

# The World Outside



By Harold MacGrath

**THE STORY THUS FAR.**  
An adventure for \$10,000—this is the latest offer made to Collingswood Jeremiah Bancroft, who has just inherited his father's \$1,000,000, by Daniel Stewart, who represents the Great Adventure company. Jerry, failing to note the stranger's evil glances, scuffs and then lingers, remembering his own 24 handrum years, his father's mysterious death—of fright, according to reports—and a memorandum in his father's effects, reading, "Paid Kennedy in full." Then out of the storm comes beautiful Nancy Bowman, an actress, rain-drenched and lost. Jerry escorts her to the railroad station and afterward, trailed by agents of Stewart, goes to New York, where he takes lodging as "Jeremiah Collingswood," a poor youth, in one of his own buildings, only to find Nancy and her chum, Jenny Malloy, also have rooms there. He sends a detective to Bolivia to search for traces of the mysterious "Kennedy," or "C. J. K." Nancy's puppy having been banished by the janitor, Jerry secretly orders his agent to rescind the edict; then he, Nancy and Jenny start out for dinner and a visit to the cafe. He again meets the seller of adventures and announces he intends to visit the offices of Stewart's Emerald company, a pretense to signing the adventure contract.

**EIGHTH INSTALLMENT.**

**Signing the Contract—and After.**

Bancroft discovered a distinguished-looking stranger chatting pleasantly with Nancy and Jenny. The stranger was not seated.  
"O, Jerry! This is Mr. Craig; Mr. Collingswood," said Jenny. The two men acknowledged the introduction pleasantly, though there was a hidden resentment in both minds. To each the other spelt danger.  
"Sit down," said Jenny, affably. "Is that agreeable to you, sir?" asked Craig.  
"Why, certainly, sir," answered Bancroft, uttering his first lie to the altar of social amenities.  
"We were talking about Miss Bowman's puppy," said Craig.  
"I love all manner of dogs," replied Bancroft.  
"In that case you and I can always meet upon one common ground."  
Bancroft thought this over carefully. It conveyed the hint that there might be no other common grounds.  
"Mr. Craig gave me the puppy," said Nancy.  
"And I have not seen him since," replied Craig.  
Bancroft could not have explained why, but this statement lessened the tension of belligerent thought. If Craig had not seen the puppy it signified he had not yet called in Ninth street. Still, "And now I may have to lose him!" said Nancy.  
"Mannheim would be glad to keep him in the office at night," suggested Craig.  
"But that's just when I want him," Nancy declared. "I'm almost sorry you gave him to me. The only happy person is one who bestows no love upon living things."  
"That's the most futile philosophy there ever was," said Craig. "You no more can help loving something than you can deny the air which lets you live. The human being who denies giving love to something is a liar. But we must find some way of protecting Ling Foo."  
Bancroft split his apple, which had just arrived. "Won't you join us in something?" he asked.  
"No, thanks," answered Craig. "I never eat anything at night. I just wander about, to chat with people I know. I'm one of those who have a horror for beds." He rose.  
"Say, Mr. Craig," said Jenny, "don't forget my blowout tomorrow night. Foster has given me his studio for the stunt. All the real Bohemes; no long hair for the men or bobs for the women. Twelve until 3. Lobster Newburgh and coffee. All the music th' police'll permit. Nobody in the house'll object because we'll all be there."  
"You can count on me," said Craig.  
Suddenly he held out his hand to Bancroft, who found the grip warm and friendly, and he knew he was going to like the man, for all that his will was set against liking him. Did he care for Nancy? Did she care for him? Dreadful thought!  
"Jeremiah," said Jenny, as she cracked a ruddy claw. "There goes what we girls call a white man. If you want to pass in a crowd without knocking your funnybones, watch the way he does it. Got oodles of money, but he spends it well. He's an all nighter, but he never stays in one joint more'n an hour. He never goes with his own crowd and he never goes with ours, but you run into him everywhere. He drinks hard, but the harder he drinks the politer he gets. He's as punk—what's the word?"  
"Punctilious!" Bancroft suggested.  
"That's him, Punctilious as John Drew in act one."  
"What's his notion of wandering about?" asked the pupil.  
"Wife ran away from him and

got killed the same night. Suppose he hates to go home on that account."  
"He wasn't drinking tonight, was he?"  
"Nope. Sober as a judge—some judges," Jenny modified.  
The waiter put the bill at the side of Bancroft's plate. Jenny reached out a hand.  
"Dutch treats, Jeremiah."  
"Never in this world. You're teaching me something about this night life and naturally I've got to pay. Where do we go from here?"  
"Rah, rah!" cried Jenny. She smiled at Nancy, who saw the gamin's jeer.  
Bancroft pulled out the \$20 bill he had deposited in his vest pocket against the needs of the adventure. Then he took up the bill and ran over the figures.  
"Waiter!"  
"Yes, sir."  
"There's \$1 overcharge here."  
"What, sir?" The waiter took the card. "Why, so there is, sir. I must have taken the wrong bill." He hurried off.  
Both Nancy and Jenny watched him and saw that he did not approach the cashier's desk, at rubbed out the excess charge, loitered for a moment behind a pillar, then returned briskly. He picked up the treasury note and headed off again.  
"Splendid!" said Nancy. "I'm one with the courage to refuse to be cheated!"  
"Jenny, Jenny," said Bancroft, "I don't believe I'm going to like this night life of yours. Do all the waiters try that?"  
"It was a tryout. It gets over nine times out of 10. Two dollars for a lobster I could get for \$1 at Jack's; 60 cents for three cups of coffee; \$1 for endives; 50 cents each for the apples, and then the waiter adds his, if he can. It's a great life, if you don't weaken."  
"What shall I tip him?" asked Bancroft, now bubbling with fun.  
"You ought to tip him over, but give him 20 per cent of the ticket. Then we'll toddle on."  
The waiter returned. Bancroft carefully counted the change; then he looked up.  
"How much shall I give you, waiter, as a tip?"  
"Whatever you say, sir." The gray eyes—their directness—troubled the waiter considerably.  
"Would 50 cents satisfy you, considering?"  
"Yes, sir." He sighed relievedly. "Considering. Mistakes will happen, sir."  
"Even with the best of Judges. Take the 50—and sin no more."  
Nancy's laughter rang out. It was the first time Bancroft had ever heard her laugh freely. It was a music comparable with her singing voice.  
"Was that all right?" asked Bancroft, uneasily.  
"Jeremiah," said Nancy, unconsciously falling into Jenny's method of address, "you're a joy! I wouldn't have missed this comedy for anything. Jenny, you'll have your hands full. But I don't know. That was altogether too smart for a country boy."  
And the three of them left the restaurant, laughing freely, as youth alone is permitted to laugh. The seller of adventures watched them until they passed from view, and the melancholy expression of his eyes remained even after he, too, departed. Youth . . . !  
The next morning Bancroft went late to his breakfast; that is to say, late for him, since he was back in his room at 8:30. Mrs. Jansen had tidied it up between times, so the room was habitable. Many things were going to happen this day, and for these he carried a sober countenance; but this sober countenance was, for a minute or two, touched with sunshine. There came a knock on the door, which he opened, to find Nancy. (He never could call her Miss Bowman in thought.)  
She was radiant. The beauty of the Madonna was nowhere in evidence. It was the glowing beauty of the Naiad, and the music of fountains was in the voice of her.  
"It is wonderful!" she cried. "It has made me so happy! The lawyers have agreed to let my keep Ling Foo. Why, I'd like to run down to their offices and kiss them both!"  
"They would probably both die of heart failure; for I imagine they must be old codgers. So Ling Foo stays! That's fine. I wonder what that old crab—as Jenny calls him—will say?"  
"I don't care what he says. But I want to thank you."  
"Thank me?—a bit of fright in his eyes."  
"Yes—for suggesting that I write a letter. I should never have thought of it, but would have accepted Jansen's dictum as the court of last appeal. My nerves have been ragged for worrying. Did you have a good time last night?"  
"Wonderful! And you?"

"Well, better than I expected. You are very clever."  
"Out of books. I am more surprised than you are—that I came through without knocking over something."  
She put a finger to her nether lip, thoughtfully. "Why did you say it would be agreeable to you to have Mr. Craig sit with us?"  
"Well, you see, I chanced to remember in time Jenny's advice—that a lie takes you a long way sometimes."  
"I wonder."  
"About what?"  
"If you will always be as you are, if there isn't something hidden away in you."  
"There is something hidden away in all of us," he said, gravely.  
"O, I don't mean that. I mean, you may have been visiting that village house, and that you are something other than you seem."  
"On my honor, I was born in that house, and have lived there all my life. My good fortune lies in the fact that I am not particularly encumbered with that petty disturbance of thought, embarrassment, as an old philosopher put it. But I did not know I could fly so well until I had tried my wings."  
She offered her hand, with that compelling smile with which he was now so familiar. He took the hand in his, held it until she drew it back, and let his own hands fall to his sides.  
"Do you know, I shouldn't have been surprised if you had kissed it," she declared whimsically.  
"I wanted to; but if I had you would have written me down a liar."  
"And why?"—astonished.  
"Because it would have set in your mind the notion that I had been accustomed to act like that, that I had lived in a world where men salute women's hands in that fashion."  
"I really don't know what to make of you."  
"You might . . . make me a friend."  
"O, that! I shouldn't be chatting to you in this manner if I hadn't already accepted you as a friend. But I'll always be a little afraid to shake hands with you."  
"And I'll always be a little afraid, too—that I might act upon your suggestion."  
She gave a startled laugh, turned, and ran back to her room.  
As she vanished, Bancroft whispered to the empty spaces of the hall: "Come on, Dragon; come on!"  
Bancroft stopped at Johnson's desk.  
"How did you like the show last night?"  
A touch of color flowed into Johnson's sallow cheeks. "Young man, if she is half as dangerous as she is attractive, I have some fears for your future. I don't suppose it would be of any use to warn you?"  
"Not the least use. But always remember, Miss Bowman doesn't know that I have any money."  
"And you'll be the last to give her hints about it, I suppose!"  
Bancroft accepted the dig philosophically. However, to justify himself, he recounted the advent of Miss Bowman into his house that stormy night.  
"Do you mean to tell us, young man, that she went away without inquiring the name of her involuntary host? A shrewd, clever woman like that?"  
"It's the truth."  
"Well, well; my advice to your father's son is not to trust too fully in your pin feathers. What's to prevent her writing to the postmaster and describing the house?"  
"I hadn't thought of that. But I don't think she will, however." He offered his hand.  
"I only went there," said Johnson, taking the full warm hand in his dry one, "because of my consideration for you, sir."  
"I know it. Is Mr. Snell in?"  
"Yes, sir."  
Snell greeted Bancroft cheerfully. "Is the pup rescued?"  
"Yes," Bancroft sat down at the side of the desk.  
"Mr. Johnson tells me that he saw the young lady last night."  
"And has indirectly pointed out the road to hell. You understand, don't you? I am young, Mr. Snell. For the first time I am free. I can't sit here and count and recount my father's money. I am doubly free, for as yet no one in that house suspects I have these millions. I am to all appearances in modest circumstances."  
"I was just chiding you, boy. You've got to grow; and while you're growing you've got to burn your fingers on stoves and bark your shins against chairs in the dark. All the warnings in the world would not stop you; and I would not have you stopped."  
"Well, I'm worried . . . about myself."  
"In what way?"  
"Why, I've just waked up to the

fact that I haven't any ambition to do things. What I mean is, I've no ambition to be a writer, or a painter, or an inventor; and if there was any talent in me, these millions would blanket it. What am I going to do? I don't want to be idle."  
"My boy, don't let that worry you. There are many kinds of genius. It took a financial genius to build up such a fortune as your father left you. It will take genius to hold it. But run and play first; it's your right. Throw a few thousand away; and then step into that empty office there and take up your father's work. I repeat to you, that the noblest creation on God's earth is an honest rich man."  
"As my father was?"  
"As your father was."  
There was a pause.  
"Mr. Snell, I've got something here I want you to read, to see if it is worded right. I shan't listen to any arguments about it. Something that I've got to do."  
"Let me see the paper." When Snell had read it through, he cried: "Young man, what the devil does this mean?"  
"Exactly what it says there, that anything I sign hereafter, outside of this office, will be due to moral or physical coercion."  
"Are you thinking of signing some document? Bring it here, where it belongs."  
"That's it; I can't bring it here."  
"Well, then, don't sign it."  
"But I must!"  
"A woman?"  
"No, no! But will such a document as I've given you hold? What I am about to sign, circumstance is forcing me to sign. Nothing can dissuade me, Mr. Snell. If you won't take charge of this, I'll have to trust to strange lawyers."  
"It's debatable whether it will hold or not; but this firm can back you in court, and my testimony would have weight. What, in heaven's name, boy, are you intending to sign?"  
"I can't tell you."  
"Does it concern your father?"  
"I don't know, but I suspect it does. I'm in the dark, the same as you are."  
"Something you've discovered that touches Johnson's tale?"  
"I haven't discovered anything; I only hope to."  
"Well, I'm tinker-damned! You'll sign this document, whether I protest or not?"  
"Yes, sir." Bancroft began to show signs of weariness.  
"Very well. I'll have this typed and witnessed."  
"I shall want a copy."  
"That, too. If you are determined, why, there's nothing but a wise old man's advice. When you've signed this damfool thing, bring it to me."  
"I can't even do that, sir. Because on the face of it, it is a damfool thing."  
"A contract of any kind, signed by you and properly witnessed, is active in law. The witnesses need know nothing of the content. They are witnesses that you signed without being forced, that you are apparently in your right mind of which I have my doubts. Boy, some crook may take everything you have away from you!"  
"No, I shan't sign anything that promises to do that. But this instrument, as you call it, of mine will tend to nullify what I sign?"  
"If you can prove that you were coerced, I don't like it at all," said Snell, vehemently.  
"Neither do I," Bancroft agreed; "but I'm going through with it."  
Snell pushed a button, and to the clerk who answered the call he said: "Have this typed twice and return to witness them. And no comments. Bring the notary seal."  
"Yes, sir."  
After Bancroft had carefully put his copy of the astonishing instrument into his wallet, he held out his hand to Snell.  
"It sounds and looks crazy, I know; but I've got to have it settled, one way or another, for peace of mind. I'll tell you this much. It's only an instinct, and I don't believe I've voiced the notion to myself. I feel that there is in this world a man who hated my father bitterly, terribly; and I've got to find out why, if my father was the honest man you say he was."  
"He was the honestest man I knew."  
"You see, then, I've got to go on."  
"Since it is for your father's sake. And God go with you! And remember, I'm always here to back you up in anything you may do," and Snell put his hands upon Bancroft's shoulders and gently pushed him toward the door.  
It was a long day. Bancroft spent some of it riding the busses up and down Fifth avenue, some at it in the public library, some of it on the park benches. It was exactly 4 o'clock when he opened the door of the Bolivian Emerald

company and entered the outer office. It was like any other office—a typewriter girl and an elderly book-keeper behind a grille. Maps and diagrams hung from the walls. He was quite astonished at the steadiness of his nerves; it had been whiling away the time that had irked him and made him fidgety.  
The typist—middle aged and kindly of countenance—came to the gate and inquired what his business was.  
"I have an appointment with Mr. Stewart."  
"Are you Mr. Collingswood?"  
"Yes."  
"Go right in; Mr. Stewart is waiting for you." She indicated the inner door marked private.  
Bancroft opened this and stood on the threshold. . . . of he knew not what! Battle, murder, and sudden death—or tomfoolery. That was the maddening part of it. Suddenly he felt himself profoundly young and inefficient.  
"Come in and draw up a chair, Collingswood," said the emerald merchant.  
Stewart held out his hand, which Bancroft took with open embarrassment. The hand was warm and dry and powerful. But, behold!—the man smiled! There was mockery in the smile; but it suggested to Bancroft old Professor Miller's smile when the pupil marched boldly into some mistake he should have known better than to make.  
On the desk, which was a roller-top, lay a heavy automatic. Stewart patted it.  
"Bandits; you never know where they'll turn up next," explained Stewart. "But I never carry more than \$3,000 or \$4,000 worth of stones. The market gobbles them up as they come. Just a moment, and I'll show you some of the stones."  
He opened the safe and returned with a tray of tissue paper packets. He unfolded one of the packets and displayed a score of beautiful green stones that made Bancroft recall the bottom of the trout stream at home.  
"Green things, eh?" said Stewart. He shifted the stones, using a small pair of metal tweezers. "Half-carat stones, I employ two cutters, Amsterdam experts; but where they live is known only to me. Look nice, wouldn't they, on the white flesh of a young woman's arm? By the way, did you find your umbrella at the hotel?"  
"Forgot all about it!" Bancroft admitted, still in a daze over the manner of his reception.  
"It was a rough night. I had a puncture, half way to town," said Stewart. "See anything here you like?"  
"How much for the lot?" asked Bancroft.  
Stewart made some computations on a tab. "Twelve hundred; my price to the market."  
"I'll take them," said Bancroft, abruptly. He drew out his wallet and counted out the sum.  
"That's a lot of money to carry about, young man"—speaking to cover his astonishment. The boy was actually buying emeralds! He refolded the tissue, and secured it with a rubber band. "There you are, Mr. Collingswood. Does the young lady know what is in store for her?"  
"No," answered Bancroft. "But I may offer them, later."  
Inwardly he was fuming. For his life, he could not broach the real object of his visit. He was buying these emeralds merely to prolong the interview, hoping that Stewart would give him some definite opening; which Stewart was determined not to do.  
"Know anything about emeralds?"  
"Nothing."  
"Interesting study," said Stewart. "It is properly the green beryl. The oriental stones—those dug up in modern times—are properly a green corundum, often magnificent, and much harder than the true emerald. The difference is in the cleavage. What I mean is, the little lines or angles which resemble cracks. Interested?"  
"Very much."  
Stewart then proceeded to go into the history of all green stones; which would have entertained Bancroft at any other time.  
"Where is this mine of yours?" asked Bancroft, rather desperately.  
"Near the Peruvian border; probably a run-out of the lost Spanish mines." Stewart reached into a cubby-hole and drew out a card. "Go to this place to have your stones set. You will not find half so much originality on Fifth avenue at 10 times the price. And remember, they look best in platinum."  
Twelve hundred, for stones in which he had only a casual interest and which he had not the least

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