



By DORNFORD YATES

SYNOPSIS

John Spencer and his cousin, Geoffrey Bohun, are vacationing in Austria. Geoffrey is a gifted portrait painter but prefers to paint landscapes. Strolling in the forest, John hears voices and decides to investigate. From cover he finds four men burying a man in green livery who, evidently, had been murdered. Pharaoh is the leader of the gang, the others are Dewdrop, Rush and Bugle. Unfortunately, John makes himself known to the assassins by dropping a letter with his name and address. He tells Geoffrey and his chauffeur, Barley, of his adventure. Geoffrey, realizing that John's life is in danger, declares he must vanish. Spencer discovers that the livery of the murdered man corresponds to the livery of the servants of Yorick castle, and tells Countess Helena, mistress of the castle, what she had seen. With Geoffrey and Barley, John starts for Annabel, a nearby village. They encounter Pharaoh. In making their getaway they exchange shots with the gang, without serious result. They arrive at the Yorick estate, where Lady Helena had requested John and his cousin to meet her. She reveals that her father had converted his immense fortune into gold and hidden it in a secret vault in the castle. Knowing that his son, Valentine, Helena's brother, was incapable of controlling the fortune, he had revealed it to Helena alone just before his death. The news leaked out, and Pharaoh is after the treasure. They planned that Geoffrey and Barley would go to Salzburg to watch for Pharaoh, while John was to remain at Plumage. Several nights go by without important incident. John visits Yorick castle and finds that Helena's brother, Count Valentine, is there and with him, on most friendly terms, is Pharaoh as Captain Flaming. Hearing that John is stopping at Plumage, Pharaoh speaks to his servant, Dewdrop. John suspects a plot. As dinner is announced, Helena and John escape.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

Then the engine of the Rolls coughed twice, and the car slowed down. As I frowned, the truth came pelting—to sear my brain. "What is it, John? What is it?" "Petrol," I said hoarsely. "I meant to fill up before we patrolled this evening; but with all this Pharaoh business—" The nearest village lay roughly 11 miles off, and whether it boasted a pump we could not tell. The road was a main highway. If I locked her switch and her bonnet,



"What is it, John? What is it?" no man could take the Rolls, but, left on the road, she was bound to attract attention. Some forty-five paces ahead a track led into the forest—a decent track; what was more, it ran slightly downhill. If I could manhandle the Rolls as far as its mouth, her weight would help me to carry her out of sight. But the road though level, was cambered. While Helena steered and stood by to apply the brake, I moved the Rolls by the spokes of one of her wheels. The strain was great, for the car was very heavy. In desperation I moved her perhaps six inches towards the crown of the road, but then the weight of her beat me, and she began to return; and in my effort to hold her before I could cry for the brake I strained or tore some muscle in the small of my back. I smothered a grunt of pain—too late for Helena's ears, before I had drawn myself up, my lady was standing beside me. "You've hurt yourself, John." "A muscle," said I. "It's nothing. As long as I don't use it, I'll be all right." Ruefully I regarded the Rolls. "But we'll have to leave her here." If we were now in no peril, our case was sorry enough. Stay with

the Rolls we dared not, for the chance that some friend would come by before some enemy seemed to us very slight. Helena's brilliant plan was back in the melting-pot, for her nurse would have kept her counsel, but we could not now summon Geoffrey until we were sure of our host. And the Rolls had to be recovered before we could move. "Are you sure you can walk?" said Helena. "Comfortably," said I. "And if I saw Pharaoh coming, I quite expect I could run. The burning question is where to look for a lodging that's not by the side of this road." Together, by the light of the torch, we studied the map. Upon this there was shown a farm, called Holy Tree. So far as we could make out, it stood some seven miles off. We had walked for an hour and a half before the track we were using came to an end. The going was rough and, because I was weary I stumbled, and every time I did so the muscle which I had injured protested with all its might. "It is useless," said I, halting. "We must wait till the dawn comes in." I stepped to a mighty beech and fung the clothes I was bearing down at its foot. "You must lie down here, my lady, and take some rest. And Sabre and I will watch." "I see," said Helena, slowly. Then she put up her hands and slid my coat from my shoulders and drew it clear of my arms. "You've got to change," she said, and, despite my protests, insisted on helping me into dry clothing. "Now you lie still," said Helena, lighting my torch. "I'm going to get some leaves." Three times she went and came with her coat full of dry leaves. These she poured into a hollow by the side of the beech. I found there an ease of body which I had not expected that night. And she sat down behind me, with her back to the trunk. "When we get to Holy Tree, I'm going to borrow some lotion and rub your back. I shall tell them we're brother and sister, so remember to treat me rough. It's really important, John, if you value my name."

The fluting of a bird woke me, and a glance at the leaves above me showed that the dawn was up. At once I rolled on to my side, but Helena's lodgment was empty and she and Sabre were gone. My back was stiff, as was natural, but to my relief I found I could walk with ease, so I set off towards the clearing, for there, the night before, I had heard the song of a rill. When I had found this, I bathed my head and my hands, but before I had finished this very simple toilet, Sabre gave tongue beside me. A moment later my lady stepped out of the woods. "How's his back?" said Helena, taking her seat on a tree-stump. "Stiff," said I, "but better." "Rest is the medicine," says she. "We simply must find a farm. Besides, I want my breakfast." "God send it you quick," said I. "We must go on walking east; but if after half an hour we don't strike a path or something—" "I've struck one," says she. "I don't know where it leads to, but I think we might try and find out."

Nearly an hour had gone by when we saw before us no farm, but a little, time-honored cottage, standing in a glade of the forest, with a garden of flowers about it. "Bread and milk," said Helena, turning a glowing face. "And honey, perhaps—there's a beehive." We were 40 paces away, when a young woman entered the doorway and stood looking into the garden alight with the sparkling flowers. For a moment she stared upon them. Then she leaned against the jamb, put her arm up to her eyes and began to weep. Helena and I stopped dead. Then— "You stay here," she said quietly, "and I'll go on and see what the trouble is." Twenty minutes went by before I saw her again, and then she came out of the garden with the lass that had stood at the door. The latter was smiling now. For a moment the two stood speaking. Then the woman dropped a curtsey and, leaving Helena standing, started across the forest in haste. Helena beckoned to me, and I got to my feet. As I came towards her— "The trick," she said, "has been

done. Our hostess has gone for petrol, and when she comes back in two hours, she's going away for good—for three days, at least, to Salzburg." I followed her into the cleanest of tiny kitchens, all bright with old wood and copper and smelling of sweet wood-smoke. Beneath the open window a table was laid with our breakfast. Sabre was lying on the flags in front of the hearth, and a pretty, fair-haired baby that might have been two years old was seated beside the Alsation. Helena sat down by the infant and drew him on to her lap. "Max," she said, "this is my brother. He's rather nice."

CHAPTER V

The Forester's Cottage. "CONVENTION he darned," said Helena. "All right," I said. "I can't help it. Do what you like. If the Countess Helena of Yorick is determined to dwell in a solitary, two-roomed cottage with an imitation brother, an infant-in-arms and a dog—" "Till your cousin arrives, she is. And now listen to me, Freda's man is in Salzburg; he's lying in a hospital there and gradually getting better of a fever which nearly carried him off. Yesterday she got a letter, saying that now she might visit him, but that on no account must she bring with her the child. "I offered to care for the baby and to give her a present as well, if my 'brother' and I might stay here until her return. She simply jumped at the bargain—she's gone for petrol and when she leaves for Salzburg she'll take a letter to your cousin.

"Now if, to serve convention, you'd have thrown such a chance away, we'd better say good-bye here and now. You're jealous of my honor. Well and good. If you weren't, we shouldn't be here. It is because you respect me, because you're so very anxious that I shouldn't put a foot wrong, that I like you and trust you."

"All right," I said slowly, and hardly knew my voice. "I'll play the pretty game."

When Freda returned she was heavy laden, for she bore two gallons of petrol which she had begged of the farmer that sold her milk; and as well she brought two chickens and a basket of new-laid eggs. She had little time to spare, if she was to catch the train which would bring her to Salzburg that night. I took my ease for the most of the day, but while I am sure the repose did much for my back, it was Helena's use of the lotion that actually healed the strain. "Tonight," I said. "I am going to get the Rolls. I'll fill her up at some pump and then find some place near Witchcraft and park her there."

"I shall come, too," said Helena. "Sabre can mind the baby and keep the house."

"I think," said I, "that you've done enough today. You've fetched and carried and nursed me and played with Max."

"Oh, John, why wasn't I born to a life like this? The life I lead is a duty—and that's the truth."

"We're not born to idylls," said I. "We've no such luck."

Helena crossed her ankles and laced her delicate fingers behind her head. "D'you find it idyllic, too?" "I tried to say so this morning," Helena knitted her brow. "Then you said it very badly," she said. "I thought you were jibbing at being here alone with me."

"For me, that's the idyll," said I. Helena turned her head and gave me a dazzling smile. It was when we had eaten our supper and the infant was fast asleep that Sabre was given his orders and we set out with the petrol to seek the Rolls. The dusk would come in, I judged, by the time we had crossed the clearing and gained the track, and that was just what we wanted, for so we could use the daylight, yet be wrapped in the cloak of darkness by the time we came to the ford. For all that, I was none too easy, for if, by some evil chance, friend Pharaoh had found the Rolls, his instinct might well have suggested that we should return at nightfall to try to recover the car. And if he was lying there, waiting, . . . Five minutes later, perhaps, the darkness ahead was lightened, and I knew we were approaching the road.

With my right hand upon my pistol, I moved like any shadow along the side of the track. Arrived at its mouth, I waited, straining my ears. So perhaps for three minutes. Then I stole around the corner and on to the edge of the road. The Rolls was gone. . . . I was up betimes the next morning and had shaved and bathed and dressed before Helena called to me to know if I was awake. In my note I had asked my cousin to bring some food. I judged that my cousin would reach us by five o'clock. And that would be the end of my idyll; with his and Barley's coming, my present estate, my kingdom must be resigned, my lovely hour would be over, and never so long as I lived should I ever be given another that smelled so sweet.

From a covert which we selected we could see the way to Witchcraft, yet could not be seen, for the ground rose up a little, to make a knoll. As I turned to peer through the fronds— "You are very impatient," said Helena. "That's the wrong word," said I. "I can't tell you what's the right one, but it's rather like standing on a platform, seeing somebody off by train." Helena knitted her brows. "I know the feeling," she said, "but I don't see how it applies." "You wouldn't," said I. "Never mind. The train will leave when Geoffrey and Barley arrive." Again I turned to glance at the shadow way down which they must come. "I like Mr. Bohun," said Helena. "He's the best in the world," I cried. "Well, he'll be here soon—if you don't keep on watching that path. Watched pots never boil, you know."

"You don't understand," I said, and lay back on the turf. "I don't want Geoffrey at all. I'll be glad to see him, of course. But if he was delayed or something, I—I shouldn't mind."

Some time later Helena suddenly peered through the fronds. "At



We Could See the Way to Witchcraft.

last," she said. "Enter Mr. Bohun and Barley." My beautiful dream was over, and now, through misunderstanding, our lovely, precious relationship was going to come to an end. If I did not speak out, it was finished. "As Geoffrey's here, you may as well know the truth. I think of you as 'Nell' deep down in my inmost heart. It's the pretty name I'd call you if we were engaged. You see, I'm mad about you. I love you—I've always loved you, from the moment I met your eyes. I love you walking and riding and sitting here on the grass. I love your head and your shoulders and that tiny vein in your ankle that looks like a thread of blue silk. I love everything about you and all you do. I love your voice and your laughter and the glorious light in your eyes. And I love your shining nature, as I love the smell of your hair and the breath of your lips. . . . And to be with you here like this—well, now perhaps you can see what it's meant to me and why I cling to my secret and why I was handicapped in trying to play your game." I got to my feet. "Good-by, Nell," I said gently. I turned to the path and the smiling cottage below. For a moment I stood, blinking. Then— "Have they gone in?" I asked. "I—made a mistake," said Helena. "It wasn't them."

I was sitting on the settle in the kitchen, with my head in my hands. And I do not know how long I sat there, but all of a sudden I knew that I was not alone. I could smell the faint perfume that Helena used.

As I started up, I found she was sitting beside me, looking very grave and gentle, with her precious hands in her lap. "I tricked you," she said. "I'm sorry. But it was the only way. You are very reticent, John. And very, very humble—and rather blind. Old Florin knew in an instant, and Pharaoh, too."

"Knew that I loved you?" I cried. (TO BE CONTINUED)

Irish Retire Ancient Bell Used in the pork market, on a church, and then as a fire alarm, an ancient bell has been honorably "retired" in the Urban council rooms of Dungannon, Irish Free State. City employees removed it from a pole near the R. U. C. barracks, where it had done duty for many years as a fire alarm. For almost a century the bell was used in the pork market, then in Market Square, and when the parish church was being rebuilt in 1868-69 it summoned the congregation to worship in the primitive Wesleyan preaching house, which was lent for two years to the Church of Ireland authorities.

Quilt of Blocks That Picture Nursery Rhymes

By GRANDMOTHER CLARK



Quilts made of blocks that picture the nursery tales that every child knows will interest both old and young. Always a good subject for a mother to work on, at bed time, with her child. Outfit No. 49-1 consists of four 9-inch blocks stamped on a good quality bleached quilting material and will be mailed to you for 10 cents. The embroidery work is in the out line stitch. Use any color thread. Address Home Craft Co., Dept. A—Nineteenth and St. Louis Ave., St. Louis, Mo. Inclose a stamped and addressed envelope for reply when writing for any information.

Now You See It, Now You Don't; and Then Chief Does

A San Francisco lunch stand proprietor counted his money—\$19 short. He counted it again—O. K. He repeated the process and called Police Captain Thomas B. Foster. "You count it," he said. "I'm going crazy." Foster counted the money—O. K. He counted it again—\$19 short. Then he found a bill, \$20 on one side, \$1 on the other.

Inebriate Youth Should Have Been Tossed Anchor

He is what, for lack of a better name, is sometimes called a young man about town. On the morning after he is clinging for support to a lamp post. An individual connected with the street cleaning department walks up to a hydrant, dragging a length of hose behind him, and, fitting a wrench to the cap, proceeds to unscrew it. "Don't—please don't!" cries the youth anchored to the lamp post. "Don't do what?" asked the functionary, halting in astonishment. "Don't wind up this street any tighter. She's spinnin' round too fast as it is!"—Bystander.

Escape by Dying

That cancer is not common among primitive people is now explained mainly on the ground that they do not live long enough to die of this disease.

FRIEND SOLVED HEADACHES

"Try Famous All-Vegetable Laxative," She Said. Headaches were making her miserable. She felt tired, listless, too. Then she found that Nature's Remedy (NR Tablets) really corrected her intestinal sluggishness. NR Tablets are a combination of laxative elements provided by nature in plants and vegetables. Try them tonight. Note that they give thorough cleansing action that leaves you refreshed and invigorated. This trial means so much to you and is so simple to make. NR contains no phenol or mineral derivatives. Non-habit forming. Only 25¢.

NRTONIGHT TOMORROW ALRIGHT

Don't be Tormented by ITCHY, BURNING, SKIN. Quick relief follows the use of Resinol.

Scientists Believe Ice Layer in Air Storm Cause

French scientists who have been conducting experiments in east Greenland say there is a layer of ice in the air over the polar regions. This ice ceiling (congealed atmosphere a million times finer than water) is situated approximately 80 miles above the earth. The discovery was made when electrical impulses from an electric sounding machine were reflected back. Time of the impulses in transit was recorded and computations made which gave the height of the ice layer. This ice is believed to be the cause of the storms at sea.—Pathfinder Magazine.

STOPS DANDRUFF

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GLOVER'S MANGE MEDICINE

Miserable with backache?

WHEN kidneys function badly and you suffer a nagging backache, with dizziness, burning, scanty or too frequent urination and getting up at night; when you feel tired, nervous, all upset . . . use Doan's Pills. Doan's are especially poor working kidneys. Millions of boxes are used every year. They are recommended the country over. Ask your neighbor!

DOAN'S PILLS



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THE best New Year's resolution you can make is to put your car, truck, tractor, and all your farm vehicles on Firestone Ground Grip Tires. These remarkable tires make their own road—wherever they go. That is why they will take your car or truck through mud, snow, or over unimproved roads—and you will not need chains.

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