

Peter Knight, defeated for political office in his town, decides to venture New York in order that the family fortunes might benefit by the expected rise of his charming daughter, Lorelei. A well-known critic interviews Lorelei Knight, now state beauty with Borzani's review for a special article. Her coin-hunting mother outlines Lorelei's ambitions, but Slosson, the press agent, later adds his information. Lorelei attends Millionaire Hammon's gorgeous entertainment. She meets Merkle, a wealthy dyspeptic. Bob Wharton, comes unveiled. Lorelei discovers a blackmail plot against Hammon, in which her brother is involved. Merkle and Lorelei have an auto wreck. The blackmailers besmirch her good name. Lorelei learns her mother is an unscrupulous plotter. She finds in Adoree Demorest a real friend, and finds Bob Wharton is likable. Lorelei leaves her family and goes to live alone. Lorelei and Merkle Bob Wharton are tricked into marriage.

Wondering how she can possibly escape the drunken caresses of her new husband the first night of their marriage, Lorelei finds the problem suddenly solved for her—but in a ghastly manner. The demons of blackmail and intrigue which have followed her give way to devils of bloodshed and murder. How she acts in a tragic crisis is told in Rex Beach's best style in this installment.

Bob Wharton and his bride and Lilias and Jimmy Knight are in Lilias' apartment celebrating the wedding when Hammon enters. He and Lilias are quarreling.

CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

During this angry scene Lilias had not risen nor spoken. Her eyes were very black and very brilliant against her pallor, and she was smiling deviously. "Wait!" she interposed. "I'm not going to stay here with this old-fool."

Hammon grew purple; he ground his teeth. "You shall stay. We're going to have a talk and settle things once for all."

Lilias rose swiftly with a complete change of manner; she was smiling no longer; her face was sinister.

"Very well," she agreed. "Tonight. Why not? But I want Lorelei to stay and—hear. Yes."

"No, I don't want her."

"I do," Lilias' bad temper flared up promptly from the hot coals of spiteful, drunken stubbornness. "She'll stay till you go, or else I'll put you out too. I don't trust you." She laughed disagreeably.

"Then have your way. It's you I want to talk with, anyhow, drunk as you are. Now, Bob—will you say goodnight?" He waved the two men from the room, and the outer door closed behind them.

Lorelei had little desire to remain as the witness to a distressing scene, but she seized upon the delay, for even a sordid lovers' quarrel was preferable to the caresses of a sodden bridegroom. But daylight seemed a long way off—she feared Bob would not fall asleep during this brief respite.

"Now come with me, if you please." Hammon turned in the direction of the library, and Lilias followed, pausing to light a cigarette with a studied indifference that added fuel to his rage. Lorelei seated herself at the disordered dining table and stared miserably at the wall.

"Well!" said Hammon, when he and Lilias were alone. "Is this how you live up to your promises?"

"How did you know I went out tonight?" she inquired in her turn.

"I had you watched. After what happened last night I was suspicious. I've been waiting for hours—while you were out with that grafter, drinking, carousing."

He bent toward her, white with fury, but she blew the smoke from her cigarette into his face, and he checked himself, staring at her strangely. She

had seated herself upon the edge of the reading table, one foot swinging idly. She watched him with a brooding, insolent amusement.

"Are you just drunk," he said, uncertainly, "or—have you completely lost your senses?"

"Yes, I'm drunk. What are you going to do about it?"

"I—why, you mustn't talk like that; you're not yourself, Lilias." He ran his eyes over the luxurious little room; he wiped his face with a shaky hand, feeling that it was he who had lost his senses. "The wine is talking. When I asked you to marry me I never dreamed—"

She eyed him silently with an expression he could not fathom, then asked, "Tell me, do you really care for me?"

Jarvis Hammon was a virile, headstrong man; his world had come suddenly, inexplicably to an end. His voice was hoarse, as he answered: "Do you think I'd have made a fool

The Auction Block

A NOVEL OF NEW YORK LIFE
By REX BEACH
ILLUSTRATIONS by F. PARKER

Author of
"The Iron Trail"
"The Spoilers"
"The Silver Horde" Etc.
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of myself if I hadn't? Do you think I'd have ruined myself?"

"Have you ruined yourself?" she interrupted, quickly.

"Not quite, perhaps; but what I've lost, what I've sacrificed, would have ruined most men. My home is gone, and my family—as you know—yes, and a good many other things you don't know about. Financially I'm not done for—"

"That's too bad."

"Eh? I don't understand. What are you getting at?"

"I'll tell you, I never intended to marry you, Jarvis."

He started as if she had struck him. "That's what I said," she reaffirmed. "and I'll tell you why. Look at me—"

He did as she directed, but saw nothing, his mind being in chaos. It had been her intention to call Lorelei to witness this dramatic disclosure and thus enhance its effect, but in the excitement of the moment she forgot. "Look at me," she repeated. "I'm Lily Leviniski."

"Leviniski. A Jew?" he exclaimed, in naive surprise.

"Yes, I'm Joe Leviniski's girl. Do you remember?"

"A Jew?" It was plain that the name meant nothing.

She slid down from her perch and approached him, crying roughly. "Don't you remember Joe Leviniski?" Hammon shook his head. "He worked for you in the Bessemer plant of the old Kingman mill. Don't you remember?"

"There were four thousand men—"

"He was killed when the converter dumped. You were rushing the work. Do you remember now?" Her words came swift and shrill.

Hammon started; a frown drew his brows together. His mind groped back through the years, and memory fatally stirred, but she gave him no leisure to speak.

"I was waiting outside with his dinner bucket, along with the other women. I saw him go. I saw you kill him—"

"Lilias! Good God, are you crazy?" he burst forth.

"It was murder."

"Murder?"

"It was. You did it. You killed him." She had dropped her cigarette, and it burned a black scar into the rug at their feet. Hammon retreated a step, the girl followed with blazing eyes and words that were hot with hate. "You spilled that melted steel on him, and I saw it all. When I grew up I prayed for a chance to get even, for his sake and for the sake of the other hunkies you killed. You killed my mother, too, Jarvis Hammon, and made me a—a—"

"Be quiet!" he commanded, roughly. "The thing's incredible—absurd. You—the daughter of one of my workmen—and a Jew!"

"Yes, Leviniski—Lily Leviniski. And you wanted to marry me," she gibed. "But I fooled you."

"I guess I—must be—out of my head. I never knew the man—there were thousands of them; accidents were common. But—you say—"

He gathered his whirling thoughts—and, strangely enough, grew calm. "You say you prayed for a chance to get even—So, then, you've been humbugging—By God, I don't believe it!"

"It's true. It's true. It's true," shrilled the girl so hysterically that her voice roused Lorelei, sitting vacant-eyed in the room down the hall, and brought her to her feet with ears suddenly strained. Lorelei could hear only a part of the words that followed, but the tones of the two voices drew her from her retreat and toward the front of the apartment.

"I knew you," Lilias was saying. "I figured it all out, and—you were easy. You were a bigger fool than I dreamed."

"You took my money—you let me support you!" cried Hammon, in bitter accusation.

"Oh, I did more than that, I planned everything that has happened to you, even that blackmail."

"Blackmail!" he shouted. Did you—was that your—?" He grew suddenly apoplectic; his eyes distended and reddened with rage.

His dismay delighted her. "Certainly," she smiled. "Half the money is in my bank at this minute—besides all the rest you've given me. Oh, I've got enough to live on without marrying you. Who do you think put your wife wise and gave her the evidence for her divorce, eh? Think it over. Do you remember those letters? You were very indiscreet—and—Your wife will read them and your daughters—"

Jarvis Hammon roused himself at last. Surprise, incredulity, dismay gave place to fury, and, as in all primitive natures, his wrath took shape as an impulse to destroy.

"You'll—do that—eh?" His tone, his bearing were threatening. He advanced as if to seize her in his great hands, and only her quickness saved her.

"Don't touch me!" Her voice ended in a little shriek as she evaded a second effort to grasp her, and placed the table between them. "What do you—mean?"

But it seemed that she had done her work too well, for his answer was like the growl of a hungry beast. His eyes roved over the table for a weapon, and, reading his insane purpose, she cried again:

"Don't do that. I warn you—"

The nearest object chanced to be a crystal globe in which was set a tiny French clock—one of those library ornaments serving as timepiece and paperweight—over this his hand closed; he moved toward her.

"Put that down," she cried. He did not pause. "Put it—"

She wrenched

at the table drawer and fumbled for something. Hammon uttered a bellow and leaped at her.

It was a tiny revolver, small enough to fit into a man's vest pocket or a woman's purse, but its report echoed loudly. The noise came like a cannon shot to the girl in the hall outside, and brought a cry to her lips. Lorelei flung herself against the library door.

What she saw reassured her momentarily, for, although Lilias was at bay against a bookcase, Hammon was rooted in his tracks. A strange, almost ludicrous expression of surprise was on his face; he was staring down at his breast; the revolver lay on the door between him and Lilias.

Lorelei gasped an incoherent question, but neither of the two who faced each other appeared to hear it or to notice her presence in the room.

"I told you to keep off," Lilias chattered. Her eyes were fixed upon Hammon, but her outflung arms were pressed against the support at her back as if she felt herself growing weak. "You did it—yourself. I warned you."

The man merely remained motionless, staring. But there was something shocking in the paralysis that held him and fixed his face in that distorted

expression even under favorable conditions, and one, moreover, which had produced a tremendous assault from rival steel manufacturers. Now, with Hammon himself stricken at the crisis of the struggle, there was no telling what results might follow.

But Merkle's apprehensions were by no means purely selfish. Hammon and he had been friends for many years; they shared a mutual respect and affection, and, although Merkle was eminently practical and unemotional, he prayed now as best he could that Hammon might not be grievously injured.

As the machine drew up to the Elegancia, Jimmy Knight leaped to the running board and said hurriedly: "Send your driver away."

Merkle did as he was directed, realizing his worst fears. When he and Jim stood alone on the walk he inquired weakly, "Is he—dead?"

Jim shook his head, and Merkle saw that he was deeply agitated. "No. But he's got a bullet in his chest."

Together the men entered the building and at the first ring were admitted to Apartment No. 1 by Lorelei herself. She led them straight into the library.

Perhaps a quarter of an hour had elapsed since the shooting, but Jarvis Hammon still sat in the big chair. He was breathing quietly. Bob Wharton stood beside him.

"John!" the ironmaster smiled pallidly as his friend came and knelt beside him. "You got here quickly."

"Are you badly hurt, Jarvis?"

"The thing is in here somewhere," Hammon took his hand away from his breast, and Merkle saw that the fingers were bloody. "Can you get me out of here quietly?"

John Merkle rose to his full height, his lips writhed back from his teeth. Harshly he inquired: "Where is that wound?"

"She's back under in her room," Bob told him. "You'd better go."

Merkle turned, but, reading his intent, Hammon checked him, crying in a strong voice: "None of that, John. I did it myself. It was an accident."

"I don't believe it."

Hammon's eyes met those of his accuser; the two stared at each other steadily for a moment.

The other occupants of the room had listened breathlessly; now Lorelei stirred and Merkle read more than mere bewilderment in her face. He opened his lips, but the wounded man did not wait for him to speak.

"You must believe me," he said, earnestly. "It's the truth, and I won't have Lilias involved—we've been a great deal to each other. Tonight—I accused her wrongfully. It was all my fault—I'm to blame for everything."

There was a pause. "Now get me out of here as quietly and quickly as you can. I'm really not hurt much. Come, come! There's nobody home except Orson and some of the kitchen help, and Orson is all right—the women are gone, you know. He'll get a doctor. It's a—bad business, of course, but I've thought it all out, and you must do exactly as I say."

The effort of this long speech told on the sufferer.

Sweat beaded his face; nevertheless, his jaws remained firmly set; his glance was purposeful, his big hands were gripped tightly over the arms of the chair. There was something superb, something terrible about his unchanging grimace.

"Is your car outside, John?" he asked.

Merkle shook his head. He was thinking swiftly. "I wouldn't dare risk that, anyhow. The driver is a new man."

"Get a cab, Jim offered, in a panic. "The cab driver would be sure to—"

"I'll drive," Bob volunteered. "I'm drunk, but I've done it before when I was drunker. It's an old trick of mine—sort of a joke, see? Give me some money—a cabby'll do anything for money at this time o' night."

Merkle eyed the speaker in momentary doubt, then handed him a roll of bank-notes. "It's a serious business, Bob, but Jarvis can't stay here. There's somebody else to consider besides us—and—Miss Lynn. I'm thinking about Mrs. Hammon and the girls." He followed Bob to the door and let him out, stepped swiftly down the hall, then, without knocking, opened the door to Lilias Lynn's bedroom and entered.

Lilias was hushed at her dressing. At his entrance she uttered a frightened cry and a silver spoon slipped from her nerveless fingers. Merkle saw a little open box, a glass of water, the cap of a pearl-and-gold fountain pen, but took scant notice of them, being too deeply stirred and too much surprised at her appearance. She was no longer the vital, dashing girl he had known, but a pallid, cringing wreck of a woman. She shrank back at sight of him, babbling unintelligible words and covering as if expecting a blow.

"Did you shoot him?" he asked, grimly.

Shivering, choking, speechless, Lilias stared at him. A repetition of his question brought no reply.

Seizing her roughly, he shook her, muttering savagely: "If I were sure, by God, I'd strangle you!"

She remained limp; her expressionless stare did not change.

Merkle heard a stir behind him and found Jimmy Knight's blanched face peering in at him. Even fright could not entirely rob the younger man's features of their sly inquisitiveness.

"Mr. Hammon's calling you," said Jim, then blinked at the wretchedly disheveled woman.

"Here!" Merkle beckoned him with a jerk of his head. "This girl must get away from here. She'll ruin everything for commercial expansion, never too see-

kind of shape while Lorelei packs her bag. We had better get her out of the country if we can."

Jim's quick eyes took in the articles on the dressing table. "Ha! Dope," he exclaimed. "She's a coker—she's filled herself up. But, say—you don't really think she—did it, do you?"

"I don't know what to think. It's just as bad, either way. Hammon's wife and daughters must never know. Now, quick. See what you can do with her."

Merkle returned to the library, sent Lorelei in to her brother's assistance, then scanned his friend's face anxiously. But Hammon had not moved; the sweat still stood upon his lips and forehead, his jaws were still set like stone.

Several months before, Bob Wharton, during one of his hilarious moments, had conceived the brilliant notion of hiring a four-wheeler and driving a convivial party of friends from place to place. The success of his exploit had been so gratifying that he had repeated the performance, but he was in a far different mood now as he left the Elegancia. The shock of Lorelei's announcement, the sight of his stricken friend, had sobered him considerably, yet he was not himself by any means. At one moment he saw and reasoned clearly, at the next his intoxication benumbed his senses and distorted his mental vision. For once in his life he wished himself sober.

Broadway, that pulsating artery of New York life, was still flowing a thin stream of traffic despite the lateness of the hour, and Bob's mind had become clearer by the time he reached it. Several taxicabs whirled past, both north and south bound, but he knew better than to hire them, so he waited as patiently as he could while those billows of intoxication continued to ebb and flow through his brain, robbing him of that careful judgment which he fought to retain.

At last the clop-clop-clop of a horse's hoofs sounded close by, and an unshaven man in an ancient high hat steered a four-wheeler to the curb, barking, "Keb, keb!"

Bob lurched forward and laid a hand upon the driver's knee. "Very man I'm lookin' for." The hiccup that followed was by no means intentional.

"Yes, sir. Where to, sir?"

But Bob shook his head vigorously and waved a comprehensive gesture toward the west. "Got a party of my own back yonder—everybody soused but me—understand? I'm the only sober one, so I'm goin' to drive 'em home, see? How much?"

"How much for what?" demanded the cabman.

"For the cab—one hour. I'll bring it back."

Nothing except Bob's personal appearance prevented the driver from whipping up without more ado. The night was old—and these jokers sometimes pay well, the man reflected.

"How'd I know you'd bring it back?" he inquired.

"Matter of honor with me. I'll be back in no time. Will ten dollars be right? I'll make it fifteen, and you can lend me your coat and hat. We'll exchange—have to, or no joke. Is it a go?"

The offer was tempting, but the driver calmly demanded Wharton's name and address before committing



Its Report Echoed Loudly.

time. "Make him think you've got a souse."

"Aren't you coming along?" asked Bob.

But Jim recoiled. "Me? No, I'll stay and help Lilias make her get away."

Merkle nodded agreement. "Don't let her get out of your sight, either, understand? There's a ship sailing in the morning. See that she's aboard."

Jarvis Hammon spoke. "I want you all to know that I'm entirely to blame and that I did this myself. Lilias is a—good girl." The words came laboriously, but his heavy brows were drawn down, his jaw was square. "I was clumsy. I might have killed her. But she's all right, and I'll be all right, too, when I get a doctor. Now put that pistol in my pocket, John. Do as I say. That's all. Now I'm ready."

Bob Wharton mounted the box and drove to Central Park West. At Sixty-seventh street he wheeled into the sunken causeway that links the East and West sides.

Once in the shadows, Merkle leaped from the door, crying softly, "Faster! Faster!"

Bob whipped up, the horse cantered, the cab reeled and bounced over the cobblestones, rocking the wounded man pitifully.

To John Merkle the ride was terrible, with a drunkard at the reins and in his arms a perhaps fatally injured man, who, despite the tortures of that bumping carriage, interspersed his groans with cries of "Hurry, hurry!" When he felt the grateful smoothness of Fifth Avenue beneath the wheels he leaned forth a second time and warned Bob. "Be careful of the watchman in the block."

The liquor in Bob was dying; he bent downward to inquire, "Is he all right?"

Merkle nodded, then withdrew his hand.

The Hammon residence had changed owners of late, but many people recall its tragic associations and continue to point it out with interest. It is a massive pile of gray stone, standing just east of Fifth Avenue, and its bronze doors open upon an exclusive, well-kept side street. At the farther corner, dimly discernible beneath the radiance of a street light, Bob made out the watchman, now at the end of his patrol. The moment was propitious; there could be no further delay.

Do you believe Lilias is really guilty—was she justified? And do you think that Jimmy Knight will use this occasion to collect blackmail money?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BLUING FIXED THE SCENERY

Water in Lagoon Was Changed From Yellowish Hue to Green.

Three barrels of bluing solved a difficult artistic problem in connection with the staging of Newark's historical pageant, which was given in the amphitheater in Weequahic park for four nights, the New York Times states.

After about 450,000 gallons of water had been run into the lagoon in front of the natural stage it was found that the clay and sand had caused the water to turn yellow. Thomas Wood Stevens, the director, observed that the water must have a green color or the artistic effect of the stage settings would be spoiled.

The lagoon, 300 feet long, 165 feet wide and two feet deep, is one of the main features of the open air stage. It was Mr. Stevens' idea that the lagoon should produce a certain effect in connection with its natural surroundings. He had taken it for granted the water would be green.

When Director Stevens and his assistant, Sam Hume, were going over final details of the amphitheater they were confronted with the yellow water in the lagoon. They were in a quandary as to how to overcome this difficulty, when H. Wellington Wack, executive adviser of the Newark celebration committee, came along. The pageant masters explained the dilemma to Mr. Wack, who suggested the bluing. It worked.

A Perpetual Motion Plant.

The perpetual motion machine of the botanist is a plant which grows in India. It is never quiet. Its leaves are dancing day and night, and neither the dead atmosphere of a tropical noon nor the soft breezes of twilight are able to soothe it with their restful lullabies. Botanists call it the telegraph plant.

Its motions differ from those of the aspen tree, which is the American type of almost perpetual motion in nature. The aspen leaf is affected by the lightest breeze, and quivers.

The leaves of the telegraph plant have a sort of jerking motion.

Each leaf is divided into three leaflets. The outside pair move up and down in nervous little jumps, as if they were being touched and shocked by some electric wire. The middle leaflet isn't quite so lively, but it keeps up a continual motion, nevertheless.

The only time the plant is quiet is when it is dead.

Archangel.

There have been numerous references of late to the Russian port, Archangel, which is now declared to be open for some weeks beyond the usual period owing to the beneficent activities of improved ice-breakers. But the links of Archangel with this country are little recognized. Yet the account of a Norse trading expedition there in the ninth century was described, or translated, by no less a personage than Alfred the Great, and the modern town dates from the visit of an English voyager, William Chancellor, in the middle of the sixteenth century. Soon after that visit an English factory was established, a fort was built, and around this the town grew up.

Look to United States.

Young men and women of the Azores are looking toward the United States for their university training and are anxious to know costs and possibilities of earning their living here.

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SLAVERY IN EARLY DAYS

African Slave Trade Was Once Openly Tolerated by the British Government.

Slavery existed in nearly all of the English colonies from an early period until shortly before or soon after the Revolutionary war, and the African slave trade was openly tolerated by the British government. In 1756 there were 292,000 African slaves in the colonies, scattered from New England to Georgia. It was not prohibited in Massachusetts until 1780, nor in Vermont until 1777. The United States census of 1810 showed 310 slaves in Connecticut, 10,851 in New Jersey, 15,017 in New York, 795 in Pennsylvania, and 108 in Rhode Island. Slavery was gradually abolished in the northern states, but in 1820 there were still 97 slaves in Connecticut, 7,557 in New Jersey, 10,088 in New York, 211 in Pennsylvania, and 48 in Rhode Island. The census of 1850 showed the disappearance of slavery in all the northern states except New Jersey, which still had a surviving remnant of 236.

The Stoker in Battle.

In the modern battleship, as is well known, the stoker, like the oarsman of ancient Roman galley, has his work all below deck. The seafight rages above him, and he can rarely if ever see a battle. One of the stories connected with the battle of Jutland illustrates the stolid character of the British stokers. A chance was given two of these during the fight to come from below. They were on the Warship, which was heavily engaged. One of them was telling a domestic story to the other as they went up to the deck. At the hottest moment of the fight their grimy heads appeared at the top of the hatch round which splinters of shell were crashing. Above the hellish din the impassive voice of the story telling stoker was heard, as calm as though at a "pub" over a mug of ale, saying, "I always thought 'er ort to 'ave married 'er."

The Retort Courteous.

Mrs. Uppish—I can assure you there is a great deal hanging on my family tree.
Miss Pert—Some ancestors, for instance?

Hay Maker.

"Does Biggins make hay while the sun shines?"
"No, He'd rather get up and run the lawn mower before daybreak."

Does Coffee Disagree?

Many are not aware of the ill effects of coffee drinking until a bilious attack, frequent headaches, nervousness, or some other ailment starts them thinking.

Ten days off coffee and on

POSTUM

—the pure food-drink—will show anyone, by the better health that follows, how coffee