

# The Black Bag

By Louis Joseph Vance  
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Thoughtfully Kirkwood fell back to his former point of observation, now the richer by another object of suspicion, the hostelry. Mrs. Hallam was waiting and watching for some one to enter or to leave that establishment. It seemed a reasonable inference to draw. Well, then, so was Kirkwood no less than the lady. He deemed it quite conceivable that their objects were identical.

He started to beguile the time by wondering what she would do if— Of a sudden he abandoned this line of speculation and, catching his breath, held it, almost afraid to credit the truth that for once his anticipations were being realized under his very eyes.

Against the lighted doorway of the Hotel du Commerce the figures of two men were momentarily sketched as they came hurriedly forth, and of the two one was short and stout and even at a distance seemed to bear himself with an accent of assertiveness, while the other was tall and heavy of shoulder.

Side by side they marched in step across the embankment to the head of the quay gangway, descending without pause to the landing stage. Kirkwood, hanging breathlessly over the guard rail, could hear their footfalls ringing in the hollow rhythm on the planks of the wharfway, could even discern Callaghan's unlovely profile in dim relief against one of the waterside lights, and he recognized unmistakably Mulready's deep voice, grumbling inarticulately.

At the outset he had set after them with intent to accost Calendar, but their pace had been swift and his irresolute. He hung fire on the issue, dreading to reveal himself, unable to decide which were the better course—to pursue the men or to wait and discover what Mrs. Hallam was about. In the end he walked and had his disappointment recompensed.

For Mrs. Hallam did nothing intelligible. Had she driven over to the hotel, as he had suspected, she would have been there long before now. He had seen her in the street, and she had seen him. He had seen her in the street, and she had seen him. He had seen her in the street, and she had seen him.

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father's party. He had a suspicion that Mulready's attitude had made it seem advisable to Calendar either to leave the girl behind in England or to segregate her from his associates in Antwerp. If not lodged in another quarter of the city or left behind she was probably traveling on ahead to a destination which he could by no means guess. And Mrs. Hallam was looking for the girl. If there were really jewels in that gladstone bag Calendar would naturally have had no hesitation about intrusting them to his daughter's care, and Mrs. Hallam avowedly sought nothing else. How the woman had found out that such was the case Kirkwood did not stop to reckon unless he explained it on the proposition that she was a person of remarkable address. It made no matter one way or the other. He had lost Mrs. Hallam, but Calendar and Mulready he could put his finger on. They had undoubtedly gone off to the Alethea to confer again with Stryker—that was, unless they proposed sailing on the brigantine, possibly at turn of tide that night.

Panic gripped his soul and shook it, as a terrier shakes a rat, when he conceives this frightful proposition. In his confusion of mind he evolved spontaneously an entirely new hypothesis—Dorothy had already been spirited aboard the vessel; Calendar and his confederates, delaying to join her from enigmatic motives, were now aboard, and presently the word would be, "Up anchor and away!"

Were they again to elude him? Not, he swore, if he had to swim for it. And he had no wish to swim. The clothes he stood in, with what was left of his self respect, were all that he could call his own on that side of the North sea. Not a boatman on the Scheldt would so much as consider accepting three English pennies in exchange for boat hire. In brief, it began to look as if he were either to swim or to steal a boat.

Upon such slender threads of circumstance depends our boasted moral health. In one fleeting minute Kirkwood's conception of the law of mine and thine, its foundations already insidiously undermined by a series of cumulative misfortunes, toppled crashing to its fall and was not.

He was wholly unconscious of the change. Beneath him, in a space between the quays bridged by the gangway, a number of rowboats, a putative score, lay moored for the night and gently rubbing against each other with the soundless lift and fall of the river. For all that Kirkwood could determine to the contrary, the lot lay at the mercy of the public. Nowhere about was he able to discern a watchman.

Without a quiver of hesitation—moments were invaluable, if what he feared were true—he strode to the gangway, passed down and with absolute nonchalance dropped into the nearest boat, stepping from one to another until he had gained the outermost. To his joy he found a pair of oars stowed beneath the thwart.

CHAPTER XX.  
Kirkwood had paused to moralize upon the discovery, he would have laid it all at the door of his lucky star and would have been wrong. We who have never stooped to petty larceny know that the oars had been placed there at the direction of his evil genius bent upon facilitating his descent into the avens of crime.

"Possibly," Mulready chimed in suavely, "you can explain what you wanted of him in the first place. How did you come to drag him into this business?"

"That was partly accident, partly inspiration. I happened to see his name on the Pless register. He'd put himself down as from Frisco. I figured it out that he would be next door to broke and getting desperate, ready to do anything to get home, and thought we might utilize him to smuggle some of the stuff into the States. Once before, if you'll remember—no, that was before we got together, Mulready—I picked up a fellow countryman on the Strand. He was down and out, jumped at the job, and we made a neat little wad on it."

"The more fool you to take outsiders into your confidence," grumbled Mulready.

"Ow!" interrogated Calendar, mimicking Stryker's accent inimitably. "Well, you've got a heap to learn about this game, Mul. About the first thing is that you must trust old man Know-it-all, which is me. I've run more diamonds into the States in one way or another in my time than you ever pinched out of the shirt front of a toff on the Empire Prom. before they made the graft too hot for you and you came to take lessons from me in the gentle art of living easy."

"Oh, cut that, cawn't you?" "Delighted, dear boy. One of the first principles, next to profiting by the admirable example I set you, is to make the fellows in your own line trust you. Now, if this boy had taken on with me I could have got a bunch of the sparklers on my mere say-so from old Morganthau, up on Finsbury pavement. He does a steady business hoodwinking the customs for the benefit of his American clients—and himself. And I'd've made a neat little profit besides, something to fall back on if this fell through. I don't mind having two strings to my bow."

"Yes," argued Mulready, "but suppose this Kirkwood had taken on with you and then peached?" "That's another secret. You've got to know your man, be able to size him up. I called on this chap for that very purpose, but I saw at a glance he wasn't our man. He smelled a nigger in the wood pile and most politely told me to go to the devil. But if he had come in he'd have died before he squealed. I know the breed. That knocks the honor of thieves higher'n a kite, the old saw to the contrary—nothing doing. You understand me, I'm sure, Mulready," he concluded, with even-tempered sweetness.

"I don't see yet how Kirkwood got anything to do with Dorothy?" "Miss Calendar to you, Mr. Mulready," snapped Calendar. "There, there, now! Don't get excited. It was when the Hallam passed me word that a man from the Yard was waiting on the altar steps for me that Kirkwood came in. He was dining close by. I went over and worked on his feelings until he agreed to take Dorothy off my hands. If I had attempted to leave the place with her they'd have spotted me for sure. My compliments to you, Dick Mulready."

"I do," returned Calendar easily. "We're both in the shadow of jail, Mul, my boy, since you choose to take the reference as personal. Sing Sing, however, yawns for me alone. It's going to keep on yawning, too, unless I miss my guess. I love my native land most to death, but—" "Ow, blow that!" interrupted the captain irritably. "Let's 'ear about the 'Allam. Wot're you afryd of?" "Fraid she'll set up a yell when she finds out we're planting the loot, cap'n. She's just that vindictive. You'd think she'd be satisfied with her end of the stick, but you don't know."

"The Hallam. That milk and water offspring of hers is the apple of her eye, and Freddie's going to collar the whole shooting match or madam will kick over the traces." "Well?" "Well, she's queered us here. We can't do anything if my lady is going to camp on our trail and tell everybody we're shady customers, can we? The question now before the board is, Where now—and how?" "Amsterdam," Mulready chimed in. "I told you that in the beginning." "But how?" argued Calendar. "The Lord knows I'm willing, but we can't go by rail, thanks to the Hallam. We've got to lose her first of all."

"But wot I'm arskin' is wot's the matter with—" "The Alethea, cap'n? Nothing, so far as Dick and I are concerned. But my dutiful daughter is prejudiced. She's been so long without proper paternal discipline," Calendar laughed, "that she's rather high spirited. Of course I might overcome her objections, but the girl's no fool, and every ounce of pressure I bring to bear just now only helps make her more restless and suspicious."

"You leave her to me," Mulready interposed, with a brutal laugh. "I'll guarantee to get her aboard or—" "Drop it, Dick," Calendar advised quietly, "and go a bit easy with that bottle for five minutes, can't you?" "Well, then," Stryker resumed, apparently concurring in Calendar's attitude, "w'y don't one of you tyke the stuff, go off quiet an' dispose of it to a proper fence an' come back to divide. I don't see w'y that?" "Naturally you wouldn't," chuckled Calendar. "Few people besides the two of us understand the depth of affection existing between Dick, here, and me. We just can't bear to get out of sight of each other. We're sure inseparable—since night before last. Odd, isn't it?"

"You drop it!" snarled Mulready in accents so ugly that the listener was startled. "Enough's enough, and—" "There, there, Dick! All right. I'll behave," Calendar soothed him. "We'll forget and say no more about it."

"Well, see you don't." "But 'as either of you a plan?" persisted Stryker. "I have," replied Mulready, "and it's the simplest and best, if you could only make this long lost parent here see it." "Wot is it?" Mulready seemed to ignore Calendar and address himself to the captain. He articulated with some difficulty, slurring his words to the point of indistinctness at times. "Simple enough," he propounded solemnly. "We've got the gladstone bag here. Miss Dolly's at the hotel. That's her papa's bright notion. He thinks she's to be trusted. Now, then, what's the matter with weighing anchor and slipping quietly out to sea?"

"Leavin' the dootiful darter?" "Cert'n'y. She's only a drag anyway. Better off without her. Then we can wait our time and get highest market prices—" "You forget, Dick," Calendar put it, "that there's a thousand in it for each of us if she's kept out of England for six weeks. A thousand's five thousand in the land I hail from. I can use five thousand in my business."

"I won't," returned Calendar inflexibly. The dispute continued, but the listener had heard enough. Stealthily he crept away to the rail, to stand grasping it and staring across the water with unseeing eyes at the gay old city twinkling back with her thousand eyes of light.

Over there, across the water, in the dingy and disreputable Hotel du Commerce, Dorothy waited in her room, doubtless the prey of unnumbered nameless terrors, while aboard the brigantine her fate was being decided by a council of three unspeakable scoundrels, one of whom, professing himself her father, openly declared his intention of using her to further his selfish and criminal ends.

His first and natural thought—to steal away to her and induce her to accompany him back to England—Kirkwood's force discarded. He could have wept over the realization of his unqualified impotency. He had no money, not even cab fare from the hotel to the railway station. Something subtler, more crafty, had to be contrived to meet the emergency. And there was one way, one only. He could see none other. Temporarily he must make himself one of the company of her enemies, force himself upon them, ingratiate himself into their good graces, gain their confidence, then when opportunity offered betray them and the power to make them tolerate him, if not receive him as a fellow, the knowledge of them and their plans that they had unwittingly given him, was his.

And Dorothy was waiting. He swung round and without attempting to muffle his footfalls strode toward the companionway. He must pretend he had just come aboard. Subconsciously he had been aware during his time of pondering that the voices in the cabin had been steadily raising in volume, rising louder and yet more loud, Mulready's ominous, irk blurred accents dominating the others. There was a quarrel afoot. It was soon as he gave it heed Kirkwood understood that Mulready in the madness of his inflamed brain was forcing the issue, while Calendar sought vainly to calm and soothe him.

The American arrived at the head of the companionway at a critical juncture. As he moved to descend some ow, cool toned retort of Calendar's

(To be Continued)

Farm Help  
All farmers wishing farm help should apply as soon as possible to MORGAN JOHNS — Lindsay.

## FARM FOR SALE

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 pasture, 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.

FOR SALE OR TO RENT—Part of lot 21, con. 7, Ops, just east of town, containing about 3 1/2 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, 1/2 acre of good bearing orchard, 2 acre of new strawberry bed. Will also sell cheap 1 good cultivator, wagon, disk harrow, berry boxes, crates, stands, etc. everything 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 53 1/2 acres, more or less, adjoining the village of Islay. 90 acres cleared and about 4 1/2 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 Cameron station. Grass Hill and Cambray 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. 1/4 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 1/2 lot 16, con. 9, Ops, all cleared, good frame house and frame barn with stone stabling. 5 miles from town of Lindsay; the Hooley property. Terms easy: wants to sell at once. For further particulars apply to ELIAS BOWES, Real Estate Agent, Lindsay.—wtf.

FOR SALE—66-2-3 acres in Marioposa, one mile from Little Britain. 56 acres cleared, balance hardwood bush. Frame house and frame barn with stone wall. Few apple trees good well and never failing spring. Well fenced. Mail box at door and telephone in house. For further particulars apply to Elias Bowes, Real Estate Agent, Lindsay.—wtf.

FARM FOR SALE OR TO RENT—In the Township of Ops, east half lot 16, con. 9, containing 100 acres, nearly all cleared and well situated. One mile from church and school, one and a half miles from Reaboro. Good clay land, bank barn and frame house. Reasonable rent for this season, if not sold. Apply to A. ROBERTSON, or A. MARSHALL Lindsay.—w3.

DESIRABLE FARM PROPERTY FOR SALE BY TENDER—The undersigned will receive tenders up to May 15th next for that desirable property two miles directly east of the Village of Sunderland and being N 1/2 lot 18, Con. 5 and the N.E. 1/4 of Lot 18, Con. 6, in the Township of Brock. For terms and particulars apply to T. H. GLENDINNING, Sunderland, Ont., Executor of the Estate of the late Robert Oliver.—w5.

Live Stock Insurance  
I am agent for the General Live Stock Insurance Co. of Montreal, and can take risks on all kinds of live animals. Dr. Broad, office 46 Peel-st.

WANTED  
WANTED—For the balance of the year, a teacher (certificated) for Ursa School, Salary \$300 per annum. Apply to STEPHEN KETTLE, Sec.-Treas., Ursa.—d3wt.



Wood kept at a discreet distance. Upon the departure of the seeking Dorothy and would, further have elected to crowd their view if she succeeded in obtaining the girl. But she did nothing of the sort. For a time the fierce red as it had been ever since stopped, then, evidently admonished by the driver straightened up, and whip and wheeled the carriage back on the way it had come, appearing in a dark side street leading downward from the embankment. Kirkwood was, then, to believe that Hallam, having taken all that he and having waited for the two