

Thoroughbreds.

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While Langdon labored over the problem of Mayne's identity, he had watched the horses at the post through his glasses. The Dutchman had behaved well, his trifle of eagerness to break away was even better than Lauzanne's indolent indifference. The other five had acted as three-year-olds are wont to act—with erratic indecision; one minute violent desire, and the next obstinate reluctance characterizing their inter-actable twistings, backings and plungings. It had not been for long; a neck or half length at the start meant little when a mile and a half stretched its tiring length between them and the finish post.

Langdon's perplexity was cut short by the cry "They're off!" the jingle of a bell, and the scurrying of many feet, as eager men rushed for higher points of observation in the stand. As the seven horses came thundering by, pulling double in eager ignorance of the long journey that lay before them, Langdon saw with evil satisfaction that The Indian was well out in the lead.

The Dutchman was sixth, and behind with a short, awkward strength in his gallop, loafed Lauzanne. There was smoothness in the stride of Hanover's big son, the Dutchman, and Langdon, as he watched him swing with strong grace around the first turn, mentally fingered the \$10,000 that would shortly be his.

"That skate win!" he sneered, as Lauzanne followed. "He gallops like a fat pig. He can't live the pace—he can't live the pace," he repeated, and his voice was mellow with a cheerful exultation. His observations seemed eminently truthful. Allis' horse trailed farther and farther behind the others.

Out in front galloped with unseemly haste The Indian—a brown blotch of swirling color. Two lengths from his glittering hoofs raced four horses in a bunch—two bays, a gray and a black, so close together that they formed a solid mosaic of mottled hue against the green background of the field beyond.

Then the Dutchman, with his powerful stride, full of easy motion—a tireless gallop that would surely land him the winner, Langdon thought, as he hung with breathless interest on every move of Westley's boy.

Mike Gaynor had taken his place on the little platform at the top of the steps leading to the stand. He was watching the race with intense interest. His judgment told him that this fast pace could not last and that Lauzanne could gallop as he was going from end to end of the mile and a half, even faster if he so wished. At the mile and a quarter a half thrill of hope came to Mike for Lauzanne as he crossed the rock and surely galloping on the leaders. And still his rider was lying low on the withers, just a blue blur on the dark gold of the chestnut.

"Got 'umbe, but they're a pair!" muttered the Irishman. "Be me soul, I think they'll win." At the bottom turn into the stretch Mike could see that White Moth and the Dutchman had closed up on the Indian, so that they swung wide around the owner of the horse.

"God, she's shut off!" he muttered. It was a living wall, and through little chinks in its quivering face he could see specks of blue close up where raced Lauzanne. "Poor girl!" he gasped, "they've got her in a pocket. Damn them boys. Why did she bug the rail? She's fair 'trowed away the last chance."

Half way up the steps stood Langdon, and his coarse, evil face took on a look of unholly joy as Lauzanne was blotted into oblivion by the front. "Poked by God! Cleverly, trainer, to put up a kid like that agin Westley an' the other," he sneered.

Then a deafening roar went up from the stand. Somebody thrust a pair of broad shoulders in front of Mike's face. He leaned out far past the intruder and saw the Indian yaw drunkenly in his stride away from the rail, carrying White Moth and the Dutchman out, and into the opening he had left, glued to the rail, crept the chestnut form of Lauzanne.

A wild yell of Irish joy escaped Mike. Then he waited. Now it would be a race! But Lauzanne was trying, trying all by himself, for the rider was still as death. Already the clamor of many voices was setting the air; all over the stand it was, "The favorite wins! The Dutchman wins!" Even yet there was no beckoning call to Lauzanne, but Mike knew. He had said to Allis before she went out, "If you ever get level wit' them in the straight you can win."

And now Lauzanne's yellow head was even with the others and soon it was in front. And then there were only two battling—Lauzanne and the Dutchman, and on the bay Westley was riding with whip and spur.

"In a walk—in a walk, I tell you!" fairly screamed Old Bill, clutching at Mortimer's arm; "didn't I tell you? We're a thousand to the good. Look at him, look at him! He had climbed half way up Mortimer's strong back in his excitement. 'Look at the kid! Never moved—a walk, in a walk! Larcen all the way for a thousand!' His voice, generally weak and tattered, like his clothes, had risen to a shrill scream of exultation.

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bet. Out of all this evil positive good would accrue.

CHAPTER XXVII.
After winning on Lauzanne, Allis had dodged the admiring crowd of paddock regulars that followed her. As Lauzanne was being blanketed she had kissed the horse's cheek and given him a mighty squeeze of thankfulness. How nobly he had done his part; good, dear old, despised, misjudged Lauzanne. He had veritably saved her father from disaster, had saved her from—many things. She had slipped into her long coat and stood waiting for Mike to drive her to Dixon's cottage, when the rumor came of an objection. Then there had been the misery of terrible suspense, a wait of uncertainty. Was her sacrifice of womanly instinct to go for nothing? Dixon had hurried to the scene of investigation; then he had come back after a little while with Mike, and the good news that they had got the race. If it had not been for prying eyes she would have knelt there at Lauzanne's feet, and offered up a prayer of thankfulness. She had done all a woman could do, almost more. Providence had not forsaken her and her stricken father.



"IF YOU DID NOT STEAL THE MONEY, WHO DID?"

"And you took the money yesterday or the day before?" "I did not." "Ah!" Lane repeated in a dryer, more severe tone than he had used before. This "ah" of the cashier's, with its many gradations of tone, had been a most useful weapon in his numerous financial battles. It could be made to mean anything, everything; fung out at haphazard, it always caught his opponent off guard. It was a subtle thrust, and while one pondered its possible meaning, Lane could formulate in his mind more decisive expressions.

"Ah," he repeated, "if you did not steal this money, who did? And if you did not take it, why did you put it back?" "With an expressive sweep of the hand toward the brother and sister, Alan told in a low, steady voice, his face flushed with anger and indignation, that he had done nothing of the kind. He had not stolen the money, and he had not put it back. He had only returned it to the cashier, and he had done so because it was the right thing to do. He had not stolen it, and he had not put it back. He had only returned it to the cashier, and he had done so because it was the right thing to do.

"I can't answer those questions," answered the man he was grilling. "The money to pay Mr. Porter's note is here, and I fancy that all the bank needs to concern itself about. It is entrusted to me, and now I am prepared to turn it over." "Quite true; ah, yes, quite true! But it might have been vastly different. That is the point that most concerns the bank. Whoever took the money—and he bowed deeply with ironical consideration to Mortimer—must have needed \$1,000 for some well-some speculative purpose, perhaps. Good fortune has enabled the someone to make good and the money has been replaced."

Mortimer bowed his head in acquiescence. What could he say—what other stand could the bank take? "You might remain at your desk," the cashier said. "If there is any mistake we will discover it, no doubt." Mortimer felt like one dead, indeed as a dishonored man he would be better dead. The bank was like a mausoleum and he a lost spirit haunting its precincts in quest of the undelivered body that had been his yesterday.

Alan Porter waited in suffering suspense for his appearance. What would come of it all? Now that the money was replaced, if the boy admitted his guilt to Crane, probably no further action would be taken, but he would be dishonored in the sight of his employers. Mortimer had sought to avert this, had not denounced Alan in the first instance. By good fortune he had been able to replace the money; even now he had divulged the name of the thief.

He was well aware of the mass of circumstantial evidence, the outcome of his own hurried actions that pointed to himself as the guilty one. Better this than that he should denounce the boy. Dishonor to the lad might kill his father, for Mortimer was well aware of the doctor's edict. And Allis, the girl he loved as his life, would hang her head in shame forever. He was anxious to see Alan before the cashier did. He did not want the boy to deny taking the money at first, as he might be he was unaware of the circumstances. It would place him in a wrong light.

Just before 12 Alan Porter came hurriedly in. He had missed his train the night before he explained in a general way to all. Mortimer stepped up to him almost at once, speaking with low, earnest rapidity. The cashier was in his own office and Mr. Case was not within ear shot. "I put the money back, but its loss had been discovered yesterday. I have been accused of taking it, but have denied it, accused me with no right to say that you borrowed it, thinking it no great harm, as it was your father's money."

Alan would have interrupted him, but Mortimer said: "Wait till I finish," and then continued: "There will be nothing done to you. I feel sure, if you take this stand, because of your father's connection with Crane. It will save me from dishonor."

"Mr. Porter." It was the cashier's voice of Damascus steel cutting in on Mortimer's low, pining tones. Alan turned his head, and Mr. Lane, seeming lightning on the coin. That was one happening. John Porter had gained more than \$20,000. This made him quite independent of Crane's financial bolstering. The banker's diplomacy of love had been weakened. That was the other happening.

Crane was dressed with the cashier not more than ten minutes when Mortimer was asked to join the two men who had so suddenly become deeply interested in his affairs. The cashier's hand had been strengthened by Crane's contribution of evidence. Mortimer had told the same falsehood about his mother being ill to him at the race course. From Alan the cashier had learned that Mortimer had been betting heavily. He had admitted to the boy that he had just won enough to replace the thousands dollars he had stolen. Mortimer's words had assumed that reading in their journey through two personalities. He had even begged young Porter not to speak of his betting transactions. He had denied taking the money, that was but natural. He had been forced to admit replacing it—that was conclusive. Indeed, it seemed a waste of time to investigate further; it was utterly impossible to doubt his guilt. Mesh by mesh, like an enthralling net, all the different threads of convicting circumstances were drawn about the accused man.

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he begged of me to take the blame. He said it would ruin him, but that Crane would do anything to me. He's a vile, sneaking thief, Allis!" "Hush, Alan, don't say that. It's all some dreadful mistake. The money will be found somewhere."

"It has been found; Mortimer put it back. Why should he replace the money if he had not stolen it?" "Where is Mr. Mortimer, Alan?" The boy pointed with his thumb to the door of the cashier's office. "Crane's in there, too. I hope Mortimer owns up. He can't do anything else; they caught him putting the money back."

Allis remembered that she had seen Mortimer on the race course, but she couldn't believe that he'd even been betting. "Mr. Mortimer doesn't bet," she said. "Yes, he does; he did yesterday, anyway. He begged me to say nothing, practically admitted that he had taken the money and was going to put it back."

"Why should he tell you that, Alan?" "I don't know, unless he feared it might be found out while he was away; or perhaps he was so excited over winning a thousand dollars that he didn't know what he was saying. At any rate he took it right enough, Allis, and you ought to cut him!"

"I shan't do that. He's innocent. I know he is. I don't care what they say. If he replaced the money, it was to shield the man who took it." She was looking searchingly into her brother's eyes, not that she was accusing him of the theft; she was just searching for the truth. "Do you mean it was to shield me that I took it? No one else could have taken the money except Mortimer or myself."

"I don't know," answered the girl, wearily; "it's all so terribly new; I only know that Mortimer did not steal it." "What she was still speaking the accused man came from the cashier's office, holding his head dejectedly erect, not at all as a half-convicted felon should have slunk through the door, yet withal in his face was a look of hopeless gravity.

As he resumed his place at the desk close to the brother and sister, Alan looked defiantly at him. He could see in the boy's eyes malignant detestation, a glimmer of triumph, as though he felt that Mortimer was irrevocably in the toils. His attitude allied Mortimer with loathing. He stole a look into the girl's face. Would she, too, say with her eyes, "Behold here is the thief?"

A thrill of ecstatic comfort warmed his brain. In Allis' gray eyes was the first touch of kindness he had known in this hour of trial. Faith, and sorrow, and cheer, and love were all there, striving for mastery; no further weakening, no uncertain questioning, no remonstrance of reproval, nothing but just unlimited faith and love.

Mortimer heard the brother say, "I think you had better not," then the girl's voice, clear and decisive, answering, "I will, I must." In anger Alan left his sister's side, and she, stepping up to the wicket, said, "Will you please come out for a minute, Mr. Mortimer? I want to speak to you." He passed around to her side. Crane and the cashier were still closeted in the latter's office.

"Let us go out into the sunshine," Allis said. "Can you—will it make any difference?" "I don't think it matters," he answered, wearily; "things are as bad as they can be, I suppose." He granted that she knew everything, but he was possessed of no shame, no diffidence, no reserve; he was innocent, and her eyes had assured him that she knew it.

As they passed through the door it was that her eyes were fixed on him. Mortimer's face, and then his hands, took the gloved fingers in his own. Without speaking, he turned and passed into the bank. "May I go with you?" asked Crane; "I will be glad to drive you over," the girl answered.

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