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**The DAUGHTER of DAVID KERR**  
By Harry King Tootle  
Illustrations by RAY WALTERS

**CHAPTER XI.**  
On the day of his interview with McMinistry Kerr had asked Kendall and Dr. Hayes to meet him at Judge Gilbert's office directly after luncheon. At this conference he intended to tell them what he had made up his mind not to do, but he wanted to know at once that it was his.  
The boss was late, and the three men had to wait some time for him. "I wouldn't want the boys to know it," said Gilbert disconsolately, "but I'm afraid he's got us beat."  
Kendall was hopeful still. "It's three days till election," he urged. "Anything can happen in that time."  
"I wish I believed in miracles like you do," was Dr. Hayes' sarcastic comment. "Only a miracle can save us," added Judge Gilbert gloomily.  
"I tell you, gentlemen," insisted Kendall, "I still think Dave Kerr can swing it."  
"All the same," answered the coroner, "when I went out to stick my good money in real estate options on factory sites I wish I'd been riding Balaam's ass."  
The others laugh at his expense was cut short by the entrance of David Kerr.  
"How 's it look, Mr. Kerr?" asked Gilbert.  
"It might be worse," was the reply. "We count the votes, don't we?"  
"Gilbert was not optimistic. "I'm afraid it isn't going to be that close."  
"Have you heard anything from the election?" queried Kendall.  
"I had a talk with Sweeney this morning, and he said he could put enough stockyards people in the tenth ward to deliver the ward all right. Baerenschmidt was in my office at the same time. He's up against it in the sixth."  
"Then we can't count on much outside the river-wards," said Kendall.  
Kerr nodded his head. He could have added that the river ward men would vote early and often, but that there was no occasion for it. It was an open secret that for several weeks floaters had been colonized in the levee district.  
"We can't count on much besides them wards," explained Kerr, "unless the Belmont News goes out of business."  
"What can we do about it?" inquired Hayes. He saw defeat staring them in the face.  
"Sam," replied the boss after a moment's silence, "every man's got his price—in some form or other."  
"News or no News, we've got to win," exclaimed Kendall desperately. "I've staked everything on it in Chicago and I must get results—and that means a franchise and nothing but a franchise."  
"Then we've got to have that paper at any cost."  
"It's mortgaged for all it's worth," said Gilbert.  
"That won't help us in the next three days," snapped Kendall.  
"There ain't no use mincing matters," concluded the boss. "We're up against it. There's only one thing to do; see what he'll sell for, and pay him his price."  
Judge Gilbert looked at the matter from the point of view of a business lawyer.  
"It won't be cash down for the whole thing. We merely assume the mortgage, and then pay him whatever he'll take to clear out for good."  
Kerr had figured all this out. With him time was the most important consideration.  
"We've got to get busy mighty quick," said the boss.  
"When are you going to see him?" asked Kendall.  
"Right away."  
"We can't very well go to his office," said Gilbert. "Even that little move would give him more of an advantage."  
"Get him over here," ordered Kerr. "Telephone him. He'll come. You needn't say who's here."  
Judge Gilbert picked up the telephone on the table and asked Williams, his secretary, who sat in the outer office, to get Mr. Wright at the Belmont News on the line for him.  
Judge Gilbert's office consisted of an outer room where sat his secretary; within, where Kerr and his lieutenants were in conference, was the library, a large room looking out on the main thoroughfare of Belmont; and from this, opposite the outer reception room, then opened, two smaller rooms, one of which Gilbert used as his private office, the other as a room for consultations.  
When Gilbert finished telephoning, he said, "He's busy going over the proofs of some late stuff for this afternoon's paper, but he'll be over in half an hour or so."  
(To be Continued.)

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