

GUNMAN'S BLUFF

Edgar Wallace
COPYRIGHT BY EDGAR WALLACE

SYNOPSIS

Rex Lefere forges the name of Luke Maddison, wealthy banker and his sister Margaret's fiance, to a large check. He is found dead with a note in his handwriting accusing Maddison of aving ruined him. Margaret marries Luke Maddison, after he has given her everything he owns. She leaves him, telling him she has London, bewildered, wanders about London, is attacked by thugs who take him for a detective, recovers in hospital to find he is known as "Smith." In this new character he becomes involved with the Joe Connors gang, who mistake him for an Australian crook named Smith, and is made an unwilling accomplice in a jewel robbery. He does not know that Margaret has returned and has returned to his bankers all the money he gave her, to the dismay of one Danton Morell, her dead brother's friend, concerning whom Gunner Haynes, an American jewel thief, whom Maddison had once befriended, has been making inquiries. Detective Bird of Scotland Yard, known also as The Sparrow, is likewise interested in Morell. Maddison goes to his own old bachelor quarters, is taken for a burglar, escapes from the police and tries to get in touch with Detective Bird. The Connors gang learn of this, and bag and imprison him in an underground cell near the river where he is certain to be drowned when the tide rises. Meantime Margaret, revisiting Luke's old rooms finds a sheet of paper on which Luke had begun a letter to his friend and lawyer saying that he is in desperate trouble. Margaret's joy over the recovery that Luke is alive and in London is tempered by the statement of Detective Bird that the man concerned in the jewel robbery, whom she now knows was Luke, had been going around for two years with the woman whose accomplice he was.

Gunner Haynes drops into Joe Connor's hiding-place just as Connor's men are fastening Luke's feet with chains to a large block of rock salt, intending to throw him in the river, where the salt will dissolve, the chains drop off and the body will be found without marks of violence. Haynes defies the Connor gang and takes Maddison into the yard, pausing as he sees two men climbing the fence.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

Returning as quickly as he came to the place where he had left Luke, he lifted him and went cautiously and gingerly down the slope toward the water. There would be a boat here. Presently his keen eyes discerned the dim shape of it as it moved uneasily on the rising tide.

He had considered the possibility of leaving Luke to be discovered by the police, and had rejected that plan. He owed a debt to this man; he could not leave him to discovery and disgrace. If what Connor had said was true, Maddison, in his capacity of brigand, was as much wanted by the police as Connor himself.

He drew the boat to the broken stone causeway with the heel of his boot, and put Luke aboard by the simple process of laying him level with the edge of the wharf and rolling him onto the boat. It took a few minutes to balance him. As he himself stepped astride of the man, he heard the sound of voices in the yard, saw the flicker of electric lamps. Uniting the painter, he pushed off with his hand, dragged an oar from under the reclining figure and paddled his way to midstream, keeping a sharp lookout for the river police.

He saw the launch coming downstream at full speed, and drove his boat into the shelter of two moored barges as the tiny steamer swung in a semicircle.

"A bit late," muttered the Gunner. He was free from detection now, unless he met another patrol, and finding the second oar, he pushed Luke down between the two seats and sitting, rowed steadily downstream.

In an hour there would be daylight; already the eastern sky was whitening. The Gunner knew a safe landing near Rotherhithe; the tide was turning and would, he judged, carry him to safety.

He judged wrong, and saw before he had reached London Bridge, that he could not make his destination in the darkness. He took his decision quickly. Stooping over the side of the boat, he filled his hat with water and dashed it in the face of the slumbering man. Luke shivered and groaned, and the Gunner repeated his experiment. He heard the moaning voice of the man at the bottom of the boat.

"My head..."

"Keep quiet!" hissed Haynes. "I'm taking you to London Bridge Stairs." There was no answer, and the Gunner prodded with his heel at his uneasily moving cargo.

"Do you hear me?"

"Yes, I hear you. What has hap-

pened?"

Haynes did not reply, but pulled at his oars, and in a minute Luke heard the jolt of the boat striking against the stone.

"Can you get up? The Gunner's hand gripped Luke's wrist and drew him to a sitting position.

With the boathook he drew the little skiff against the steps and came to land. It took five minutes before Luke could follow him. His knees gave under him, and he wanted all the support that his companion could give him.

"Sit on the steps," commanded the Gunner, and Luke obeyed. "Now try to stand."

For five minutes Luke sat crouched up, his face in his hands, and then the Gunner's voice aroused him.

"There are too many people passing over the bridge to please me," he said. "We had better get up before it's light."

He assisted the half-unconscious man to rise to his feet.

Neither spoke as they climbed the steep flight until they emerged flush

with the footpath. The people who were hurrying across the bridge took little notice of them, and gripping his companion by the arm, the Gunner led him down toward Tooley Street. When he saw a slowly moving cab he hailed the driver and bundled Luke inside.

"My friend's a bit under the weather," he explained to the cabman with a smile. "Drive me to Lennox Street, Clerkenwell."

There was a large block of model buildings in Lennox Street, and for years the Gunner had had his secret headquarters in a fairly large flat on the ground floor. It was a place to which he very seldom came, and of whose existence the police were ignorant. It was his pied-a-terre, jealously preserved for emergencies. He had slept there two nights before, and the woman who came in daily had made the bed. Upon this he laid Luke Maddison.

"They must have given you a pretty large dose," he said. "I'll make you some coffee."

Luke shuddered.

"Coffee—ugh!"

"Gave it to you in that, did they? That's probably why you're not dead."

He pulled down the blinds before he lit the gas; then, going into the little kitchen, he made coffee.

The Gunner had kept house in places as wide apart as Biazitz in from Munich, and knew how to brew that delicious beverage. When he came back Luke was sitting on the side of the bed, his head in his hands.

"A couple of aspirins ought to put you right," said the Gunner, and went in search of the little white pellets.

Luke gulped down the medicine, and then for the first time became conscious of his benefactor.

"Aren't you Gunner Haynes?" he asked.

Haynes smiled.

"That is my name."

"Where is Connor?"

Again that cryptic smile.

"In jail, I hope," said the Gunner. "Now, Mr. Maddison, are you well enough to talk?"

Luke looked up eagerly.

"You know me, then?"

The man nodded.

"I knew you the first time I saw you. There's one thing I want to ask you—is it true, the story that Con-



"Tell me why your wife hated you."

nor told? That you were in that smash-and-grab raid at Taffany's?"

Luke nodded.

"I drove the car. I hadn't the slightest idea what they wanted me to do or what it was all about until it was too late."

"So you're the bearded man?" mused the Gunner. "That certainly is amazing. I'm not asking you to explain."

"I'll explain as soon as my head stops splitting," groaned Luke.

It was after two that afternoon when he awoke from an uneasy sleep. His head was still thick, his mouth tasted like a limekiln, but after a cold wash at the kitchen sink he was near to his normal self; and over a cigarette and a cup of tea he told the story from start to finish, and this time reserved nothing.

The Gunner listened in silence, making no comment until he had finished.

"Did you tell Connor this story?" Luke nodded.

"Yes, except that naturally enough I didn't speak about my wife and the money. Why do you ask?"

Gunner Haynes pursed his lips. "I don't know. Connor is a pretty bad man. Your only hope is that he's sent down for a stretch—by which inellegant word I mean a term of penal servitude. If he gets away with this police raid, supposing they find nothing on the premises—and like a fool I gave him plenty of warning—Connor is the sort of man who would investigate the most unlikely story if he thought there was a chance of money in it. And that is going to make your reappearance a rather difficult matter."

He lit another cigarette and stared past his guest.

"Tell me why your wife hated you—you rather glossed over that part of your yarn."

Luke was silent for a long time.

"I don't think it's very difficult to understand," he said. "She thought I was responsible for the death of her brother. He shot himself."

"But why did she understand that?" persisted the Gunner. "Allowing that Danty Morrell is a very plausible gentleman, she would hardly take his bare word." He thought for a moment, then asked suddenly: "When that

boy shot himself did he leave any message behind?"

Luke shook his head.

"I heard of none—nor was anything mentioned at the inquest."

"Who found his body?"

"Morrell was in the room and made the discovery."

The Gunner nodded.

"And immediately after that Mrs. Maddison's manner changed. Of course, you weren't married then, but that is a fact, isn't it? If that is a fact, it means that Danty carried some evidence to the young lady that was quite sufficient to make her play this trick—"

"I'm not blaming her," began Luke.

He saw a flicker of amusement in the man's eyes.

"You are?"

"Well, not exactly," drawled the Gunner. "I've given up blaming people. There's no profit in it."

He flicked off the ash of his cigarette carefully into his saucer.

"You can't make a sudden reappearance; you can't even get to Ronda and be sure you'll get away with it," he said. "You're got yourself mixed up with two bad gangsters—Connor and Morell."

He rose and paced up and down the small room, his eyes narrowed, his brow corrugated in thought.

"It's Connor—at's worrying me. If he's held for trial, that problem is settled. If he isn't, and suppose you come back from Ronda, he'll be able to trace all your movements. Have you got your passport?"

He saw Luke thrust his hands inside his shirt, and a look of blank dismay came to his face.

"I've lost it somewhere."

Gunner Haynes's lips clicked impatiently.

"If you lose it at Keel's Wharf then you're in the soup," he said. "There's only one thing to do, and that is to get your passport back. There's another thing: I want to see the letter that that boy wrote before he shot himself."

Luke shook his head.

"I don't believe he wrote a letter, and if he did it was certainly destroyed."

Ten minutes later the Gunner left the house on his quest.

The Mutual Fire Insurance Co.

OF KENT COUNTY MD.
INSURES PROPERTY AGAINST FIRE AND LIGHTNING
ALL POLICY HOLDERS PARTICIPATE IN THE COMPANY'S PROFITS

Conservation and caution its motto. Nearly three million dollars worth of property insured.

L. A. ECTOR, President

James P. Brown, Church Hill; R. G. Nicholson, J. D. Bacchus, F. G. Usilton, T. W. Ellison, Jr., Altan A. Harris, Eben F. Perkins, Edward W. Emory, P. Medford Brooks, Chestertown; Howard Turner, Betterton; Wm. A. Hyland, Galena; Dudley S. Roe, Sudlersville.

Applications for insurance to be made to—Ellsworth C. Bowers, Lynch, Md.; George W. Owens, Betterton, Md.; B. W. Duling, Millington, Md.; Frank H. Ruth, Galena, Md.; Howard Turner, Betterton, Md.; F. E. Thomas, Stevensville, Md.; J. Abner Bryden, Piney Neck, Md.; and Eben F. Perkins, Chestertown, Md.

FRED G. USILTON, President
EDEN F. PERKINS, Sec.-Treas.

ONE BEST WAY

There are several ways of saving money but there is ONE BEST WAY and that is through the Kent Building & Loan Company. Stock matures at the end of 6 1/2 years and then it pays a very satisfactory sum. 25 cents per share per week.

Kent Building & Loan Co.

Chestertown, Md.
L. Bates Russell, President;
Fred G. Usilton, Vice-Pres.;
John D. Urie, Attorney;
C. N. Satterfield, Sec.-Treas.

A Long Felt Necessity

Having a new, finely equipped Ambulance, we offer its service to the public for hospitals, etc., night or day, at reasonable charges, according to distance.
Call Telephone Still Pond 3, Chestertown 306J.
B. R. Fellows,
Still Pond.

W. S. & A. M. CULP
COAL
LUMBER
CEMENT
LIME
Builders' Supplies
W. S. & A. M. CULP
Chestertown, Md.

MASSEY & WILMER'S FERTILIZERS

SEMESAN Bel a seed potato disinfectant.
SEMESAN Jr., a superior disinfectant for seed corn.
Warner Hydrated Lime.
Shell Lime.
Leonard Tomato Seeds.
Red Clover
White Clover
Sweet Clover
Alfalfa
Alsike
Red Top
Timothy
Orchard Grass

FERTILIZERS
5-8-5
2-8-5
1-9-4
0-12-5
0-10-5

Our Fertilizers are in first class mechanical condition.
Treat your Tomato seed with SEMESAN and note the difference in the quality of your plants.

MASSEY & WILMER
CHESTERTOWN, MD.

DR. G. H. DANA
DENTIST
347 W. HIGH STREET
CHESTERTOWN, MD.
EVENINGS BY APPOINTMENT
X-RAY
PHONE 205

WALCOTT
Optometrist
In Office at Chestertown
Every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.
Office Hours 9 a. m. to 4 p. m.
Dr. Julian T. Power
Optometrist

READY for you!
\$69.50
(Less Radiosets)

A real sensation...the biggest radio thrill in town. The RCA Radiola 21. A high-powered, Screen-Grid table model for battery operation. Particularly good reproduction with any RCA Loudspeaker. Here's a high, quality instrument that will amaze you! Only \$69.50.

Shore Radio Service Inc.
Chestertown, Maryland

FOR SALE—DOUBLE DWELLING on High Street extended. Ten Rooms, Electric lights, water conveniences. For further information apply to ELLSWORTH C. GREENWOOD, Chestertown, Md.

IMPORTANT
Our CHESTER TURKEY LAYING MASH now contains pure COD LIVER OIL.
Results obtained from feeding PRATTS STARTER, GROWING MASH and KASCO ALL MASH CHICK FOOD speak for themselves.
For more EGGS, we recommend PRATTS, KASCO ALL MASH and CHESTER laying mashes.
Rock bottom prices on PRATTS, KASCO and ESHELMAN'S DAIRY FEEDS.
We carry a full line of all feeds and ingredients.
Have your stock turkey treated with IODINE VERMICIDE, it will pay you.
Chestertown, Kennedyville, Worton, Still Pond

Metcalfe Bros.
Chestertown,

JUST SLIDE THE KNOB—you have exactly the station you want!

Nothing can approach Victor-Radio for performance under all conditions. The only radio with tone quality approved by the world's great artists.

Victor Radio
micro-synchronous

Victor Radio-Electrola RE-45
Sensitive-Selective
-Modernized circuit

W. P. NEWNAM
CHESTERTOWN, MD.

It is impossible for you to over-estimate the need for caution in selecting a Monument. There are many grades of the different Monumental Materials now on the market. A reliable dealer with a reputation for honest values will be your best protection. When in the market for work
See J. W. KIRBY
CHESTERTOWN MARBLE & GRANITE WORKS
Chestertown, Md., Phone 276

WM. C. SUTTON COAL COAL
Of Course Everybody Knows Where to Buy
GOOD CLEAN COAL
ALSO WOOD, LIME, HAY,
TERRA COTTA PIPEING
The place to buy is from the coal and wood man
J. D. BACCHUS

Systematic Saving
is easy after you once at start-ed, provided you are made of the right stuff.
Delays are dangerous, but today is yours, and you have the opportunity to save because this SAFE, SOUND and SUCCESSFUL institution earnestly solicits your account, and its officers and directors gladly offer their services.
And when we will help your money to grow at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum, compounded every six months.

KENT COUNTY SAVINGS BANK
CHESTERTOWN, MD.

The Bloom Of Health
This can be said of Gill Bros. Ice Cream without fear of contradiction: It is healthful, nourishing and delicious. We are what you might term as finick in the selection of the ingredients we put in Gill Bros. Ice Cream. We use only the purest and best, and even in the making we exercise the greatest care.
For more EGGS, we recommend PRATTS, KASCO ALL MASH and CHESTER laying mashes.
Rock bottom prices on PRATTS, KASCO and ESHELMAN'S DAIRY FEEDS.
We carry a full line of all feeds and ingredients.
Have your stock turkey treated with IODINE VERMICIDE, it will pay you.
Chestertown, Kennedyville, Worton, Still Pond

GILL BROS.
Chestertown, Md., Phone 290

Prices Reduced ON Floor Coverings!
Felt Base Regular Value 50c sq. yd NOW 25c sq. yd
Felt Base Regular Value 60c " " NOW 45c " "
Felt Base Regular Value 75c " " NOW 50c " "
Printed Linoleum " " \$1.00 " " NOW 75c " "

9x12 RUGS NOW \$6.75
Large Selection of AXMINSTER RUGS
Bedroom Suites
Beautiful 4 piece Suites, Walnut Finish
Priced \$117.00 Up.

JOHN BARTLEY
Phone 76
Chestertown, Mary and

DR. H. C. HUGHES
DENTIST
Office in the Telephone Exchange Building, Chestertown, Md.