

That Royal Girl

BY EDWARD BALMER

CHAPTER 17

JOAN IS TAKEN AWAY

"What's she saying?" a reporter demanded, approaching with a companion and the detectives, curious themselves.

"She's repeating her story about seeing the other man with Ketlar's wife," Calvin informed them.

"But what's the idea here? What was she showing you in the sand?" "Stones," said Calvin.

"Stones?" she cried. "There they are, see I was—"

Just then a detective stepped among them. "Bunk!" he said.

"What're you taking her now, sir?" he asked Calvin. "Over to the flat?" "Adele's flat?" Joan gasped. "Oh, no! No!"

"Halt!" said the detective. "I guess you don't want to go but—"

"Have you anything else to show me here?" Calvin asked her.

"No."

"This is what you brought me out to see."

"Yes."

"Then we'll go back."

"I'll go," said Joan Daisy, dully.

On the way from the beach, she further amazed Calvin Clarke by humming. He made no comment about it he did not speak with her at all, but he listened to her humming a few bars of a cheap, lively jazz tune. Over and over again she hummed it and then suddenly she made explanation:

"You remember I told you that Ket got Perth, Wash or Kansas City—I don't know which—before he went out of my room and he got some jazz. That's the tune he got, Mr. Clarke!" And she hummed her refrain over twice more. "Look it up!" You'll see! Check up programs from Port Worth and Kansas City tonight; and you'll find the tune on one of them. And when they played it, Ket was still in the room with me!"

Calvin silently escorted her to the door where newspaper men questioned him and flashlights flared. He learned that the police woman, whom he had summoned, was on the way; and personally he took Joan Daisy up to her apartment.

"I am sending you to a hotel in charge of a Mrs. Howick, whom I know very well," he announced.

"You had better collect such articles as you will need for a day or two."

"You mean," asked Joan Daisy—she had ceased to hum—"you're arresting me for—for a part in killing Adele?"

"Not arresting," Calvin denied.

"You will be held; that's all."

"What's the difference?"

"There will be no charge lodged against you, yet; and you will merely be kept in the care of Mrs. Howick at a hotel."

"Why?"

"Why?" repeated Calvin, nettled; "because it is perfectly plain you know more about this murder than you have yet told and we mean to get it out of you."

"I have told you," said Joan Daisy, "the whole truth now. The truth! The truth!"

"Do you want," asked Calvin, "to speak to your parents before you go?"

"What time is it?"

"Half past two."

"Maybe I can wake one of them."

She retreated, backing from him until she reached the door to the passage where she turned and slipped away; but, probably for the sake of the light from the front room, she left the door open and also left ajar the bedroom door after she entered.

"Mamma! Mamma!" Calvin heard her say; and for a few moments she tried to arouse her mother, but the drugged sleep proved too deep; so she stirred the man.

"Dads! Dads! . . . Dads! The police are here—the police—"

"Here?" said a man's thick voice. "Sorry, dear Betty, he apologized stupidly. "Wouldn't he had it happen for worlds, Joan—not for worlds."

"You didn't, Dads. It's about Ket. Time, Ket—he's in trouble. The police think I know something about it; so they're taking me away. Not to the station, to a hotel; just to a hotel, Dads; that's what they say. They'll all don't think about it now; go back to sleep. Daisy—only remember in the morning!"

She came from the room, her eyes blinking in the light. "He'll remember, I think; but I'd better leave him a note, too," she said to Calvin and crossed to a desk where she wrote for a minute before she asked: "What hotel are you sending me to?" "I'll let him know later," Calvin answered.

She gazed at him steadily, her lips quivering, then she finished her note and asked him, "Do you want to see it?"

"No," said Calvin, feeling uneasy. "That's all right."

She set to packing her night-dresses and toilet articles in a little leather bag and Calvin watched her hands at work, deftly folding, arranging and pressing things into place while she thought about them not at all.

"Where are you doing with him?" she asked suddenly, not glancing up at Calvin, but staring at the floor as though she could peer through to the apartment below.

"We have not fully decided yet," Calvin answered.

"Can I see him a second before you take me away?"

"For what purpose?"

"I want to see him."

Calvin considered for a moment and then said, "No."

She offered no direct protest, but repeated, "He didn't do it," like a child insisting. She closed her bag and immediately occupied herself with stripping the blankets and sheets from her bed.

"Where do you live?" Calvin asked, watching her.

"Live? Why, here."

"I mean," he explained, "where is your home?"

"You're in it," she replied and he started, slightly.

A few minutes later, the policeman arrived and after she had escorted the girl away, Calvin lingered in Joan Daisy's room. From her window he watched for her on the walk below, and he followed her slender, pretty figure until she entered an automobile and was driven off.

(To Be Continued.)



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