

# THE ROOT OF EVIL

BY  
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## CHAPTER XIV. The Unbidden Guest.

**T**HE bitter reference to Bivens and the crime of his corner in wheat had roused Nan's fighting blood. She would accept the challenge of this rabble and show her contempt for its opinions in a way that could not be mistaken. She determined to give an entertainment whose magnificence would startle the social world and be her defiant answer to the critics of her husband. At the same time it would serve the double purpose of dazzling and charming the imagination of Stuart. She would by a single dash of power and his indecision as to Bivens's offer and blind with stronger cords the tie that held him to her.

Her suggestion was received with enthusiasm by her husband. "All right," he said excitedly, "beat the record. Give them something to talk about the rest of their lives. I don't mean those poor fools in Union square. Their raving is pathetic. I mean the big bugs who think they own the earth, the people who think that we are new comers and that this island was built for their accommodation. Give them a knock out."

Nan spared no expenditure of time, money and thought to the perfection of her plans. She employed a corps of trained artists, took them to her home, told them what she wished and they worked with enthusiasm to eclipse in splendor New York's record of lavish entertainments—but always with the reservation which she had imposed that nothing be done that might violate the canons of beauty and good taste. The long dreamed night came, and her guests had begun to arrive.

One was hurrying there to whom no engraved invitation had been sent, and yet his coming was the one big event of the evening, the one thing that would make the night memorable.

The confession of love for Stuart which Harriet had sobbed out in her father's arms had been the last straw that broke the backbone of his fight against Bivens. In a burst of generous feeling he made up his mind to set his pride, drive from his mind every bitter impulse and forget that he had ever hated this man or been wronged by him. He could see now that he had neglected his little girl in the fight he had been making for other people and that her very life might be at stake in the struggle she was making for the man she loved.

Bivens had once offered to buy his business. He had afterward made him a generous offer to compromise his suit. He had never doubted for a moment that a compromise would be accepted the moment he should see fit to give up.

He instructed his lawyer to withdraw the appeal before the day fixed for filing the papers. The lawyer raved and pleaded in vain. The doctor was firm. He wrote Bivens a generous personal letter in which he asked that the past be forgotten and that he appoint a meeting at which they could arrange the terms of a final friendly settlement.

The act had lifted a load from his heart. The sum he would receive, if but half Bivens' original offer, would be sufficient to keep him in comfort, complete his daughter's course in music and give him something with which to continue his daily ministry to the friendless and the lowly. It was all he asked of the world now.

He wondered in his new enthusiasm why he had kept up this bitter feud for the enforcement of his rights by law when there were so many more urgent and important things in life to do.

He waited four days for an answer to his letter and receiving none wrote again. In the meantime the day for final action on his appeal had passed and his suit was legally ended. On the last day his lawyer pleaded with him for an hour to file the appeal suit and then compromise at his leisure. The doctor merely smiled quietly and repeated his decision:

"I'm done fighting. I've something else to do."

When Bivens failed to reply to his second letter he made up his mind to see him personally. He was sure the letter had been turned over to a lawyer and the financier had never seen it. He called at Bivens' office three times and always met the same answer:

"Mr. Bivens is engaged for every hour today. You must call again."

On the fourth day, when he had stayed until time for closing the office, a secretary informed him that Mr. Bivens was too busy with matters of

great importance to take up any new business of any kind for a month and that he had given the most positive orders to that effect to all his men. If he would return the first of next month he would see what could be done.

The doctor left in disgust. He determined to break through this ceremonial nonsense, see Bivens face to face and settle the affair at once.

When he should see him personally it would be but a question of five minutes friendly talk and the matter would be ended. Now that he recalled little traits of Bivens' character he didn't seem such a scoundrel after all. Just the average money mad man who could see but one side of life. He would remind him in a friendly way of their early association and the help he had given him at an hour of his life when he needed it most. He wouldn't cringe or plead. He would state the whole situation frankly and truthfully and with dignity propose a settlement.

It was just at this moment that the



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doctor learned of the preparations for the dinner and ball at the Bivens palace on Riverside drive. The solution of the whole problem flashed through his mind in an instant. They would have professional singers without a doubt, the great operatic stars and others. If Harriet could only be placed on the program for a single song it would be settled. Her voice would sweep Bivens off his feet and charm the brilliant throng of guests. He would have to accompany her there, of course. At the right moment he would make himself known. A word with Bivens and it would be settled.

He lost no time in finding out the manager of the professional singers for the evening and through Harriet's enthusiastic music teachers arranged for her appearance. From the moment this was accomplished his natural optimism returned. His success was sure. He gave his time with renewed energy to his work among the poor.

On the day of the ball Harriet was waiting in a fever of impatience for his return from the hospitals to dress. At half past 7 their dinner was cold and he had not come. It was 8 o'clock before his familiar footstep echoed through the hall.

He ate a hasty meal, dressed in thirty minutes and at 9 o'clock led Harriet to the side entrance of Bivens' great house on the drive.

He was in fine spirits. He rejoiced again that he had made up his mind to live the life of faith and good fellowship with all men, including the little swarthy master of the palace he was about to enter. And so with light heart he stepped through the door which the soft white hand of death opened. How could he know?

As Stuart dressed for Nan's party he brooded over his new relation to his old sweetheart with increasing pleasure. Never had Bivens' offer seemed more generous and wonderful. His pulse beat with quickened stroke as he felt the new sense of power with which he would look out on the world as a possible millionaire.

He gazed over the old square with a feeling of regret at the thought of

leaving it. He had grown to love the place in the past years of loneliness. But was deciding too soon, perhaps. There were some features of Bivens' business he must understand more clearly before he could give up his freedom and devote himself body and soul to the task of money making as his associate.

He went across the square to take a cab at the Brevort. His mood was buoyant. He was looking out on life once more through rose tinted glasses. At Eighth street he met at right angles the swarming thousands hurrying across town from their work-heavy looking men who tramped with tired step, striking the pavements dully with their nailed shoes, tired, anxious women, frowzy headed little girls, sad eyed boys, half awake—all hurrying, the fear of want and the horror of charity in their silent faces. And yet the sight touched a responsive chord of sympathy in Stuart's heart as it often had. As he drove uptown the avenue flashed with swift, silent automobiles and blooded horses. These uptown crowds through whose rushing streams he passed were all well dressed and carried bundles of candy, flowers and toys.

Stuart felt the contagious enthusiasm of thousands of prosperous men and women whose lives at the moment flowed about and enveloped his own.

What was it that made the difference between the squalid atmosphere below Fourth street and the glowing, flashing, radiant, jeweled world uptown? Money! It meant purple and fine linen, delicacies of food and drink, pulsing machines that could make a mile a minute, the mountain and the sea, freedom from care, fear, drudgery and slavery!

After all in this modern passion for money might there not be something deeper than mere greed, perhaps the regenerating power of the spirit pressing man upward? Certainly he could see only the bright side of it tonight.

As his cab swung into Riverside drive from Seventy-second street the sight which greeted him was one of startling splendor. Bivens' yacht lay at anchor in the river just in front of his house. She was festooned with electric lights from the water line to the top of her towering steel masts.

The illumination of the exterior of the Bivens house was remarkable. The stone and iron fence surrounding the block, which had been built at a cost of a hundred thousand dollars, was literally ablaze with lights. The house was illumined from its foundations to the top of each towering minaret with ruby colored lights.

Stuart passed up the grand stairs through a row of gorgeous funkies and greeted his hostess.

Nan grasped his hand with a smile of joy.

"You are to lead me in to dinner, Jim, at the stroke of 8."

"I'll not forget," Stuart answered, his face flushing with surprise at the unexpected honor.

"Can't wish to see you at once. You will find him in the library."

Bivens met him at the door.

"Ah, there you are!" he cried cordially. "Come back downstairs with me. I want you to see some people as they come in tonight. I've a lot of funny things to tell you about them."

The house was crowded with an army of servants, attendants, musicians, singers, entertainers and reporters.

The doctor had been recognized by one of the butlers whom he had befriended on his arrival from the Old World. The grateful fellow had gone out of the way to make him at home, and in his enthusiasm had put an alcove which opened off the ball room at his and Harriet's disposal. The doctor was elated at this evidence of Bivens' good feeling and again congratulated himself on his common sense in coming.

Bivens led Stuart to a position near the grand stairway, from which he could greet his guests as they returned from their formal presentation to the hostess.

He kept up a running fire of biographical comment which amused Stuart beyond measure. It was a revelation of the crooked ways in which Bivens' guests or their fathers or grandfathers had amassed their millions, many of them by robbing the government, the people.

"The world has never heard most of these stories—that's funny!" Stuart exclaimed after a time.

"Not so funny, Jim, when you think of the power of money to make the world forget. God only knows how many fortunes in America had their origin in thefts from the nation during the civil war, and the systematic frauds that have been practised on our government since. I've turned some pretty sharp tricks, Jim, in staking my name in this big man hunt of Wall street, but at least I've never robbed the wounded or the dead on a battlefield and I've never used a dark lantern to get into the government vaults at Washington. I'm not asking you to stand for that."

"If you did—"

"Yes, I know the answer, but speak softly, his majesty the king approaches—long live the king!"

Bivens spoke in low, half joking tones, but the excitement of his voice told Stuart only too plainly that he fully appreciated the royal honor his majesty was paying in this first social visit he had ever made to his home. The king gave him a pleasant nod and grasped Stuart's hand with a hearty cordial grip. He was a man of few words, but he always said exactly what he thought.

"I'm glad to meet you, Mr. Stuart. You've done us a good turn in sending some of our crooks to the penitentiary. You've cleared the air and made it possible for an old fashioned banker to

breathe in New York. It's a pleasure to shake hands with you."

The king passed on into the crowd, the focus of a hundred admiring eyes. Bivens could scarcely believe his ears when he listened with open mouth while his majesty spoke to Stuart.

"Great Scott, Jim!" he gasped at last. "That's the longest speech I ever heard him make. I knew you had scored the biggest hit any lawyer has made in this town in a generation, but I never dreamed you'd capture the king's imagination. I'm beginning to think my offer wasn't so generous after all. Look here, you've got to promise me one thing right now. When you do go in to make your pile it shall be with me and no other man."

Nan passed and threw him a gracious smile.

"It will be with you if I go, Cal. I promise. At least the king is one exception to your indictment of all great fortunes."

"That's the funniest thing of all," Bivens whispered. "He's not an exception. Understand, I'm loyal to the king. He's a wonder. I like him. I like his big head, his big shaggy eyebrows, his big hands and big feet. I like to hear him growl and snap his answer—'Yes, No—that means life or death to men who kneel at his feet. He's a dead game sport. But he, too, has his little blots in his early copy-books at school if you care to turn the pages."

"No!" Stuart interrupted incredulously.

"Yes, sir; he turned the slickest trick on Uncle Sam of all the bunch. He was a youngster, and it was his first deal. When the civil war broke out the government had no guns for the volunteers. He learned that there were 5,000 old Hall carbines stored away among the junk in one of the national arsenals in New York. He bought these guns (on a credit for a song, about \$3 apiece, and shipped them to General Fremont, who was in St. Louis hovering for arms. Fremont agreed to pay \$22.50 each for the new rifles and closed the deal at once by drawing on the government for enough to enable the young buccaneer to pay his three dollar contract price to Uncle Sam in New York and lay aside a snug sum for a rainy day besides.

"When Fremont found that the guns were worthless he advised the government to stop payment on the balance. It was stopped on the ground of fraud. And then the youngster showed the stuff he was made of. Did he crawl and apologize? Not much. He sued the United States government for the full amount and pushed that suit to the supreme court. In the face of the sneers of his enemies he won and took the full amount with interest. He's the king today because he was born a king. His father was a millionaire before him. He's the greatest financial genius of the century."

Bivens paused and a dreamy look came into the black eyes.

"Jim," he continued with slow emphasis, "I'd rather get my fingers on his throat in a death struggle than lead the combined armies of the world to victory."

Stuart was silent.

The soft tones of hidden oriental gongs began to chime the call for dinner. The chimes melted into a beautiful piece of orchestral music which seemed to steal from the sky, so skillfully had the musicians been concealed. Nan suddenly appeared by Stuart's side, and he was given the honor of leading his hostess into the banquet hall before even the king, while the great ones of earth slowly followed.

(To Be Continued.)

## Local News

From Friday's Daily.  
Dr. A. L. Parks of Omaha was in the city today looking after business for the Burlington Relief.

Miss Buelah Sans departed this afternoon for her home near Murray to visit over Sunday with her mother.

Mrs. John A. Donelan was a passenger this morning for Omaha, where she will visit friends for a few hours.

Miss Hattie Kearney returned this afternoon from Omaha, where she had been visiting friends for a short time.

E. M. Godwin and wife of near Murray were in the city yesterday for a few hours attending to matters of business.

Court Reporter Earl Travis returned this afternoon from Papillion, where he has been looking after business matters.

Tom Sherwood was a passenger this morning for Omaha to look after some matters of business for a short time.

Glen Perry, from near Mynard, was a passenger this morning for Omaha, where he will look after business matters for a short time.

John Schiappacasse was a passenger on No. 15 this morning for Omaha, where he was called to look after some matters of business for a short time.

Attorney Matthew Gering was a passenger this afternoon for Omaha to look after some matters of business.

John W. Barr of Greenwood was in the city today looking after matters of the court house for a few hours.

Louis Jiran and wife were passengers this morning for Omaha, where they visited with friends for the day.

Mrs. Harry Barthold returned this morning from Glenwood, where she has been visiting her son for a few days.

Attorney W. A. Robertson departed this morning for Omaha, where he will look after business matters for the day.

Mrs. D. B. Smith and Mrs. Robert Gibson were passengers this morning for Omaha, where they will visit for the day.

Frank Slagel of Murray was in the city yesterday for a few hours attending to some matters of business with the merchants.

Mrs. W. D. Smith and child returned last evening from Grand Island, where they have been for some time visiting with friends.

Mrs. Rhoda Cotner was a passenger this morning for Omaha, where she will attend to some matters of business for the day.

J. H. Kuhns, wife and son, Stanley, were passengers this morning for Omaha, where they looked after business matters for the day.

B. G. Wurl was a passenger on No. 23 this afternoon for Omaha, where he will visit his son, Carl, at the hospital for a few hours.

W. E. Painter of Lincoln, inspector of merchandise loading for the Burlington, was in the city yesterday afternoon looking after company business.

Attorney C. S. Polk of Boise, Idaho, was in the city for a few hours this morning, being called here to look after business matters in county court.

Will Rinker and wife and Mrs. William Gravett were passengers this afternoon for Omaha, where they visited for a few hours and looked after business matters.

Mrs. Marion F. Stennant and daughter, Mrs. C. H. Weinman, of Red Oak, Iowa, who have been here for a short time visiting with Mrs. Stennant's sister, Mrs. J. M. Johns and family, departed this morning for their home.

M. L. Furlong, one of the worthy farmers from near Rock Bluffs, was in the city yesterday for a few hours looking after business matters, and dropped into the Journal office and renewed for his Semi-Weekly in order to keep posted on the news.

Miss Helen Dovey came in this afternoon from Omaha to spend Sunday with her parents, H. N. Dovey and wife. Miss Dovey was accompanied by Miss Lucretia Patterson of Omaha and Harry Cummings of Seward, who will be guests at the Dovey home.

Miss Edna Propst of Mynard was a passenger this afternoon for Omaha, where she will visit for a few hours with friends.

George Poissal returned from Lincoln last evening on No. 2, being accompanied by his mother-in-law, Mrs. Elizabeth Knight, who will visit here for a short time with the Poissal family.

P. P. Meisinger, one of the worthy farmers from near Mynard, was in the city today for a few hours, and called at the Journal office to renew his subscription to the Old Reliable.

Nicholas Halmes, the Weeping Water miller, and William P. Sitzman motored up this morning from their home and looked after some business matters, and Mr. Sitzman found time to drop into the Journal office for a chat with his friends in the printing business.

Miss Meta Jennings, who recently underwent an operation at the Imanuel hospital in Omaha, is reported as getting along as well as could be expected and her many friends trust that she will continue to improve and soon be able to be up and around and in their midst again.

Miss Florence Waugh of Lincoln will return to this city on Sunday evening to complete the task of cataloging the books of our library. At this time she will bring with her an exhibit of juvenile work and all who desire to see this exhibit may call at the library any afternoon or evening next week.

George Hanson and wife and Frank Cox of Nehawka were in the city for a few hours this morning attending to some matters of business with the merchants. Mrs. F. A. Hanson accompanied the party, who came up by auto. Mr. Hanson called and renewed his subscription to the Semi-Weekly Journal.

## CASS COUNTY COUPLE ARE MARRIED IN NEBRASKA CITY

From Friday's Daily.  
A couple of Union's well known young people, Albert Lee Thacker and Miss Stella Younker, went to Nebraska City on Tuesday, and a call at County Judge Bischof's office disclosed the purpose of the visit to that city. A license was soon signed and sealed and the accommodating judge pronounced a ceremony designed especially for young people from our own Judge Beeson's jurisdiction.

Mr. and Mrs. Thacker returned from Nebraska City that evening, and we are informed that they will make their home on a farm in this vicinity. The bride is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Younker, residing east of town, and is one of the very popular young ladies, highly esteemed by all who have formed her acquaintance. Mr. Thacker is one of Cass county's energetic and prosperous young farmers, and is well known as a gentleman of excellent habits and character.—Union Ledger.

A Want Ad in the Journal will bring what you want.

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