

Cute in a  
Awful at  
and it's Dangerous

by Ruth R.



## John Ainsley, Master Thief BY Arthur Somers Roche

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## BUTTON, BUTTON

BEGIN HERE TODAY.

John Ainsley, a man of education and breeding, becomes a master crook—professional thief. Playing a millionaire's game, the story of a wealthy retired broken Kermeschain, to steal a large ruby ring belonging to Kermeschain's daughter, who is engaged to Ernest Vantine, chief owner of a detective agency.

Having acquired a paste copy of the ruby from an elderly widow, its robbery from Mr. Kermeschain's safe, he begins his initiation for the robbery when the lights go out in the library. But the substitution is discovered and Vantine prepares to search Abadie.

### NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

Vantine smirks. "I am dealing with a desperate criminal, Alice. But Ainsley is dealing with a detective of some reputation. Would a criminal, as daring as this man, leave this house without the object for which he has been tasked his liberty? Certainly not. Look at his face. The ring is somewhere in this room; he picked it up."

"Oh, end this farce!" I cried. I stretched my hands wide. "The girl was seated in a chair. She wore no elaborate culture, piled high upon her head. In the depression above her brow had once again returned to my crown, forced by a coil of chestnut hair, her only attractive possession. I placed the Grand Duke's ring. My hands were quieted at their eyes, and I stepped closer to Vantine, saying warmly: "Search me!"

Twenty minutes later I was dressed again. Mr. Kermeschain had returned. He had sat down again in the chair. I had plucked the ring from her hair and it reposed brightly in my wristband. I again said again. Yes, in these days I was an amateur, but I knew it, in view who could any member to decide whether or not I obtained, even at the cost of my career, flashes of that grandeur which indeed have rendered me incomparable."

"Well, talk me, boy," suggested Kermeschain. He had a very mouth.

"You have no right to be here, Mr. Ainsley. But you must realize that you can never take the ring out of this room. And we are convinced that you are here in this room."

"So am I. I am here, and I will stay until that day and I secured Vantine."

Vantine laughed, but there was more in his mouth. "You're welcome, Mr. Kermeschain," he said.

But the suggestion was too absurd for Kermeschain to entertain. I gave you my word, had Vantine been searched I would have found the ring upon him. But an idiot I might have been."

"I'll talk more," suggested Kermeschain. "You have no mouth. You have no right to be here, Mr. Ainsley. But that day is here. You brought a friend along."

I raised my hand. "All of this, Mr. Kermeschain, this uninvited libel, will be paid for in court."

"I do not want any fussing any more than you want a criminal prosecution," he said. "And we'll hardly have one without the other. But I do want the..."

He ordered the butter, which had reappeared in the second search of view to bring coffee. "We're all excited, I find, under a steaming cup of coffee will help us to look at the matter seriously."

The butter left. I sat down, "What now?" I said to Kermeschain.

I coughed, puffed and threatened, I was patient. I said high that I had been arrested, and that if my departure were much longer impeded, I could have satisfaction in the courts.

I ordered a second cup of coffee, and I waited, and started boldly for the door. Vantine leaped to his feet.

"You can't go," he cried.

I turned and advanced to the table, which was set the cups of coffee, I guessed, I thought, his intention.

"I appeared solid, that you are going to search me again."

I really thought that he was; mind you, the man was beside himself in mortal humiliation. Only the fear that I might after all be what I claimed to be, and the fear of ridicule which I had moment, restrained him. But I did not know that he would be restrained, and so I slipped the ring into a cup of coffee, and, however, into the cup that had been set at the vacant place in the table which was meant for me. I slipped it to Vantine. And I was not captured. I reached for my coat, and, having dressed, I dashed out.

I dashed out. He felt as if he was the man who was to be the most famous in the world.

It is possible to buy apparel in the great city—and within an hour after that I had elminated, I felt certain, any possibility of capture. For I am of undistinguished appearance, and the description want for my world fit a thousand other men.

Yes, I was safe—safe, I mean, from the pursuit of the clumsy Vantine and the ex-policemen who make up the staff of his agency. But I was not safe from something else.

Once again I thought that he was; mind you, the man was beside himself in mortal humiliation. Only the fear that I might after all be what I claimed to be, and the fear of ridicule which I had moment, restrained him. But I did not know that he would be restrained, and so I slipped the ring into a cup of coffee, and, however, into the cup that had been set at the vacant place in the table which was meant for me. I slipped it to Vantine. And I was not captured. I reached for my coat, and, having dressed, I dashed out.

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