

The Black Mansion Murder

By Leslie McFarlane



(Continued from Last Week)

Chapter XI JIMMY GETS HIS SCOOP

Next morning, the happiest newspaperman on the continent was sitting in Roger Kelvey's apartment having breakfast with the detective who had been given a grudging police credit for having achieved one of the greatest feats in the annals of the city—the clearing up of three separate and distinct mysteries.

The other newspapers published stories, of a sort. The Bulletin had all the facts. It was the only paper giving the complete solution of the mystery of the night-club cashier's murder and of the Moreno killing. It was the only paper giving all the facts in the daring attempt to loot the jewelry store vault by the expert tunneling job from the Black Mansion.

"What a beat!" gloated Jimmy. "I've been given a raise already, and I'll swear that cub reporters in this town will be hearing about it from the old hands for the next hundred years."

"I'm glad I was able to sew up the story so that you got most of it exclusively," grinned Kelvey, tenderly feeling his bandaged head. "I didn't tell Malloy all I knew about Old Ned until after

your sheet was on the press. "And believe me, I appreciate it. What a shock that must have given Malloy. Old Ned, the poor old street corner cripple, right under his nose for weeks, turning out to be one of the biggest jewel thieves in the country!"

"Ned isn't so old," said Kelvey. "That false beard helped a lot. He's wanted for crashing out of Joliet so he had to adopt some sort of disguise, and he certainly picked a good one. The wheelchair and the assumed deafness helped a lot, too. He let himself be seen around the street just enough to allay suspicion, and at nights he plied his trade."

"Even yet, sir," remarked Parkes, coming in to clear away the breakfast things, "I must confess that I am somewhat in the dark."

"Haven't you read The Bulletin?" shouted Jimmy.

"I was reserving that pleasure until after breakfast," confessed Parkes.

"Old Ned is really Timothy Carter, known to the police of forty-eight States and Alaska," said Kelvey. "He came here hold-up in collusion with Moreno. And when young Gale unfortunately chose that night to go around to remonstrate with Mo-

reno for his attentions to Miss Branner, the deceased Moreno saw an excellent chance to kill two birds with one stone. One of his trusty lieutenants went to Gale's room and stole his service revolver, planted it near the scene of the crime, and Gale was in a bad fix."

"I should say!" agreed Parkes. "It was a frame-up, pure and simple. Gale, acting wisely or unwisely as you will, was persuaded by his brother that his best course was to go into hiding until some method could be found of prevailing on Moreno to prove his alibi. In the meantime, Old Ned had spied the possibilities of using the Black Mansion as a means of entrance to the jewelry store and had organized a gang consisting of Goldy Marinoff, Joe Mintz, Doc Bain, an expert vault artist, and Spike Smith, none of whom were in Moreno's gang, but all men he could use. Moreno got wind of the Black Mansion affair from one of these fellows and thought he would use his knowledge of the night-club murder to force Old Ned to terms."

"When thieves fall out—," quoted Parkes, sententiously. "Sam, who had been looking for information, somehow stumbled on the fact that Moreno had been paying visits to the Black Mansion. He did not know why but he knew there was no good back of it, and he had more than a suspicion that the proximity of the jewelry store might have something to do with these visits. He told Howard, his brother, and learned that Moreno was usually in the Black Mansion at night. As a matter of fact, Moreno had been counted in on the job and was taking an active part, afraid that the thieves might complete their task and clear out with the loot before he knew about it."

"So Mr. Gale went there to learn what he could, I suppose?" Exactly. Sam was dubious as to the wisdom of this course and he confided in Miss Branner. Howard promised to call her up as soon as he returned from the place, to assure her that no harm had come to him. He intended to go to the mansion at about midnight, but on the way he was seen by a policeman and had a bad time of it for an hour or so. He eventually threw them off his trail, but the chase had taken him to a distant part of the city and by the time he got to the Black Mansion it was nearly dawn. In the meantime, Miss Branner had gone there, afraid he had fallen into Moreno's power. She had found Moreno dead. She heard someone entering the house and fled by the front way."

"The man entering," said Parkes, with a flash of inspiration, "was Gale."

"It was. Moreno and Old Ned had been alone in the house, owing to a break in the equipment they were using to cut through the vault and when Moreno tried to force Old Ned into disgorging the lion's share of the loot, Old Ned promptly killed him. He knew he was never safe as long as Moreno knew of the night-club affair. When Miss Branner and Gale were in the house, it was deserted, but one of the gang saw Miss Branner leaving. Old Ned at once used this to his advantage. They saw Gale entering and leaving by the back way and they naturally assumed that either Gale or the girl had killed Moreno. Old Ned persuaded them to keep quiet, as it would ruin the success of the jewelry store job, and he put Moreno's body in an upper room, where I found him. Next morning he thought it safer to remove the body and Goldy Marinoff and Joe Mintz were sent for that purpose."

"But this matter of abducting Gale, sir?"

"They knew Gale and the girl knew that the murder had been committed in the Black Mansion. The police did not. Old Ned was desperately afraid it would leak out and spoil all his plans. He felt that the girl was in touch with Howard so he delivered the letter, presumably from someone in touch with the Moreno gang, and then watched the novelty store. Sam and I went to Howard and delivered the message. Old Ned and his two assistants followed us and took Howard away. They wanted to keep him quiet until after the robbery and in the meantime they sent a message to the girl warning her that if she revealed her knowledge of the Black Mansion to the police, Gale would die."

"But didn't Gale confess to the Moreno murder, sir?"

"He did, but it was merely to save the girl. Ned was merely bluffing, for the benefit of the other members of the gang. Young Gale really thought the girl might have killed Moreno, to protect herself, and he thought these men were all friends of Moreno, anxious for revenge. Therefore, he lied, and confessed. But at police headquarters this morning, after I had informed Malloy of what I overheard in the tunnel, Old Ned was subjected to —er— rather persuasive questioning and he admitted everything."

"And Gale?"

"I left him under guard in the house by the river but I knew he was safe for the time being. I telephoned the girl and told her the situation. She got in touch with Sam, who went to the place with a policeman and rescued Howard, while Joe Mintz was promptly carted off to the nearest precinct station. Does that clear it all up, Parkes?"

"Nicely, sir, very nicely."

"Except for the vote of thanks I owe you for exerting your lungs so well on that police whistle. What with the patrolmen you summoned and the squad Howard Gale had on the scene a few minutes later, it was a big night for the blue-coats."

"A big night for all of us," said Jimmy Thomas.

THE END

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tepees of the Stoney Indians and the colorful note of bright-hued blankets, befeathered head-dresses, beaded squaws and shiny-eyed papooses. As if all this were not enough to crowd into one short week, there is the great Ice Palace, lit up at night with fireworks displays, the annual trap shoot of the Banff Gun Club, the packing contest with its high light of the famous diamond hitch, and open air swimming in the hot sulphur springs, unique in the annals of winter sports. Masquerade balls keep the fun of the carnival going and it ends up with the election of the Queen for the ensuing year. Lay-out shows skiers in action under the shadow of the mountains with insets of Pat Brewster, president of the 1931 carnival, W. E. Round, secretary-treasurer of the sports and Miss Doris Winnifred Parkes, of Vancouver, Queen of the Carnival.