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The B. V. D. Company, New York.

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a professional pickpocket—a hand-bag expert, to do it. We followed her into two stores this morning, before the 'dip' got to her. He got them."

"And the jewels?" inquired Lawson to whom the end always justified the means. "Who pawned them? Did you find out?"

"The pawnbroker described him as a tallish man, rather good looking, who gave the name of Arnold and said he was from the South."

They had turned up Fifth Avenue. Lawson was wondering, as their cab threaded its way in and out of the long lines of vehicles, who it could be. Who was the mysterious man who had shared the spoils with Belle Livingston the night before? It was not Harrington, at least.

"Wait here," said Clare as they pulled up in front of the Carlyle home. "I telephoned by long distance to Mr. Carlyle and he said that he would meet me here. Mrs. Carlyle, I believe, had an engagement with some friends."

The shock of what Clare had revealed had told on the man, even in a few hours. Tactfully, she reported the developments of the day. Carlyle gripped the arms of his chair as she proceeded.

"I can't believe it," groaned the unhappy millionaire, still unconvinced, even though he saw the jewels before him—mute witnesses to the truth of what he had heard. "There must be some mistake. I can't believe Augusta would gamble."

"Do you really want to hear the truth, with your own ears?" asked Clare, facing him squarely.

He looked half frightened, as if afraid to know the full truth.

"Yes," he said in a husky voice, at length. "Yes, I was ready to pay to hush up a possible scandal. I may as well know the worst, know what I am hushing up, too."

THE detectaphone was working perfectly when Clare, Lawson and Carlyle entered the empty apartment that night. Clare had added a third set of receivers, so that the disillusioned husband might hear also.

Hour after hour they listened to choice bits of gossip and fragments of scandal that the instrument brought down to them.

At length, after a silence, new voices were heard, faintly at first.

"There she is," exclaimed Carlyle, recognizing his wife's voice immediately.

It was a man and woman talking, the same man's voice that Lawson and Clare had heard the night before.

Still willing to admit—hoping for—a chance of mistake, Carlyle listened. The first sentence was a death blow to any doubts he might still have.

"Now, Gussie, listen to me. I did n't want you to play. You're in bad again. What's the matter? You act as if you had lost something, everything. I never saw you so desperate. Why, he'll find out this time, if you—"

"I have lost something—everything. He will find out."

"That means me," ejaculated Carlyle hoarsely.

"I've made a pile at this sort of thing, Gussie," remarked the man, soothingly.

There was no answer. "I'm going to quit it. It's only a question of time when I'll have to, with all this investigating going on. Gussie—"

A pause. "Let us make a getaway, together. Augusta—I love you—I'd do anything, everything for you, give you anything—only—"

"What's that?" exclaimed Lawson, as a peculiar sibilant sound came over the wire. Clare kicked his foot gently, but it was too late. He had spoken too quickly. Carlyle had noted it, too.

"A kiss," he cried, furiously. "Gussie—tell me—will you?" Still no answer. Another kiss. Carlyle was raging. "Answer me, dearest."

There was a confused noise, as of some one struggling to avoid another person.

"Don't—don't," pleaded a woman's voice. "You know how weak I am. You know how I got into this thing, the fascination, the excitement, the glamor and glitter of it. You know how you suggested bringing me here the first time, before I knew you had anything to do with it. You know how you have held me in your power, though no one else knew it."

The man said something they did not hear. "You know how I have lost everything—everything," wailed Mrs. Carlyle, "except what you ask now. I have even stolen my own jewels. Oh—my God—what shall I tell him when he finds the truth? He thinks some one else stole them. Oh—you have all been using me—oh—oh—!"

She had burst into hysterical tears, as the man tried to calm her.

Carlyle was growing more and more furious, scarcely able to control himself.

"Damn him!" he muttered between his clenched teeth. "I'll break every bone in his body for that—the black-guard."

He had pulled the receiver off his head and was making for the door wildly in the darkness.

Clare laid her hand on his arm. "No, no!" he raged, groping ahead. "Let me go."

Lawson was at his side in an instant. "Mr. Carlyle," he urged. "Wait just a minute. Please. Listen—ah—she's talking."

The woman's voice came over the wire, thrilling with emotion.

"You have no right to ask this," she sobbed.

"Then you will not?"

"Oh—please—please—don't ask me. I can not—Oh—oh! No, I can't—I won't—I won't."

"Choose. It is either accept this new debt tonight—you know what that means—or—what?—you won't go with me? Then—curse the luck—she's fainted. Mary, some water and a little brandy—Mary!"

CLARE had jerked the receiver from her head and had raised a window looking out on the street. As Lawson switched on the lights her little lace handkerchief fluttered in the draught. She waved it frantically.

Across the street three men in plain clothes hurried over and entered the Recherche as if they had sprung from nowhere.

"Come," cried Clare. "Billy—Mr. Carlyle—hurry!"

The elevator shot past them without stopping as they took the winding stairs two at a time.

In the gambling apartment all was confusion. Shrieks of women mingled with the curses of men. Harrington, ashen pale, was vainly endeavoring to argue with the detectives.

A tall man, his hair dishevelled and coat torn, rushed desperately past. Lawson and Carlyle tackled him together.

"I've got you at last," ground out Carlyle, his anger giving him almost superhuman strength.

Inside the apartment, tables were overturned. Mrs. Livingston, with blazing eyes, was demanding an explanation. Two of the central office men were gathering up cards and chips, the roulette wheels and faro boxes. In the drawing room was a sad collection of gamblers.

"He'll never take me back. He'll leave me," sobbed one woman.

Clare brushed past, into the boudoir. On the bed, pale and still motionless, lay Mrs. Carlyle, forgotten in the excitement.

Gently Clare unfastened her dress, moistened her head and fanned her face, forcing a few drops of stimulant between her hard-set little milk white teeth.

Meanwhile Carlyle and Lawson had let their captive up.

"Good God!" exclaimed Carlyle, as the light shone full on his face. "Hennessey!" (Continued on page 15)

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