PAWNS COUNT

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

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SHE SHOOK HER HEAD. "I SHOULD OBJECT MOST STRONGLY TO NOCTURNAL DISTURBERS OF MY SLUMBERS!"

FRONTISPIECE. *See page 283.*

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[illegible] LD OBJECT MOST [illegible]
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[illegible] See page 255.

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THE PAWNS COUNT

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

WITH FRONTISPIECE BY
F. VAUX WILSON

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1918

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FOREWORD

"I am for England and England only," John Lutchester, the Englishman, asserted.

"I am for Japan and Japan only," Nikasti, the Jap, insisted.

"I am for Germany first and America afterwards," Oscar Fischer, the German-American pronounced.

"I am for America first, America only, America always," Pamela Van Teyl, the American girl, declared.

They were all right except the German-American.

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THE PAWNS COUNT

CHAPTER I

Méfiez-Vous!
Taisez-Vous!
Les Oreilles Ennemies Vous Ecoutent!

The usual little crowd was waiting in the lobby of a fashionable London restaurant a few minutes before the popular luncheon hour. Pamela Van Teyl, a very beautiful American girl, dressed in the extreme of fashion, which she seemed somehow to justify, directed the attention of her companions to the notice affixed to the wall facing them.

"Except," she declared, "for you poor dears who have been hurt, that is the first thing I have seen in England which makes me realise that you are at war."

The younger of her two escorts, Captain Richard Holderness, who wore the uniform of a well-known cavalry regiment, glanced at the notice a little impatiently.

"What rot it seems!" he exclaimed. "We get fed up with that sort of thing in France. It's always the same at every little railway station and every little inn. 'Méfiez-vous! Taisez-vous!' They might spare us over here."

John Lutchester, a tall, clean-shaven man, dressed

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in civilian clothes, raised his eyeglass and read out the notice languidly.

"Well, I don't know," he observed. "Some of you Service fellows — not the Regulars, of course — do gas a good deal when you come back. I don't suppose you any of you know anything, so it doesn't really matter," he added, glancing at his watch.

"Army's full of Johnnies, who come from God knows where nowadays," Holderness assented gloomily. "No wonder they can't keep their mouths shut."

"Seems to me you need them all," Miss Pamela Van Teyl remarked with a smile.

"Of course we do," Holderness assented, "and Heaven forbid that any of us Regulars should say a word against them. Jolly good stuff in them, too, as the Germans found out last month."

"All the same," Lutchester continued, still studying the notice, "news does run over London like quicksilver. If you step down to the American bar here, for instance, you'll find that Charles is one of the best-informed men about the war in London. He has patrons in the Army, in the Navy, and in the Flying Corps, and it's astonishing how communicative they seem to become after the second or third cocktail."

"Cocktail, mark you, Miss Van Teyl," Holderness pointed out. "We poor Englishmen could keep our tongues from wagging before we acquired some of your American habits."

"The habits are all right," Pamela retorted. "It's your heads that are wrong."

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"The most valued product of your country," Lutchester murmured, "is more dangerous to our hearts than to our heads."

She made a little grimace and turned away, holding out her hand to a new arrival — a tall, broad-shouldered man, with a strong, cold face and keen, grey eyes, aggressive even behind his gold-rimmed spectacles. There was a queer change in his face as his eyes met Pamela's. He seemed suddenly to become more human. His pleasure at seeing her was certainly more than the usual transatlantic politeness.

"Mr. Fischer," she exclaimed, "they are saying hard things about our country! Please protect me."

He bowed over her fingers. Then he looked up. His tone was impressive.

"If I thought that you needed protection, Miss Van Teyl —"

"Well, I can assure you that I do," she interrupted, laughing. "You know my friends, don't you?"

"I think I have that pleasure," the American replied, shaking hands with Lutchester and Holderness.

"Now we'll get an independent opinion," the former observed, pointing to the wall. "We were discussing that notice, Mr. Fischer. You're almost as much a Londoner as a New Yorker. What do you think? — is it superfluous or not?"

Fischer read it out and smiled.

"Well," he admitted, "in America we don't lay

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much store by that sort of thing, but I don't know as we're very good judges about what goes on over here. I shouldn't call this place, anyway, a hotbed of intrigue. Excuse me!"

He moved off to greet some incoming guests — a well-known stockbroker and his partner. Lutchester looked after him curiously.

"Is Mr. Fischer one of your typical millionaires, Miss Van Teyl?" he asked.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"We have no typical millionaires," she assured him. "They come from all classes and all States."

"Fischer is a Westerner, isn't he?"

Pamela nodded, but did not pursue the conversation. Her eyes were fixed upon a girl who had just entered, and who was looking a little doubtfully around, a girl plainly but smartly dressed, with fluffy light hair, dark eyes, and a very pleasant expression. Pamela, who was critical of her own sex, found the newcomer attractive.

"Is that, by any chance, one of our missing guests, Captain Holderness?" she inquired, turning towards him. "I don't know why, but I have an idea that it is your sister."

"By Jove, yes!" the young man assented, stepping forward. "Here we are, Molly, and at last you are going to meet Miss Van Teyl. I've bored Molly stiff, talking about you," he explained, as Pamela held out her hand.

The girls, who stood talking together for a moment, presented rather a striking contrast. Molly Holderness was pretty but usual. Pamela was beau-

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tiful and unusual. She had the long, slim body of a New York girl, the complexion and eyes of a Southerner, the savoir faire of a Frenchwoman. She was extraordinarily cosmopolitan, and yet extraordinarily American. She impressed every one, as she did Molly Holderness at that moment, with a sense of charm. One could almost accept as truth her own statement — that she valued her looks chiefly because they helped people to forget that she had brains.

"I won't admit that I have ever been bored, Miss Van Teyl," Molly Holderness assured her, "but Dick has certainly told me all sorts of wonderful things about you — how kind you were in New York, and what a delightful surprise it was to see you down at the hospital at Nice. I am afraid he must have been a terrible crock then."

"Got well in no time as soon as Miss Van Teyl came along," Holderness declared. "It was a bit dreary down there at first. None of my lot were sent south, and a familiar face means a good deal when you've got your lungs full of that rotten gas and are feeling like nothing on earth. I wonder where that idiot Sandy is. I told him to be here a quarter of an hour before you others — thought we might have had a quiet chat first. Will you stand by the girls for a moment, Lutchester, while I have a look round?" he added.

He hobbled away, one of the thousands who were thronging the streets and public places of London — brave, simple-minded young men, all of them, with tangled recollections in their brains of blood and fire

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and hell, and a game leg or a lost arm to remind them that the whole thing was not a nightmare. He looked a little disconsolately around, and was on the point of rejoining the others when the friend for whom he was searching came hurriedly through the turnstile doors.

"Sandy, old chap," Holderness exclaimed, with an air of relief, "here you are at last!"

"Cheero, Dick!" was the light-hearted reply. "Fearfully sorry I'm late, but listen — just listen for one moment."

The newcomer threw his hat and coat to the attendant. He was a rather short, freckled young man, with a broad, high forehead and light-coloured hair. His eyes just now were filled with the enthusiasm which trembled in his tone.

"Dick," he continued, gripping his friend's arm tightly, "I'm late, I know, but I've great news. I've motored straight up from Salisbury Plain. I've done it! I swear to you, Dick, I've done it!"

"Done what?" Holderness demanded, a little bewildered.

"I've perfected my explosive — the thing I was telling you about last week," was the triumphant reply. "The whole world's struggling for it, Dick. The German chemists have been working night and day for three years, just for one little formula, and I've got it! One of my shells, which fell in a wood at daylight this morning, killed every living thing within a mile of it. The bark fell off the trees, and the labourers in a field beyond threw down their implements and ran for their lives. It's the prin-

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ciple of intensification. The poison feeds on its own vapours. The formula — I've got it in my pocket-book —"

"Look here, old fellow," Holderness interrupted, "it's all splendid, of course, and I'm dying to hear you talk about it, but come along now and be introduced to Miss Van Teyl. Molly's over there, waiting, and we're all half starved."

"So am I," was the cheerful answer. "Hullo, Lutchester, how are you? Just one moment. I must get a wash. I motored straight through, and I'm choked with dust. Where do I go?"

"I'll show you," Lutchester volunteered. "Hurry up."

The two men sprang up the stairs towards the dressing-room, and Holderness strolled back to where his sister and Pamela were talking to a small, dark young man, with rather high cheek-bones and olive complexion. Pamela turned around with a smile.

"I have found an old friend," she told him. "Baron Sunyea — Captain Holderness. Baron Sunyea used to be in the Japanese Embassy at Washington."

The two men shook hands.

"I was interested," the Japanese said slowly, "in your conversation just now about that notice. Your young friend was telling you news very loudly indeed, it seemed to me, which you would not like known across the North Sea. Am I not right?"

"In a sense you are, of course," Holderness admitted, "but here at Henry's — why, the place is

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like a club. Where are the enemies' ears to come from, I should like to know?"

"Where we least expect to find them, as a rule," was the grave reply.

"Quite right," Lutchester, who had just rejoined them, agreed. "They still say, you know, that our home Secret Service is just as bad as our foreign Secret Service is good."

Holderness smiled in somewhat superior fashion.

"Can't say that I have much faith in that spy talk," he declared. "No doubt there was any quantity of espionage before the war, but it's pretty well weeded out now. I say, how good civilisation is!" he went on, his eyes dwelling lovingly on the interior of the restaurant. "Tophole, isn't it, Lutchester — these smart girls, with their furs and violets and perfumes, the little note of music in the distance, the cheerful clatter of plates, the smiling faces of the waiters, and the undercurrent of pleasant voices. Don't laugh at me, please, Miss Van Teyl. I've three weeks more of it, by George — perhaps more. I don't go up before my Board till Thursday fortnight. Dash it, I wish Sandy would hurry up!"

"You never told me how you got your wound," Pamela observed, as the conversation flagged for a moment.

"Can't even remember," was the careless reply. "We were all scrapping away as hard as we could one afternoon, and nearly a dozen of us got the knock, all at the same time. It's quite all right now, though, except for the stiffness. It was the

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gas did me in. . . . What a fellow Sandy is! You people must be starving."

They waited for another five minutes. Then Holderness limped towards the stairs with a little imprecation. Lutchester stopped him.

"Don't you go, Holderness," he begged. "I'll find him and bring him down by the scruff of the neck."

He strode up the stairs on a mission which ended in unexpected failure. Presently he returned, a slight frown upon his forehead.

"I am awfully sorry," he announced, "but I can't find him anywhere. I left him washing his hands, and he said he'd be down in a moment. Are you quite sure that we haven't missed him?"

"There hasn't been a sign of him," Molly declared promptly. "I am so hungry that my eyes have been glued upon the staircase all the time."

Pamela, who had slipped away a few moments before, rejoined them with a little expression of surprise.

"Isn't Captain Graham here yet?" she asked incredulously.

"Not a sign of him," Holderness replied. "Queer set out, isn't it? We won't wait a moment longer. Take my sister and Miss Van Teyl in, will you?" he went on, laying his hand on Lutchester's shoulder. "Ferrani will look after you. I'll follow directly."

The chief maître d'hôtel advanced to meet them with a gesture of invitation, and led them to a table arranged for five. The restaurant was crowded, and the coloured band, from the space against the wall

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on their left, was playing a lively one-step. Ferrani was buttonholed by an important client as they crossed the threshold, and they lingered for a moment, waiting for his guidance. Whilst they stood there, a curious thing happened. The leader of the orchestra seemed to draw his fingers recklessly across the strings of his instrument and to produce a discord which was almost appalling. A half-pained, half-amused exclamation rippled down the room. For a moment the music ceased. The conductor, who was responsible for the disturbance, was sitting motionless, his hand hanging down by his side. His features remained imperturbable, but the gleam of his white teeth, and a livid little streak under his eyes gave to his usually good-humoured face an utterly altered, almost a malignant expression. Ferrani stepped across and spoke to him for a moment angrily. The man took up his instrument, waved his hand, and the music re-commenced in a subdued note. Pamela turned to the chief maître d'hôtel, who had now re-joined them.

"What an extraordinary breakdown!" she exclaimed. "Is your leader a man of nerves?"

"Never have I heard such a thing in all my days," Ferrani assured them fervently. "Joseph is one of the most wonderful performers in the world. His control over his instrument is marvellous. . . . Captain Holderness asked particularly for this table."

They seated themselves at the table reserved for them against the wall. Their cicerone was withdrawing with a low bow, but Pamela leaned over to speak to him,

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"Your music," she told him, "is quite wonderful. The orchestra consists entirely of Americans, I suppose?"

"Entirely, madam," Ferrani assented. "They are real Southern darkies, from Joseph, the leader, down to little Peter, who blows the motor-horn."

Pamela's interest in the matter remained unabated.

"I tell you it makes one feel almost homesick to hear them play," she went on, with a little sigh. "Did they come direct from the States?"

Ferrani shook his head.

"From Paris, madam. Before that, for a little time, they were at the Winter Garden in Berlin. They made quite a European tour of it before they arrived here."

"And he is the leader — the man whom you call Joseph," Pamela observed. "A broad, good-humoured face — not much intelligence, I should imagine."

Ferrani's protest was vigorous and gesticulatory. He evidently had ideas of his own concerning Joseph.

"More, perhaps, than you would think, madam," he declared. "He knows how to make a bargain, believe me. It cost us more than I would like to tell you to get these fellows here."

Pamela looked him in the eyes.

"Be careful, Monsieur Ferrani," she advised, "that it does not cost you more to get rid of them."

She leaned back in her place, apparently tired of the subject, and Ferrani, a little puzzled, made his bow and withdrew. The music was once more in

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full swing. Their luncheon was served, and Lutchester did his best to entertain his companions. Their eyes, however, every few seconds strayed towards the door. There was no sign of the missing guest.

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CHAPTER II

Molly Holderness, for whom Graham's absence possessed, perhaps, more significance than the others, relapsed very soon into a strained and anxious silence. Pamela and Lutchester, on the other hand, divided their attention between a very excellent luncheon and an even flow of personal, almost inquisitorial conversation.

"You will find," Pamela warned her companion almost as they took their places, "that I am a very curious person. I am more interested in people than in events. Tell me something about your work at the War Office?"

"I am not at the War Office," he replied.

"Well, what is it that you do, then?" she asked. "Captain Holderness told me that you had been out in France, fighting, but that you had some sort of official position at home now."

"I am at the Ministry of Munitions," he explained.

"Well, tell me about that, then?" she suggested. "Is it as exciting as fighting?"

He shook his head.

"It has advantages," he admitted, "but I should scarcely say that excitement figured amongst them."

She looked at him thoughtfully. Lutchester was a little over thirty-five years of age, tall and of

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sinewy build. His colouring was neutral, his complexion inclined to be pale, his mouth straight and firm, his grey eyes rather deep-set. Without possessing any of the stereotyped qualifications, he was sufficiently good-looking.

"I wonder you didn't prefer soldiering," she observed.

He smiled for a moment, and Pamela felt unreasonably annoyed at the twinkle in his eyes.

"I am not a soldier by profession," he said, "but I went out with the Expeditionary Force and had a year of it. They kept me here, after a slight wound, to take up my old work again."

"Your old work," she repeated. "I didn't know there was such a thing as a Ministry of Munitions before the war."

He deliberately changed the conversation, directing Pamela's attention to the crowded condition of the room.

"Gay scene, isn't it?" he remarked.

"Very!" she assented drily.

"Do you come here to dance?" he inquired.

She shook her head.

"You must remember that I have been living in Paris for some months," she told him. "You won't be annoyed if I tell you that the way you English people are taking the war simply maddens me. Your young soldiers talk about it as though it were a sort of picnic, your middle-aged clubmen seem to think that it was invented to give them a fresh interest in their newspapers, and the rest of you seem to think of nothing but the money you are making.

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And Paris. . . . No, I don't think I should care to dance here!"

Lutchester nodded, but Pamela fancied somehow or other that his attitude was not wholly sympathetic. His tone, with its slight note of admonition, irritated her.

"You must be careful," he said, "not to be too much misled by externals."

Pamela opened her lips for a quick reply, but checked herself.

Captain Holderness and Ferrani had entered the room and were approaching their table, talking earnestly. The latter especially was looking perplexed and anxious.

"It's the queerest thing I ever knew," Holderness pronounced. "We've searched every hole and corner upstairs, and there isn't a sign of Sandy."

"Have you tried the bar?" Lutchester inquired.

"Both the bar and the grillroom," Ferrani assured him.

"If he had been suddenly taken ill —" Molly murmured.

"But there is no place in which he could have been taken ill which we have not searched," Ferrani reminded her.

"And besides," Holderness intervened, "Sandy was in the very pink of health, and bubbling over with high-spirits."

"One noticed that," Lutchester remarked, a little drily.

"He might almost have been called garrulous," Pamela agreed.

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Ferrani took grave leave of them, and Holderness seated himself at the table.

"Well, let's get on with luncheon, anyway," he advised. "It's no good bothering. The best thing we can do is to conclude that the impossible has happened — that Sandy has met with some pals and will be here presently."

"Or possibly," Lutchester suggested, "that he has done what certainly seems the most reasonable thing — gone straight off to the War Office with his formula and forgotten all about us. Let us return the compliment and forget all about him."

They finished their luncheon a little more cheerfully. As the cigarettes were handed round, Pamela's eyes looked longingly at a tray of Turkish coffee which was passing.

"I'm a rotten host," Holderness declared, "but, to tell you the truth, this queer prank of Sandy's has driven everything else out of my mind. Here, Hassan!"

The coloured man in gorgeous oriental livery turned at once with a smile. He approached the table, bowing to each of them in turn. Pamela watched him intently, and, as his eyes met hers, Hassan's hands began to shake.

"The waiter is bringing us ordinary coffee," Holderness explained. "Please countermand it and bring us Turkish coffee for four."

The man had lost his savoir faire. His wonderful smile had turned into something sickly, his bland speech of thanks into a mumble. He turned away almost sheepishly.

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"Hassan doesn't seem to like us to-day," Molly remarked.

"I should have said that he was drunk," her brother observed, looking after him curiously.

There was certainly something the matter with Hassan, for it was at least a quarter of an hour before he reappeared and served his specially prepared concoction with the usual ceremony but with more restraint. Molly and the two men, after Hassan had sprinkled the contents of his mysterious little flask into their coffee, gave him their hands for the customary salute. When he came to Pamela he hesitated. She shook her head and he fell back, bowing respectfully, his hand tracing cabalistic signs across his heart. For a moment before he departed, he raised his eyes and glanced at her. It was like the mute appeal of some hurt or frightened animal.

"You don't approve of Hassan's little ceremony?" Lutchester asked her.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"In America," she observed, "I think we look upon coloured people of any sort a little differently. Well, we've certainly given your friend a chance," she went on, glancing at the little jewelled watch upon her wrist. "We've outstayed almost every one here."

Their host paid the bill, and they strolled reluctantly towards the door, Holderness and Pamela a few steps behind.

"Now what are your sister and Mr. Lutchester

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studying again?" the latter inquired, as they reached the lobby.

Molly had paused once more before the notice on the wall, which seemed somehow to have fascinated her. She read it out, lingering on every word:

MEFIEZ-VOUS!
TAISEZ-VOUS!
LES OREILLES ENNEMIES VOUS ECOUTENT!

Holderness listened with a frown. Then he turned suddenly to Lutchester, who was standing by his side.

"It would be too ridiculous, wouldn't it — you couldn't in any way connect the idea behind that notice with Sandy's disappearance?"

"I was wondering about that myself," Lutchester confessed. "To tell you the truth, I have been wondering all luncheon-time. If ever a man broke the letter and the spirit of that simple warning I should say your excitable young friend, Captain Graham, did."

"But here at Henry's," Holderness protested, "with friends on every side! Isn't it a little too ridiculous! We'll wait until the last person is out of the place, anyway," he added.

The crowd soon began to thin. Ferrani, seeing them still waiting, approached with a little bow.

"Your friend," he asked, "he has not arrived, eh?"

"No sign of him," Holderness replied gloomily.

"What about his hat and coat?" Ferrani inquired, with a sudden inspiration.

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"Great idea," Holderness assented, turning towards the cloakroom attendant. "Don't you remember my friend, James?" he went on. "He arrived about half-past one, and threw his coat and hat over to you."

The attendant nodded and glanced towards an empty peg.

"I remember him quite well, sir," he acknowledged. "Number sixty-seven was his number."

"Where are his things, then?"

"Gone, sir," the man replied.

"Do you remember his asking for them?"

The attendant shook his head.

"Can't say that I do, sir," he acknowledged, "but they've gone right enough."

A party of outgoing guests claimed the man's attention. Holderness turned away.

"This thing is getting on my nerves," he declared. "Does it seem likely that Sandy should chuck his luncheon without a word of explanation, come out and get his coat and hat and walk off? And, besides, where was he all the time we were looking for him?"

It was unanswerable, inexplicable. They all looked at one another almost helplessly. Pamela held out her hand.

"Well," she announced, "I am sorry, but I'm afraid that I must go. I have a great many things to attend to this afternoon."

"You are going away soon?" Lutchester inquired.

She hesitated, and at that moment Mr. Fischer,

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who had been saying farewell to his guests, turned towards her.

"You are not thinking of the trip home yet, Miss Van Teyl?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered a little evasively. "I'm out of humour with London just now."

"Perhaps we shall be fellow-passengers on Thursday?" he ventured. "I am going over on the *New York*."

"I never make plans," she told him.

"In any case," Mr. Fischer continued, "I shall anticipate our early meeting in New York. I heard from your brother only yesterday."

She looked at him with a slight frown.

"From James?"

Mr. Fischer nodded.

"Why, I didn't know," she observed, "that you and he were acquainted."

"I have had large transactions with his firm, and naturally I have seen a good deal of Mr. Van Teyl," the other explained. "He looks after the interests of us Western clients."

Pamela turned a little abruptly away, and Lutchester walked with her to the door.

"You will let me see that they bring your car round?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Thank you, no," she replied, holding out her hand. "I have not yet said good-by to Captain Holderness and his sister. Good-by, Mr. Lutchester!"

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Her farewell was purposely chilly. It seemed as though the slight sparring in which they had indulged throughout luncheon-time, had found its culmination in an antipathy which she had no desire to conceal. Lutchester, however, only smiled.

"Nowadays," he observed, "that is a word which it is never necessary to use."

She withdrew her hand from his somewhat too tenacious clasp. Something in his manner puzzled as well as irritated her.

"Do you mean that you, too, are thinking of taking a holiday from your strenuous labours?" she asked. "Perhaps America is the safest country in the world just now for an Englishman who —"

She stopped short, realising the lengths towards which her causeless pique was carrying her.

"Prefers departmental work to fighting, were you going to add? he said quietly. "Well, perhaps you are right. At any rate, I will content myself by saying au revoir."

He passed through the turnstile door and disappeared. Pamela made her adieux to Holderness and his sister, and then, recognising some acquaintances, turned back into the restaurant to speak to them. Fischer, who had just received his hat and cane from the cloakroom attendant, stood watching her.

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CHAPTER III

Pamela, after a brief conversation with her friends, once more left the restaurant. In the lobby she called Ferrani to her.

"Has Mr. Fischer gone, Ferrani?" she asked.

"Not two minutes ago," the man replied. "You wish to speak to him? I can stop him even now."

She shook her head.

"On the contrary," she said drily, "Mr. Fischer represents a type of my countrymen of whom I am not very fond. He is a great patron of yours, is he not?"

"He is a large shareholder in the company," Ferrani confessed.

"Then your restaurant will prosper," she told him. "Mr. Fischer has the name of being very fortunate. . . . That was a wonderful luncheon you gave us to-day."

"Madame is very kind."

"Will you do me a favour?"

Ferrani's gesture was all-expressive. Words were entirely superfluous.

"I want two addresses, please. First, the address of Joseph, your head musician, and, secondly, the address of Hassan, your coffee-maker."

Ferrani effectually concealed any surprise he might have felt. He tore a page from his pocket-book.

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"Both I know," he declared. "Hassan lodges at a shop eighty yards away. The name is Haines, and there are newspaper placards outside the door."

"That is quite enough," Pamela murmured.

"As for Monsieur Joseph," Ferrani continued, "that is a different matter. He has, I understand, a small flat in Tower Mansions, Tower Street, leading off the Edgware Road. The number is 18C. So!"

He wrote it down and passed it to her. Pamela thanked him and stood up.

"Now that I have done as you asked me," Ferrani concluded, "let me add a word. Both these men are already off duty and have left the restaurant. If you wish to communicate with either of them, I advise you to do so by letter."

"You are a very courteous gentleman, Mr. Ferrani," Pamela declared, dropping him a little mock curtsey, "and good morning!"

She made her way into the street outside, shook her head to the commissionaire's upraised whistle, and strolled along until she came to a cross street down which several motor-cars were waiting. She approached one — a very handsome limousine — and checked the driver who would have sprung from his seat.

"George," she said, "I am going to pay a call at a disreputable-looking news-shop, just where I am pointing. You can't bring the car there, as the street is too narrow. You might follow me on foot and be about."

The young man touched his hat and obeyed. A

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few yards down the street Pamela found her destination, and entered a gloomy little shop. A slatternly woman looked at her curiously from behind the counter.

"I am told that Hassan lodges here, the coffee-maker from Henry's," Pamela began.

The woman looked at her in a peculiar fashion.

"Well?"

"I wish to see him."

"You can't, then," was the curt answer. "He's at his prayers."

"At what?" Pamela exclaimed.

"At his prayers," the woman repeated brusquely. "There," she added, throwing open the door which led into the premises behind, "can't you hear him, poor soul? He's been pinching some more charms from ladies' bracelets, or something of the sort, I reckon. He's always in trouble. He goes on like this for an hour or so, and then he forgives himself."

Pamela stood by the open door and listened — listened to a strange, wailing chant, which rose and fell with almost weird monotony.

"Very interesting," she observed. "I have heard that sort of thing before. Now will you kindly tell Hassan that I wish to speak to him, or shall I go and find him for myself?"

"Well, you've got some brass!" the woman declared, with a sneer.

"And some gold," Pamela assented, passing a pound note over to the woman.

"Do you want to see him alone?" the latter

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asked, almost snatching at the note, but still regarding Pamela with distrustful curiosity.

"Of course," was the calm reply.

The woman opened her lips and closed them again, sniffed, and led the way down a short passage, at the end of which was a door.

"There you are," she muttered, throwing it open. "You've arst for it, mind. 'Tain't my business."

She slouched her way back again into the shop. At first Pamela could scarcely see anything except a dark figure on his knees before a closed and shrouded window. Then she saw Hassan rise to his feet, saw the glitter of his eyes.

"Pull up the blind, Hassan," she directed.

He came a step nearer to her. The gloom in the apartment was extraordinary. Only his shape and his eyes were visible.

"Do as I tell you," she ordered. "Pull up the blind. It will be better."

He hesitated. Then he obeyed. Even then the interior of the room seemed shadowy and obscure. Pamela could only see, in contrast with the rest of the house, that it was wonderfully and spotlessly clean. In one corner, barely concealed by a low screen, his bed stood upon the floor. Hassan muttered something in an Oriental tongue. Pamela interrupted him. She spoke in the soothing tone one uses towards a child.

"That's all right, Hassan," she said. "Sorry to have interrupted you at your prayers, but it had to be done. You know me?"

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"Yes, mistress," he answered unwillingly. "I your dragoman one year in Cairo. What you want here, mistress?"

"You know that I know," she went on, "that you are a Turk and a Mohammedan, and not an Egyptian at all."

"Yes, mistress, you know that," he muttered.

"And you also know," she continued, "that if I give you away to the authorities you will be sent at once to a very uncomfortable internment camp, where you won't even have an opportunity to wash more than once a day, where you will have to herd with all sorts of people, who will make fun of your colour and your religion—"

"Don't, mistress!" he shouted suddenly. "You will not tell. I think you will not tell!"

He was sidling a little towards her. Again one of those curious changes seemed to have transformed him from a dumb, passive creature into a savage. There was menace in his eyes. She waved him back without moving.

"I have come to make a bargain with you, Hassan," she said, "just a few words, that is all. Not quite so near, please."

He paused. There was a moment's silence. His face was within a foot of hers, lowering, black, bestial. Her eyes met his without a tremor. Her full, sweet lips only curved into a faintly contemptuous line.

"You cannot frighten me, Hassan," she declared. "No man has ever done that. And outside I have a chauffeur with muscles of iron, who waits for me.

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Be reasonable. Listen. There are secrets connected with your restaurant."

"I know nothing," he began at once; "nothing, mistress — nothing!"

"Quite naturally," she continued. "I only need one piece of information. A man disappeared there this morning. I just have to find him. That's all there is about it. At half-past one he was inveigled into the musicians' room and by some means or other rendered unconscious. At three o'clock he had been removed. I want to know what became of him. You help me and the whole world can believe you to be an Egyptian for the rest of their lives. If you can't help me it is rather unfortunate for you, because I shall tell the police at once who and what you are. Don't waste time, Hassan."

He stood thinking, rubbing his hands and bowing before her, yet, as she knew very well, with murder in his heart. Once she saw his long fingers raised a little.

"Quite useless, Hassan," she warned him. "They hang you in England, you know, for any little trifle such as you are thinking of. Be sensible, and I may even leave a few pound notes behind me."

"Mistress should ask Joseph," he muttered. "I know nothing."

"Oh, mistress is going to ask Joseph all right," she assured him, "but I want a little information from you, too. You've got to earn your freedom, you know, Hassan. Come, what do they do with the people who disappear from the restaurant?"

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"Not understand," was the almost piteous reply.

Pamela sighed. She had again the air of one being patient with a child.

"See here, Hassan," she went on, "a few days ago I went over that restaurant from top to bottom with the manager. There is the musicians' room, isn't there, just over the entrance hall? I suppose those little glass places in the floor are movable, and then one can hear every word that is spoken below. I am right so far, am I not?"

Hassan answered nothing. His breathing, however, had become a little deeper.

"An unsuspecting person, passing from the toilet rooms upstairs, could easily be induced to enter. I think that there must be another exit from that room. Yes?"

"Yes!" Hassan faltered.

"To where?"

"The wine-cellars."

"And from there?"

Hassan was suddenly voluble. Truth unlocked his tongue.

"Not know, mistress — not know another thing. No one enters wine-cellar but three men. One of those not know. If I guess — I, Hassan — I look at little chapel left standing in waste place. Perhaps I wonder sometimes, but I not know."

Pamela drew three notes from her gold purse, smoothed them out and handed them over.

"Three pounds, Hassan, silence, and good day! You'll live longer if you open your windows now and

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then, and get a little fresh air, instead of praying yourself hoarse."

Again the black figure swayed perilously towards her. She affected not to notice, not to notice the hand which seemed for a moment as though it would snatch the door handle from her grasp. She passed out pleasantly and without haste. The last sound she heard was a groan.

"Done your bit o' business, eh?" the landlady asked curiously.

Pamela nodded assent.

"Rather an odd sort of lodger for you, isn't he?"

"Not so odd as his visitors," the woman retorted, with an evil sneer.

Pamela passed into the narrow street and drew a long sigh of relief. Then she entered her car and gave the chauffeur an address from the slip of paper which she carried in her hand. When they stopped outside the little block of flats he prepared to follow her.

"Tough neighbourhood this, madam," he said.

"Maybe, George," she replied, waving him back, "but you've got to stay down here. If the man I am going to see thought I was frightened of him I wouldn't have a chance. If I am not down in half an hour you can try number 18C."

The chauffeur resumed his place on the driving-seat of the car. Pamela, heartily disliking her surroundings, was escorted by a shabby porter to a shabbier lift.

"You'll find Mr. Joseph in," the lift boy assured her with a grin.

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Pamela found the number at the end of an unswept stone passage. At her third summons the door was cautiously opened by a large, repulsive-looking woman, with a mass of peroxidised hair. She stared at her visitor first in amazement, then in rapidly gathering resentment.

"Mr. Joseph is at home," she admitted truculently, in response to Pamela's inquiry. "What might you be wanting with him?"

"If you will be so good as to let me in I will explain to Mr. Joseph," Pamela replied.

The woman seemed on the point of slamming the door. Suddenly there was a voice from behind her shoulder. Joseph appeared — not the smiling, joyous Joseph of Henry's but a sullen-looking negro, dressed in shirt and trousers only, with a heavy under-lip and frowning forehead.

"Let the lady pass and get into the kitchen, Nora," he ordered. "Come this way, mam."

Pamela followed her guide into a parlour, redolent of stale cigar smoke, with oilcloth on the floor and varnished walls, an abode even more horrible than Hassan's lair. Joseph closed the door carefully behind him, and made no apology for his dishabille. He simply faced Pamela.

"Say, what is it you want with me?" he demanded truculently.

"A trifle," she answered. "The key of the chapel in the little plot of waste ground next Henry's."

She meant him to be staggered, and he was. He reeled back for a moment.

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"What the hell are you talking about?" he gasped.

"Facts," Pamela replied. "Do you want to save yourself, Joseph? You can do it if you choose."

He folded his arms and stood in front of the closed door. Without a collar, his neck bulged unpleasantly behind. There was nothing whatever left of the suave and genial chef d'orchestra.

"Save myself from what, eh? Just let me get wise about it."

Pamela's eyebrows were daintily elevated.

"Dear me!" she murmured. "I thought you were more intelligent. Listen. You know where we met last? Let me remind you. You were playing in the Winter Garden at Berlin, and the gentleman whom I was with, an attaché at the American Embassy, spoke to you. He told me a good deal about your past life, Joseph, and your present one. You are in the pay of the Secret Service of Germany. Am I to go to Scotland Yard and tell them so?"

He looked at her wickedly.

"You'd have to get out of here first."

"Don't be silly," she advised him contemptuously. "Remember you're talking to an American woman and don't waste your breath. You can be in the Secret Service of any country you like, without interference from me. On the other hand, there's just one thing I want from you."

"What is it? I haven't got any key."

"I want to discover exactly what has become of Captain Graham," she declared.

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"What, the guy that missed his lunch to-day?" he growled.

"I see you know all about it," she continued equably.

"So he's your spark, is he?" Joseph observed slowly, his eyes blinking as he leaned a little forward.

"On the contrary," Pamela replied, "I have never met him. However, that's beside the point. Do I have the key of that chapel?"

"You do not."

"Have you got it?"

"Right here," Joseph assented, dangling it before her eyes.

"I think it's a fair bargain I'm offering you," she reminded him. "You lose the key and keep your place. You only have to keep your mouth shut and nothing happens."

"Nothing doing," the negro declared shortly. "Keys as important as this ain't lost. If I part with it, I get the chuck, and I probably get into the same mess as the others. If I keep it —"

"If you keep it," Pamela interrupted, "you will probably stand with your back to the light in the Tower within the next few days. They've left off being lenient with spies over here."

He looked at her, and there were things in his eyes which few women in the world could have seen without terror. Pamela's lips only came a little closer together. She pressed the inside of the ring upon her third finger, and a ray of green fire seemed to shoot forward.

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"I guess I'm up against it," he growled, taking a step forward. "I'll have something of what's coming to me, if I swing for it."

His arm was suddenly around her, his face hideously close. He gave a little snarl as he felt the pinprick through his shirt sleeve. Then he went spinning round and round with his hand to his head.

"What in God's name!" he spluttered. "What in hell —!"

He reeled against the horsehair easy-chair and slipped on to the floor. Pamela calmly closed her ring, stooped over him, withdrew the key from his pocket, crossed the room and the dingy little hall with swift footsteps, and, without waiting for the lift, fled down the stone steps. Before she reached the bottom, she heard the shrill ringing of the lift bell, the angry shouting of the woman. Pamela, however, strolled quietly out and took her place in the car.

"Back to the hotel, George," she directed the chauffeur. "Don't stop if they call to you from the flats."

The young man sprang up to his seat and the car glided off. Pamela leaned forward and looked at herself in the mirror. There was a shade more colour in her face, perhaps, than usual, but her low waves of chestnut hair were unruffled. She used her powder puff with attentive skill and leaned back.

"That's the disagreeable part of it over, anyway," she sighed to herself contentedly.

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CHAPTER IV

The last of the supper-guests had left Henry's Restaurant, the commissionaire's whistle was silent. The light laughter and frivolous adieux of the departing guests seemed to have melted away into a world somewhere beyond the pale of the unseasonable fog. The little strip of waste ground adjoining was wrapped in gloom and silence. The exterior of the bare and deserted chapel, long since unconsecrate, was dull and lifeless. Inside, however, began the march of strange things. First of all, the pinprick of light of a tiny electric torch seemed as though it had risen from the floor, and Hassan, pushing back a trap-door, stepped into the bare, dusty conventicle. He listened for a moment, then made a tour of the windows, touched a spring in the wall, and drew down long, thick blinds. Afterwards he passed between the row of dilapidated benches and paused at the entrance door. He stooped down, examined the keyless lock, shook it gently, gazed upwards and downwards as though in vain search of bolts that were never there. His white teeth gleamed for a moment in the darkness. He turned away with a little shiver.

"Not my fault," he muttered to himself. "Not my fault."

He listened for a moment intently, as though for

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footsteps outside. The disturbance, however, came from the other end of the building. There was a sharp knocking from the trap-door by which he had ascended. He touched an electric knob. The place was dimly yet sufficiently illuminated. He hastened towards the further end of the place and pulled up the trap-door. A melancholy-looking little procession slowly emerged. First of all came Joseph, stepping backwards, supporting the head and shoulders of Graham, still bound and gagged. After him came a dark, swarthy-faced wine waiter, who supported Graham's feet. Behind followed Fischer, carrying his silk hat and cane in his hand. He paused for a moment as he stepped on the floor of the chapel, and brushed the dust from his trousers.

"You can take out the gag now," he ordered the two men. "There isn't much shout in him."

They laid him upon a couch, and Joseph obeyed the order. Graham's head swung helplessly on one side. His eyes opened, however, and he struggled for consciousness. His lips twitched for a moment. In these long hours he had almost forgotten the habit of speech. The words, when they came, sounded strange to him.

"What — where am I? What do you want with me?"

Fischer laid his hat and stick upon a table, on which also stood a telephone instrument.

"The formula, my young friend," he replied, "for that wonderful explosive of which you spoke in the lobby."

A sudden accession of nervous strength brought

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something almost like passion into the young man's reply, although to himself there still seemed some unreality in the words which might have come from the walls or the roof — surely not from his lips.

"I'll see you damned first!"

Fischer smiled. The man was good-looking, in his way, but this was a pale and ugly smile.

"My request was merely a matter of courtesy," he remarked. "The difficulty of searching you is not formidable. It would have been undertaken long ago but for the fact that the restaurant has been crowded and gags sometimes slip. Besides, there was no hurry. Observe!"

He leaned over Graham, who for the first time struggled furiously but ineffectually with his bonds. His fingers all the time were straining towards the inside pocket of his coat. Fischer nodded understandingly.

"Allow me to anticipate you," he said.

With a quick thrust he drew a little handful of papers from the pocket of his captive. One by one he glanced them through and flung them on to the floor. As he came towards the end of his search, however, his expression of confident complacency vanished. His lips shrivelled up a little, his eyes narrowed. The last folded sheet of paper — a little perfumed note from Peggy, thanking Sandy for his beautiful roses — he crumpled fiercely into a little ball. He opened his lips to speak, then he paused. A new light broke in upon him. The fury had passed from Sandy Graham's face. In its stead there was an expression of blank astonishment.

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"Where is the formula?" Fischer asked fiercely.

There was no reply. Sandy Graham was still staring at the little pile of papers upon the floor. Fischer made a brief examination of the other pockets. Then he stepped back. His voice shook, his face was dark and malevolent.

"Joseph, Hassan, Jules — listen to me!" he ordered. "Did any one else enter the musicians' room whilst he was lying in the alcove?"

"Impossible!" Jules declared.

"The door was locked," Hassan murmured.

"Stop!" Joseph exclaimed.

Fischer wheeled round upon him.

"Well?" he exclaimed. "Get on, then. Who?"

Joseph moistened his lips. He was still feeling sore and dizzy, but he began to see his way.

"You noticed, perhaps," he said, "the American girl — the beautiful young lady with this guy's friends? She was waiting with the others for Captain Graham to come down. I saw her go up the stairs. I saw her come down again, three minutes later."

"Miss Van Teyl?" Fischer exclaimed, with a frown. "You're mad, Joseph!"

The negro laughed grimly.

"Am I!" he retorted. "I tell you this, Master Fischer. She was in Berlin where I was, and she was at the Embassy every day. She was asked to leave there. They put her over the frontier into Holland. I knew her when she came into the restaurant. She's no society young lady, she ain't! Bet you she was on to the goods."

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Fischer hesitated for a moment. The thoughts were chasing one another through his brain. Then he took up the receiver from the telephone instrument which stood upon the table.

"1560 Mayfair," he asked in a low tone.

They all stood listening, grouped around Graham's writhing figure.

"Hullo! Is that Claridge's Hotel?" Fischer went on. "I am speaking from Ciro's. Put me through, if you please, to Miss Van Teyl's apartments. . . What? Repeat that, will you? . . . Thank you."

Fischer laid down the receiver. He turned towards the others. He was breathing a little quickly, and his eyes glittered behind his gold-rimmed spectacles.

"Miss Van Teyl," he announced, "has left for Tilbury. She is going out on the *Lapland* this morning. My God, she's got the formula!"

There was a moment's silence. Joseph was standing by with a wicked look on his face.

"I saw her slip away," he muttered, "and I watched her come down again. There was just time."

Fischer turned suddenly to where Graham was lying. He drew a sheet of writing paper from the rack upon the table, and a pencil from his pocket. There was an evil and concentrated significance in his tone.

"That formula," he said, "can be written again. I think you had better write it."

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"I'll see you damned first!" was the weak but prompt reply.

Fischer bent a little lower over the prostrate figure. "Look here," he went on, "we don't run risks like this for nothing. You're better dead than alive, so far as we are concerned, anyway. We'd planned to take the formula from you, and you can guess the rest. There are cellars underneath here into which no one ever goes who matters. Now here's a chance of life for you. Write down that formula — truthfully, mind — and we'll discuss the matter of taking your parole."

"See you damned first!" Graham repeated, his voice a little more tremulous but still convincing.

Fischer stood upright and turned to Jules.

"Get a bottle of brandy and a glass," he ordered.

The man pushed open the trap-door and disappeared. He came back again in a few moments, with a bottle in one hand and a glass in the other. Fischer poured out some of the cordial and drew a small table up to Graham's side.

"There," he said, loosening the cord around his left wrist, "drink that, and think it over. We shall be gone for about ten minutes. If you change your mind before, ring that little hand-bell. If you have not changed your mind when we return, it will be the cellars."

"Beasts!" Graham muttered.

Fischer shrugged his shoulders. For a moment he had straightened himself. His face had softened, but it was in tune with his thoughts.

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"I would twist the necks of a million fools like you," he said, "for the sake of —"

He paused, leaving his sentence uncompleted, and beckoned to the other men. They followed him through the trap-door and down into the cellars below. The place was once more silent. Graham rolled from side to side, drew a long breath, and tugged vainly at his bonds. The effort overtaxed his strength. He seemed to feel the darkness closing in upon him, the rushing of the sea in his ears. . .

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CHAPTER V

So far as Sandy Graham was concerned, his unconsciousness might have lasted an hour or a day. As a matter of fact, it was scarcely a minute after the disappearance of Fischer and his confederates when he was conscious of a rush of cold air in the place, and beheld the vision of a tiny flash of light at the lower end of the gloomy building. Immediately afterwards he heard the soft closing of a door and beheld a tall, shadowy figure slowly approaching. He lay quite still and looked at it, and his heart began to beat with hope. One of the lights had been left burning, and there was something in the bearing and attitude of the man who finally came to a standstill by his side, which was entirely reassuring.

"Lutchester!" he faltered. "My God, how did you get here?"

"Offices of a young lady," Lutchester observed, producing a knife from his pocket. "Allow me!"

He cut the cords which still secured Graham's limbs. Then he looked around him.

"How did they bring you here?" he whispered. "I suppose there is a passage from the restaurant?"

"Up through a trapdoor there," Graham explained, pointing.

Lutchester stood over it and listened intently.

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Then he turned around, lifted the glass of brandy from the table, smelt it approvingly, and tasted it.

"Excellent!" he pronounced. "The 1840. Allow me!"

He refilled the glass and handed it to Sandy, who gulped down the contents. The effect was almost instantaneous. In less than a minute he had staggered to his feet.

"Feel strong enough to walk about fifty yards?" Lutchester inquired.

"I'd walk to hell to get out of this place!" was the prompt reply.

Lutchester took his arm, and they passed down the dusty aisle between the worm-eaten and decaying benches and through the outside door, which Lutchester closed and locked behind them. The rush of cold air was like new life to Graham.

"I can walk all right now," he muttered. "My God, we'll give these fellows hell for this!"

They made their very difficult way across a plot of ground from which a row of dilapidated cottages had been razed to the ground. The fog still hung around them and seemed to bring with it a curious silence, although the dying traffic from one of the main thoroughfares reached them in muffled notes. Lutchester climbed to the top of a pile of rubbish and then, turning around, held out his hand.

"Up here," he directed.

Graham struggled up until he stood by his companion's side. The latter stood quite still, listening for a moment. Then he climbed a little higher and swung around, holding out his hand once more.

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"I'm on top of the wall," he said. "Come on."

Graham's knees were shaking, but with Lutchester's help he staggered up and reached his side. On the pavement below a man in chauffeur's livery was standing, holding out his hands, and by the side of the curbstone a closed car was waiting. Somehow or other the two reached the pavement. Lutchester almost pushed his companion into the limousine and stepped in after him. The chauffeur sprang to his seat and the car glided off. Graham just realised that there was a woman by his side whose face was vaguely familiar. Then the waves broke in upon his ears once more.

"I was right, then, it seems," Pamela observed approvingly. "You were just the man for this little affair."

Lutchester sighed.

"Unfortunately," he confessed, "a messenger boy would have been as effective. I stumbled over to the chapel — rubber shoes, you observe," he remarked, pointing downwards —"and soon discovered that blinds had been let down all round and that there were people inside. There was just a faint chink in one, and I caught a glimpse of several men, your friend Oscar amongst them. Having," he went on, "an immense regard for my personal safety, I was hesitating what means to adopt when the lights were lowered, and it seemed to me that the men were disappearing."

"Do go on," Pamela murmured. "This is most exciting."

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"In a sense it was disappointing," Lutchester complained. "I had pictured for myself a dramatic entrance . . . a quiet turning of the key, a soft approach — owing to my shoes," he reminded her — "a cough, perhaps, or a breath . . . discovery, me with a revolver in my hand pointed to the arch-villain — 'If you stir you're a dead man!' . . . Natural collapse of the villain. With my left hand I slash the bonds which hold Graham, with my right I cover the miscreants. One of them, perhaps, might creep behind me, and I hesitate. If I move my revolver the other two will get the drop on me — I think that is the correct expression? A wonderful moment, that, Miss Van Teyl!"

"But it didn't happen," she protested.

"Ah! I forgot that," he acknowledged. "Still, I was prepared. I had the revolver all right. But as you say, it didn't happen. I made my way to the chapel door, let myself in, found our friend lying in a half-comatose state upon one of the blue plush Henry sofas, in the shadow of a horrible deal pulpit. I gathered that he had been left there to reflect upon his sins. There was a bottle of remarkably fine brandy within reach, which I tested, and with which I dosed our friend here. I then cut away his bonds, arm in arm we walked down the aisle, I locked up the place, threw the key away, kicked my shins half-a-dozen times crossing that disgusting little plot of land, climbed boldly to the top of the wall, and behold!"

Pamela smiled upon him in congratulatory fashion.

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"On the whole," she said, "I am quite glad that I telephoned to you."

"You showed a sound discretion," he admitted.

"If he had not been lame," she confessed, "I should have sent to Captain Holderness."

"That would have been a great mistake," Lutchester assured her. "Holderness is a good fellow but devoid of imagination. He is great on constituted authority. He would have probably marched up with a squad of heavy-footed policemen — and found nothing."

"Yet I must confess," Pamela persisted, with a frankness unaccountable even to herself, "that if I could have thought of any one else I should never have telephoned to you."

"And why not?"

"Because I should not have classified you as being of the adventurous type," she declared.

Lutchester looked injured.

"After all," he protested, "that is not my fault. That is due to your singular lack of perception. However, I am able to return the compliment. I, for my part, should have thought that you were more interested in the fashions than in paying exceedingly rash visits to degenerate orientals and negroes."

"Perhaps some day," she remarked, "we may understand one another better."

He met her gaze with a certain seriousness.

"I hope that we may," he said.

For some reason they were both silent for a moment. Her tone had changed a little when she spoke again.

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"You are sure," she asked, "that you do not mind my leaving the rest of this affair in your hands? There are reasons, which I cannot tell you of just now, which make me anxious not to appear in it at all."

"I accept the charge as a privilege," he assented. "We are within a few yards of my rooms now. I promise you that I will look after Captain Graham and advise him as to the proper course for him to pursue."

The car came to a standstill.

"This then," she said, holding out her hand, "will be good-by for the present."

He held her fingers for a moment without reply. Quite suddenly she decided that she liked him. Then he lifted Graham, who was half asleep, half unconscious, to his feet, and assisted him from the car.

"Where shall I tell the man to go to?" he inquired.

"He knows," she answered with sudden taciturnity.

"Wherever it may be, then," he replied, "bon voyage!"

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CHAPTER VI

It was about half-an-hour later when Sandy Graham opened his eyes and began to feel the life once more warm in his veins. He was seated in the most comfortable easy-chair of John Lutchester's bachelor sitting-room. By his side was a coffee equipage and a decanter of brandy. His head still throbbed, and his bones ached, but his mind was beginning to grow clearer. Lutchester, who had been seated at the writing table, swung round in his chair at the sound of his guest's movement.—

"Feeling better, eh?" he asked.

"I am all right now," was the somewhat shaky reply. "Got a head like a turnip and a tongue like a lime-kiln, but I'm beginning — to feel myself."

"How's your memory?"

"Hazy. Let me see. . . . My God, I've been robbed, haven't I!"

"So I imagine," Lutchester replied. "You rather asked for it, didn't you?"

Graham moved uneasily in his place. He had suddenly the feeling of being back at school — and in the presence of the headmaster.

"I suppose I did in a way," he admitted, "but at Henry's — why, I've always looked upon the place as a club more than anything else."

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"I am afraid that I can't agree with you there," Lutchester observed. "I should consider Henry's a remarkably cosmopolitan restaurant, where a man in your position should exercise more than even ordinary restraint."

"I suppose I was wrong," Graham muttered, "but I had been working for about ten hours on end, and then rushed up to London in the car to try and keep my appointment with Holderness."

"Stop anywhere on the way?"

"We had a few drinks," Graham confessed. "I was so done up. Perhaps I had more than I meant to. However, it's no use bothering about that now. I've been robbed, and that's all there is about it. Could we get on to Scotland Yard from here?"

"We could, but I don't think we will," Lutchester replied.

Graham was puzzled.

"Why not?" he demanded. "That formula was the most wonderful thing that has ever been put together, and the whole thing's so simple. I've been afraid every second that some one else might stumble upon it."

"It is without doubt a great loss," Lutchester admitted. "All the same, I don't fancy that it's a Scotland Yard business exactly. Have you any idea who robbed you?"

Graham paused to think. His eyes were still troubled and uncertain.

"It's coming back to me," he muttered. "I remember that beastly barn of a chapel. There were Jules, and that musician fellow, and the big

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American. He emptied my pockets. . . . Why, of course, I remember how angry he was. . . . My pocketbook was gone! They left me alone to write out the formula again, and then you came. . . . How on earth did you tumble on to my being there, Lutchester?"

"It was Miss Pamela Van Teyl whom you must thank," Lutchester told him, "not me. It seems she knew more about Henry's than any of us. She'd come up against some of the crew in Berlin, and she guessed they were holding you for that formula. She got the key out of one of those men and then telephoned to me for my help."

"And I never even thanked her," Graham murmured weakly.

There was a moment's silence. The recovering man's consciousness of his position and of events was evidently as yet incomplete. He sat up suddenly in his chair, gripping the sides of it. His eyes were large with reminiscent trouble.

"My pocketbook had gone when they searched me," he muttered.

"Are you sure that you had it with you when you came into Henry's?" Lutchester inquired.

"Absolutely certain."

"Do you think you can remember now what happened when you went upstairs?"

"I reached the lavatory all right — you were with me then, weren't you?" Graham said reflectively. "I hung up my coat while I washed, but there was no one else in the room. Then you went downstairs and I brushed my hair and just stopped to light a

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cigarette. You know that on the right-hand side of the landing there is a room where the musicians change. Joseph, that black devil, was standing in the doorway. He grinned as I came into sight. 'Lady wants to speak to you for a moment, Captain Graham,' he said. Well, you know how harmless the fellow looks — just a good-natured, smiling nigger. I never dreamed of anything wrong. As a matter of fact, I thought that Peggy Vincent — that's a young lady I often go to Henry's with — wanted to have a word with me before I joined our party. I stepped inside the room, and that's just about all I can remember. It must have been jolly quick. His arm shot round my neck, the door was closed, and that other brute — Hassan, I think it was — held something over my face."

"But that room was searched," Lutchester reminded him.

"Well I came to just a little," Graham explained, "I found that I was in a sort of cupboard place, behind the lockers these fellows have for their clothes. It opens with a spring lock, and you'd never notice it, searching the room."

"Who was the first person you saw when you recovered consciousness?"

Graham's forehead was wrinkled in the effort to remember.

"I can't quite get hold of it," he confessed, "but I have a sort of fancy I can't altogether get rid of that there was a woman about."

Lutchester looked at the end of the cigarette he had just lit.

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"A woman?" he repeated. "That's queer."

"I can't remember anything definitely until I woke up in that chapel," Graham continued, "but when they searched me and found that the pocket-book had gone, Fischer, the big American, muttered some woman's name. I was queer just at the moment, but it sounded very much to me like Miss Van Teyl's. He rang her up on the telephone."

"Did they suspect Miss Van Teyl, then, of having taken your pocketbook?"

Graham shook his head.

"I lost the drift of things just then," he admitted. "She couldn't have done, in any case. Forgive me, but aren't we wasting time, Mr. Lutchester? We must do something. Couldn't you ring up Scotland Yard now?"

"I certainly could," Lutchester assented, "but, as I told you just now, I don't think that I will."

Graham stared at him.

"But why not?"

"For certain very definite reasons with which you needn't trouble yourself just now," Lutchester pronounced. "The formula has gone, without a doubt, but it certainly isn't in the hands of any of the people at Henry's."

"But there's that American fellow — Fischer!" Graham exclaimed. "He was the ringleader!"

"Just so," Lutchester murmured thoughtfully. "However, he hasn't got the formula."

"But he planned the attack upon me," Graham

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protested. "He is an enemy — a German — sheltering himself under his American naturalization. Surely we're going for him?"

"He's a wrong 'un, of course," Lutchester admitted, "but he hasn't got the formula."

"But we must do something!" Graham continued, his anger rising as his strength returned. "Why, the place is a perfect den of conspirators! I expect Ferrani himself is in it, and there's that other maître d'hôtel, Jules, and those black beasts, Joseph and Hassan, besides Fischer. My God, they shall pay for this!"

Lutchester nodded.

"I dare say they will," he admitted, "but not quite in the way you are thinking of."

Graham half rose to his feet.

"Look here," he said, "I'm sane enough now, aren't I, and in my proper senses? You are not going to suggest that we don't turn the police on to that damned place?"

"I certainly am," was the brief reply.

Graham was aghast.

"What do you mean to do, then?"

"Leave them alone for the present. Not one of them has the formula. Not one of them even knows where it is."

"But the attack upon me?"

"You asked for all you got," Lutchester told him curtly, "and perhaps a little more."

The first tinge of colour came back to Graham's cheeks. His eyes flashed with anger.

"Perhaps I did," he admitted, "but that doesn't

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alter the fact that I'm going to have some of my own back out of them."

Lutchester crossed his legs and turned round in his chair. For the first time he directly faced his visitor. His tone, though not unkindly, was imperative.

"Young fellow," he said, "you'll have to listen to me about this."

A smouldering sense of revolt suddenly found words.

"Listen to you? What the devil have you got to do with it?" Graham demanded.

"I hate to remind any one of an obligation," Lutchester answered, "but I am under the impression that, together with Miss Van Teyl, of course, I rescued you from an exceedingly inconvenient situation."

"I haven't had time yet to tell you how grateful I am," Graham said awkwardly. "You were a brick, of course, and how you and Miss Van Teyl tumbled on to the whole thing I can't imagine. But I don't understand what you're getting at now. You can't suggest that I am to leave these fellows alone and not give information to the police?"

"The character of the place," Lutchester assured him, "is already perfectly well known to the heads of the police. The matter will be dealt with, but not in the way you suggest. And so far as regards Fischer, I do not wish him interfered with for the present."

"You do not wish him interfered with?" Graham

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repeated. "Where the devil do you come in at all?"

"You can leave me out of the matter for the present. You want the formula back, don't you?"

"My God, yes!" Graham muttered fervently. "It's all very well to give one a pencil and a piece of paper and say 'Write it out,' but there are calculations and proportions —"

"Precisely," Lutchester interrupted. "You want it back again. Why not let Fischer do the business? He has an idea where it's gone. The thing to do seems to me to follow him."

"To follow Fischer?" Graham repeated vaguely.

"Precisely. If he thinks the formula is in England, Fischer will stay in England. If he thinks that it has gone abroad he will go abroad. If we leave him free we can watch which he does."

Graham swallowed half a wineglassful of the brandy by his side. Then he leaned forward.

"Look here," he said, "you'll forgive me if I repeat myself and ask you once more — what the hell has all this got to do with you?"

"Just this much," Lutchester replied, "that I insist upon your taking the course of action in this matter which I propose."

"You mean," Graham protested, working himself gradually into a state of wrath, "that I am to go back to my rooms as though nothing had happened, see Holderness and the others to-morrow, and not have a word of explanation to offer? That I am to leave those blackguards at Henry's to try their dirty games on some one else, and let Fischer, the man

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who was fully inclined to become my murderer, go away unharmed? I think not, Mr. Lutchester. I am much obliged for your help, but you are talking piffle."

"What do you propose to do, then?"

"I am going round to Scotland Yard myself."

Lutchester rose to his feet.

"Stay where you are for a minute, please," he begged.

He passed into a smaller room, and Graham could hear faintly the sound of the telephone. In a minute or two his host returned.

"Go in there and speak, Graham," he invited. "You will find some one you know at the other end."

Graham did as he was bidden, and Lutchester closed the door after him. For a few minutes the latter sat in his chair, smoking quietly, his eyes fixed upon the fire. Then his unwilling guest reappeared. He came into the room a little unsteadily and looked with new eyes at the man who seemed so unaccountably to have taken over the control of his affairs.

"I don't understand all this," he muttered. "Who the devil are you, anyway, Lutchester?"

"A very ordinary person, I can assure you," was the quiet reply. "However, you are satisfied, I suppose, that my advice is good?"

"Yes, I am satisfied," Graham answered nervously. "You know that — that I'm under arrest?"

Lutchester nodded.

"Well, you're not asking for my sympathy, I suppose?" he observed drily.

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The young man flushed.

"I know that I behaved like a fool," he admitted. "All the same, I've been working night and day for weeks on this problem. I haven't even been up to town once. I must say I think they seem inclined to be a little hard on me."

"No one is going to be in the least hard on you," Lutchester assured him. "You have committed a frightful indiscretion, and all that is asked of you now is to keep your mouth shut. If you do that, I think a way will be found for you out of your troubles."

"But what is to become of me?" Graham demanded.

"I understand that you are to be taken to Northumberland to-morrow," Lutchester informed him. "There you will be allowed every facility for fresh experiments. In the meantime, I have promised to give you a shakedown here for the night. You will find a soldier on guard outside your door, but you can treat him as your servant."

"You are very kind," Graham faltered, a little vaguely. "If only I could understand —"

Lutchester rose to his feet. His manner became more serious, his tone had in it a note of finality.

"Captain Graham," he interrupted, "don't try to understand. I will tell you as much as this, if it helps you. Henry's Restaurant will be placed under the closest surveillance, but we wish nothing disturbed there at the moment until we have discovered the future plans of Mr. Oscar Fischer."

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"The big German-American," Graham muttered. "He's the man you ought to get hold of."

"Some day I hope that we may," Lutchester declared. "For the moment, however, we want him undisturbed. You would scarcely believe it, perhaps, if I told you that the theft of your formulas is only a slight thing compared to the bigger business that man has on hand. There is something else at the back of his head which is worth heaven and earth to us to understand. We want the formula and we shall have it, but more than anything else in the world we want to know why Fischer has pledged his word in Berlin to bring this war to an end within three months. We have to find that out, and we are going to find it out — from him. You see, I have treated you with confidence, Captain Graham. Now let me show you to your room." Graham put his hand to his forehead.

"I feel as though this were some sort of nightmare," he muttered. "I've known you for several months, Mr. Lutchester, and I have never heard you say a serious word. You dance at Henry's; you made a good soldier, they said, but you'd had enough of it in twelve months; you play auction bridge in the afternoons; and you talk about the war as though it were simply an irritating circumstance. And to-night —"

Lutchester threw open the door of his own bedroom and pointed to the bathroom beyond.

"My man has put out everything he thinks you may want," he said. "Try and get a good night's sleep. And, Graham."

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"Yes?"

"Don't bother your head about me, and don't ask any more questions."

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CHAPTER VII

The *Lapland* was two days out from Tilbury before Pamela appeared on deck, followed by her maid with an armful of cushions, and the deck steward with her rugs. She had scarcely made herself comfortable in a sunny corner when she was aware of the approach of a large, familiar figure. Her astonishment was entirely genuine.

"Mr. Fischer!" she exclaimed. "Why, how on earth did you catch this steamer? I thought you were coming on the Thursday boat?"

"Some inducement to change my mind," Mr. Fischer replied, drawing a chair up to her side.

"Meaning me?"

"I guess that's so!"

"Of course, I'm exceedingly flattered," Pamela observed, "or rather I should be if I believed you, but I don't see how you could leave a supper-party at Henry's and go straight to Tilbury."

"Say, how did you know I was supping at Henry's?" he inquired.

"Because I was there for luncheon myself, as you know," she answered carelessly, "and I heard you order your table for supper."

Mr. Fischer nodded reminiscently.

"I always wind up with a little supper at Henry's,

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on my last night in London," he remarked. "It left me two hours to get down to Tilbury, but it don't take me long to start for anywhere when I once make up my mind. That's the American of us, I suppose. Besides, I never need much in the way of luggage. I keep clothes over on the other side and clothes in New York, and a grip always ready packed for a journey."

"You're so typical," she murmured, smiling.

"I don't know about that," he replied. "My business makes it necessary for me to be always on the go. Have you heard from your brother lately?"

Pamela shook her head.

"Jimmy is the most terrible correspondent," she complained. "I don't think I've had any mail from him for two months."

"You didn't know that he and I were sharing rooms together, then, in the Plaza Hotel, I suppose?"

Pamela turned her head a little and gazed at her companion in genuine surprise.

"Sharing rooms in the Plaza Hotel?" she repeated. . . . "You and Jimmy?"

"I guess that's so," Mr. Fischer assented. "We were doing business together one day, and the subject cropped up somehow or other. Your brother was thinking of making a move, and I'd just been shown these rooms, which were a trifle on the large side for me. I made him an offer and he jumped at it."

"I hope you're not leading James into extravagant ways" she remarked anxiously. "I loved his

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little apartment in Forty-Second Street and it was so inexpensive."

"Your brother's share of these rooms isn't anything more than he can afford," Mr. Fischer assured her. "That I can promise you. I guess his firm is doing well just now. If they've many more clients like me they are."

"It is very nice of you to put business in his way," Pamela said thoughtfully. "I wonder why you do it, Mr. Fischer?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Well," Pamela went on, her eyes travelling out seaward for a moment, "you seem to be one of those sort of men, Mr. Fischer, who never do anything without an object."

"*Some* powers of observation," he admitted blithely.

"You have an object in being kind to Jimmy, then?"

Mr. Fischer produced a cigar case and selected a cheroot.

"Mind my smoking?"

"Not in the least. The only time I mind things is when people don't answer my questions."

"I was only kind of hesitating," Mr. Fischer went on, leaning back once more in his chair. "You want the truth, don't you?"

"I never think anything else is worth while."

"In the first place, then," her companion began, "your brother belongs to what I suppose is known as the exclusive set in New York. I am a Westerner with few friends there. Through him I have ob-

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tained introductions to several people whom it was interesting to me, from a business point of view, to know."

"I see," Pamela murmured. "You are at least frank, Mr. Fischer."

"I am going to be more frank still," he promised her. "Then another reason, of course, was because I liked him, and a third, which I am not sure wasn't the chief of all, because he was your brother."

Pamela laughed gaily.

"Is that necessary?"

"Necessary or not, it's the truth," he assured her. "I am a man of quick impressions and lasting ones."

"But we've never met except on a steamer," Pamela reminded him.

"I know it's the fashion," Mr. Fischer said, "to turn up one's nose at steamer acquaintances. It isn't like that with me. You see, I don't have as much opportunity of meeting folk as some others, perhaps. The most interesting people I've known socially I've met on steamers. I sat at your table, side by side with you, Miss Van Teyl, for seven days a few months ago. I guess I'll remember those seven days as long as I live."

Pamela turned her head and looked at him. The faintly derisive smile died away from her lips. The man was in earnest. A certain curiosity stole into her eyes as the seconds passed. She studied his hard, strong face, with its great jaw and prominent forehead; the mouth, a little too full, and belying the rest of his physiognomy, yet with its own pecul-

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iar strength. He had taken off his spectacles, and it seemed to her that the cold, flinty light of his eyes had caught for a moment some touch of the softer blue of the sea or the sky. Seated, he lost some of the awkwardness of his too great and ill-carried height. It seemed to her that he was at least a person to be reckoned with, either in friendship or enmity.

"Are you an American born, Mr. Fischer," she asked him.

He shook his head.

"I was born at Offenbach," he told her, "near Frankfurt. My father brought me out to America when I was eleven years old."

"You must find the present condition of things a little trying for you," she observed.

Oscar Fischer put on his glasses again. He did not answer for several moments.

"That opens up a subject, Miss Van Teyl," he said, "which some day I should like to discuss with you."

"Why not now?" she invited. "I feel much more inclined for conversation than reading."

"Tell me, then, to begin with," he asked thoughtfully, "on which side are your sympathies?"

"I try to do my duty as an American citizen," she replied promptly, "and that is to have no sympathies. Our dear country has set the world an example of what neutrality should be. I think it is the duty of us Americans to try and bring ourselves into exactly the same line of feeling."

He changed his position a little uneasily. His

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attitude became less of a sprawl. His eyes were fixed upon her face.

"I fear," he said, "that we are going to begin by a disagreement. I do not consider that America has realised in the least the duties of a neutral nation."

"You must explain that at once, if you please, before we go any further," Pamela insisted.

"Is this neutrality?" Fischer demanded, his rather harsh voice almost raucous now with a touch of real feeling. "America ships daily millions of dollars' worth of those things that make war possible, to France, to Italy, above all to England. She keeps them supplied with ammunition, clothing, scientific instruments, food — a dozen things which make war easier. To Germany she sends nothing. Is that neutrality?"

"But America is perfectly willing to deal in the same way with Germany," Pamela pointed out. "German agents can come and place their orders and take away whatever they want. The market is as much open to her as to the Allies."

Fischer was sitting bolt upright in his chair now. There was a little spot of colour in his cheeks and his eyes flashed behind his spectacles. He struck the side of the chair. He was very angry.

"That is Jesuitical," he declared. "It is perfectly well-known that Germany is not in a position to fetch munitions from America. Therefore, I say that there is no neutrality in supplying one side in the war with goods which the other is unable to procure."

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"Then you place upon America the onus of Germany's naval inferiority," Pamela remarked drily.

"Germany's maritime inferiority does not exist," Mr. Fischer protested. "When the moment arrives that the High Seas fleet comes out for action the world will know the truth."

"Then hadn't it better come," Pamela suggested, "and clear the ocean for your commerce?"

"That isn't the point," Fischer insisted. "We have wandered from the main issue. I say that America abandons its neutrality when it helps the Allies to continue the war."

"I don't think you will find," Pamela replied, "that international law prevents any neutral country from supplying either combatant with munitions. If one country can fetch the things and the other can't, that is the misfortune of the country that can't. For one moment look at the matter from England's point of view. She has built up a mighty navy to keep the seas clear for exactly this purpose — to continue her commerce from abroad. Germany instead has built up a mighty army, with which she has overrun Europe. Germany has had the advantage from her army. Why shouldn't England have the advantage from her navy?"

"Let me ask you the question you asked me a few minutes ago," her companion begged. "Were you born in America — or England?"

"I was born in America," Pamela told him; "so were my parents and my grandparents. I claim to be American to the backbone. I claim even to treat any sympathies I might have in this affair as

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prejudices, and not even to allow them a single corner in my brain."

Mr. Fischer sat quite still for several moments. He was struggling very hard to keep his temper. In the end he succeeded.

"We will not, then, pursue the subject of America's neutrality," he said, "because it is obvious that we disagree fundamentally. But tell me this, now, as an American and a patriot. Which do you think would be better for America — That Germany and Austria won this war, or the Allies?"

"Upon that question I have not altogether made up my mind," Pamela confessed.

"Then there is room there for a discussion," Mr. Fischer pointed out eagerly. "I should like to put my views before you on this matter."

"And I should love to hear them," Pamela replied, "but I feel just now as though we had talked enough politics. Do you know that I came up on deck in a state of great agitation?"

"Submarine alarms from the stewardess?" Mr. Fischer suggested.

"I am not afraid of submarines, but I have a most profound dislike for thieves," Pamela declared.

"You have not had anything stolen?" he asked quickly.

"I have not," Pamela replied, "but the only reason seems to be that I have nothing worth stealing. When I got back from luncheon this afternoon I found that my stateroom had been systematically searched."

She turned her head a little lazily and looked at

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her neighbour. His expression was entirely sympathetic.

"Your jewellery?"

"Deposited with the purser."

"I congratulate you," he said.

"Nothing has been stolen," she observed, "but one hates the feeling of insecurity, all the same. Both my steward and stewardess are old friends. It must have been a very clever person who found his way into my room."

"A very clever person," Mr. Fischer objected, "would have known that you had deposited your jewels with the purser."

"If it was my jewels of which they were in search," Pamela murmured. "By the bye, do you remember all that fuss about the disappearance of a young soldier that morning at Henry's?"

Fischer nodded.

"I heard something about it," he confessed. "They were talking about it at dinner-time."

"I had an idea that you might be interested," Pamela went on. "He was rather a foolish young man. He came into the restaurant telling every one at the top of his voice that he had made a great discovery! Even in London, which is, I should think, the most prosaic city in the world, there must be people who are on the lookout to pick up war secrets."

"Even in London, as you remark," Fischer assented.

"You didn't hear the end of the affair, I suppose?" she asked him.

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The steward had arrived with afternoon tea. Fischer threw into the sea the cigar which he had been smoking.

"I do not think," he said, "that the end has been reached yet."

Pamela sighed.

"Les oreilles ennemies!" she quoted. "I suppose one has to be careful everywhere."

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CHAPTER VIII

It was one evening towards the end of the voyage, and about an hour after dinner. A huge form loomed out of the darkness, continuing its steady promenade along the unlit portion of the deck. Pamela, moved by some caprice, abandoned her caution of the last few days and called out.

"Mr. Fischer!"

He stopped short. The sparks flew from the red end of his cigar, which he tossed into the sea. He hastened towards her.

"Miss Van Teyl?" he replied, a little hesitatingly.

"How clever of you to know my voice!" she observed. "I am in the humour to talk. Will you sit down, please?"

Mr. Fischer humbly drew a chair to her side.

"I had an idea," he said, "that you had been avoiding me the last two or three days."

"I have," she admitted.

"Have I offended you, then?"

"Scarcely that," she replied, "only, you see, it seemed waste of time to talk to you with the foils on, and a little dangerous, perhaps, to talk to you with them off."

His face reflected his admiration.

"Miss Van Teyl," he declared, "you are quite a wonderful person. I have never believed very much

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in women before. Perhaps that is the reason why I have never married."

"Dear me, are you a woman-hater?" she asked.

He looked at her steadfastly.

"I have made use of women as playthings," he confessed. "Until I met you I never thought of them as companions, as partners."

She laughed at him through the darkness, and at the sound of her laugh his eyes glowed.

"Really, I am very much flattered," she said. "You give me credit for intelligence, then?"

"I give you credit for every gift a woman should have," he answered enthusiastically. "I recognise in you the woman I have sometimes dreamed of."

Again she laughed.

"Don't tell me, Mr. Fischer," she protested, "that ever in your practical life you have spent a single moment in dreams?"

"I have spent many," he assured her, "but they have all been since I knew you."

Pamela sighed.

"I have never been through a voyage," she observed, "without a love affair. Still, I never suspected you, Mr. Fischer."

"You suspected me, perhaps, of other things."

She nodded.

"I am full of suspicions about you," she admitted. "I am not going to tell you what they are, of course."

"There is one thing of which I am guilty," he confessed. "I should like to tell you about it right now."

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"Could I guess it?"

"You're clever enough."

"You like me, don't you, Mr. Fischer?"

"Beter than any woman in the world," he answered promptly. "And my confession is — well, just that. Will you marry me?"

Pamela shook her head.

"Quite early in life," she confided, "I made up my mind that I would never give a definite answer to any one who proposed to me on a steamer. I suppose it's the wind, or is it the stars, or the silence, or what? I have known the sanest of men, even like you, Mr. Fischer, become quite maudlin."

"I am brimful of common sense at the present moment," he declared earnestly. "You and I could do great things together, if only I could get you to look at one certain matter from my point of view; to see it as I see it."

"A political matter?" she inquired naïvely.

"I want to try and persuade you," he confessed, "that America has everything in the world to gain from Germany's success, and everything to lose if the Allies should triumph in this war and Great Britain should continue her tyranny of the seas."

"It's an extraordinarily interesting subject," Pamela admitted.

"It is almost as absorbing," he declared, "as the other matter which just now lies even nearer to my heart."

She withdrew her fingers from his sudden clutch.

"Mr. Fischer," she told him, "what I said just

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now was quite final. I will not be made love to on a steamer."

"When we land," he continued eagerly, "you will be coming to see your brother, won't you?"

She nodded.

"Of course! I am coming to the Plaza Hotel. That, I suppose, is good news for you, Mr. Fischer."

"Of course it is," he answered, "but why do you say so?"

"It will give you so many opportunities," she murmured.

"Of seeing you?"

She shook her head.

"Of searching my belongings."

There was a moment's silence. She heard his quick breath through the darkness. His voice assumed its harsher tone.

"You believe that it was I who searched your stateroom?"

"I am sure that it was you, or some one acting for you."

"What is it, then, of which I am in search?" he demanded.

"Captain Graham's formula," she replied. "I think you want that a good deal more than you want me."

"You have it then?" he asked fiercely.

She sighed.

"You jump so to conclusions. I didn't say so."

"You went up the stairs . . . you were the only person who went up just at that one psychological

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