

# DEPUTY OF THE DEVIL

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

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## CHAPTER VIII—Continued

Her heart leaped. She cried: "Father, he's all right. See!"

Doctor Greeding fought back to self-control; he began a swift examination. Nancy's eyes blurred with tears, but she heard buttons yield, and the movement of garments, and saw Dan's white flesh, and saw through misty eyes the wound.

"Does it hurt, darling?" she pleaded. "Does it?"

Dan shook his head, his white lips grimed. "Not a bit," he said weakly. "Tell Mr. Jerrell—it's all right. Accident!"

Jerrell, somewhere above them, standing over them, cried: "Dan, I swear I tried not to. Something—"

Mary Ann flashed one glance toward him, reassuring, comforting. Then she watched Doctor Greeding. He met her eyes and shook his head in negation.

Her cheeks flamed. She cried: "You can help him! You can operate!"

The doctor protested: "Hopeless! I've nothing here to work with."

Mary Ann stood up. "We'll manage," she insisted. "You've got to. Quickly. We can't just—give up!"

He faced her. "Mary Ann," he said gravely. "If we could act instantly, there might be a slim chance; but as it is—to get him to the mainland, to the hospital, to move him. It's hopeless!"

He added: "And even if there were time, it would need a miracle to save him!"

Mary Ann held his eyes with hers. "You can do miracles," she said, her tones vibrant, compelling. "I know. I've seen them. But it wasn't anything I could see. Oh, I've seen what you did with your hands, your instruments. Everything you did! But it wasn't what you did! It was something inside you. She caught his arms, grasped them firmly. "You must do a miracle for Dan," she said.

She spoke quickly to Nancy. "Your father will have to operate, here, at once. In the house. With plenty of light. A table, somewhere."

Nancy caught strength from Mary Ann. She suggested steadily: "The kitchen. There's a big skylight, and a long table."

Mary Ann nodded. "Perfect." She turned to Jerrell. She saw then that he stood white and shamed and sorrowful; and she went to him, and rose on tiptoe to kiss him—touched his cheek reassuringly.

"Don't—worry. You must—help us, Ira," she said. "Get something to carry Dan into the house—something so that he can lie flat. I will telephone the nearest hospital. Where is it, Nancy?"

Nancy told her. Jerrell, instantly galvanized into activity, was already running toward the house. Mary Ann looked at Doctor Greeding. "You will need," she reflected, "these things." And she named them, in a swift catalogue. "Anything else?"

Doctor Greeding said gently: "No, that will do. But—it's no use, Mary Ann!"

The girl ignored his word. "I'll have them send everything," she said, moving toward the path; and then, to Nancy: "While I'm phoning, get water boiling. Get Dan on the table. Find some razor-blades—new ones, if you can—and put them on to boil. And if you've some blunt-ended scissors. Or any scissors will do. And thread, and big needles. And big spoons. Put everything on to boil. But first come show me where the telephone is. I'll call the hospital, and then I'll search the house, see what I can find. There must be first-aid things—"

They went swiftly together toward the house, and Doctor Greeding was left alone here beside Dan.

The man stood looking down, his eyes brooding. His universe was chaos in this hour. The discovery that Dan was not dead—though his wound must almost certainly prove fatal—had struck Doctor Greeding with a shocking force.

Dan, the rock upon which all his hopes and plans were shattered, Dan whom he hated and whom he had meant should die—was still alive!

And he had meant that Dan should die by Jerrell's carelessness, so that Mary Ann would abort the man. Yet—here a moment ago—Mary Ann had kissed Jerrell on the lips. She loved her brother; she should for his carelessness hate Jerrell. But instead, she had kissed him, in comfort and in love.

Doctor Greeding could not recognize the world so long familiar. He felt himself under the glance of a stern, condemning eye; he seemed to hear mockery in the air, and a derisive laughter.

He spoke, without knowing it, aloud. "He must die! He can't live," he muttered.

Dan on the ground at his feet, said stubbornly, without opening his eyes: "I'm not dead yet, Doctor!"

And the older man said, crushingly: "You're badly hurt! Don't nurse any futile hopes."

But Dan would not by words alone be daunted. His mouth twisted in a grin. "I'll show you something about getting well that you never saw before," he insisted, laboring over his words. "I'm—telling you!"

Doctor Greeding shook with a murderous rage; Dan was like a scurried snake, to be crushed under a grinding heel. The doctor looked over his shoulder toward the path along which Nancy and Mary Ann had disappeared. There was no one in sight. His eyes searched all around; and then he knelt beside Dan again, his countenance contorted. If the man were not now dead, yet he must die!

But Nancy called, from the path: "I'm coming, Dan." So Doctor Greeding stood up quickly, brushing his hands together, withdrawing from the stricken man.

Yet he took only a grudging and reluctant hand in what immediately followed. Thomas and Jerrell and Nancy and her father worked together. Thomas had brought one of the shutters used to seal the windows of the house in winter; and they laid it on the ground, and managed as gently as possible to lift Dan upon it. His breath whistled through dry lips, and his mouth twisted, but he did not speak or complain.

They lifted him, and with Nancy and her father at one end, Jerrell and Thomas at the other, they carried the shutter and its burden across the court and through the gate, and along the path toward the house. They came to the kitchen door. Ruth, and Margaret, the cook, had made all ready there. They bore Dan into the kitchen, and laid the shutter upon which he rested on the table, and Doctor Greeding felt the hurt man's pulse.

Nancy turned quickly to the servants. "Margaret," she directed, "you keep the kettles boiling. Ruth, bring blankets and sheets and pillows. Lots of them. Clean ones. Don't let them touch anything, the wall or anything."

Old Margaret, white-faced but steady, turned to the stove. Ruth, pale as death, departed to do as Nancy bade her. Jerrell stood silent by the kitchen door, waiting for commands; and Thomas went stolidly out of doors, a lumpish man not easily dismayed. Doctor Greeding looked around at them all—saw Margaret, her back turned, busy at the stove, and he said softly:

"Nancy, and you, Ira, you'd better leave me with him." He might even now find the opportunity to do what he intended.

But Nancy answered stoutly: "I'm never going to leave him again. Never!"

Then Mary Ann, her hands full, came through the pantry. "I got the hospital on the phone," she reported. "They're sending everything. Nancy, have some one meet the car at the landing. And I've been rummaging the house for things we could use." She spoke to Doctor Greeding. "You can begin with what I have here. By the time you're ready to close the wound, the things from the hospital will have come."

He said stubbornly: "Dan is sinking, Mary Ann. This is valorous, but it is futile too."

She deposited her burden on the draining-board beside the sink and put her hand on his forehead; and after a moment she said crisply: "His pulse is not bad!"

Then, almost sternly: "Doctor Greeding, I have seen you do miracles. You didn't do them with instruments, and equipment. You did them with the gift of healing that is in you. You can do one now!"

The man's eyes flickered uncertainly, in a sort of desperation; and beads of perspiration appeared upon his brow. He repeated after her, like a lesson learned by rote: "I can do one now." Then his color flamed, and he seemed about to speak, to refuse. But in the end, as though surrendering, he said decisively: "Quick, then!"

Mary Ann nodded; turned back to the sink. "I found this can of ether, in the bathroom closet upstairs," she reported. "It's never been opened. And here's iodine, and alcohol, and gauze for sponges—"

Mary Ann went to the stove to inspect the things boiling there; she nodded, satisfied. And she turned to Nancy, looked at her appraisingly.

"Do you want to stay, to help?" she asked.

"Yes," said Nancy.

"You will stand up to it," Mary Ann decided. "But first, send some one to meet the car from the hospital, at the landing."

Jerrell volunteered: "I'll go."

He was grateful for even this small chance to be of help, hurried away, and Mary Ann turned back to Doctor Greeding. The man was still like one dreaming, bewildered, stunned. Mary Ann, because she knew exactly what she wished for, commanded him in his uncertainty: "Go and prepare yourself."

She directed: "We'll have to do without gloves. I'll contrive a mask.

Nancy and I will get him ready. Come back quickly."

He turned submissively away; and then Ruth appeared, her arms full of linen.

Nancy, during what followed, had no sense of dealing with the body of Dan, whose flesh and blood she loved. This was an impersonal task that must be done. She and Mary Ann stripped off his garments, and while Mary Ann and Ruth lifted first his head and then his feet, Nancy slipped under his body blankets and sheets to cushion the hard shutter on which he still lay.

A pillow under his head; then sheets over him, expertly slit and folded to expose the field in which Doctor Greeding must work.

Once Dan whispered something, weakly, and Mary Ann said: "Hush, dear. Rest!"

"Where's—Nancy?" he asked.

"Here," said Nancy, and touched his lips with her finger; so that he was content.

When they were ready, Mary Ann said crisply:

"Go tell your father to hurry." Nancy obediently departed. Mary Ann went to the sink, and under the running faucet scrubbed her hands



If the Man Were Not Now Dead, Yet He Must Die!

and her arms above the elbow. She ripped a sheet in half and folded it like an apron around her shoulders, slit holes for her arms, made Ruth pin the sheet like an apron behind. She then thoroughly washed her hands with alcohol; then bade Margaret empty the water out of the boiling kettle and set it, with the things it contained still steaming as they dried, on a chair by the table. Doctor Greeding and Nancy returned.

Mary Ann said briskly: "Doctor, you can scrub up at the faucet there. Here's alcohol."

He urged: "Mary Ann, don't count too much on this."

She retorted: "I'm not counting, I'm not even thinking. I'm just doing it! I can. You must—do the rest of it!"

Nancy stood by uncertainly, and Mary Ann said to her:

"Nancy, you scrub up too. Scrub your hands, hard, with the brush and soap. Then wash them in alcohol. Don't touch anything afterward. Stand near us here, in case we need you. Your father will tell you what to do."

She bound a strip of linen across Doctor Greeding's mouth and nose, made Ruth do a like service for herself. And she showed Doctor Greeding the kettle and its contents. "I've boiled everything I found that you might use," she said. Her voice caught. "It isn't much of a kit, but I bent these big spoons for retractors; and here are scissors, and razor-blades. They're double-edged. You'll have to be careful not to cut yourself! We've no snaps, so you'll have to catch the small vessels with thread as you go along. Here are needles, and thread."

She saw him waver, and she cried in a swift storm of determination: "What's the matter with you? You act like a scared interne!" Her tones rang with scorn. "If you bungle this, I'll see that the world knows it. You can do this; and you've got to, Doctor. You've got to! Now come!"

He said with a helpless gesture: "The ether, Mary Ann. Who will give that?"

They were ready, scrubbed, standing by the table. Mary Ann for a moment hesitated helplessly. Then: "Nancy will," she decided. "I'll tell her how." To Nancy: "Take that towel and fold it twice, and pour ether on it and then lay it across his mouth and nose. Then a few drops afterward, whenever I tell you."

Doctor Greeding stood with his

hands lifted, protecting them against any least contamination. He said: "You know it's hopeless, Mary Ann. We're not properly sterile. Infection—"

Nancy, with the can of ether in her hand, cried miserably: "I can't open this!"

"Stick an ice-pick into it," Mary Ann commanded. "And—don't touch anything that we're using afterward, Nancy. You're not clean now. Doctor—we'll have to risk infection." Her voice broke for a minute in something like a sob. "For that matter, there's infection enough already inside him. Begin!"

"He's not ready yet."

Mary Ann was white, with desperation, white with haste. "Dan," she cried. His lips moved. "Dan, if it hurts, lie still," she commanded. "Nancy's going to give you ether now. Just breathe deeply. You won't feel it long."

Nancy came with the can, the pungent smell of ether preceding her. "Pour it on the towel, Nancy," Mary Ann commanded. "Now lay the towel over his face!" And then, curtly, over her shoulder: "Ruth, scrub your hands with soap and water and then alcohol. Don't touch anything afterward. We may need you." To Doctor Greeding: "I'll assist, do everything I can."

"We'll have an explosion here," Doctor Greeding muttered. "These fumes, and the stove."

"It's a gas-stove," Mary Ann insisted. "Not lighted."

"Coal fire in the water heater," he insisted.

She said in a still fury: "We've got to risk something!"

Doctor Greeding picked up a razor-blade from the kettle. It was still hot enough to burn his fingers, and he dropped it, with an exclamation.

"Careful!" Mary Ann cried in a deep exasperation.

Doctor Greeding steeled himself; he picked up the blade again. He looked at his hands.

These hands of his were, miraculously, steady. He studied them as though they belonged to some one else, astonished at their rocklike firmness. Himself in turmoil, his body and his soul shaken as by a tempest, it seemed to him incredible that these trained hands of his should be so still and sure.

Dan's chest was heaving, his breath labored. His face was covered by the towel. The fumes of ether filled the kitchen.

They stood in a silent group, waiting; Doctor Greeding by Dan's side, Mary Ann facing him across the table, Nancy at Dan's head. Ruth, holding her scrubbed hands out in front of her, white and motionless, stood near, awaiting any command. Old Margaret, the cook, bowed her head, and her lips moved silently.

There was no sound save Dan's long, rattling inhalations; and the clock ticked on the wall.

"He's ready," said Mary Ann.

Doctor Greeding's thoughts began to race. It was a moment before he realized that, at her word, and without command from his will, his hands had begun their business here.

## CHAPTER IX

Doctor Greeding, during that interminable time while he waited beside Dan, with Mary Ann facing him, and Nancy at his left dripping ether on the towel, felt himself helpless as even the stoutest swimmer must be helpless in the full sweep of a mighty current. And when at last he began, he watched like a spectator this conflict between his will—which desired Dan to die—and his deed. He wished to bungle, to be inept and clumsy; but despite himself, those long-trained fingers went about their accustomed tasks, seeking out the hurts that must be mended, discovering them infallibly by touch alone.

Lord Willington recently was installed lord warden and admiral of the Cinque ports by the grand court of Shepway, writes a London correspondent in the Chicago Tribune. To have witnessed the installation was to have seen the greatest possible muddle of ancient and modern in ceremony. A great gentleman with a notable record garbed in all the finery of uniform that an admiral can boast; "barons" and "combarons" dressed in scarlet cloaks with trimmings of blue and gold and the arms of the Cinque ports on the shoulders; others in black knee breeches and white satin embroidered waistcoats; still others in black frock coats and top hats. All were gathered on Dover college close for the ceremony. The old court which had a real service to perform was held at Shepway Cross, but this modern one was held under a marquee, where the lord warden undertook the duty of main-

Only by the sense of touch could the thing in fact be done. The bullet had ripped into Dan's abdomen; its course must be traced and all its ravages repaired. And to do this, the eye was relatively useless; it was necessary that probing fingers should seek out the rents that must be closed.

And Doctor Greeding thought, with a deep wonder, that his hands had never better performed their task than now. He had not even to direct them with his eyes.

While he worked, a change by slow degrees took place in him. He began to be able to look with a clear eye upon himself and upon the world.

He saw Nancy clearly, and perhaps for the first time. He comprehended her love for Dan, and he comprehended in all its implications her love for himself too. So many times he had hurt her, wounded her, frightened her; and yet always there dwelt in her a love for him that, no matter how often he spurned it, was still ready to offer him tenderness and comforting.

And Doctor Greeding thought of Mary Ann, so bravely steady now, rigorously controlling all the sorrow and terror she must feel, on the slim chance that she might, by strength, save Dan. Of Mary Ann, who loved Jerrell enough so that even after his shot struck down her brother, she could offer him forgiveness and comfort with an unasked kiss.

She loved Jerrell, would be happy with him. But—could she ever be happy with him if Dan, whom Jerrell had shot, should die?

And Doctor Greeding thought of Dan, so near death now, whose crime had been no more than that Nancy loved him. And as Doctor Greeding's thoughts thus spun and swirled, he began to feel himself utterly alone. By the interwoven loves which bound these others together—Nancy and Dan, Dan and Mary Ann, Mary Ann and Jerrell—he felt himself helplessly excluded. Their lives were full without him. There was no one to whom he, his life, was indispensable. No one now in the living world.

He was lonely for Myra, for his wife. Through all the years of his manhood she had been welded to his side. He realized, suddenly, that where she who had been flesh of his flesh had been torn away, there remained an open wound that would never close.

Flesh of his flesh; and—torn away by his own hand! He accepted this fact with all that it implied; and he remembered with a wry smile something Professor Carlisle had said, long ago. Something about the unwisdom of supping with the devil, unless one had a long spoon!

He had paid no heed to that caution, at the time; but it was too late for wisdom now. His fingers were already burned.

With a rising pride he watched these fingers of his, working here so skillfully. Burned or not, they could still work miracles when he chose.

And suddenly Doctor Greeding realized that he did so choose; that he wished, deeply and profoundly and with a certain desperation, to work now a miracle for Dan. He wished it just as a man swept by a strong current toward the crest of a cataract wishes to cling to the stout rope which chance has thrown within his reach and grasp. To save Dan might not suffice to—save himself. Yet Doctor Greeding realized, with a sort of pride, that this did not greatly matter. It was of others he was thinking now.

As he had wished death for others, and even a while ago for Dan himself, so now he wished life for Dan. For the sake of Mary Ann, that she might be happy with Jerrell; for the sake of Nancy and her love; for Dan's own sake, he wished Dan to live! This wish was like a humble prayer.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## What Irwin S. Cobb Thinks about

Defenders of Communism.

SANTA MONICA, CALIF.—

Every time I write a squib against communism, there follows a flood of letters from persons who begin by saying they're not communists—perish the thought.

But either I'm attacking free speech—as though free speech meant free license to undermine our government; or, by indirection, I'm trying to undermine trade unionism, although what trade unionism has in common with communism is something which I don't quite see.

One camouflage red—or anyhow he must be reddish—states there are only 100,000 known communists among 120,000,000 of us, so why worry? But wouldn't you worry if 100,000 lepers were suffered to go at large among us, or 100,000 stinging lizards to run wild?

A very passionate lady has been writing in, calling hard names. But I shan't argue with her, because I'm a victim of aeturophobia. On looking in the dictionary, you'll find that aeturophobia means one who has an intense aversion for cats.

"Smitty's" Travels.

READING about a police sergeant who retired after forty years' service and never set foot off his native Manhattan island made me think of a gentleman known as "Smitty" who, in my reportorial days on Park Row, was general rouabout at Andy Horn's saloon.

Smitty was born in the shadow of Brooklyn bridge and grew up there. He had traveled the various boroughs, but no matter where he went was always within the greater city. Finally he took a tour to foreign parts. He went to visit his sister, who'd married a truck gardener back of Newark, and the brother-in-law, who owned a car, toured Smitty about the landscape.

I was one who greeted Smitty on his return.

"Fur me," he said, "never again! I don't like that Joisey. Why, all them towns over there is got different names."

Dolling Up Lobbyists.

WHAT ever became of the bill introduced into the Louisiana legislature requiring lobbyists to wear special uniforms while following their trade? As I recall the original act, it provided that lobbyists of less than three years' experience should wear green skull caps and rainbow-hued plaid trousers; veterans were to wear the green caps and all-white suits, which latter seemed especially appropriate, white being the color for purity.

It's just too bad if the notion has been allowed to languish. And if an amendment were tacked on requiring that a certain type of legislator must wear garments with no pockets in them and buttoning up the back, princess style, so the wearer couldn't slip anything inside his bosom—well, there you'd have an idea that any state in the Union could profitably adopt, or, anyhow, almost any state.

Styles in Women's Hats.

HAVE you noticed those sub-divisional hats women are wearing this season? If not, kindly do so. It'll distract your attention from the part-time frocks some of them are wearing.

The average woman is wearing what looks like part of a hat—say one-half to two-thirds. I've heard the more of the original hat the milliner chopped off, the higher went the price for what was left. I suppose with hats, as in the case of a good clean appendix operation, if they'd cut the entire thing away, only very wealthy women could afford to do bare-headed.

Even so, the wearer has something to do with the effect. I ran into the lovely Mrs. Clark Gable and she had on one of the new fractional hats and it was powerfully becoming to her. But I'll bet it would look like the very dickens on me or Jimmy Durante.

IRVIN S. COBB.

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Wrath Silver

Ever since the year 1170 the parishes surrounding Knightlow, Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire, have paid Wrath Silver to the Lord of the Manor on St. Martin's day. Shortly before sunrise the money is placed in a niche in the remains of an old stone cross, and then is collected by the Steward of the Manor, according to Tit-Bits Magazine. The fees are purely nominal, ranging from one penny to two shillings and threepence-halfpenny. Defaulters, however, are dealt with severely, and have to pay a fine of twenty shillings for every penny, as well as a white bull with red ears and a red nose. But there has been no necessity within living memory to enforce this fine.

More Speed

"If I had a race boss," said Uncle Eben, "I'd call it 'Money,' 'cause I don't know anything dat faster."