

# Most Fascinating, Surprising Story of the Year

Continued from Preceding Page

said Mr. Magee, quietly. "I'll buy that handkerchief from you for nineteen thousand dollars. That much I can lay my hands on quickly. Nineteen thousand—what's the answer?"

"What you goin' to do with it?" demanded Kenton.

"Burn it," replied Mr. Magee. "The captain thought a moment. Then he passed the handkerchief over to Mr. Magee, who rose to his feet, walked to an ornamental fireplace and promptly applied a match to the bit of lace. He waited until it was entirely consumed. Then he took an envelope from his inside pocket.

"There's eighteen one thousand dollar bills there," he said. He dug into a trousers' pocket and pulled forth a crumpled wad of bills. "And here's the other thousand."

The captain's hands reached greedily for the money. A moment later it was stowed away in his inside clothing. The smile of avarice faded from his lips. He tapped Mr. Magee on the shoulder.

"You hop into your clothes and come along with me," he commanded.

"With you? Where?"

Captain Kenton laughed. "Holberg and Madison may have killed each other, and they may not. You can prove it to a jury if you want."

"You mean that?"

"You're under arrest, charged with murder," snapped Kenton.

Mr. Magee looked dazedly at the police officer. "But—you gave me that handkerchief—you—don't think—"

"I didn't need the handkerchief," grinned Kenton. "I ain't stuck on seen' any woman get it in the neck, at that. But when there's a killin' that may be murder in my district, and I got a perfectly good guy to hang it on—you're too wise a bird, Mr. Magee. Gents like you can always get a comeback on guys like me, even if you do masquerade as a tramp."

"But you can't come back—you won't have time to think about it if you're facin' a capital charge. Come on; there's loads of excitement in the extras about this killin'. I'll get loads of credit for my prompt arrest. Hustle into your clothes, you!"

Mr. Magee stared. "Captain, you're the finest specimen of dog fit's ever been my misfortune to meet."

"Say, young man, you keep a civil tongue in your head," snarled the captain, "or I'll beat your skull

in. I've stood for your freshness long as I intend to. If I'd known you had that money right here in this room I'd never have stood for as much as I have. Come along!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### Arrested for Murder.

MR. MAGEE looked at his cell, disgust written in every line of his face.

"And yet," he said, "I've met perfectly trustworthy hoboes who have assured me that there is no place quite as comfortable as a well-managed jail. I'd like to meet the first man that told me that I'd like to hang one on his ear."

And Mr. Magee flexed muscular biceps and knotted a fairly capable looking fist the while he strode up and down the narrow limits of his prison. For his predicament was most unpleasant.

True, he felt that he would be freed in time, but Kenton could make out a pretty strong case, offset though it might be by testimony as to the positions of the bodies, the empty cartridge of Madison's gun and Holberg's bloody blackjack. In the end, however, Mr. Magee felt that he must come free, but he'd have to stand a trial.

Kenton was just the conscienceless dog to let an innocent man face a murder charge if so be the arrest redounded to Kenton's credit. And, of course, Kenton would receive great praise for his sleuthing abilities, whether or not Mr. Magee went free. Curse Kenton!

And there were the laws of chivalry that would make Mr. Magee's position so much more precarious. For Mr. Magee could not drag into his own defence the name of Eleanor Blake. To do so would be to mire her, she who had but yielded to a desire for excitement, and had been aided by her brother, who should have known better. Even to save his life Mr. Magee could not ask her to testify in his behalf.

He shrugged his shoulders; he hoped that he'd get some word from her, some evidence that she was not as heartless as her desertion of him in the "strong room" would seem to indicate. It was a hopeless hope, though. Who was he, to aer thinking some gambling feudist, that she should risk her own good name in his behalf?

And yet—Mr. Magee faced the facts: One fleeting glimpse of her and he had known she was the one girl; one-half hour of whispered talk with her and the whole world of Mr. Magee had been reconstructed.

He knew the girl; he knew that neither scandal nor danger would



"You acted like a white man last night. Sis says you got your knokout to save her. You were a man then, but now—Mr. Magee you're a thoroughbred."

hinder her from coming to his rescue with her story. And so he had sent for no lawyer as yet. Wherefore he scowled upon the turnkey who came to his cell door.

"You're wanted outside," said the turnkey.

"Some shyster, I suppose, who's promised you a slice of the fee if he gets any," snapped Mr. Magee, angrily.

"Don't get gay," replied the turnkey. "And hop along there."

He made Mr. Magee precede him down the celled corridor to a waiting room. There were Captain Kenton and a brisk young man whose hat could not hide his bandaged head.

The police officer scowled at Mr. Magee. The latter smiled.

"Well, my grafting friend, lug up a lawyer for me so you can get what may be left?"

The captain showed his teeth. "This gentleman wants to talk with you."

"Alone," said the bandaged young man, emphatically.

The captain stirred uneasily. "What's the matter with my hearin' it? I'm the one that found him, and—"

"It doesn't take a great deal to reduce a captain to the ranks,"

snapped the brisk young man. Captain Kenton rose heavily to his feet; he started for the door.

"One moment," said the brisk young man. "Have you told the newspapers anything yet?"

"I only got him in here half an hour ago," snarled Kenton. "I phoned the papers and told 'em I had a great tip on the double murder, but the boys ain't got here yet."

"I see; well, when they do get here you tell them that it was all a mistake."

The captain glared. "Say, what

# Maiden Hair—An Idiotic Novelette

By J. J. Bell

## CHAPTER I.

It was an hour past noon. Lord Fitzmarmalade, in golfing attire, his countenance gloomy and weary, strolled aimlessly through the orchard. He did not observe the late apple blossoms glowing above him; he did not hear the birds singing about him—or, rather, about their own affairs; for he was still blind to the world, as he had been the previous night, and deaf to all sounds save that of a buzzing in his head. Yet he had no bee in his bonnet.

Growning heavily, he took a small phial from his vest pocket and extracted three tiny white pellets.

"A fast life makes a slow liver," he murmured, swallowing them. Then he adjusted his calves and continued his walk.

Suddenly he halted abruptly and rubbed his eyes. "What did he see?"

In a hammock slung between two apple trees reclined with high-bred grace a maiden—the most beautiful Lord Fitzmarmalade had ever seen save in a musical comedy. Lily-white lids thickly fringed with long dark lashes hid her eyes and shadowed her cheeks, which were as exquisitely tinted as the blossoms above her. Her fair hair partially concealed her high, low, broad forehead with a mass of rich silken ruffance, which shimmered under a sunbeam that had strayed through the foliage as if to imprint a golden benediction from heaven itself. One lovely heavy curl lay gleaming upon her shoulder, and her bosom rose and fell with that gentle regularity which alone denotes the holy slumber of youthful innocence. Her little hands, with their delicate taper fingers, were carelessly clasped behind her head, and from its refuge of snowy draperies there coyly peeped an elastic-sided boot.

On such a beatific vision did Lord Fitzmarmalade gaze for nigh five minutes ere he realized that he was, indeed, awake and in his sober senses.

"It is the Lady Semolina," he said to himself, "and she sleeps. No longer need I worship her at a

distance. . . . I wonder if my nose is still red. . . . If I blew it it would become purple." Lord Fitzmarmalade was an amateur artist and, therefore, knew the value of colors. "Ah, me!" he continued, "with beauty such as hers she may well look in the glass as often as I do." He sighed and took out the small phial. "Would that my nose were as sweet as hers."

He adjusted his calves and stepped softly forward. Then he perceived that the maiden was not alone.

## CHAPTER III.

Not alone was the maiden. A tall, dark man was kneeling beside her, and also beside himself with rage. From between his clenched teeth hissed the following remarks:

"Aha! my proud beauty, at last you are in my power! Last night, on the balcony, you laughed—ay, laughed in my face when I, a suppliant, craved a lock from your proud golden head. But, 'tis I who laugh now! Ha! ha! The drug was quick, indeed! You, who have accepted with careless smiles the countless gifts of sweetmeats which these hands have lavished upon you—you little suspected that my last gift should compel you to sink into profound slumber, and lie at my mercy as you lie now. Proud beauty, you refused me a lock of your hair—now it is mine to take that which you dote upon most of all your beauties, viz., your coronation curl!"

Flourishing a pair of manicure scissors, the villain bent toward his unconscious victim.

Lord Fitzmarmalade shook off the icy horror that had held him motionless till now. He adjusted his calves and stepped swiftly forward. In a voice vibrant with righteous wrath he cried:

"Sir Geoffrey Jones, hay your stand!—I mean stay your hand!"

"False hair!" said Sir Geoffrey, with a brutal laugh. "It was not necessary to use steel after all." And he dangled his prize between his finger and thumb.

"Liar and robber, I may be too late to prevent your foul deed, but thank heaven, I am in time to pete out punishment—I mean."

With a swift movement the other drew out a shining object from his pocket and held it toward her hero. "Try a sennet," he said, showing his gleaming teeth, "or, better still, take a few and so acquire some sense."

Lord Fitzmarmalade waved away the casket with a gesture of abhorrence. "Trifle not!" he cried, sternly. "Take my card, Sir Geoffrey Jones!"

"As you know my name," sneered the villain, "I need not waste a card in return, but I'm obliged for yours, Lord Fitz by name and fits by nature."

"Sir, I demand satisfaction!" "Sorry I haven't any. Run away and play. The lady is coming to—not to play, but to herself!" He placed the curl carefully in his coat-tail pocket.

"I shall not stir a foot from here," said our hero.

"You'll stir several feet when I've kicked you," was the vicious retort.

A faint voice startled them. "Where am I, oh, where am I?" it said.

## CHAPTER V.

The two men glared at each other.

Suddenly a booming sound was heard and the villain's face changed.

"Lunch!" he muttered. "A bird on the plate is worth two in the orchard." Then he said to Lord Fitzmarmalade, "I'll leave you to frighten the lady. Tell her I'll keep the secret of her hair for the sum of two thousand pounds, for which I shall return here within an hour."

"Foul wretch!"

"Tata!" said Sir Geoffrey, and he turned on his heel.

Lord Fitzmarmalade adjusted his calves and advanced toward the hamper.

## CHAPTER VI.

A pair—or nearly so—of violet eyes regarded him in a troubled fashion.

"Who are you?" murmured the maiden.

"A true friend whose worst fish

—I mean, first wish is to assist you. My name is Fitzmarmalade."

"Ah! Lord Fitzmarmalade?"

"At your service. Tell me how you feel, dear Lady Semolina."

"Oh, so weak! Have you no brandy?"

"Alas! I had more than enough last night, but—"

"My head aches so."

"Ah, I know what that is."

"How kindly and sympathetically you speak! You must be a friend," said the maiden with a faint sweet smile.

Lord Fitzmarmalade produced the small phial, and, with a reassuring glance, gave her two pellets and partook of a couple himself. She swallowed them with infinite grace and lay back languidly. But a moment later she sat up with a piercing cry. "Where, oh, where, is my coronation curl?"

## CHAPTER VII.

Lord Fitzmarmalade adjusted his calves and started back fourteen inches. How was he to tell her?

At last he spoke. "Dam sweet-sell—I mean sweet damsel," he said, trembling with emotion, "are you aware that you have been foully drugged?"

"Ah! I remember now."

"You givin' me? Goin' to try and grab off the space for your office?"

"And it's just as easy to break a common policeman as it is to reduce a captain," said the young man.

Scowling, muttering, Kenton left the room and closed the door behind him. The brisk young man turned to Mr. Magee with a smile. "He-held out his hand. 'Some wallop you got, sir. Almost as fine as my own. I want to shake hands with you. My name is Blake.'"

Mr. Magee gripped the young man's hand mightily. "I like the name," he said. "Magee might be better for a woman, but—"

"Sit down," said young Blake. He looked Mr. Magee over carefully. "My sister told me that you were—odd, sir. Now, let's get down to cases. I want to get this story straight, so that I can decide just how to go about this matter. Of course, you know I'm district attorney now that Madison, poor devil, has gone beyond."

Mr. Magee nodded. "And my father is mayor," said Mr. Blake. "So you can see I can pull stuff that would be raw for anyone else to try. However, I don't want it to seem too raw. If you'd only been in the house when my sister and I came back in the car"—

"What's that?" demanded Mr. Magee. Young Blake stared at him.

"Why, when my sister found that Madison and Holberg were dead and that you were unconscious she left. She went to the hospital to tell me the story and get my help. But I wasn't there then. I'd only got a crack on the head and I wasn't going to stick around a hospital. She thought, of course, that I'd gone home, so she went there. But I wasn't there, either. I hadn't wanted to scare dad by letting him see me all bungled up, so I'd gone to the club."

"Why hadn't you come after your sister? She expected you. And it was a fine piece of damn foolishness, you letting your sister go there, anyway."

"That's what people who don't know sis always declare," said young Blake, ruefully. "I've got mine more times than—why—man alive, when sis wants something you just have to let her have it, that's all sis has a way of coaxing that."

"I should imagine so," said Mr. Magee, with a sigh. "But why didn't you get her? Why did you let her stay in that blamed house alone?"

"Why, as soon as I got out of the

hospital I phoned our house, thinking that sis would probably have gone home by then, and a stupid maid told me, sleepily, that Miss Eleanor was in her room. So, of course, thinking that she was all right I went to the club, and Eleanor finally found me there and told me what had happened. Well, the first thing was to get you out of the way so that no questions would be asked by any Paul Fry detective. But it took over an hour to get my car; I didn't dare hire an auto—questions might have been asked. And my own car was a bit dismantled, so—when we got there you were gone, and I took sis home. But, of course, I had to be on the job first thing this morning, even though I was supposed to know nothing about Madison's death until I got it over the phone from the office. And as soon as I got to the office I heard that an arrest had been made, and feeling that it was you I came right up here. So now—"

"How is your sister?" inquired Mr. Magee. "I suppose she's terribly upset."

"She's worried a bit about you," said Blake. "But I told her that you'd probably made your getaway. She doesn't know of your arrest yet, of course."

"Worried about me?" echoed Mr. Magee. "Good Lord, hasn't she enough—her fiancée's death?"

"Madison wouldn't have been her fiancée more than another day or so," said Blake. "She—sis had heard things—so had I, being in his office, and—well, if he'd lived it would have only been to get the mitten. Of course, the shock and the blow to her pride—my sister will get over that, Mr. Magee, he finished, coldly. "Now, about yourself. Kenton has told me of the chain of events leading to your arrest. He has a case, of course. And if you're held my sister's part will have to come out, so—"

"Your sister's name will never be mentioned unless by you or her," said Mr. Magee.

"You mean you'll face trial without—"

"Your sister's name will not be mentioned by me," reiterated Mr. Magee.

Blake stared at him. "You're no hobo, sir. You're a—you acted like a white man last night. Sis says you got your knokout to save her. You were a man then, but now—Mr. Magee, you're a thoroughbred. I'd like to shake hands with you again."

To Be Continued  
Copyright, 1919, International Feature Service, Inc.

