The Bat

A Novel from the Play

By
Mary Roberts Rinehart and Avery Hopwood

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unusual quality—but they were the eyes of a man who can wait and a man who can strike.

He stood perfectly easy before his chief for several moments before the latter looked up from his papers.

"Well, Anderson," he said at last, looking up, "I got your report on the Wilhenry burglary this morning. I'll tell you this about it—if you do a neater and quicker job in the next ten years you can take this desk away from me—I'll give it to you. As it is, your name's gone up for promotion today—you deserved it long ago."

"Thank you, sir," said the tall man, smiling and sitting down. He took a cigar and lit it. "That makes it easier, sir. Because—I've come to ask a favor."

"All right," said the chief, promptly. "Whatever it is, it's granted."

Anderson smiled again. "You'd better hear what it is first, sir. I don't want to put anything over on you."

"Try it!" said the chief. "What is it—vacation? Take as long as you

The Super-Crook of Fiction.

like—within reason—you've earned it—I'll put it through today."

Anderson shook his head. "No, sir—I don't want a vacation. I want to be assigned to a certain case—that's all."

The chief's look grew searching. "H'm," he said. "Well—as I say—anything within reason. What case do you want to be assigned to?"

The muscles of Anderson's left hand tensed on the arm of his chair. He looked squarely at the chief. "I want a chance at the Bat!" he said, slowly.

The chief's face became expressionless. "I said—anything within reason," he said, softly, regarding Anderson keenly.

"I want a chance at the Bat!" repeated Anderson stubbornly. "If I've done good work so far—I want a chance at the Bat!"

The chief drummed on the desk. Annoyance and surprise were in his voice when he spoke.

"But look here, Anderson," he burst out finally. "Anything else and I'll—but what's the use? I said a minute ago, you had brains—but now, by Judas, I doubt it! If anyone else wanted a chance at the Bat—I'd give it to them gladly—I'm hard-boiled. But you're too valuable a man to be thrown away!"

"I'm no more valuable than Wentworth would have been."

"Maybe not—and look what happened to him! A bullet-hole in his heart—and thirty years of work that he might have done thrown away! No, Anderson—I've found two first-class men since I've been at this desk—Wentworth and you. He asked for his chance—I gave it to him—turned him over to the government—and lost him. Good detectives aren't so plentiful that I can afford to lose you both."

"Wentworth was a friend of mine," said Anderson, softly. His knuckles were white dints in the hand that gripped the chair. "Ever since the Bat got him—I've wanted my chance. Now my other work's cleaned up—and I still want it."

"But I still tell you—" began the chief in tones of high exasperation. Then he stopped, and looked at his protege. There was silence for a time.

"Oh, well—" said the chief, finally, in a hopeless voice. "Go ahead—commit suicide—I'll send you a 'Gates Ajar' and a card—'Here lies a d—n fool who would have been a great detective if he hadn't been so pig-headed.' Go ahead!"

Anderson rose. "Thank you, sir," he said in a deep voice. His eyes had light in them, now. "I can't thank you enough, sir."

"Don't try," grumbled the chief. "If I weren't as much of a d—n fool as you are, I wouldn't let you do it. And if I weren't so d—n old, I'd go after the slippery devil myself and let you sit here and watch me get brought in with an infernal paper bat pinned where my shield ought to be. The Bat's supernatural, Anderson—you haven't a chance in the world—but it does me good all the same to shake hands with a man with brains and nerve," and he solemnly wrung Anderson's hand in an iron grip.

Anderson smiled. "The cagiest bat flies once too often," he said. "I'm not promising anything, chief, but—"

"Maybe," said the chief. "Now wait a minute—keep your shirt on—you're not going out bat hunting this minute, you know—"

"Sir? I thought I—"

"Well, you're not," said the chief, decidedly. "I've still some little respect for my own intelligence and it tells me to get all the work out of you I can, before you start wild-goose chasing after this—this bat out of hell. The first time he's heard of again—and it shouldn't be long from the fast way he works—you're assigned to the case. That's understood. Till then, you do what I tell you—and it'll be work, believe me!"

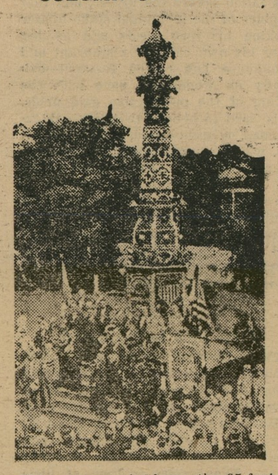
"All right, sir," Anderson laughed and turned to the door. "And—thank you again."

He went out. The door closed. The chief remained for some minutes looking at the door and shaking his head. "The best man I've had in years—except Wentworth," he murmured to himself. "And throwing himself away—to be killed by a cold-blooded devil that nothing human can catch."

He turned back to his desk and his papers. But for some minutes he could not pay attention to the papers. There was a shadow on them—a shadow that blurred the typed letters—the shadow of bat's wings.

(Continued Next Week)

COLUMN OF FRUIT



This photograph shows the 35-foot-high fruit column which was erected at the Fifty-fourth annual "Canstatter volksfest," held by the Canstatter Volksfest Verein of Philadelphia. The column contained three tons of fruit.

Songs of Plain Folks

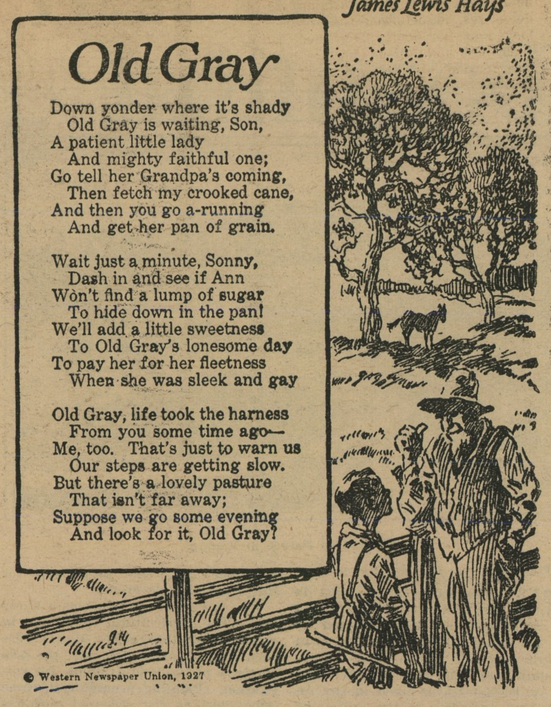
By James Lewis Hays

Old Gray

Down yonder where it's shady
  Old Gray is waiting, Son,
A patient little lady
  And mighty faithful one;
Go tell her Grandpa's coming,
  Then fetch my crooked cane,
And then you go a-running
  And get her pan of grain.

Wait just a minute, Sonny,
  Dash in and see if Ann
Won't find a lump of sugar
  To hide down in the pan!
We'll add a little sweetness
  To Old Gray's lonesome day
To pay her for her fleetness
  When she was sleek and gay

Old Gray, life took the harness
  From you some time ago—
Me, too. That's just to warn us
  Our steps are getting slow.
But there's a lovely pasture
  That isn't far away;
Suppose we go some evening
  And look for it, Old Gray?



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FALL FOOTWEAR DECLARES ELEGANCE OF SIMPLICITY

LEADING authorities on bootery tell us that definite reaction is setting in this fall against fancy footwear, that dignity of line and simplicity of trimming are taking the place of garish display for street shoes.

In style the pump or oxford types will take precedence for street wear, while sandals and opera pumps will continue good for afternoon and evening.

Suede, patent leather and kidskin declare smartness for fall. The vogue for reptile skins also continues. Black and tan lizard, amber alligator, boa snake, and snakeskin all appear in the new street styles.

Some fashion experts predict that it will be a fifty-fifty proposition between black and brown tones for street wear.

The walking shoe that will prevail with the tailored and semi-sports costume will have a Cuban heel. Medium French heels appear, too, for daytime wear. Heels on dress shoes will continue high.

The shoe in the sketch at the top to the left is en exponent of the very newest in fall footwear. It is of black kid in pump effect with ornamental kid tongue and metal buckle in black edged with silver. A very popular shoe in the new shades of brown is pictured to the right. It is designed in light tones or in tan with mahogany brown saddle and heel. Typical of the new reptile skin modes is the shoe shown below to the right.

In the midst of this simplicity movement for footwear, the usual "exception to the rule" presents itself, which in this instance happens to be resplendent buckles. Sparkling cut steel buckles, either square or oval, are featured in pumps of suede, kid, patent leather, satin and that which is very new and chic, velvet. With her striking costume of metal cloth and satin, Billie Dove of film fortune and fame is pictured herewith wearing satin pumps with glittering buckles.

JULIA BOTTOMLEY.

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