

RUNAWAY JUNE

By George Randolph Chester and Lillian Chester

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

JUNE 6, 1915.

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID.

II. Sam. 11:1-12:7.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God." Psalm 51:10.

Chapter 11:5. David's sin was committed at a time when Israel was at war with Ammon. This was one of those wars through which David had built his empire. The campaign was against the children of Ammon to the east of Jordan. The Ammonites had defied Israel and been defeated by Saul. They had again insulted the messengers sent by David to condole with Hanun, their king, upon the death of his father. They were not inclined to live as peaceful neighbors of the Israelites. There was nothing to do but to reduce them to vassalage. In this war David does not seem to have followed the custom of ancient kings, instead of marching at the head of his army he stayed at home and committed the management of the campaign to his stalwart general, Joab. Whatever his reasons may have been for this course, it proved his undoing morally. Had he gone to Rabbah (the capital city of Ammon), which was not in an intrigue with Bathsheba, his army was besieging, he would not have been tempted as he was. Satan is always in the labor market employing idle hands. David busy with work in the camp would have had neither occasion nor time for sin. He would have been busy with Bathsheba, to give to an intrigue with Bathsheba.

Verses 6-21. It would be futile to attempt to characterize David's sin as it stood out as an exception to the rule. It was a typical sin. It was a sordid, saddening, sickening affair, as properly understood. First, it illustrates the solidarity of sin. This means that sins are interlinked with one another. There is no way of avoiding one sin leading to another except immediate repentance and reparation. There is no way of preventing weeds from multiplying except plucking them up by the roots and destroying them up by the roots and destroying them up. David's first sin bound to lead to a second and a third; and it did so. To cover up the disgrace and popular indignation that might follow the discovery of it, David must needs put Uriah out of the way. To put Uriah out of the way, he needs resort to indirection and trickery, which is falsehood. Another aspect of sin illustrated by the affair is that the sinner is seldom alone in his sin. David must have the assistance of Joab in getting rid of Uriah. It is true in Job he found a ready co-worker. For to the sturdy soldier, callous to bloodshed, the death of one man, especially in battle, was an insignificant matter. But the responsibility of David for making Joab a partner in his sin is none the less on that account. We are not to be deceived (imitators of Satan) because those we invite to sin with us are naturally inclined to what we induce them to do.

Verses 22-27. The false position assumed by David must be maintained through the end. Hence when the news of the success of his evil scheme was brought to him he carried the falsehood further by assuming the role of a comforter to Joab, as if Joab cared a straw for the death of Uriah, or even all the men that had been butchered through the affair. He covered his murder. At last, however, he thought he had come to the end of his evil planning.

Chapter 12: 1-17. If David thought that his sin was now well protected by the great mistake he had made, he was greatly mistaken. The matter how safely men may safeguard themselves against the consequences of their evil deeds, and not matter how completely they may cover them up, there is always one eye which sees the sin, one mind which knows of it, and that mind has the power of causing it to live again in new consequences. The God against whom all sin is an offence would not in his infinite kindness permit David to merely forget his transgressions of his own law. It was in kindness that God's prophet came to David because an unrepentant sinner was given sin; and better than thousands of pangs than the sting of sin permanently embedded in one's character. The method of Nathan in raising David's sin to his consciousness is characteristic of the Hebrew prophets. In a parable full of Oriental charm he put before the king the case of a powerful man committing a deed of cruel injustice against a poor neighbor. The imaginary cast was just different enough from that of David to leave the sound part of the king's moral nature unprejudiced. Not recognizing himself as the offender, David could view the offence in a detached manner and give vent to his righteous indignation. And because the case was presented to him as a real one, and because further as king he was the administrator of justice, he was ready to declare the criminal worthy of death, and require four-fold restitution, according to the law of the land, to the injured person. The differences between the affair in David were counterbalanced by a parallelism in the principles involved. The story was in a manner a mirror in which David might recognize himself. Nathan waited until David had thoroughly committed himself on the principles involved. Then by removing the slight veil of individual peculiarity he held the mirror up to David, "Thou art the man." It was a means of awakening David's conscience. David's greatness as a king and his essential soundness as a man, was again shown in his prompt obedience to the divine voice. He did not resent Nathan's bold rebuke. He made no excuses. He frankly acknowledged the offence of his sin against Jehovah. It were well if men never sinned. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

TENTH EPISODE

A Prisoner on the Yacht.

CHAPTER I.

NED WARNER, in front of the blazing windows of the New York cafe, stood as one in a daze, deaf to all the words of Bobbie and Iris Blethering, who feared, from the ashen pallor of his face, that his murderous frenzy might react upon himself. He saw again his lovely runaway bride being forced out of the cafe against her will by the man with the white mustache and that infernal scoundrel with the black Vandyke, Gilbert Blye!

Too late! Too late for anything but his stator. The limousine had turned the corner. On that side of the cafe there was not a taxi to be seen. Bobbie's car stood in front, on the other side. While Iris endeavored to arouse the stupefied Ned, Bobbie ran around and brought his roadster. They drove up to the corner and turned down the street through which the limousine had disappeared, but where in all that wilderness of moving vehicles could the track of June be found? Nowhere! It was as if the earth had opened and swallowed her up. It might as well, for June, in a swift motorboat with the gay party which had kidnapped her from the cafe, was then swiftly approaching a long, low yacht which loomed gracefully above them in the misty river.

June's struggles were useless in that heaving water, and her cries of protest were unheard. In that lonely waste, strong arms lifted her to her feet. A strong hand from above grasped her, and she was pulled up to the deck. Below her she heard the laughter of the three men who had abducted her, and with their laughter blended the shrill, high voice of that vicious brunette, Tommy Thomas. June's heart sent out a wild call to Ned. This had been the first time she had seen his face since the day of their wedding.

At the door of the sumptuously fitted crimson and gold salon on the yacht the tottering June was confronted by a stolid steward, with gray mottled chop whiskers, and a puckered looking stewardess, who wore, as if habitually, a half whimper. "The dearie looks faint," said the stewardess.

"Well, bring the young lady a glass of wine, you," gruffly ordered the steward. Mrs. Villard came in and dropped in a chair, while the vivacious Tommy danced over to the gold lacquered piano, its beautiful marine view painted by the famous Velaz. Blye and the white mustached Cunningham and the heavy Edwards followed, laughing, as Wilkins wheeled in from the pantry a portable buffet, its frosty topped bottles packed in glistening ice.

"Have a taste of this, dearie. It will soothe your nerves." The whining stewardess held to June's lips a glass of sherry, but June drew away from it with repugnance and, rising, hurried away from the sumptuously fitted salon. She did not know where that passageway led except that it led away from that hateful company. The stewardess followed her, the glass of sherry still in her hand. "Right in here, dearie," and she opened the door of a magnificent stateroom, its mahogany walls paneled with ivory tinted tapestry, its brass bed hung with rich lace.

music, pounded out by the nimble fingers of Tommy Thomas. Blye sat quietly, with that suave smile upon his lips and stroking his black Vandyke with his long, lean, white fingers, upon one of which sparkled a diamond. He rose presently, and, tipping down the gangway, stopped at June's door and listened. He could hear an occasional stifled sob as June sat amid the soft cushions of the couch. Before her, through a half open door, could be seen a glimpse of a snowy white bathroom, and in the adjoining little pale blue boudoir stood June's own luggage!

Ned! That brief sight of him had filled June's whole soul with longing. Poor little runaway bride! There were the rattle of a donkey engine and the scraping of chains on the yacht Hilarity. The anchor was coming up, and there was an instant change in the easy rocking of the craft. She shuddered, and then there was the sound of seething water as the Hilarity gathered headway. June was on her feet in an instant. She ran to the porthole and gazed out at the barely moving lights along shore. The portholes were too small to let her shoulders through. She ran to the door and opened it stealthily, then closed it and held the knob as Tommy Thomas and Orin Cunningham danced past in the salon.

The alert ear of Gilbert Blye caught the click of that latch, slight as it was, and his eyes glowed; he motioned significantly toward the corridor, and Edwards, reaching up, said something in the ear of Mrs. Villard. A slight frown crossed her brow, but she rose instantly and went down the gangway to the door of June's stateroom. She knocked, but there was no answer. "June!" she called. "June, dear!"

No answer. Mrs. Villard listened. No sound. She went back slowly to the salon. "You'll never make that child one of us," and she shook her head. June sat on the couch in her stateroom with her hands locked upon her knees, staring into the white slice of brightness formed by the tiling of the bathroom, and while she pondered on what she should do Marie and Henri reached the city and stopped at a telephone office. When they came out of that place a short, wide, thick man who had been wedding down the street, with a blunt stub of a cigar in one corner of his mouth and a look of habitual furtiveness in his little eyes, started abruptly at sight of Marie, and when the touring car started the short, wide man lunged behind, his cigar stub firmly clamped between his teeth.

The doorbell rang at the Moore home in Brynport. Stern John Moore, reading his paper beneath the portrait of June, looked up quickly, and there was a slight tremor at the corner of his paper. Aunt Debby's voice was heard: "Why, it's Mr. Ned and Miss Iris. Why, good evenin'. The folks is to home."

Stern John Moore listened with silent attention while Mrs. Moore, her hand upon her breast, stifled the emotions to which Iris Blethering gave full play as the "kidnaping" was described.

There was but one conclusion among the men, and Ned, composing his voice as he passed from the mention of Blye, stated that conclusion. "It is a matter for the police," he declared. "It is a matter for the police," he declared and picked up the telephone. "Our daughter is in danger," said the grave voice of John Moore.

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CHAPTER II.

IN the dock adjacent to the one from which the Hilarity's motor tender had departed there paced, almost perceptibly, a night watchman, who consisted of an overcoat, a cap and two glints of eye. To him there came, as the docks intensified their loneliness, a brisk little chauffeur with a thin mustache and a woman with high cheek bones.

"The Hilarity!" stated the little chauffeur, with an accusing tone, and with a sweeping gesture he pointed to that adjacent dock where stood a big hamper with the word "Hilarity" glaring white on its side. "She is gone!" Then Henri stepped back. "Yep," rumbled a frosty voice. "But her tender," objected Henri, "also is gone. Listen, my friend," insisted Henri, stopping in front of the overcoat and cap, but moving aside as it came irresistibly on. "The facts are like these. Mademoiselle has gone on board the Hilarity. Behold, here is the maid of the charming mademoiselle. She was also to have gone on board the Hilarity. How, then, shall she go?"

"Dunno." The maid of the charming mademoiselle now stepped forward. "Can you drive a motorboat?" she asked. "Volla!" And Henri snapped the fingers of both hands, snapped them three times. "Volla, mademoiselle, Marie! If it goes I can drive it."

"Can't we hire this boat?" and the resourceful Marie pointed to a trim little craft. "But, comrade," And Henri jerked his cap on the back of his head as he wheeled at right angles. "It is important. Look. Here is money. I take the swift little boat. I swish out of the slip. I swish across the bay. Like lightning I swish, and I overtake the yacht Hilarity. I deliver the charming maid—a little bow here—and a kiss from the flippers tips to the charming mademoiselle, and immediately I swish back. Nothing is lost! All is safe!"

"Get off the dock," came the answer. "But, monsieur." "Hike." "I, Henri, detest you!" was the angry response. And he followed Marie off the dock. Henri had another idea. He drove to a nearby saloon and procured a

swiftly, silently, June gained the deck. Flash the lonely overcoat and cap pursued their almost imperceptible way. A touring car stopped on the street up the hill. "It is cold, my friend, is it not?" called Henri as he rushed forward, bottle in hand. "Shall we warm ourselves—yes?"

"Yep," rolled up the somber voice, with frosty cordiality, and the neck of the bottle disappeared in the slit of the overcoat collar.

"The motor tender from the Hilarity— it is not yet returned, eh?" "Nope." "Volla!" Henri is even cheerful as he races back up the dock. "I shall return, my friend Monsieur Frappe."

As Henri jumps into his car a dim, fat figure slinks out of the shadows and hops on behind.

Left alone momentarily, June threw open the door which she had just locked and dashed back along the gangway toward the pantry. At the end of the passage she found a companionway which led her up to the deck. She rushed forward to the prow, taking in a glance that the water were far from shore and in the open water. The distant lights glowed dimly through the mist, but just ahead of her, on the port side, bore down the red and green lights of a tug.

"Aho!" she cried, lifting her hands to her mouth like a megaphone. "Aho!" she screamed. Strong arms seized her—the heavy jawed officer she had seen as she had come on board. Two others came running up, Edwards and Cunningham. Close behind were Tommy Thomas and Mrs. Villard, the former laughing, the latter panic stricken. A handkerchief was pressed against her mouth, and the tug flashed by.

"Oh, yes." Again the grin. "Young ladies always trust me. Say, I think she wants to escape."

Blye, with a frown on his dark, handsome face, walked across and spoke to Cunningham. Orin nodded and, his eyes twinkling, went to the portable buffet, where he selected a long stemmed, gracefully shaped, gold incusted goblet of Venetian glass. He filled it with ice and set it to one side. "Her, while the others watched him, Tommy Thomas, with a half sneer, and Mrs. Villard, with shocked concern, he took from a locked case a tiny stone bottle. Now he emptied the ice from the beautiful goblet and poured into it a few blood red drops. Mrs. Villard half rose and looked toward Gilbert Blye; then, with a catch in her breath, she sat down and was silent.

Blye went to the door as the stewardess came up the gangway and called her in with a jerk of his head. On the lips of Edwards there had come a firm set, and his heavy lidded eyes had narrowed. Without a word Cunningham landed the glass to the stewardess, but between the two there passed a look which was full of meaning. Blye, with his glowing eyes on the glass, smiled suavely. "I brought you the water, dearie," said the stewardess, entering June's stateroom.

"Oh!" An exclamation of delight from June as her eyes widened with the beauty of the delicate Venetian goblet. "That's something else I made for you in the pantry, dearie," explained the stewardess, in her coaxing whine, and bobbed her neck. "It's a fine stimulant and soothing to the nerves."

June took the fragile glass in her hand. Its sheer beauty had won her. She inhaled daintily. The fragrance was most appealing. She looked at it again and smiled. She did feel faint and weak. She lifted the glass to her lips, and the tip of her tongue caught the delicious flavor. Suddenly, as she tilted the glass to drink, she caught the pallid eyes of the stewardess fixed eagerly upon her. The woman's mouth was half open, and she was breathing hard.

With a flash of intuition June jerked her lips from the glass and threw it crashing and splintering, into the fireplace. "Why, dearie!" exclaimed the stewardess, and in great agitation she pushed a button at the side of the mantel. June's eyelashes lowered for an instant, and her lips set; then quietly she went into the little blue boudoir and sat thoughtfully upon the daintily upholstered settee.

The steward came pompously in. "Well, you've done it again, you!" he growled as he surveyed the splintered fragments of the delicate Venetian glass.

"No, Percy," whined the woman and glared toward the boudoir door with her pallid eyes. She jerked her thumb in that direction, and then she winked. "That's you," snarled Wilkins. "You always say it's a guest."

"How much?" whispered the woman in a sibilant hiss, which carried as it was intended to do. "Them glasses is \$12 apiece, and it'll be taken from your wages. That comes out of my pocket!"

June bit her lips. Twelve dollars! It was a lot of money to a girl who had found dollars coming slowly and independence hard to win, but she picked up her purse. After all, she had no proof that the woman meant anything but kindness.

"Is this breakage charged against you?" asked June. "Why, yes, dearie." A sniffe went with the whine. "How much will it cost you?" "Twelve dollars!" sniffed. "But it's all a part of our job, so never mind, dearie."

"I do not wish you to lose the money," and quite thoughtfully June counted \$12 from her slender store. She added another for the customary thanks and gave one to the man, and they thanked her most obsequiously. As June returned to the boudoir their suppressed voices broke out again.

"No," protested the woman in that whining hiss; "that's my money—the dollar's mine, anyhow."

"Nothing yours except what I give you," stated Percy Wilkins gruffly. "That's the law, and you know it. Clean up that mess, you," and he left the room. The woman's whining mumble could be heard all the while she was cleaning up the fireplace. She was going when June returned to the stateroom, but on the floor near the door was a yellow leather bound blank book, its side worn like glass from the constant friction of a pocket. June picked it up and opened it with idle curiosity. On the first inside page, at the top, was the big scrawled word "From." At the top of the opposite page was the word "To." The first item on the "From" page was dated four years back.

showed an item, "Banked to the credit of P. Wilkins, \$12,000."

And it all belonged to the map, every penny. If the woman had anything it was a gift, no matter what she brought to the man on her marriage nor what she had earned since! It seemed universal, this condition. A startling thought came to June. Suppose she achieved her independence, so that she earned her own money, so that she could go to Ned, asking for her love, would he want what she had earned? If so, what would become of the principle for which she had run away? She paused at that thought, and then she laughed. She did not know the law in this matter, but she knew Ned. Dear Ned! She hunted her handkerchief in a hurry.

CHAPTER III. THE arrival of an envelope by messenger rendered unnecessary the immediate need of post office aid for the Moore family.

With fingers which trembled in spite of his habitual control, the father of June opened the telegram and read this strange message: I am sorry I had a certain party tied and lost in Hunter's woods. Please find him and tell him I am sorry. I am going to join our darling. I will protect her until we meet again, when all will be happy. Your faithful MARIÉ.

New plans were made accordingly. On the dock against which rocked and grated the swift little motorboat



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It was Edwards and Cunningham who dragged June down into the crimson and gold salon, and as June was jostled in the first thing she saw was the dark, handsome face of Gilbert Blye! He was standing at the portable buffet, quietly drinking a glass of wine!

"Didn't I tell you before to hike?" barked the warm steam of breath.

"Get off the dock." "The beautiful little motorboat!" interrupted Henri, with ingratiating enthusiasm. "My friend M. Flambeau would it not be possible?" "Nope." "Volla!" Henri was quite cheerful. "I shall return again, my friend Frappe."

Henri was just starting his car and the short, thick figure had just slunk out of the shadows to hop on behind when the overcoat and cap sat on the edge of the dock, with their feet dangling toward the water.

"Ah!" breathed Henri to the stiff figure beside him. "At last it arrives! We shall wait!" "Is there any left?" barked a voice. "Pardon," abjectly apologized Henri. "A thousand pardons, Mlle. Marie!" And he produced a fresh bottle.

The thick, short figure slinking back into the shadows wiped its lips with its tongue and shivered. Dawn—slowly the chill, gray mist which lay upon the river began to clear.

"Volla," cracked the voice of Henri, but the tone was cheerful still. "He sleeps!" It was true. The overcoat and cap, after bobbing and swaying dangerously over the water's edge for hour after hour, had at last stretched out on the dock for the slumber due to a night watchman who was thoroughly at ease and thoroughly warm.

Henri and Marie, with all the mental effect of stealthiness, sprang into the swift looking little motorboat. A short, thick figure came painfully waddling out on the dock and shook the overcoat. The cap wobbled.

"Hey!" This was from the short, thick figure, but the aperture through which the sound came was so stiff that the result was only a wheeze. A snore came from the overcoat. "Hey!" A punch, a kick, but a stiff kick which had no force.

"Ugh!" The grunt was from the night watchman. "Well, you with the distillery breath, I tried to tell you all night, didn't I? Oh, get alive! This is Bill Wolf, the private detective, talking to you."

"Ugh!" The cap moved, but the overcoat was still asleep. "They stole the Flash, I say, they!" "The Flash!" The overcoat straightened. It rose. The cap stiffened its angle. The combination scrambled to its feet.

"They stole the Flash?" "Stole it? Who?" "Oh, who?" The tone was one of infinite contempt. "Why, the little pink whiskered guy and the bony dame! Stole it! And now where did they go?"

"The yacht—what's her name?" The overcoat and cap were still hazy. The cap turned gropingly toward the hamper on the adjoining dock, where the name stood out in blunt white letters. "Hilarity!"

"The Hilarity!" Bill Wolf stooped with his hands on his knees to stare at that information which had been in plain sight all night. "Me for a telephone. Gee, look at that boat go!"

Upon the swelling waves rode the Hilarity, and all on board of her, save the officers of the night and one other, were sound asleep.

That one was June Warner. She had noiselessly dressed herself in a yachting costume, and now she slowly removed a bar which held the sliding of a secret panel she had discovered in the wall of her cabin. Then she showed it to one side until the opening was large enough to admit her lithe, slender figure. She found herself in a glowing of the dawn, and in that room, on a chair and still wearing the evening raiment of the night before, sat his head bent upon his shoulder, Orin Cunningham.

With a shudder of aversion June sped to the door of Cunningham's cabin and opened it. She passed through the salon. There on the bench stretched Tommy Thomas, one tapering arm bent over her head and her dainty slippers crossed in slumberous ease.

Swiftly, silently, June gained the deck. Creeping close to the cabins, she rounded the stern. The Hilarity had dropped anchor, and the landing



Gilbert Blye's Dark, Handsome Face Appeared Above the Rail.



That Infernal Scoundrel With the Black Vandyke, Gilbert Blye!



June Drew Away From It With Repugnance.



Mrs. Moore Stifled the Emotions to Which Iris Blethering Gave Full Play.



"It is a matter for the police," he declared.

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