wat t' 'ell," he asked himself, "is d' hop-head corkscrew doin' wid d' pair a' peaches? Dey musta got loose from some hot-house show an' rolled in here by mistake." And Kid Brady, his gallantry aroused by a sense of possible danger, resolved to constitute himself their attendant shadow and unsuspected guardian.

He watched Miss Gladys toy with her sweetmeats and tea. Never before

had he seen food dispatched so eloquently and daintily. It was as if some goddess had condescendingly descended to vulgar, material mortality. Could the almost imperceptible movement of that rounded chin be mastication? It seemed a profanation for that lovely mouth to be put to such a use. All the untutored poetry in The Kid's nature rebelled against it, and then, astonished at his own thoughts, he fell to wondering vaguely at himself. "Say, ain't she a bute, a bute from Montana, huh?" whispered Kid Brady incoherently.

MISS GLADYS chatted gaily with her companion, her eyes roving with bright curiosity about the place, enjoying every detail. Suddenly they encountered the steady, fascinated stare of The Kid, his artless admiration as open and candid as the skies. A frown of annoyance puckered the white expanse between her arched brows, but quickly vanished in a relenting smile. The Kid's heart missed several beats, and then tried to make up for them in a mad gallop.

"Gee," he murmured, "wat a pair a' lamps! If she bats 'em at me agin, me fer d' foolish mausion, sure."

But the enslaving eyes had taken their fill of the place and Miss Gladys arose like a princess, it seemed to Mr. Brady, paid the noiselessly gliding waiter and swept out, leaving a faint trace of violet struggling with the oriental atmosphere of the restaurant. The Kid came to his feet dizzily and had almost gained the door when the gliding waiter intercepted him with an indignant, "Washa malla?"

"Huh?" demanded The Kid.

"Two bittie," was the direct reply. The Kid dropped half a dollar into the curling yellow palm and dashed out the door leaving the Chinaman gaping after him in open-mouthed amazement.

Miss Gladys and her attendant were admiring a shop window a few doors (Continued on Page 9)



He wanted to crawl under the ropes; he was going, going!