

THE MASTER KEY See The Motion Pictures of This Story At The IDEAL THEATRE, on Wednesdays and Thursdays

CHAPTER XV. The New Plot.

The morning brought John Dorr, Ruth Gallion and Thomas Kane together to discuss the problems before them. The papers as necessary for the continuation of the deal that Everett had proposed were again sent. Where they were going, whether they had indeed fallen into Wilkerson's hands, none could tell. But more immediate was the need of extracting John. Two plain clothes men waited near by, ready to take him to prison on a charge of killing Henry Pell.

unfortunate all around, but I know that John will be things. Tom Kane fixed his honest old eyes on the girl and shook his head. "I don't want to discourage you, Ruthie," he said quietly, "but until that man Wilkerson is out of the mine for good you can't do more than patch matters up temporarily."



"I don't want to discourage you, Ruthie."

"It's really only a formality," said the manager of the hotel. "The man was a robber and Mr. Dorr tried to capture him, as he had every right to do, and the man was killed." This failed to comfort Ruth. To her mind the presence of the burly officers, the fact that John Dorr was under arrest in a strange city, made her feel that her burdens were too great to bear. She sat holding the old cook's hand till Everett should come. He had already telephoned, and she tried to be brave till he should come.

Everett arrived, and the moment she saw him she heaved a sigh of relief. He was so capable looking, so cool, so genuinely cordial to John that even Tom Kane softened his grim visage a little. "I'm under arrest," John told him. "The officers were good enough to let me stay here till you came. Now I must be off. Let me introduce you all around."

"This done, John Dorr went on, "They can tell you all about things, and when you've learned the worst come down and get me out, if you can." Everett agreed, and Dorr rose, and with a smile said goodbye to his companions. As he left the hotel with an officer on either side of him Ruth broke down and cried. Tom Kane comforted her as best he could till Everett suggested that they had best go to some more private place and discuss matters.



"Please hurry!" Ruth pleaded.

The result was that things went to the bad, and the boys they come to me and want to know how long they've got to stay off. "I suppose you mean how long before a pay day," I says to 'em. "So far as I know nobody has laid you out." They agreed with me, but said they couldn't feed their folks without money, and if they got no money for it why work? "They haven't been paid, then?" "No. And Wilkerson cut off all credit at the store. I guess I got in bad with Tubbs when I divided up a lot of flour and spoils that was in the cook stanty among the worst of 'em. There was some ugly talk, and before I could kind of settle the boys' minds they treated Bill pretty roughly. So I just told myself that I would come to San Francisco and explain things—how Wilkerson deserted the camp and the mine was closed down and how people were starving.

Meantime Wilkerson and Jean Darnell were anxiously awaiting news from Henry Pell. It was getting along in the forenoon, and the woman insisted that if he had succeeded in getting the papers he should have been on the ground long before their company.

When the boy had gone she called Tom Kane on the telephone and told him that she was going. "John sent a car for me," she added. "All right," came back the answer. "I'll just travel along. Maybe I might help John myself."

So it was agreed, and they met in the lobby, where Ruth showed the note to the clerk in her impulsive way. Something in that official's expression made the old cook unobtrusively take out his revolver, and see that it was in good condition. He followed Ruth to the street and into the waiting machine.

This more disconcerted Drake. He had not intended to have two passengers, but he saw no help for it and merely nodded when Ruth ordered him to take her to the city prison. He started his engine and they sped off up the hill.

They rode for some time and as neither of them was acquainted with the city it did not occur to them that they were being rapidly conveyed into a part of town only partly built up—and now veiled in dense clouds of swirling fog.

"It's a long way," Ruth remarked several times, but Kane merely grunted. He was busily pondering over some method of extracting John Dorr. Suddenly the car swerved around a corner, dived down a steep hill and came to a stop before a big gray building—the boarded up residence of an absentee. Reaching back, Drake opened the door, and Ruth sprang out. A figure darted across the sidewalk, and she felt herself clutched by the arm.

"Gumph!" said Kane. "That sounds funny to me." Ruth nodded, looking at the note on the girl and shook his head. "I don't want to discourage you, Ruthie," he said quietly, "but until that man Wilkerson is out of the mine for good you can't do more than patch matters up temporarily."

"The one that brought the note," he said. "He says he was told to wait." "Oh!" she exclaimed. "Tell him I'll be right down."

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At the word reward there was a change, and the woman demanded it know how much it would be. Estelle thought rapidly. It had been impressed on her that taste was necessary. She decided on offering a fifty sum, yet not enough to make ash man and his wife think they were in possession of papers of extraordinary value. She pulled out her money and held out \$5. The man was satisfied. His wife intervened.

"Twenty dollars," she said coolly. Estelle bargained for some moments and then said in a tone that was decisive, "If you show me the papers and they are the ones I want I'll give you \$15 and no more."

The deeds were produced, and a glance told her that they belonged to Ruth. She paid the money and hurried away. Everett and Dorr had gone over the situation thoroughly together, and the broker agreed that he would help out in putting the "Master Key" mine on its feet again.

"I think I can do it tomorrow," he said. "Just let me have all the papers, and I'll go over them tonight."

"Ruth has them," John replied. "You'd best go up and get them now." Ruth received them cheerfully and promptly went to her trunk for the deeds. Her first search was not rewarded, and she lifted a puzzled face to John. Then she once more went through all her belongings. It was fruitless. She then remembered the desk and searched it with the same result.

"They're gone!" she stammered. "Impossible!" said Dorr. "They must be somewhere here." "No," she mourned. "I've looked everywhere." Everett was the first to suggest that no time should be lost in locating the missing property. He sent for the evening papers and delved into the result that he very soon handed a paper to Dorr and pointed out the advertisement which had attracted Wilkerson's attention.

Half an hour later John Dorr turned away from the ash man's door and said to Everett: "I'll bet that was one of Wilkerson's crowd. We can notify the police before we can get away."

They had soon told their difficulties to the sympathetic car at headquarters and started back for the hotel. John was in the dumps. "It seems as if everything goes wrong when I try to do something for that little woman," he growled.

into the hills to some quiet hotel. You can catch the night train." "Nonsense!" Everett said quickly. "All of you go with her. I'll look after matters here for a week. If need be, I'll go down to the mine myself."

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"We must save ourselves first."

of the police. You can trust Dorr to be looking for those papers right this minute.

"I promised Drake by a messenger that we would have him out before night," he responded.

"We must save ourselves first," she said angrily. "And we must be disguised."

After some argument Wilkerson agreed, and they decided to go south. "It will give us time to plan things out, and you can work things out at your leisure," Jean told him.

"But how shall I disguise myself?" he demanded.

Mrs. Darnell's eyes gleamed maliciously. "You must go as an old man," she told him—"my father, you see."

He rebelled, but finally acquiesced, and within a short time Jean and the maid had transformed him into a very presentable old man.

"Now, go and buy our tickets," she ordered. "Estelle and I will pack up while you are gone."

"Tickets to where?" "Tickets to Los Angeles," she snapped.

So he departed, to return in an hour with the tickets and an expressman.

When the trunks were gone Mrs. Darnell sat down with Wilkerson, and they went over the situation again, with the result that she took his advice and disguised herself and made Estelle also do the same.

After a hasty supper they then called a taxi and went to the station. Mrs. Darnell and her maid immediately entered the drawing room reserved for them, and Wilkerson took the porter to make up his berth in the body of the car immediately.

"Ruth!" he muttered to himself as the wheels began to turn and he saw the faces of several plain clothes men on the platform.

Neither he nor Mrs. Darnell was aware that in another car Ruth and her maid and John Dorr and Tom Kane were also heading for the south.

Queer Cases of Jilt.

A well known divorcee was once jilted by a girl who took exception to the inadequate punishment meted out to one of her notorious villains. She declared that as he regarded vice with so lenient an eye he must himself be at heart a reprobate and unworthy of true love and that she must request that their acquaintance cease.

An eminent lawyer in his younger days met with a similar mishap. The lady to whom he was engaged, chancing to hear that he had delivered a most skillful though futile speech in defense of an arrant rogue, wrote saying that she must decline to know one who could thus strive especially to excuse crime. In return he pleaded the exigencies of the profession, but in vain. The lady was obstinate and soon afterward, by the strange irony of fate, married a man who was ultimately convicted of gross fraud, mainly through the forensic eloquence of her former lover.

Paper Lifeboats. Rear Admiral Yokoyama of the Japanese navy has invented a collapsible lifeboat, or rather, raft, made of paper. It has a very tough paper bottom as a support, made from man-berry tree fiber, he sought for and discovered a chemical treatment to make it waterproof. After experiment he found that the best device was to take several pliable tops and place them side by side as in a raft. As finally given forth it is a life raft quite immune from wreck and so collapsible that it could be stowed in a suitcase and always be ready for use.

Not Much Room For Argument. "You owe everything to your wife," said the severe maternal relative. "Maybe I do," replied Mr. McKim. "Anyhow, she gets around regularly every day and collects."—Washington Star.



A Glance Told Her That They Belonged to Ruth.

Miss Gallion dresses and acts. I want you to impersonate her for a little while.

"But, madame—" "There is no danger at all," Mrs. Darnell went on. "All you have to do is to go to this address and get those papers."

The maid looked at the advertisement and finally consented to go to the Hill street address and see if they were really Ruth's deeds and if so recover them. In a few moments she had departed on her errand, and Wilkerson and Jean once more resigned themselves to waiting.

Estelle tripped along the street to a car line and took the first car that came along, which, the conductor informed her, crossed the street she sought.

Arriving at her street, she got off and found herself in a neighborhood inhabited by very poor people. She looked with disgust at the tumble-down shanties and dirty alleys that littered the rubbish heaped yards. Two blocks up from the car line she found her number, a house slightly better kept than most. But she noticed in the yard an upturned ash man's cart. In the rear was a rickety stable. She entered the gate and rang the bell.

A very large, ill dressed Italian woman opened the door, letting out a tremendous odor of garlic and cheese. She surveyed her caller with suspicion, and then beamed.

"Oh, you come looks de papers?" she demanded.

Estelle merely showed a copy of the advertisement.

"Yes, my husband he put that in de paper," the woman said, losing her smile.

For some moments Estelle tried to get a glimpse of the documents. The Italian himself came up the stairs and demanded a full description. When Estelle said that they had been lost from the Max hotel he nodded and explained that he had been removing the ashes therefrom when his eye had been caught by the folded papers, but he still insisted on an accurate description, which the maid could not give. At last she said quietly, "The papers are of no value to you, and I am authorized to pay a good reward for them."



He Was Started to See How White She Was.

this point the doctor interfered with orders that she was to be perfectly quiet.

In the other room they held a consultation. The physician listened to their explanation of what the girl had been through and then said gravely: "She must have an absolute change of scene for a time. Get her away from here instantly."

"But where?" Dorr demanded. "Why not take her to the southern part of the state for a little while?" he suggested. "But whatever you do, do it quickly. Her nerves won't stand much more."

"I know just the place," Kane said. "Take her to Los Angeles and then out

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