

A LIFE FOR SALE

BY SYDNEY HORLER

CHAPTER XII

Martin Creighton, meanwhile, in his Hampstead lodgings lived a quiet uneventful life, so uneventful in fact, that it was almost impossible for him to believe the truth. He had more than a passing suspicion that all his movements were being watched, but this was not the cause which kept him on the spot. There was the girl—that girl about whom he found himself thinking at practically every moment of the day. Sooner or later the Colossus would be bound to send for him, and then he must take his chance of meeting her again. Although she had turned from him in something like horror at Rimini's Restaurant, he felt that, however foolish the idea might be, his whole future life was bound up in this girl whom he had met in such bizarre circumstances, Fate, having an insoluble reason of its own, had caused their paths to cross. He had to protect her, for that she was still in dire peril he knew instinctively.

Two things he asked himself. The first was what connection had the girl with the British Foreign Secretary? And the second: Why had she been in the house of the Colossus that night? There was a third query: Was she the girl whose appeal for help he had heard over the telephone wire? But the answer to this problem was linked with the second.

It was weary waiting, and even his walks across the glorious Heath palled after the first two days. He spent practically all his time out of doors—first, because he felt himself to be in training for some stupendous future ordeal; and, secondly, because Mrs. Perkins' reminiscence of that distinguished servant of the local gas office, Mr. Dropstick, increased in volume as time went on.

Returning from a visit to Highgate on the afternoon of the third day, Creighton stiffened to attention when his landlady informed him that he had a visitor. Uttering a mental "Now for it!" he walked into the sitting-room. One look at the deeply tanned man lounging in the uncomfortable easy chair, and he burst out laughing; what he had expected and what he had found were as the poles asunder.

"Jenkins!" he exclaimed; "how the deuce—?" The last time he had seen Harry Jenkins was in a South American mining camp.

"Never thought to see me turn up again like a bad penny, did you, old son?" The visitor rose and gave the other a hearty hand-grip. "But the truth was, after you cleared out I got fed up with everything and decided to come home myself. I sold out for over six thousand quid, and came home in style like a bloomin' multimillionaire. Travelled first class, and, the luck holding good, fell in with a big pot on the boat, one Sir Benjamin Travers, who offered me wonderful terms to go out to China in six months' time. In the meantime, I intend to enjoy myself, and I want you to chip in with the was-sal bowl business. You know I was always fond of you, you old son of a gun. No excuses, now—you'll have to dine with me to-night and go on to a show afterwards. Possibly we may take one over the hic—eight, but if you're the same chap as you used to be you'll raise objection to that."

If there's one thing I positively loathe," concluded Harry Jenkins, "it is getting well lit up by myself." Martin was obliged to smile.

"Yes, I'll dine with you, Harry, and it's damn glad I am to look at your old ugly mug again. But how on earth did you run me down?"

Jenkins chuckled. "That was easy," he said. "I called at the flat in Guildford Street from which you wrote me last, found you had gone, but got this address from the housekeeper, who has been forwarding on your letters. How are things going with you, Martin?"

Creighton was tempted to tell this old friend the plain, unvarnished narrative of all that had happened to him since arriving back in England. Then he decided to wait. Jenkins, so far as he knew him, was one of the best chaps in the world, but he hated the thought of having to confess that he had lost five thousand pounds through what he knew now to be an act of plain idiocy.

"Oh, fairly," he compromised.

"If you are fed up with London by the time I leave you had better come out with me to China," suggested the other. "In the meantime, you are all right for to-night, then? Make it seven o'clock at Prince's. Suit you?"

"I'll be there," promised Creighton.

Jenkins arrived ten minutes late. He was full of apologies.

"Do you mind if we cut the show out for to-night, Creighton?" he asked. "When I got back to the hotel, I found a telegram from my gov'nor. He is arriving at King's Cross from the North at nine-thirty, and he has asked me to meet him. Dear old boy, I feel I must go."

"Of course. You're lucky to have a father to meet, Jenks."

It was an agreeable meal, Jenkins doing most of the talking. Martin was thankful his companion was such a voluble conversationalist, since, as time went on, he found it more and more difficult to start relating his own adventures. He knew very well what would happen: his companion would receive the story about the Colossus and his advertising his own life with an amused grin of incredulity. The other would think that he was trying to pull his leg. And then there was the girl. . . . He did not care to discuss her with anyone. At nine o'clock the two friends parted, Jenkins hailing a taxi to take him to King's Cross. Left to his own resources, Creighton strolled idly through the West End towards the Hampstead Tube at the Trafalgar Square end of the Strand.

In order to avoid the crowd in Coventry Street, he turned into Lower Regent Street, and, attracted by the quietude of the Mall, found himself, after a short while, in that noble thoroughfare Carlton House Terrace.

Being in no hurry, he stopped to watch with idle curiosity a number of men and women in evening dress entering an imposing mansion. Creighton knew that many of the houses in Carlton House Terrace belonged to distinguished families, and guessing that a ball was being held in this particular house, he was about to pass on, when he quickly and determinedly changed his mind. He was going in to this house himself!

What had made him come

to this unorthodox decision was seeing a girl step out of a taxicab. The light from an electric standard fell full upon her face as she crossed the wide pavement.

Martin drew in his breath. He had not been mistaken. She was the girl of his dreams—the girl who had fallen into the power of the Colossus, the girl whom he had sworn in his heart to protect and succor.

What could she be doing there? Why was she entering that house? Was she one of the invited guests?

Quickly came some sort of revelation. He remembered Luigo's words: "A million pardons, M'sieur, but I do not know the young lady. Her companion, however, is a patron of mine; he is Lord Belshaven, the Foreign Secretary."

This must be Lord Belshaven's house. Then what—? Instantly his mind went back to "Mr. Jones." This girl, no doubt, had been given instructions by that super-crook. She was entering the house of a famous politician, a man occupying one of the most important positions in the State.

Exactly what he intended to do, should he be successful in gaining an entrance, Martin had no definite idea. His mind was centered solely on the girl. Some instinct warned him that she might be going, probably against her will, into a position of danger. She might—

He waited no longer. Fortunately he was in evening kit, and when the footman, standing just inside the entrance, looked at him questioningly, he acted on the inspiration that had suddenly come.

"I am from the Foreign Office," he said with brusque authority; "I have an important message for his lordship."

"Very good, sir." The man bowed, and Creighton passed on.

The great house contained some hundreds of guests, and mingling always with the biggest groups, saying nothing, but keeping both eyes and ears alert, Creighton succeeded in his endeavor to remain in the place unsuspected. He was on tenderhooks all the time, however, for if the girl once recognized him he was afraid she might give the alarm. Why, after his two offers of help, she should shrink from him as she had done at Rimini's, he did not know; but he must keep as near as possible to her that night, nevertheless.

It was not until half an hour had passed that Creighton caught sight of the girl. Standing near the open doorway of one of the large rooms, he looked upward, to notice her passing along a small balcony leading from the top of the stairs.

He followed quickly, two resolutions firmly fixed in his mind. The first was that he had to see the girl alone, and explain to her once again that he was a friend, and not a creature of the Colossus. The second was that he felt he must be on hand should the girl attempt to do anything foolish.

His footsteps made no sound on the thick carpet, and the girl did not look. Quickening his pace, he was within six yards of her, when she turned into a room on the right of the corridor.

Apparently she was in a hurry, for she neglected to close the door behind her, and Creighton, looking through the six inches of space, watched her cross the room that was furnished as a study, go to a bureau and, selecting a key from a bunch, unlock a drawer.

In the whirl of thoughts that he had, Creighton came instantly to the conclusion that his first impression was correct: this girl had been forced by the Colossus to commit a criminal act. For-

getting everything but his desire to help her, he crossed the room, and was by her side as soon as she had withdrawn a sheaf of papers, bound with red tape, from the drawer.

"Put them back!" he said quickly.

Then several things seemed to happen almost at once. The startled girl, after one nervous glance at him, made a sudden cry, the door opened wider, and a slim, wiry man with a determined face, wearing a monocle, strode into the room.

Creighton's brain worked rapidly. He guessed that this man, who was a complete stranger to him, was suspicious—perhaps he was something to do with a branch of the Secret Service—and he must concentrate this suspicion upon himself so that the girl could be entirely cleared.

He had already snatched the papers from the girl's hand. His original intention, of course, had been to replace them in the drawer, but now, thrusting them into an inside pocket, he started for the door.

"What's the hurry?" asked a voice in clipped tones. The speaker's hand went to a pocket, and emerged holding a small revolver. "I suggest you return those papers," added the stranger.

Creighton, in reply, acted in the most suspicious manner that he could devise. Assuming an expression of desperation, he rushed blindly forward and, disregarding the weapon the other held, endeavored to fling the man to the floor. There was a brief but spirited struggle, and then, taking advantage of his unknown opponent slipping on the polished floor, he hit him with his clenched fist under the chin.

Gaining the corridor, he sprinted along this, dropping the papers into a large ersuscan vase standing in a corner on a pedestal.

By this time some sort of alarm must have been given, for from below there came sounds of hurrying feet.

He had to get away. There were two vital reasons. The first and most important was that his escape would completely concentrate all the attention upon himself. Also, it would be fatal for his other plans if he were captured. He must retain his liberty in order to run the Colossus to earth.

Escape through the crowded hall was impossible; moreover, he had to act in a markedly suspicious manner if he were to achieve his purpose. Turning the corridor, he noticed a door which, by some lucky chance, was open. Slipping through this, he found himself at the top of an iron staircase, which apparently led down into the garden.

A minute later he was running across the wide lawn towards the high wall, on the other side of which was the Mall. Once over that wall and he felt he would be safe.

But for the creeper which covered this eight-foot obstacle, however, he might have been unable to climb it; but, securing both hand and foot holds, he was soon in the Mall and walking rapidly away in the gloom.

There came no sound of pursuit. His foresight in quietly closing the door leading to the iron staircase had prevented anyone tracking him. No doubt all the rooms in the great mansion were being searched, and by the time that the correct solution was made he would be well away.

He arrived home at 13 Fitzroy Street, with out further mishap. He was minus hat and overcoat, but remembered that there was nothing about either by which he could be identified.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"Lucile is the Happiest Girl"

So many mothers nowadays talk about giving their children fruit juices, as if this were a new discovery. As a matter of fact, for over fifty years, mothers have been accomplishing results far surpassing anything you can secure from home prepared fruit juices, by using pure, wholesome California Fig Syrup, which is prepared under the most exacting laboratory supervision from ripe California Figs, richest of all fruits in laxative and nourishing properties.



It's marvelous to see how billows, weak, feverish, sallow, constipated, under-nourished children respond to its gentle influence; how their breath clears up, color flames in their cheeks, and they become sturdy, playful, energetic again. A Western mother, Mrs. H. J. Stoll, Valley P. O., Nebraska, says: "My little daughter, Roma Lucile, was constipated from babyhood. I became worried about her and decided to give her some California Fig Syrup. It stopped her constipation quick; and the way it improved her color and made her pick up made me realize how rundown she had been. She is so sturdy and well now, and always in such good humor that neighbors say she's the happiest girl in the West."

Like all good things, California Fig Syrup is limited, but you can always get the genuine by looking for the name "California" on the carton.

Wanted No Funeral Grief

That there be no display of grief at his funeral was asked in the will of Reginald F. Arthur, an attorney, of South Brent, England, who died recently. "Merely carry me when nobody is about to my grave and let me be," the will read. He stipulated that there was to be "no clergymen, no church service, no mourning flowers and no hearse or mourning coaches."

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Gain Physical Vigor — Youthfulness With Clear Skin and Vivacious Eyes That Sparkle With Glorious Health

Here's the recipe that banishes fat and brings into blossom all the natural attractiveness that every woman possesses.

Every morning take one-half teaspoonful of Kruschen Salts in a glass of hot water before breakfast—cut down on pastry and fatty meats—go light on potatoes, butter, cream and sugar—in 4 weeks get on the scales and note how many pounds of fat have vanished.

Get a bottle of Kruschen Salts—the cost is trifling and it lasts 4 weeks. If even this first bottle doesn't convince you this is the easiest, safest and surest way to lose fat—if you don't feel a superb improvement in health—so gloriously energetic—vigorously alive—your money gladly returned.

But be sure for your health's sake that you ask for and get Kruschen Salts. Get them at any drugstore in the world.

The Radio Age
"Yes, I had scintia."
"What wave-length?" — Hummel (Hamburg).

Why not have A CLEAR SKIN?

Cuticura Soap used constantly and Cuticura Ointment occasionally will promote and maintain a clear skin, free from pimples, blackheads, redness, roughness and other unsightly eruptions.

Soap 25c. Ointment 25 and 50c.
Proprietors: Potter Drug & Chemical Corp., Malden, Mass.

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NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

Uneda Bakers

New Gold Dredge

Sent to Mexican Fields

Salida, Cal —(UP)— A Gold Dredge which, its inventor claims, will extract gold from desert sands, was sent from here to Mexico recently, where it will be put to work on a 30,000-acre tract in Sonora.

The machine, which is equipped with crawler wheels and a power shovel, was invented by a Visalia man, C. W. Fuller. He refused to discuss details of his invention except to say that it does not re-

quire water to extract gold, as do ordinary dredges.

He said it will travel at the rate of a mile an hour, treating all sand in its path.

Keepers Execute

Former Circus Bear

Portland, Ore —(UP)— "Bruin," a 400-pound black bear, formerly with the Barnes circus until he became "unmanageable" and a recent resident of Washington Park zoo, here, has entered the uncon-

fining wilderness of his "happy hunting ground."

Julius Franckiewicz, Barnes road animal trainer, gave the bear to the park after Bruin failed to respond to his curb. The animal was placed in a big rocky pit with scores of his fellows. But Bruin didn't like it. He clambered up the wire netting surrounding the enclosure and browsed about in the park. Several times he was recaptured and reconfined. The bear apparently believed it a game. He escaped more often.

Finally, the patience of park

and zoo officials fled. After a council of war, they decided he must die. A few days ago, Bruin was executed.

ELECTRICITY TESTS LOBSTERS

Boston —(UP)— An electrical device, developed by a professor at Boston university, to determine whether a lobster is fit to be eaten, recently was adopted by the Massachusetts Fish and Game Department. All lobsters that fail to respond to a n electric shock by a sharp contraction of the tail, or by movements of the flippers, will be condemned.