

DIAMONDS FOR A DRINK

By
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Vanderhuizen, the big Dutchman, stepped aboard the downcountry train from Kimberley, South Africa, en route for Cape Town. He laid his suit case carelessly upon the rack, placed his hand upon his breast to make sure that the package for which he had risked many years of freedom, was there, and sat down in a seat, looking out at the desert landscape.

At Boshof a stranger came into the train, looked keenly about him, and finally, spotting Vanderhuizen, seated himself opposite him. Vanderhuizen recognized him as a man named James, from Kimberley also; he had once been a mine guard, but had been dismissed for some dishonesty. He had contrived in some way to avoid the clutches of the law, always severe on buyers of diamonds from the native quarrymen.

Vanderhuizen nodded surlily. James was the last person in the world that he wanted to see just then.

James smiled sardonically. "Come into the smoker, Van," he said, "and we can discuss business."

Vanderhuizen uttered an oath and his hand stole in a betraying manner to the package inside his coat. He saw James' eyes follow the movement and realized that he was trapped. Suddenly he arose and accompanied him.

"Well?" he growled, as they took their places in the empty smoker.

"Halves!" said James, laconically. "I'm fly."

"Curse you!" said Vanderhuizen. "It's a lucky thing you met me," returned James, quietly. "Do you know Thompson of the Kimberley police?"

"What of him?"

"He's in the next compartment. He's undoubtedly going to arrest you as soon as you step off the train. If he can get you to Cape Town without doing so, he will save himself a lot of trouble. That's why I came—I got wind of the affair."

The big Dutchman scowled fearfully. Seven years on the breakwater for illicit diamond buying was the last thing in the world that he wanted. And the stones in his breast pocket were worth twelve thousand pounds anywhere.

"What's the game?" he demanded. "Halves?" questioned James.

"I suppose so."

"I've telegraphed for two saddle horses to wait at Klipfontein station. We'll get there at dark. We can make a dash from the train, mount and be away before Thompson spots us. The saddle-bags are loaded with a week's food. In three days we can cross the desert to Khama's Land, where we can pick up an ox wagon and make our way into Johannesburg. Thompson will be clean off the scent. It will take him a couple of hours to find a horse, and then he won't know for sure that we are going to Khama's Land."

"I'm with you," replied Vanderhuizen, curtly.

At Klipfontein the program was carried out. As the train drew, shrieking, up to the station, the confederates leaped from the carriage. At the rear

of the platform a native man was waiting with two saddle horses, tough little Basuto ponies, of the kind that would carry their loads where no European horse could go. Two leaps into the saddles, two pulls at the reins, and the thieves were padding quickly through the single street of the settlement and out into the desert.

They looked back when they reached the sand. In the distance they saw a crowd gathered about a tall man who was making futile efforts to strike a quick bargain for a horse.

They rode till evening. When the moon came up they were alone upon the desert. They dismounted, made a fire from the scanty thorn scrub, and cooked some of the meat in James' saddle bags. On either side of the saddle hung a large water bag, the mols-



"Hand Over the Bag!"

ture from which, evaporating, kept the contents cold as spring water. They watered the horses scantily. They watched by turns and started out at dawn. It was ten miles to the nearest water pool, where the water bags were to be refilled.

"I believe we've missed the pool," said James, toward noon. All around them was the shimmering desert, devoid now even of thorn scrub. The horses panted from the heat. James gave them the last of the water.

"We'll strike another water hole before dark," he said to his companion.

But they did not strike the water hole, and by sunset the horses were unable to proceed farther. James was down, and Vanderhuizen's stood trembling, and evidently on its last legs.

"We had better press on afoot," said James. "I know there is a water hole at the foot of the mountains." And he pointed to where the blue outlines of a distant range rose against the cloudless sky.

He removed his saddle bags and slung them across his shoulders, and the two men proceeded wearily. James lagged behind Vanderhuizen, who, tortured by thirst, walked like a man in a nightmare. On they went, hour after hour, till suddenly the big Dutchman went down.

"You'd best leave me; I'm done for," he murmured.

James set down his saddle bags, opened them, and pulled out a bottle of water. He held it in the air. Vanderhuizen leaped to his feet, to find himself looking down the muzzle of a revolver.

"Hand over the bag," said James, briefly.

"You scoundrel!" shouted Vanderhuizen, through his swollen lips.

"This bottle for your half," James

pursued. "And—I know where to find the water hole."

Vanderhuizen glared at him; then, with a gesture of despair, he took the precious bag from his breast and tossed it to the other. For a man will give all that he has to save his life.

Next moment Vanderhuizen had knocked the head off the bottle and was gulping down the life-giving fluid. James watched him sardonically.

"You will find the water hole half a mile distant, at the foot of that elevation," he said, indicating a hummock in the sand. And he watched Vanderhuizen stagger away.

He went back to the horses and, knocking the heads off the other bottles, poured the contents down their throats. The animals, revived, staggered to their feet. His own horse was done for, but Vanderhuizen's seemed capable of carrying him to his destination—another water hole along the wagon route across the desert, which he knew like a book.

He clasped the diamonds to his breast as he rode, and chuckled. The scheme had been an excellent one and had worked out better than he could have expected. He had heard in Kimberley, by the merest chance, that Vanderhuizen intended to go down country. He himself had never dared to purchase diamonds from the natives, but he knew Vanderhuizen's reputation as a successful and daring thief, and it had occurred to him that there was a splendid opportunity of compelling the man to share his plunder with him.

The advent upon the scene of Inspector Thompson had been a little disconcerting; but the same chance which had told him of Vanderhuizen's maneuver had given him information that the police were on the man's trail. He had then telegraphed to Klipfontein for the two horses—and everything had gone like clockwork.

It was no wonder that he chuckled. Looking back he could see the horse still lying upon the sand, and Vanderhuizen, a tiny figure under the moon, marching painfully back. His own plans could not fail him. He would strike the water hole, refresh himself and his steed, and then proceed in a leisurely manner toward the wagon path.

At last he reached the place. He climbed the ascent toward the hollow crater in which lay the pond. But when he reached the summit he found himself striking down into a dry mud hole.

The water had dried up under the influence of the hot sun and an unusually long dry season.

For a few minutes he could not believe his eyes. Then he lost his self-control. He would have to go back to Vanderhuizen. And his bottles were empty. He was parched with thirst, and his animal was incapable of proceeding farther.

For hours he raved beside the water hole, clenching his fists and calling down curses upon his luck. He spread the diamonds in a little heap before him and looked at the dull pebbles, each one worth a little lake of wine. And for all these he could not get so much water as would wet his lips.

"I'll go back then—back to Vanderhuizen," he muttered, and flung himself upon the rocks. "When I am rested."

"Get up, James!"

He started to his feet. The sun was high in the sky. Before him stood Vanderhuizen and—Inspector Thompson.

"I want you, James," said the inspector, fingering the bag of diamonds, which he had taken from beside the sleeping man. "I thought Vanderhuizen was the man I was after, but—well, you understand. Your horse is dead, but you won't mind a little walk of twenty-five miles or so? You see, we've got plenty of water."

ADVICE FOR THE NERVES

Well to Turn Habit of Overstrenuousness Into Some Really Profitable Channel.

Are you strenuous? Do you go in for things for all they are worth? If you are an American-born woman I know the answer. You pitch headlong into club life, art, society, or some other pursuit because your nerves are ragged American nerves that never stop sending out impulses from dawn to dark.

There is too much pent-up vitality in all of us, and yet it is better for your everlasting beauty and poise that you expend it with discretion over a number of activities rather than exert it over one that may be a mere fancy.

I realize that this is a day of specialization, and to be a success one must adhere to one thing, but vitality is both physical and mental, and the first must not be neglected or the second will suffer. Regular walks in the open country and daily exercises would give her the perfect equilibrium and nerve control which she and her work both need.

Have you ever noticed what a lot of useless things we do when our nerves are on the ragged edge? When they are rested and well you keep calm, you enjoy life and accomplish things without leaving lines of wear on the face.

If you must be strenuous in the pursuit of some object, expend a good amount of daily enthusiasm on physical exercise. The benefits will show in your looks and health and the perfection of your work.—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

WELL TO ABSTAIN FROM FOOD

Giving Stomach an Occasional Rest Is Regarded as an Excellent Idea.

Abstinence from food for a short period is a very excellent method of treatment for dyspepsia and kindred digestive disturbances. A raging sick headache disappears after giving the stomach a rest—by omitting to eat only one or two meals. It is common knowledge that a day or two of starving every two or three months enables one to do better work—more mental and physical work can be accomplished without fatigue. It is advisable, however, when on a hunger strike to drink water. Copious libations of hot water—several quarts during the waking hours—will contribute to the feeling of well-being. The water may be taken a tumblerful or more every hour or two. Those persons who eat at irregular hours and partake of foods poorly cooked or of such composition as to cause indigestion will find the mild form of starving for 24 hours or longer a practice worthy of trial, for the resulting effects of the experiment will be gratifying. The rest (when one is on a hunger strike) given the digestive apparatus strengthens it and thus aids in conserving the health. A general feeling of rejuvenation invariably follows a few days' fasting.

Pigeons That Swim.

The swimming of blue pigeons—the familiar domestic bird—is the remarkable sight reported to a Dutch natural history journal. Some months ago one of the doves was thrown into the water in a fight and rescued by human aid, and since then they have become more familiar with the water. Pieces of bread noticed in shallow places evidently tempted them at first. Gaining courage, they soon learned to swim, and just before making his report the observer saw two of them sailing around like gulls a few yards from his house. When they tired of the bath they quietly flew out of the water.