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The man addressed grabbed the | roared out limp figure far from gently, and hustled him through the door. As the i ver?" others disappeared, leading the three horses, Mortimer grasped my sleeve "That's Preacher Jenks," he whis pered, "from down at the Cross Roads

What can Fagin want of him?" "If Fagin is Grant's tool, and Grant s here," I answered soberly, "I am ready to make a guess at what is up. The recollection of the captain's threa: at the summer-house instantly re curred to memory. "Here, you lads skulk down into these bushes, while I try that balcony. That is the library, isn't it, Eric? I thought so; I've been under guard there twice. The window shows no light, but some one is in the room beyond. Give me a leg

up, Tom, and stand close so you can near if I speak. It was not high from the ground,

but I could not grip the top of the rail without help. With Tom's assistance I went over lightly enough, and with out noise. The window was the one which had been broken during the first assault on the house, and never repaired. I found ample room for crawling through. The door into the hall stood partly ajar, a little light streaming through the crack, so I experienced no difficulty in moving about freely. A glance told me the apartment was unoccupied, although I heard the murmur of distant voices earnestly conversing. Occasionally an emphatic oath sounded clear and distinct. My first thought was that the men with me would be better concealed here than in the bushes below, and I leaned over the rail, and bade them join me. Within another minute toward the rear of the house, and the voices we heard were evidently in the dining-room. Occasionally there was a clatter of dishes, or the scraping of a chair on the polished floor. One voice sang out an order to a servant, a nasal voice, slightly thickened by wine, and I wheeled about, gazing in-

quiringly into Mortimer's face. "I thought so; that's when he is gratitude, her sweet love!"



Fagin Roared Out: "What It It Now? Heard From Eulver?"

the hallway is clear I am going to get into the shadow there under the stairs. Have your weapons ready."

Where the fellow was who had been at the front door I could not determine. He had disappeared somehow, but won't old Mortimer rave, necessary ten feet like a shadow, and crept in beneath the shelter of the yer game?" staircase. From here I could look into There was no cloth on the table, and place." but few dishes, but I counted a halfdozen bottles, mostly empty, and numerous glasses. Grant was at one after the ceremony. Bill, bring in the speak to her a moment." and, his uniform dusty and stained, preacher."

and yellow, fang-like teeth were dis into the parlor, I stole silently back across the fable at Fagin. For the played whenever he spoke. Beyond this fellow, and only half seen from where I crouched, was a heavy-set individual, his face almost purple, with a thatch of uncombed red hair. He wore the cocked hat of a Dragoon, pushed to the back of his head, his feet were encased in long cavalry boots, crossed on the table, and he was pulling furiously at a pipe, the stem gripped firmly between his teeth. Who the bearded man might be I had no means of knowing, but this beauty was without doubt Fagin. 'I stared at him, fascinated, recalling the stories of his flendish cruelty, my heart thumping violently, while my fingers gripped the butt of my pistol. Then, without stairs, when Bill came forth, gripping warning, a man stepped out of the darkened parlor, passed within three

"What is it now? Heard from Cul-

CHAPTER XXXI.

They Send for Claire. I could only see the fellow's back with hair hanging low over the collar, but his voice was clear.

"Got here five minutes ago. The preacher is locked in the parlor." "By God! Good! Now we can pla; out the game, eh, Captain? Or," turn ing about suspiciously, and staring a the other, who sat with eyes shaded by one hand, "are you weakening as the

time draws near?" "Hell's fire! No! We gave her choice, and she only laughed at it. I'l' go on now to spite the wench; only I think we should bring in the boy first, and prove to her that we've actually

Fagin emptied the glass in his hand, "Let Me Pass, Sir—This is My giving utterance to an oath as he replaced it on the table.

"Yer as chicken hearted drunk as sober, Grant," he said coarsely. yer hear the fool, Jones, an' after all I've told him?"

The bearded man nodded silently, his eyes shifting from one face to the other. Fagin grinned, and poured out another drink.

"Now listen again," he went on, half angrily. "That boy's worth money ter us-a thousand pounds-but it wouldn't do yer any good ter be mixed up in the affair, would it? What chance would yer have in this estate, or fer yer commission either, if Howe o Clinton-got an inklin' of yer game Good Lord, man! they'd hang yer inthe three of us were in the room in stead of the other fellow. You'll have tently listening. I stole across to the | ter lie some as it is, I reckon, ter excrack of the door. The hall was plain why yer left Sir Henry, an' came empty so far as I could see looking down here. Have yer got that fact inter yer brains?" Grant glayed at him wickedly, but

remained silent across the table. "Yer already in bad enough; without huntin' more trouble. Better leave the boy alone. I thought, at first, we' have ter use him, but I don't now, Le the girl believe he's deserted, and that yer in a position ter help him. That "That's Grant," he said quickly, will serve yer purpose better than the other scheme. It may awaken her

> "Damn her love!" "So it isn't love, eh, that makes yer so anxious. I thought as much. What is it, then-revenge?"

Grant held his breath a moment, his dull eyes on the faces of the two men. "Well. I might as well tell you." he snarled at last. "I loved her once, guess; anyhow I wanted her badly enough. I want ber now, but not in just the same way. I want to show her I'm the master. I want to give her a lesson, and that cub brother of hers. I'd have got them all, the Colonel with them, if that damned Colonfal spy hadn't stolen my coat. I had i them, dead to rights, Fagin, and the apers to prove it. Now I don't care how it's done, so I get her. I though she'd marry me to save the boy, but if she won't, why then, you carry out

your plan-what is it?" Fagin laughed, again emptying his

Easy enough. She's alone, except fer her father, and he can't get out of bed. We've got Jenks here, an' the damned old coward will do whatever tell him." "But she despises me-"

"Oh, no! We'll make you a victim That will leave things in proper shape between yer two. We'll play it off as a drunken lark-eh, Jones? My God! It won't be the first time we've done the trick either. Do you remember that love-sick couple over at Tom's River, Ned? Never laughed so much In my life. This is a better one, Lord and I slipped along the wall for the mighty little good it will do him. Come, what do yer say, Grant? Are

"Hell's fire yes." He got to his

"Of course it is, drink ter the bride Just tell her Captain Grant wishes to of the table, and confronted Grant,

mt his eyes alone betraying intoxica- . "It was growing daylight. I could past the preacher, the stairs creaking tion. Beside him was a tall, stoop perceive the glow of the sky out shouldered man, with matted beard, through the window, but the candles my head. Grant arose, and stood answering; I understand the whole wearing the coat of a British Grena still sputtered on the table, casting looking out the window into the glow despicable scheme. You masqueraddier, but with all insignia of rank grim lights and shadows on the faces of the sunshine, and Jenks dropped ripped from it. He had a mean mouth, of the three men. As Bill disappeared into the nearest chair, still staring You are his puppet. I've known it for

> to the library door. "Tom," I whispered briefly, "find the the situation. I got to my feet, yet boys, and bring them in here, through dare not move so much as a step, for that broken window. They are in the Fagin was facing the hallway. It aporchard to the right, and there are no | parently would be better to wait until guards in front. Move lively, but be

Mortimer, eageny.

"I can't explain now. I must get back where I can see and hear. But there is going to be a fight. Hold the men ready here until I call. See that their weapons are in good order." I caught the glint of his eye, could wait no longer. Indeed I was

scarcely back, snuggled the collar of his prisoner's coat, and

men were close at hand. Within u. - around. Jones came into view first. minutes the entire squad would be and behind him walked Claire, her crowded into that room, eager for cheeks flushed, her head held high. At trouble to begin. Probably Fagin did the door she paused, refusing to enter not have a half-dozen fellows in the her eyes calmly surveying the occu house. If we could strike swiftly pants, enough we might overpower them all. without creating alarm outside, where the main body lay. Some carelessness had brought us good luck in having the front of the house left guarded. These thoughts swept over me, and left me confident. The time for, with face redder than ever, he go had come when I was to serve her, to prove my own worthiness. I felt ready mering slightly. and eager for the trial.

I caught a glimpse of Jenks' face, as said, striving to retain his accustomer Bill jerked him forward. The man roughness, "I reckon you have hear was gray with terror, his parchment of me." like skin seamed and contorted. He



was a tall, loose-jointed creature, wear ing a long black coat flapping about up in the doorway, and both Fagin and Jones laughed at the pitiful sight, the burst of profanity.

"Go on back ter the front door, Bill," he ordered roughly. "This fellow'll never run away; his legs wouldn't said grimly. "The Captain is only carry him. Now, Mr. Preacher, "glow- obeyin' orders fer save his own neck. ering savagely at the poor devil across There's no love lost atween us, let the bottle-strewn table, "do yer know | me tell yer. But we're not so blame

the convulsive movement of his throat. but made no sound. Fagin cursed to have some fun, an' leave two happy

gullet," he exclaimed, shaking a half. blame country is ours. Somewhere, you could answer when I spoke to you. this Captain was pretty thick-how is Now, see here, you canting old hypocrite, I'm Red Fagin, an' I guess you I don't like your style. Now you're tion, her lips answered. goin' to do just what I tell you, or the boys will have a hangin' bee down in We were children together." the ravine. Speak up, an' tell me what

door with both hands. "What-what is it you wish of me?" his uncertain gaze wandering over the three faces, but coming back to Fagin. | gaged until a few weeks ago. Then

to a young lady." "What-what young lady?" name, isn't it, Grant? Yes, Claire; you know her, I reckon. breathe in the silence, but Fagin's I'm a-goin' ter marry yer off before

eyes threatened. lessly. "Does she desire the-the cere- | are yer?"

"That doesn't happen to be any of to realize the man was in earnest; she your business," broke in Fagin bluntly. sven smiled slightly. "This is my affair, an' the fewer questions you ask the better. If we want to grasp?" she asked. "Will you not some fun, what the hell have you got explain?" to do with it, you snivelling spoilsport! I haven't asked either of them his hat on his head, uttering a rough they got married. Stand up, man, and a goin' ter marry Grant, here an' now, let go that door," he drew a derringer an' there's the parson, waitin' ter do from his belt and flung it onto the the job." table, "There's my authority-that, an' fifty hell-hounds outside wondering why I don't loot the house, an' be her cheeks, and her hands grasped the done. Do you want to be turned over to them? If you don't then speak up.

Jenks' eyes wandered toward Jones, who stared blankly back at him, yellow fangs showing beneath his beard. "Why-of course-yes," he faltered weakly. "I-suppose I must."

"Don't seem much chance to get out, does there, parson? Well, I reckon it won't hurt your conscience particularly, Bill! Where's Bill?" "You sent him to guard the front

door," explained Jones. "That's right, I did. You'll do just brother from your hands. We can the room opposite, although only a feet, gripping the back of his chair. as well. Go up stairs, an' bring the suffer, if necessary, for we are of a portion of the space was revealed. "Bring-bring 'em in; this is a good girl down. She's with the old man, fighting race, but I shall never yield an' Culberson is guarding the door. to threats." Fagin struck the table with his fist. | Better not say what she's wanted for.

> Jones straightened up, and pushed under his weight as he went up over means? No, there is no need of your first time I seemed to entirely grasp Eric, and from that moment I despised after the girl came down stairs, until What is it, Major?" asked young before we struck. I wanted to know you endeavor to succeed with the help what she would say, how she would act, when she understood what was proposed. The time allowed me for decision was short, as it seemed scarcely a minute before I heard their

> > CHAPTER XXXII.

footsteps above.

A Threatened Marriage. Fagin heard them coming and took feet of my hiding place, and stood lower, the morning light in neutening straight in his chair; the preacher within the dining-room door. The to reveal my hiding place, yet with pushed his back until half concealed bree within looked at him, and Fagin mind more at ease, now I knew the behind the door; Grant never looked August.

"You sent for me, sir," she sale coldly. "May I ask for what purpose? Even Fagin's cool insolence was un able to withstand unmoved her beau! and her calmness of demeanor. Ap parently he had never met her before to his feet, half bowing, and stam

"My name is Fagin, Mistress," I

"I have," proudly, her eyes meeting his, "and, therefore, wonder what you purpose may be in ordering me here. wish to return to my father who re quires my services."

The guerilla laughed, now angered

by her manner. "Well, I thought I'd tell you who was so you wouldn't try any high and mighty business," he sald coarsely and eying her fleroely. "That ain't the sort o' thing that goes with me, an yer ain't the first one I've taken down a peg or two. However, I don't mean you no harm, only you'd better behave yourself. Yer know that man over there, don't yer?"

He indicated with a nod of the head, and Claire glanced in that direction, but without speaking. "Well, can't you answer?"

"I recognize Captain Grant, if that what you mean." "I was speaking English, wasn't Yer ought to know him-yer engaged

ter him, ain't yer?" "Certainly not," indignantly. Grant turned about, his face twitch-

"This is not my fault. Claire," he exclaimed swiftly. "Don't blame me his knees. The guard fairly held him for it. I am also a prisoner, and help-

former ending his roar with an out- swered, her entire attention concentrated on Fagin, who was grinning with enjoyment.

"That's sure right, young lady," he merciless after all, an' I reckon, we've Jenks endeavored to answer, from got about all thar is in the house worth cartin' away. Now we're goin' hearts behind. Ain't that it, Jones? "If it wasn't such a waste of good Clinton's licked; Washington has his liquor I'd pour some of this down your hands full up north; an' this hull filled bottle in his fist. "Then maybe Mistress, I've heard tell that you an'

Her eyes exhibited indignant sur know what that means. I'm pisen, an' prise, but, after an instant's hesita-"I hardly know what you mean, sir.

"An' engaged ter be married-eh?" "There was an arrangement of that Jenks wet his dry lips with his nature between our parents. But why

tongue, clinging to the sides of the should this interest you?" He ignored the question, but his eyes hardened

"I heard it this way. You were en-"You are to marry this officer here you met a damned Continental, a spy, an' imagined yer fell in love with him. Now de yer know what interest I've "Mortimer's daughter-Claire is the got? I'm with the Red-coats, an' if I can turn a trick fer that side I'm a goin' ter do it. You'll be blessin' me I could hear the unfortunate man fer it some day. Now, see here, girl. leavin' this house. I reckon yer ain't "Is-is she here?" he faltered help. intendin' to make no fuss about it,

She did not appear to comprehend,

"Is this some joke, sir, that I fail

"Explain, hell!" and Fagin clapped about it. I just decided it was time oath. "I spoke plain enough. Yer

She partly turned, and as she recognized Jenks, the color deserted side of the door for support.

"Marry Captain Grant! 1?" she exclaimed, horrified, "No, never!" "Oh, I guess yer will, my beauty. Good Lord, why not? He's not so bad; there's many a girl would jump at the chance. Your plantations join,

an' he's a King's officer." "Listen to me, sir," she broke in now cool and determined. "Til give you my answer. I have already given it to Captain Grant. I will not marry him-not even to save this house from destruction; not even to release my

She swept past him, around the end who drew back a step, scowling. "So this is your way, is it, to win a

you. While I believed you an honorable soldier I was able to treat you | with outward respect, but no longer. You threatened me with a forced marriage once before, and failed. Now of this outlaw. But you never shall! No, do not speak! do not hold out your hands to me! You are not a prisone

These men are here at your instigation: you are concerned in their infamy. I would rather die than have you touch me!" She turned her back upon him, her face white, her eyes blazing, but Fa-

gin stood between her and the enerinning savagaly

(To be Continued.) Hon. Dr. Roche, minister of the in terior, will take a trip to the

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or it. I am also a prisoner, and helpess."

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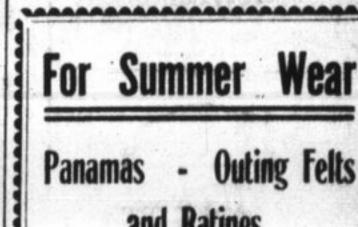
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