The Black Box

"It was Jose's fault!" she cried.

Craig faced them all with sudden

"that man had his knife raised to stab

The two cowboys linked their arms

them insisted. You can't carve a girl

The girl clutched at Craig's arm.

which she set down on the table.

"Drink this," she invited.

Craig emptied the glass eagerly.

The men do not care," she de-

clared, "Jose took me by surprise,

She nodded understandingly.

"Yes! with a warrant for my ar-

"You are safe now," she whispered.

"We care that much for a United

States warrant," and she snapped her

slim fingers. "You shall stay with us

Back in the camp, a spirit of devilry

had entered into Long Jim and his

mates. A tactless remark on the part

Long Jim they were taken by surprise

The deputies spluttered with rage

and fear. Shot rained about them and

the canvas of the wagon was riddled.

Suddenly they all paused to listen.

The sound of a horse's slow footfall

was heard close at hand. Presently

Quest appeared out of the shadows.

carrying Lenora in his arms. Laura

"Lenora!" she cried. "Is she hurt?"

Quest laid her tenderly upon the

"We had a spill at the bridge," he

explained, quickly. "I don't know

whether Craig loosened the supports.

He got over all right, but it went down

under Lenora, who was following, and

I had to get her out of the river.

The professor came ambling from

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "Dear

He passed his hand over her side

"Four ribs broken," he pronounced.

we are able to move her. Nothing

more serious, so far as I can see, Mr.

"Say, that's too bad!" Long Jim de-

for a time, though, you can have the

tents. We boys can double up any-

where, or bunk on the ground. That's

right, ain't it?" he added, turning

There was a little grunt of acquies-

cence. They carried Lenora to the

CHAPTER XXIX.

rough chair tilted back against the

"As tired as ever?" she asked, lay-

will be a week, at any rate, before

the tent where he had been lying. He

Where's the professor?"

me! Come, come!"

and made a brief examination.

comfort we can give her."

rushed forward.

for a time. We will take care of you."

* ----

"Were they after you?"

She patted his hand.

He sighed wearlly.

of thing, do you, here?"

"Jose was mad. He would have killed

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The BLACK BOX

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a life-and-death struggle with a mysteri- a yell of pain to his lips. The knife half monkey, half man, destroyed by fire. containing notes, signed by a pair of arm- and was standing within a few feet her. less hands. Laura and Lenora, his assist-ants, suspect Craig, the professor's serv- of him, a man with long, pale face, Craig is trapped, but escapes to England, spector French in San Francisco. He escapes from French in a train wreck and is chased by the party across the Mexican

THIRTEENTH INSTALLMENT

TONGUES OF FLAME.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

From the shadows of the trees on through Jose's and led him off toward the farther side of the river, Craig the door. with strained eyes watched Quest's struggle. He saw him reach Lenora, watched him struggle to the bank with her, waited until he had lifted her on to his horse. Then he turned slowly around and faced the one coun- "Wait." try in the world where freedom was still possible for him. He looked into came back with a glass full or wine, the wall of darkness, penetrated only at one spot by a little blaze of light. Slowly, with his arm through the thank you for saving me." bridle of his horse he limped towards it As he drew nearer and discovered its source, he hesitated. The light came through the uncurtained win- wild enough to allow that here, are dows of a saloon, three long, yellow they?" shafts illuminating the stunted shrubs and sandy places. Craig kept me! in the shadow between them and drew a little nearer. From inside he though, or I would have killed him. could hear the thumping of a worn But who are you, and where did you plane, the twanging of a guitar, the come from?" rattle of glasses, the uproarious shout- | "I have just crossed the border," he ing of men, the shrill laughter of replied women. The tired men and the lame horse stole reluctantly a little nearer. Craig listened once more wearily. It was home he longed for so much- rest!" and rest. The very thought of the place sickened him. Even when he reached the door, he hesitated and instead of entering stood back amongst

Inside, the scene was ordinary enough. There was a long bar, against which were lounging half a dozen typical Mexican cowpunchers. There was a small space cleared for dancing. at the farther end of which two per- of one of the deputies had set alight formers were making weird but ve-, the smoldering fire of resentment hement music. Three girls were danc- which the cowboys had all the time him. ing with cowboys, not ungracefully felt against them. At a word from the frequent discords in the music. and tied to the wagon One of them-the prettiest-stopped abruptly and pushed her partner away from her.

the shadows. If only he could find

any other sort of shelter!

"You have drunk too much, Jose!" she exclaimed. "You cannot dance. You tread on my feet and you lean against me. I do not like it. I will dance with you another night when you are sober. Go away, please." Her cavalier swayed for a moment

on his feet. Then he looked down upon her with an evil glitter in his eyes. He was tall and thin, with a black mustache and yellow, unpleasant looking teeth. "So you will not dance any longer

with Jose?" he muttered. "Very well. you shall drink with him, then. We will sit together at one of those little tables. Listen, you shall drink wine.' "I do not want to drink wine with you. All that I wish is to be left alone," the girl insisted, curtly. "Go and play cards, if you want to. There

is Pietro over there, and Diego. Perhaps you may win some money. They say that drunkards have all the luck." Jose leered at her. "Presently I will play cards," he

said. "Presently I will win all their money and I will buy jewelry for you. Marta-stones that look like diamonds and will sparkle in your neck and in Quest, but she'll need rest and all the your hair."

She turned disdainfully away. "I do not want your jewelry, Jose," clared. "If you've got to stay around she declared

"Perhaps this is what you want," he cried, as he stooped down to kiss around to the cowboys.

and struck him on the face. He stag- largest of the tents and made her as gered back for a moment. There was comfortable as possible a red flush which showed through the tan of his cheek. Then he drew a little nearer to her, and before she could escape had passed his long arm around her body. He drew her to the

His left hand played with the knife adobe wall of the saloon

"Marta, little sweetheart," he said, | ing her hand upon his for a moment. mockingly, "you must pay for that He turned his head and looked at blow. Don't be afraid," he went on, her. as he drew the knife across his leath- "Always tired," he answered, list

er breeches. "A little scratch across lessly. your cheek, so! It is but the brand | She made a little grimace. of your master, a love token from "But you are so strange," she pro-Jose. Steady, now, little Maverick!" | tested. "Over the hills there are the The girl struggled violently, but steam cars. They would take you to

Jose was strong; such brawls were some of our beautiful cities, where all

here, whatever your troubles may have been. You say that you have money, and if you are lonely," she added, dropping her voice, "you need not go

He patted her hand affectionately, but there was something a little forced about the action.

"Child," he said, "it is so hard to make you understand. I might lose myself for a few minutes, it is true, over yonder. Perhaps, even," he added, "you might help me to forget. And then there would be the awakening. That is always the same. Sometimes at night I sleep, and when I sleep I common and those of the company rest, and when my eyes are opened in who noticed at all, merely laughed at | the morning the weight comes back Sanford Quest, master criminologist of the girl's futile struggles. Jose's arm and sits upon my heart, and the the world, finds that in bringing to justice was already raised with the knife in strength seems to pass from my Macdougal, the murderer of Lord Ashleigh's daughter, he has but just begun his hand, when a sudden blow brought limbs and the will from my brain."

Her eyes were soft and her voice Professor Ashleigh's garden he has seen fell clattering to the floor. He sprang shook a little as she leaned towards an ape skeleton and a living creature, up, his eyes red with fury. A man him. Something in his helplessness In his rooms have appeared black boxes had entered the door from behind had kindled the protective spirit in

"Has life been so terrible for you?" ant, of a double murder. The black boxes dark eyes, travel-stained, and with the she whispered. "Have you left beto appear in uncanny fashion air of a fugitive. A flood of incoherent | hind-but no! you never could have Quest, Lenora and the professor abuse streamed from Jose's lips. He been really wicked. You are not very follow him. Lord Ashleigh is murdered stooped for the knife. Marta threw old, are you? Why do you not stand by the Hands. Craig captured, escapes stooped for the knife. Marta threw old, are you? Why do you not stand by the Hands. Craig captured, escapes to Port Said. Quest and his party follow, herself upon him. The two cowboys up and be a man? If you have done and beyond into the desert. They are captured by Mongars, escape with Craig vened. The girl screamed. wrong, then very likely people have done wrong things to you. Why should you brood over these memories? Why- What are you looking at? Who are these people?"

> The professor, with Quest and Long Jim, suddenly appeared round the cor-"As I came in," he explained, ner of the building. They walked towards Craig. He shrank back in his the girl. You don't allow that sort place.

"If these are your enemies," the girl cried, fiercely, "remember that they cannot touch you here. I'll have the boys out in a minute, if they dare to "The stranger's right, Jose," one of | try it."

Craig struggled to his feet. He made no answer. His eyes were fixed upon the professor's. The girl passed her "Sit down here, please," she begged. arm through his and dragged him into the saloon. They passed Jose in the She disappeared for a moment and doorway. He scoffed at them "Say, the boss will fire you, Marta,

if you waste all your time with that Yankee," he muttered Marta drew the red rose from the

bosom of her dress and placed it in "I just happened to be the first to Craig's buttonhole. Then she led him see him, ' he said. "They aren't quite without a word to a seat. "If these men try any tricks in

here," she said, "there'll be trouble." "Quien sabe? The girls do not like Almost at that moment they all three entered. Long Jim nodded to Craig in friendly fashion. "It's all right, cookie," he told them.

"Don't you look so scared. This is just a bit of parleyvous business, that's all. The professor held out a piece

paper. He handed it over to Craig. "Craig." he announced, "this is a dispatch which I found in Allguez with my letters. It is addressed to you, but under the circumstances you will scarcely wonder that I opened it. You had better read it." Craig accepted the cable form and

read it through slowly to himself. To John Craig, Care Prof. Lord Ashleigh, Yonkers, New York: Your sister died today. Her daughter Mary sails on Tuesday to join you

in New York. Please meet her. COMPTON, Solicitor, London. Craig sat for a moment as though

stunned. The girl leaned over towards

"Are they trying to take you on a warrant?" she whispered. "Remember.



"I Have Sinned and I Must Pay!" you don't need to go unless you wan

Craig shook his head. "This is something quite different

He sat with his eyes fixed upon the

"Fate seems to be too strong for and I promise you that I'll go at once to New York, settle Mary's fu- Long Jim muttered. "You'll be safer ture and then make a full disclosure." there for the night. Then you can manded Jim touched him on the shoulder. "Remember," he told him, "you

make that 8:30 in the morning." want to. Those deputies don't go this

"Four Ribs Broken," Pronounced the Professor. "She Cannot Be Moved for a Week.

inspector?"

Lenora."

turned.

Quest smiled.

were very soft.

ly." she murmured.

there talking rubbish."

glanced up a little surlily.

Chinese cookie is there."

Quest nodded.

He held her hand for a moment.

"I think you know," he said.

coyotes barking in the distance. Pres-

ently Laura and the inspector re-

They sat round the opening before

the heavens. Quest, who had been on

the outside of the circle for some little

time, suddenly rose to his feet and

crossed over to the cook wagon. Long

"That don't sound none too civil s

apologized. "You've been very good

son I asked the question was that I

"As they talked they heard the

side of the border. You're safe as little party, on their return, eagerly. long as you like to stay." Craig nodded gratefully. "All the same," he said, I fear that I

must go." The professor coughed.

"I am sure, Craig," he declared, "that you have decided wisely." Craig looked gloomily away.

"There is nothing else for me to do," he said. "The child must be met and looked after. Besides, I am sick of it all. You may as well know the truth." "Why not now?" Quest suggested.

"In New York," Craig replied, "and

Quest and the professor exchanged meaning glances "Very well," the former decided. turning away; "in a week from today,"

Craig, I shall expect you to report at the professor's house." They left the room together. Long Jim lingered by Craig's side "Those guys have been scaring you

some, I guess, he remarked. "Forget 'em, cookie. They can't touch you here. Of course, if you go to New "ork it's your own show." "I know that," Craig replied, gloom-

One of the girls passed her arm through Long Jim's. "Just one dance," she whispered. He hesitated, looking out of the

window. Then he shrugged his shoul-"I'm tired of those guys," he remarked to Craig, with a grin. "Guess

I'll stay here for a bit." Craig was left alone for a few minutes. Suddenly Marta glided in and sat by his side. Her eyes were flash-

ing with anger. "You know what they said, those to us and I'm sure we are uncommonly obliged to you, Jim. The only reapered, hoarsely. "I heard They are going to board the 8:30 man turned and said to the other: 'It he is not on that, we'll wait till we find him. Once we get him in New

York, he's our man.' A little exclamation of anger broke from Craig's lips. The girl caught at

"Don't go," she begged. "Don't go. There are plenty of places near here where you can hide, where we could go together and live quite simply. I'd work for you. Take me away from this, somewhere over the hills. Don't go to New York, They are cruel, those men. They are hunting you-I can see it in their faces."

Craig shook his head sadly. "Little girk" he said, "I should like to go with you along that valley and over the hills and forget that I had ever lived in any other world. But I can't do it. There's a child there now, on the ocean, nearer to New York every day, my sister's own child and no one to meet her. And-there are the other things. I have sinned and I must pay. . . . My God!"

The room suddenly rang with Marta's shriek. Through the open window by which they were sitting, an arm wrapped in a scrape had' suddenly hovered over them. Craig, in starting back, had just escaped the downward blow of the knife, which had buried itself in Marta's arm. She fell back. screaming.

"It's Jose!" she cried. "The brute Craig swung to his feet, furious,

Long Jim, cursing flercely, drew his gun. At that moment the door of the saloon was thrown open. Jose came der, a drunken grin on his face. He staggered towards them. "Jose, you beast!" the girl called

out, and fell back, fainting. There was the sound of a revolver shot and Jose reeled backwards and fell with a cry across the sanded floor. Jim thrust his smoking gun into this belt and caught Craig by the arm. "Say, we'd better get out of this, cookie!" he muttered

They hustled out, Apparently Jose | "I'll explain later, professor." "Til get you into the camp quietly," on his shoes. AND SERVICE OF THE PROPERTY AND THE RESERVE

their breakfast "Say, boss," one of them called out, "you're not making that 8:30 train to New York?"

"Why not?" Quest asked, quickly, "It's only three-quarters of an hour's ride, is it?"

looking lively. Kind of overslept, haven't you?" Both men glanced once more at

"Our watches have been set back!" he exclaimed. "The Hands again!" another, dumfounded. Then Quest

"Say, is there any quicker way to the depot?" he inquired of the cow-

"Fifty dollars," Quest continued, "to

One of them rose slowly to his feet. "Waal," he observed, "fifty dollars would come in kind of handy. Yes

"Fifty dollars for you, then," Quest replied, as they hurried towards the horses, "and an extra ten if we make the train.

They galloped off into the distance The cowboys finished their breakfast Quest at once came and sat by her and went off to their work. Laure stole out from her tent and started of "Where's Laura," he asked, "and the in rather a shamefaced manner for walk. Presently Lenora opened her She smiled and pointed to the riseyes. She, too, stretched out her ing ground behind them. In the faint hand for her watch. Suddenly she moonlight two forms were just visisat up in bed with a little exclamation On the table by her side was a small black box. She took off the lid with "French has got it bad," he de-

of paper and read. Foois! Tongues of flame will cross She laughed at him. Her face was Quest's path. He will never reach the

a little drawn with pain, but her eyes depot alive. Lenora glanced at Laura's empty "I wonder if you have it very bad-

ing of the tent. "Laura!" she cried. There was no one there. The cow boys had all gone to their work, Laura had passed out of sight across the

ridge in the distance. Lenora staggered to the cook wagon, where the "Nice sort of a nurse I am," the Chinese cook was sitting cleaning former grumbled. "It's all the fault of this man. He would keep me out "Listen!" she cried. "They are in Lenora's tent till the moon was high in

holding out the scrap of paper. The Chinaman shook his head. H glanced at the slip of paper indiffer

Jim, who was sitting on the steps. "No can ride, missee," he said. "Who's inside there?" Quest asked Long Jim removed his pipe from his The camp was empty. She staggered

question for a guest," he remarked, "but if you want to know, our new "Sorry if I seemed abrupt," · he

can ride. Better go back bed." Lenora pushed him on one side With a great effort she managed to reach her place in the saddle. Then

gave me a start. For a moment I thought it was Craig back again." "He's gone to New York, or going tomorrow morning," Jim replied. don't think he's so powerful fond of your company that he'd come round

here looking for it.' Quest strolled off again and glanced at his watch as he rejoined the little

"Well," he said, "I think we'll turn in. Seven o'clock tomorrow morning. inspector. Jim's sending one of the boys with us and we shall catch the Eastern Limited at the junction."

"This open-air life makes me sleepy." he confessed. turning away.

CHAPTER XXX.

Quest awoke the next morning stretched out his hand and glanced at the watch by the side of the bed. It was barely six o'clock. He turned over and dozed again, looked again at halfpast six, and finally, at a few minutes to seven, rose and made a hasty toilet. Then, in the act of placing his watch in his waistcoat pocket, he gave a sudden start. By its side, half covered by the handkerchief which he had thrown upon the little table, stood a small black box! For a moment he was motionless. Then he stretched ou his hand, removed the lid and drev out the usual neatly folded piece o

Even time fights you. It loses that you may lose.-The Hands. Quest for a moment was puzzled Then he hurried into the next tent where the professor was sleeping

"Say, professor, what's the time your watch?" Quest asked, shaking The professor sat up and drew his chronometer from under his pillow.

"Seven o'clock," he replied; "five

minutes past, maybe." Quest nodded. "That seems all right," he declared

was unpopular, for everyone seemed He hurried out into French's tent only anxious to have them clear away. and found the inspector just drawing "French, what's the time?" he

"Three minutes past seven, or thereabouts," French replied, yawn-Lenora, with her bed dragged to ing. "I'm coming right along. We've the opening of the tent, greeted the got lots of time. Three-quarters of

an hour waght to do it, the boys say. They walked outside to the camp, where the cowboys were finishing

"Maybe not," the other replied. "but as it's eight now, your chances ain't

their watches. Then Quest thrust his back with a little oath.

For a moment they looked at one moved towards the corral.

They heard his question indiffer-

anyone who can take me by a quicker

reckon I can cut off a mile or two for

trembling fingers, drew out a scrap clared, "almost as badly as I have,

bed. Then she staggered to the open-

danger, the three men who have gone off to the depot! If you'll ride after them, I will give you a hundred dollars. Give them this," she added,

ently and went on with his work. Lenora looked around helplessly

across towards her own horse. "Come and help me," she ordered. The Chinaman came unwillingly They found her saddle, but he only gazed at it in a stolid sort of fashion "No can fix," he said. "Missee no

depot, galloped away. The pain was excruciating. She could only keep



"In a Week From Today I Shall Ex-

ringing in her head-"Tongues flame!" She kept looking around anxlously. Suddenly the road dropped scious of a wave of heat. In the tance she could see the smoke rolling across the open. She touched he horse with the quirt. The spot which she must pass to keep on the track to the depot was scarcely a hundr seemed to be running like quicksilve across the ground, licking up the dr greasewood with indeed a flaming ongue. She glanced once behind warned by the heat. The fire was closing in upon her. A puff of smoke Her head began to swim and a fit of giddiness assafled her. She rocked Compound makes women normal in her saddle and the pony came to a sudden standstill, faced by the mass of rolling smoke and flame.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Sanford!" Lenora cried.

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