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CHAPTER VII.

In Which He Spends an Hour or Two on a Roof.

ONE.

Drummond paused for a moment at the door of the sitting room, then with a slight shrug he stepped past Peterson. During the last few days he had grown to look on this particular room as the private den of the principals of the gang. He associated it in his mind with Peterson himself, suave, impassive, ruthless; with the girl Irma, perfectly gowned, lying on the sofa, smoking innumerable cigarettes, and manicuring her already faultless nails; and in a lesser degree, with Henry Lakington's thin, cruel face, and blue, staring eyes.

But tonight a different scene confronted him. The girl was not there; her accustomed place on the sofa was occupied by an unkempt-looking man with a ragged beard. At the end of the table was a vacant chair, on the right of which sat Lakington regarding him with malevolent fury. Along the table on each side there were half a dozen men, and he glanced at their faces. Some were obviously foreigners; some might have been anything from murderers to Sunday school teachers. There was one with spectacles and the general appearance of an intimidated rabbit, while his neighbor, helped by a large red scar right across his cheek, and two bloodshot eyes, struck Hugh as being the sort of man with whom one would not share a luncheon basket.

Peterson's voice from just behind his shoulder roused him.

"Permit me, gentlemen, to introduce to you Captain Drummond, D. S. O., M. C., the originator of the little entertainment we have just had."

Hugh bowed gravely. "My only regret is that it failed to function," he remarked. "As I told you outside, I'd quite forgotten your menagerie. In fact"—his glance wandered slowly and somewhat pointedly from face to face at the table—"I had no idea it was such a large one."

"So this is the insolent young swine, is it?" The bloodshot eyes of the man with the scarred face turned on him morosely. "What I cannot understand is why he hasn't been killed by now."

Hugh waggled an accusing finger at him.

"I knew you were a nasty man as soon as I saw you. Now look at Henry up at the end of the table; he doesn't say that sort of thing. And you do hate me, don't you, Henry? How's the jaw?"

"Captain Drummond," said Lakington, ignoring Hugh and addressing the first speaker, "was very nearly killed last night. I thought for some time as to whether I would or not, but I finally decided it would be much too easy a death. So it can be remedied tonight."

If Hugh felt a momentary twinge of fear at the calm, expressionless tone, and the half-satisfied grunt which greeted the words, no trace of it showed on his face. Already the realization had come to him that if he got through the night alive he would be more than passing lucky, but he was too much of a fatalist to let that worry him unduly. So he merely stifled a yawn, and again turned to Lakington.

"So it was you, my little one, whose fairy face I saw pressed against the window. Would it be indiscreet to ask how you got the dope into us?"

Lakington looked at him with an expression of grim satisfaction on his face.

"You were gassed, if you want to know. An admirable invention of my friend Kauffner's nation."

A guttural chuckle came from one of the men, and Hugh looked at him grimly.

"The scum certainly would not be complete," he remarked to Peterson, "without a filthy Boche in it."

The German pushed back his chair with an oath, his face purple with passion.

"A filthy Boche," he muttered thickly, lurching toward Hugh. "Hold him the arms of, and I will the throat tear out. . . ."

It all happened so quickly. At one moment Hugh was apparently intent upon selecting a cigarette, the next instant the case had fallen to the floor; there was a dull, heavy thud, and the Boche crashed back, overturned a chair, and fell like a log to the floor, his head hitting the wall with a vicious crack. The bloodshot being resumed his seat a little limply. Hugh resumed his search for a cigarette.

"After which breezy interlude," remarked Peterson, "let us to business get."

Hugh paused in the act of striking a match, and for the first time a genuine smile spread over his face.

"There are moments, Peterson," he murmured, "when you really appeal to me."

Peterson took the empty chair next to Lakington.

"Sit down," he said shortly. "I can only hope that I shall appeal to you still more before we kill you."

Hugh bowed and sat down.

"Consideration," he murmured, "was always your strong point. May I ask how long I have to live?"

Peterson smiled genially.

"At the earnest request of Mr. Lakington you are to be spared until tomorrow. At least, that is our present intention. Of course, there might be an accident in the night; in a house like this one never can tell. Or"—he carefully cut the end off a cigar—"you might go mad, in which case we shouldn't bother to kill you. In fact, if you go mad, we shall not be displeased."

Once again he smiled genially.

"As I said before, in a house like this, you can never tell. . . ."

The intimidated rabbit, breathing heavily, was staring at Hugh fascinated; and after a moment Hugh turned to him with a courteous bow.

"Laddie," he remarked, "you've been eating onions. Do you mind deflecting the blast in the opposite direction?"

His calm imperturbability seemed to madden Lakington.

"You wait," he snarled thickly; "you wait till I've finished with you. You won't be so d—d humorous then. . . ."

Hugh regarded the speaker languidly.

"Your supposition is more than probable," he remarked, in a bored voice. "I shall be too intent on getting into a Turkish bath to remove the contamination to think of laughing."

Slowly Lakington sank back in his chair, a hard, merciless smile on his lips; and for a moment or two there was silence in the room. It was broken by the unkempt man on the sofa, who, without warning, exploded unexpectedly.

"A truce to all this fooling," he burst forth in a deep rumble; "I confess I do not understand it. Are we assembled here tonight, comrades, to listen to private quarrels and stupid talk?"

A murmur of approval came from the others, and the speaker stood up waving his arms.

"I know not what this young man has done: I care less. In Russia such trifles matter not. He has the appearance of a bourgeois, therefore he must die. Did we not kill thousands—aye, tens of thousands of his kidney, before we obtained the great freedom? Are we not going to do the same in this accursed country? Kill him now—



"Kill Him Now—Throw Him in a Corner and Let Us Proceed."

throw him in a corner and let us proceed."

He sat down, amidst a murmur of approval, in which Hugh joined heartily.

"Splendid," he murmured. "A magnificent peroration. Am I right, sir, in assuming that you are what is vulgarly known as a Bolshevist?"

The man turned his sunken eyes, glowing with the burning fires of fanaticism, on Drummond.

"I am one of those who are fighting for the freedom of the world," he cried harshly, "for the right to live of the proletariat." He flung out his arms wildly. "It is freedom; it is the dawn of the new age."

Hugh looked at him with genuine curiosity; it was the first time he had actually met one of these wild visionaries in the flesh. And then the curiosity was succeeded by a very definite amazement; what had Peterson to do with such as he?

For the moment his own deadly risk was forgotten: a growing excitement filled his mind. Could it be possible that here, at last, was the real object of the gang; could it be possible that Peterson was organizing a deliberate plot to try and Bolshevize England? He looked up to find Peterson regarding him with a faint smile.

"It is a little difficult to understand, isn't it, Captain Drummond?" he said, carefully flicking the ash off his cigar "I told you you'd find yourself in deep water." Then he resumed the contemplation of the papers in front of him.

Hugh half closed his eyes, while a general buzz of conversation broke out round the table.

Fragments of conversation struck his ears from time to time. The intimidated rabbit, with the light of battle in his watery eye, was declaiming on the glories of workmen's councils; a bullet-headed man was shouting an inspiring battle cry about no starvation wages and work for all.

"Can it be possible," thought Hugh, grimly, "that such as these have the power to control big destinies?" And then, because he had some experience of what one unbalanced brain, whose owner could talk, was capable of achieving; because he knew something about mob psychology, his half contemptuous amusement changed to a bitter foreboding.

"You fool!" he cried suddenly to the Russian; and everyone ceased talking. "You poor d—d boob! You—and your new earth! In Petrograd today bread is two pounds four shillings a pound; tea, fifteen pounds a pound. Do you call that freedom?" He gave a contemptuous laugh.

Too surprised to speak, the Russian sat staring at him; and it was Peterson who broke the silence with his suave voice.

"Your distress, I am glad to say, is not likely to be one of long duration," he remarked. "in fact, the time has come for you to retire for the night, my young friend."

He stood up smiling; then he walked over to the bell behind Hugh and rang it.

"Dead or mad—I wonder which." He threw the end of his cigar into the grate as Hugh rose. "While we



He Opened the Door and Stood There Smiling.

deliberate down here on various matters of importance we shall be thinking of you upstairs—that is to say, if you get there. I see that Lakington is even now beginning to gloat in pleasant anticipation."

Not a muscle on the soldier's face twitched; not by the hint of a look did he show the keenly watching audience that he realized his danger. Lakington's face was merciless, with its fiendish look of anticipation, and Hugh stared at him with level eyes for a while before he turned toward the door.

"Then I will say 'Good night,'" he remarked casually. "Is it the same room that I had last time?"

"No," said Peterson. "A different one—specially prepared for you. If you get to the top of the stairs a man will show you where it is." He opened the door and stood there smiling. And at that moment all the lights went out.

TWO.

The darkness could be felt, as real darkness inside a house always can be felt. Not the faintest glimmer even of greyness showed anywhere, and Hugh remained motionless, wondering what the next move was going to be. Now that the night's ordeal had commenced, all his nerve had returned to him. He felt ice-cold; and as his powerful hands clenched and unclenched by his sides, he grinned faintly to himself. Then very cautiously he commenced to feel his way toward the door.

At that moment someone brushed past him. Like a flash Hugh's hand shot out and gripped him by the arm. The man wriggled and twisted, but he was powerless as a child, and with another short laugh Hugh found his throat with his other hand. And again silence settled on the room . . .

Still holding the unknown man in front of him, he reached the foot of the stairs, and there he paused. He had suddenly remembered the mysterious thing which had whizzed past his head that other night, and then clanged suddenly into the wall beside him. He had gone up five stairs when it had happened, and now with his foot on the first, he started to do some rapid thinking.

If, as Peterson had kindly assured him, they proposed to try and send him mad, it was unlikely that they would kill him on the stairs. At the same time it was obviously an implement capable of accurate adjustment, and therefore it was more than likely that they would use it to frighten him. And if they did—if they did . . . The unknown man wriggled feebly in his hands, and a sudden unholy look came on to Hugh's face.

"It's the only possible chance," he said to himself, "and if it's you or me, laddie, I guess it's got to be you."

With a quick heave he jerked the man off his feet, and lifted him up till his head was above the level of his own. Then clutching him tight, he commenced to climb. His own head was bent down, somewhere in the region of the man's back, and he took no notice of the feebly kicking legs.

Then at last he reached the fourth step, and gave a final adjustment to his semi-conscious burden. He pressed his head even lower in the man's back, and lifted him up another three inches.

"How awfully jolly!" he murmured. "I hope the result will please you."

"I'd stand quite still if I were you,"

(To Be Continued.)

FARMERS & MERCHANTS STATE BANK

REPORT of the Condition of the Farmers & Merchants State Bank, at Denton, Md., in the State of Maryland, at the close of business June 30, 1921.

RESOURCES.

Loans and discounts		$197,942 87
Overdrafts, secured and unsecured		846 27
Furniture and fixtures		2,026 16
Due from national, state and private banks, and bankers and trust companies, other than reserve		872 18
Checks and other cash items		160 15
Due from approved reserve agents		1,337 20
Lawful Money Reserve in Bank, viz:		
U. S. Currency and national bank notes	$4,244 00	
Gold coin	252 50	
Minor coin	703 42	5,199 92
Total		$208,384 75

LIABILITIES.

Capital stock paid in		$30,000 00
Surplus fund		6,000 00
Undivided profits, less expenses, interest and taxes paid		5,785 80
Due to national, state and private banks and bankers and trust companies, other than reserve		228 45
Deposits (demand):		
Subject to check	$52,691 22	52,691 22
Deposits (time):		
Savings and Special	$66,271 78	
Certificates of deposits	17,407 50	83,679 28
Bills payable, including certifiactes of deposit for money borrowed		30,000 00
Total		$208,384 75

State of Maryland, County of Caroline, ss.:

I, S. E. Hignutt, Cashier of the above named institution, do solemnly swear that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

S. E. HIGNUTT, Cashier.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 12th day of July, 1921

MILDRED GORSUCH, Notary Public.

Correct Attest:
CLEMENT DRAKE,
HENRY W. HUGHES,
J. HUDSON TAYLOR,
Directors.

THE PEOPLES BANK

REPORT of the condition of The Peoples Bank, at Denton, in the State of Maryland, at the close of business, June 30, 1921.

RESOURCES.

Loans and discounts		$339,310 03
Ovedrafts, secured and unsecured		1,114 41
Stocks, bonds, securities, etc.		121,303 24
Banking house, furniture and fixtures		10,000 00
Mortggaes and judgments of record		10,500 00
Due from national, state and private banks and bankers and trust companies, other than reserve		4,225 71
Checks and other cash items		358 01
Due from approved reserve agents		30,350 03
Lawful money reserve in bank, viz.:		
U. S. currency and national bank notes	$8,748 00	
Gold coin	685 00	
Minor coin	2,992 70	12,425 70
Total		$529,587 13

LIABILITIES.

Capital stock paid in		$50,000 00
Surplus fund		32,500 00
Undivided profits, less expenses, interest and taxes paid		11,835 54
Due to national, state and private banks and bankers and trust companies, other than reserve		1,616 52
Deposits (demand):		
Subject to check	$151,521 87	
Certified checks	20 00	
Cashier's checks outstanding	197 43	151,739 30
Deposits (time):		
Savings and special	$208,895 77	280,895 77
Reserved for taxes		1,000 00
Total		$529,587 13

State of Maryland, County of Caroline, ss.:

I, T. F. Johnson, Cashier of the above named institution, do solemnly swear that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

T. F. JOHNSON, Cashier.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 7th day of July, 1921.

WM. S. CROUSE, Notary Public.

Correct Attest:
W. R. FOUNTAIN,
H. C. HOBBS,
F. J. WRIGHT,
Directors.

THE DENTON NATIONAL BANK

Number 2547.

REPORT of the condition of The Denton National Bank, at Denton, in the State of Maryland, at the close of business on June 30, 1921.

RESOURCES.

Loans and discounts		$1,105,279 71	
Notes and bills rediscounted		53,990 00	$1,051,289 71
Overdrafts, unsecured			2,521 80
U. S. Government securities owned:			
U. S. bonds deposited to secure circulation (par value)			50,000 00
Owned and unpledged			11,800 00
Total U. S. Government securities		$61,800 00	
Other bonds, securities, etc.:			68,182 62
Value of banking house			12,000 00
Real estate owned other than banking house			8,500 00
Lawful reserve with Federal Reserve Bank			40,317 39
Cash in vault			26,798 01
Net amount due from banks, bankers and trust companies other than included in items 8, 9 or 10			4,004 05
Total of items 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13		$30,802 06	
Checks on banks located outside of city or town of reporting bank and other cash items			145 15
Redemption fund with U. S. Treas. and due from U. S. Treas.			2,500 00
Total			$1,278,058 73

LIABILITIES.

Capital stock paid in		$100,000 00
Surplus fund		175,000 00
Undivided profits		24,542 09
Circulating notes outstanding		49,500 00
Net amounts due to national banks		670 03
Net amounts due to state banks, bankers, trust companies, (other than included in items 21 or 22)		6,073 87
Certified checks outstanding		107 30
Total of items 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25	$6,851 10	
Demand deposits (other than bank deposits) subject to reserve (deposits payable within 30 days):		
Individual deposits subject to check		281,340 71
Total demand deposits	$281,340 71	
Time deposits subject to reserve (payable after 30 days, or subject to 30 days or more notice, and postal savings):		
Other time deposits		640,824 73
Total of time deposits	$640,824 73	
Total		$1,278,058 73

State of Maryland, County of Caroline, ss.:

I, William I. Norris, Cashier of the above named bank, do solemnly swear that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

WILLIAM I. NORRIS, Cashier.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 6th day of July, 1921.

ELIZABETH MacDONALD, Notary Public

Correct Attest:
HARVEY L. COOPER,
J. ROLAND CHAFFINCH,
JAMES H. NICHOLS,
Directors.

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