

# The Black Bag

By Louis Joseph Vance  
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endar. We can send the boat back."  
"Once aboard the lugger the girl is mine," eh, Mulready, to say nothing of the loot!"  
Calendar's words were jocular his tone conveyed a different impression entirely. Both man and girl wheeled right about to face him, the one with a strangled oath, the other with a low cry.

"The devil!" exclaimed this Mr. Mulready.  
"Oh, my father!" the girl voiced her recognition of him.

"Not precisely one and the same person," commented Calendar suavely, "but—er—thanks, just as much. You see, Mulready, when I make an appointment I keep it."  
"We'd begun to get a bit anxious about you"—Mulready began defensively.

"So I surprised from what Mrs. Hallam and Mr. Kirkwood told me. Well?"

The man found no ready answer. He fell back a pace to the railing, his features working with his deep chagrin. The murky flare of the gas lamp overhead fell across a face handsome beyond the ordinary, but marred by a sullen humor and seamed with indulgence—a face that seemed hauntingly familiar until Kirkwood in a flash of visual memory reconstructed the portrait of a man who lingered over a dining table with two empty chairs for company. This, then, was he whom Mrs. Hallam had left at the Pless—a tall, strong man, very heavy about the chest and shoulders.

"Why, my dear friend," Calendar was taunting him, "you don't seem overjoyed to see me for all your wild anxiety! 'Pon my word, you act as if you hadn't expected me—and our engagement so clearly understood at that. Why, you fool!—here the mask of irony was cast—"did you think for a moment I'd let myself be nabbed by that yap from Scotland Yard? Were you banking on that? I give you my faith I ambled out under his very nose! Dorothy, my dear," turning impatiently from Mulready, "where's that bag?"

The girl withdrew a puzzled gaze from Mulready's face (it was apparent to Kirkwood that this phase of the affair was no more enigmatic to him than to her) and drew aside a corner of her cloak, disclosing the gladstone bag securely grasped in one gloved hand.

"I have it, thanks to Mr. Kirkwood," she said quietly.

Kirkwood chose that moment to advance from the shadow. Mulready started and fixed him with a troubled and unfriendly stare. The girl greeted him with a note of sincere pleasure in her surprise.

"Why, Mr. Kirkwood! But I left you at Mrs. Hallam's!"

Kirkwood bowed, smiling openly at Mulready's discomfiture.

"By your father's grace I came with him," he said. "You run away without saying good night, you know, and I'm a jealous creditor."

She laughed excitedly, turning to Calendar. "But you were to meet me at Mrs. Hallam's?"

"Mulready was good enough to try to save me the trouble, my dear. He's an unselfish soul, Mulready. Fortunately it happened that I came along not five minutes after he'd carried you off. How was that, Dorothy?"

Her glance wavered uneasily between the two, Mulready and her father. The former, struggling to declare his indifference, turned his back squarely upon them. She frowned.

"He came out of Mrs. Hallam's and got into the four wheeler, saying you had sent him to take your place and would join us on the Althea."

"So—of How about it, Mulready?" The man swung back slowly. "What you choose to think," he said after a deliberate pause.

"Well, never mind! We'll go over the matter at our leisure on the Althea."

There was in the adventurer's tone a menace, bitter and not to be ignored, which Mulready saw fit to challenge.

"I think not," he declared. "I think not. I'm weary of your addle pated suspicions. It'd be plain to any one but a fool that I acted for the best. If you're not content to see it in that light I'm done."

"Oh, if you want to put it that way I'm not content, Mr. Mulready," retorted Calendar dangerously.

"Please yourself. I bid you good evening and—goodby." The man took a step toward the stairs.

Calendar dropped his right hand into his topcoat pocket. "Just a minute," he said abruptly, and Mulready stopped.

Abruptly the fat adventurer's smoldering resentment leaped in flame. "That will be about all, Mr. Mulready! 'Bout face, you hound, and get into that boat! D'you think I'll temporize with you till doomsday? Then forget it. You're wrong, dead wrong. Your bluff's called, and"—with an evil chuckle—"I hold a full house, Mulready—every chamber taken." He lifted meaningfully the hand in the coat pocket.

"Now, in with you!"  
With a grin and a swagger of pure bravado Mulready turned and obeyed. Unnoticed of any save perhaps Calendar himself the boat had drawn in at the stage a moment earlier. Mulready dropped into it and threw himself sullenly upon the midships thwart.

"Now, Dorothy, in you go, my dear," continued Calendar, with a self-satisfied wag of his head.

Half dazed, to all seeming, she moved toward the boat. With clumsy and assertive gallantry her father stepped before her, offering his hand—his hand which she did not touch, for in the act of descending she remembered and swung impulsively back to Kirkwood.

"Good night, Mr. Kirkwood. Good night. I shan't forget."

He took her hand and bowed above it, but when his head was lifted he still retained her fingers in a lingering clasp.

"Good night," he said reluctantly. In a sudden flush of daring he turned and nodded coolly to Calendar. "With



The boat dropped away, the oars lifting and falling.

your permission," he said negligently and drew the girl aside to the angle of the stairway.

"Miss Calendar"—he began, but was interrupted.

"Here—I say!"  
Calendar had started toward him angrily.

Kirkwood calmly waved him back. "I want a word in private with your daughter, Mr. Calendar," he announced, with quiet dignity. "I don't think you'll deny me. I've saved you some slight trouble tonight."

Disgruntled, the adventurer paused. "Oh, all right," he grumbled. He returned to the boat.

"Forgive me, Miss Calendar," continued Kirkwood nervously. "I know I've no right to interfere, but—"

"Yes, Mr. Kirkwood?"

"But hasn't this gone far enough?" he floundered unhappily. "I can't like the look of things. Are you sure that it's all right—with you, I mean?"

She did not answer at once, but her eyes were kind and sympathetic. He plucked heart of their tolerance.

"It isn't too late yet," he argued. "Let me take you to your friends—you must have friends in the city. But this—this midnight flight down the Thames, this atmosphere of stealth and suspicion, this—"

"But my place is with my father, Mr. Kirkwood," she interposed. "I daren't doubt him, dare I?"

"I suppose not."

"So I must go with him. I'm glad—thank you for caring, dear Mr. Kirkwood. And again good night."

"Good luck attend you," he muttered, following her to the boat.

Calendar helped her in and turned back to Kirkwood with a look of ardent triumph. Kirkwood wondered if he had overheard. Whether or no, he could afford to be magnanimous. Seiz-

ing Kirkwood's hand, he purged it vigorously.

"My dear boy, you've been an angel in disguise. And I guess you think me the devil in masquerade." He chuckled, in high conceit with himself over the turn of affairs. "Good night and—fare thee well!" He dropped into the boat, seating himself to face the recalcitrant Mulready. "Cast off, there!"

The boat dropped away, the oars lifting and falling. With a weariful sense of loneliness and disappointment Kirkwood hung over the rail to watch them out of sight.

Somewhat wearily the young man released the railing and ascended the stairs. "And that is the end!" he told himself, struggling with an acute sense of personal injury. He had been hardly used. For a few hours his life had been lightened by the ineffable glamour of romance. Mystery and adventure had engaged him. He had served a fair woman and been associated with men whose ways, however questionable, were the ways of courage, hedged thickly about with perils.

Disconsolate and aggrieved, he gained the street. He was miles from St. Pancras, foot weary, to all intents and purposes lost.

In this extremity chance smiled upon him. The cabby who at his initial instance had traveled this weary way from Quadrant mews, after the manner of his kind, ere turning back had sought surcease of fatigue at the nearest public. From afar Kirkwood saw the four wheeler at the curb and made all haste toward it.

Entering the gin mill, he found the cabby, soothed him with bitter and, instructing him for St. Pancras with all speed, dropped, limp and listless with fatigue, into the conveyance.

### CHAPTER IX.

FROM the commanding elevation of the box "Three 'n' six!" enunciated the cabby, his tone that of a man prepared for trouble, inclined to give trouble a welcome. His bloodshot eyes blinked truculently at his alighted fare. "Three 'n' six," he iterated aggressively.

An adjacent but theretofore abstracted policeman pricked up his ears and assumed an intelligent expression.

"Bermondsey Ol' Stairs to Sain' Pancras," argued the cabby assertively, "seven mile by th' radius—three 'n' six!"

To be continued.

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### FARM FOR SALE

**FARM FOR SALE**—Lot 11, con. 11 Emily; 200 acres more or less; 140 acres cleared, balsam, tamarack swamp. New frame house and frame barn 36x80. Small orchard well watered, 5 miles from the town of Lindsay. Property of DENNIS SOULLY, Price right for a quick sale. Apply to Elias Bowes, Real Estate Agent, Lindsay.—wtf.

Consisting of 100 acres, more or less, barn only, known as the Wilson Farm, being Lot 1, Con. 8, Eldon, on the Town line between Mariposa and Eldon, 1 mile east of Grass Hill station. This Farm will be sold at a bargain on easy terms. Immediate possession. For further particulars write D. D. McEACHERN or T. A. WILSON, Executors of the H. Wilson Estate Cannington, Ont.—wtf.

**FARM FOR SALE**—Improved farm of one hundred and fifty acres, more or less, being composed of the South Half of Lot Twenty (20) in the Tenth and the West part of Lot Twenty (20) in the eleventh Concession of the Township of Ops. This land is good clay loam, suitable for any kind of grain, drained, and all cleared but about Fifteen (15) acres of pasturage, through which there is running water. Situated three miles East of Lindsay, on good gravel road. There is a frame dwelling, kitchen and woodshed. Large frame barn 45x75 feet with stone foundation and stabling for all kinds of stock. Apply to MOORE & JACKSON, Solicitors, Lindsay, Ont. or A. BLACKWELL, 1 Notre Dame Street, West, Montreal.—wtf.

**FARM FOR SALE OR TO RENT**—Part of lot 21, con. 7, Ops, just east of town, containing about 3½ acres of good land, well drained. There is on the premises a one storey frame house, good stable, driving shed and hen coop. Good well, ½ acre of good bearing orchard, ½ acre of new strawberry bed. Will also sell cheap 1 good cultivator, wagon, disk harrow, berry boxes, crates, stands, etc. every-

thing necessary for the cultivation and growing of strawberries, also a mare and colt. Apply on the premises or address JAS. MAHER, P. O. box 292, Lindsay, Ont. —wtf.

**FARM FOR SALE**—Lot 15, con. 2, Fenelon, containing 93½ acres, more or less, adjoining the village of Islay. 90 acres cleared and about 4½ acres hardwood bush. New frame barn 50x65 on stone wall with first-class stabling complete, cement floor. Log house, well finished inside, partly plastered and partly boarded. School post office and blacksmith shop within a few rods of farm, 6 miles from Cambray station. Grass Hill and Cameron grain markets. The property of JOHN R. COWISON. For further particulars apply to Elias Bowes Real Estate Agent, Lindsay.—wtf.

**FARM FOR SALE**—50 acres being S. W. ¼ of lot 9, con. 8, Ops. There are on the premises good farm buildings and a never failing spring; land is first-class. This property will be sold on reasonable terms. Apply GEO. MARTIN, Fenelon Falls, Ont.

**FARM FOR SALE**—100 acres, east half lot 16, con. 9, Ops, all cleared, good frame house and frame barn with stone stabling. 5 miles from town of Lindsay; the Hooey property. Terms easy: wants to sell at once. For further particulars apply to ELIAS BOWES, Real Estate Agent, Lindsay.—wtf.

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at Mrs. Flett's old home, Mt. Horeb- of Windsor men. And with farewell unspoken. Signed, husband and family.