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THE SILVER ASSASSIN

By WILLIAM J. MAKIN

(Continued)
 INSTALMENT TEN

When his eyes opened again it seemed that he was in space. His body was lost in the night sky. The cool air made salty the sweat that dripped from his forehead. And that silvery bladder of the moon leered down upon him.

He tried to raise an arm to shield his face from the hateful rays. But his arm was powerless. His legs, too. His whole body was clamped to some black, shining surface. Realization came to him. He was stretched on the moon altar.

And as the sweat broke out afresh on his face, the orb of the moon was transformed. A man, a moon man was gazing down on him. A cruel mouth, eyes mad with hatred, and a powerful hand holding a gleaming sacrificial knife.

"As the knife was raised for the downward thrust, that vibrant voice, which now he knew, intoned in a whisper:

"So must perish all enemies of the moon..."

Peter tried to cry out. He struggled vainly against his bonds. He could hear, like the pounding of his own heart, the intake of breath that would precede the stroke of the knife.

"Knock, knock, booooo!"

The figure holding the knife turned. This time the sound was real. The knocks were devastating blows against the door. And a police whistle was shilling and rousing echoes in the street below.

"The police! Police!"

Pandemonium raged. Phosphorescent shapes fluttered in the darkness and disappeared one by one. A powerful foot was placed against the altar. The hand that held the knife was reaching towards the moon. And even as there came the crash of splintering wood the blue robe of the priest seemed to go floating into the sky like a witch riding away from the dawn.

Heavy footsteps sounded. They were lost in the deep rumble overhead. Staring upwards, Peter saw the moon annihilated by a black shadow. The night sky disappeared. At the same time, slowly, the concealed lights of the walls began to come alive. There was the shuffle of feet.

"Everyone stay where they are, please!"

The command came in the familiar voice of Detective-Inspector Graves. And the next moment the irritated, fox-terrier-like face was bending over the bound figure.

"Hullo, inspector!" ventured Peter. "You just arrived in time."

"So it seems," nodded Graves. "I've been chasing you between Oxford and London."

"I hope this time you're determined to arrest me," said Peter. A prison cell would be safe and restful after this!

A policeman unbound the straps that bound him. As he struggled to his feet, he saw a frightened, whispering crowd of men and women herded in a corner of the room. The lost children of the moon! Pallid faces, tawdry-dressed ill-fitting suits—they looked a miserable bundle of humanity. A pile of ordinary looking hoods was heaped against a wall where they had been hastily flung. And in a matter of fact way, two plain clothes detectives were noting names and addresses in official-looking books.

Graves supervised the proceedings with a grim air. He came over to where Peter Allister was nursing his bruises.

A good night's work, inspector, commended Peter. I don't know how you discovered this place, but it badly needed raiding.

The inspector sniffed, disappointedly. Contains at least a dozen people well-known to us. They're always found in every raid in the West End, whether it's a gambling house or any other sort of house. I expected something more unusual on this occasion.

"But didn't you discover—?"

Peter stopped, and gave a searching glance at the motley crowd herded in a corner of the room. He was looking for the figure of the high priest, the man in the blue robe with its decoration of moons. The man was not there.

He lifted his head. A black painted ceiling was stretched across. Then someone shook him. It was Graves.

"Has someone got away?" asked the inspector.

Peter nodded.

"The moon murderer," he said, quietly.

The Scotland Yard man cursed. It was five days later before Detective-Inspector Graves again sought out Peter Allister for a long delayed conversation. As usual, he had some difficulty in tracking down the elusive, sardonic young man. Then, at eight o'clock one evening, the inspector stood ringing and knocking in turn outside the door of a flat overlooking Hyde Park.

After five minutes' noisy persistence the door was flung open. An unshaven, wild-eyed Peter Allister swathed in a gaudy dressing-gown stood there.

"Go away was all he said and ought to close the door."

But Graves was too quick for him. He deftly inserted a heavy boot, pushed back the door and entered.

"I want to have a talk with you, Allister," he said grimly.

Peter glowered at him.

"Don't you Scotland Yard fellows do anything but talk? Why don't you go away and arrest a murderer or something?"

Graves nodded.

"I will when you tell me who the murderer is I suspect you know more than you have told me, Allister."

Peter growled and turned away.

"It's easy enough to suspect. The difficulty is to prove anything," he said.

"I'm glad you appreciate some of our difficulties at Scotland Yard," smiled Graves. "Have you a chair in this flat?"

"No," replied Peter. "Except the one at the piano there, and I'm using that. Can't you people realize that I've a recital at the Eolian Hall next week, and that I've come here to practise in quite. I've a damned good mind to call a policeman and have you arrested for forcing your way in here," he added.

Graves glanced at the bare walls, the bare floor, and the doors, which half-opened, revealed a serious of bare rooms. Except for a huge grand piano, a chair, a table with a coffee pot and a dirty cup and saucer on it, a divan with a rough blanket tumbled over, and a telephone standing forlornly on the floor, the flat with its several rooms was bare.

"You might have chosen a more comfortable place to live in," suggested the Scotland Yard man.

"Why did you leave Oxford?"

"Couldn't work there," said Peter. "I found this place, paid a year's rent, bought a piano, and settled down to practise."

So you intend to settle here?"

Yes. As soon as Jill Bretherton agrees to marry me, I'll begin buying any other furniture that is necessary."

I see. You are still determined about that girl?"

Very much so. And now, inspector, having reported my movements will you go away and leave me to my work?"

He reached out for a cigarette and lit one. The inspector noticed that the thin musical hand was trembling. The sandy hair was all dishevelled. The lean, hungry face was more lean and hungry than ever.

"When did you last have a meal?" asked Graves, bluntly.

How should I know? was the irritated response. Twelve noon today, or yesterday. I can't remember. I'm not one of your mathematicians.

Well, you're coming out for a meal now, said Graves, in determined fashion.

Why?

Firstly, because you need one. Secondly, because I'm hungry. Thirdly, because I want to talk to you."

Peter groaned. He took up a sheet of music manuscript from the table, and with those thin but powerful hands, tore it into shreds.



NEWS!

News ever has been the forerunner of progress. Civilization advanced, industry developed, trade and commerce expanded as facilities for circulating news improved.

When John Bushell published the first Canadian newspaper at Halifax in 1752 the inns and coffee houses of the scattered Canadian settlements were the principal sources of news. There the pioneers foregathered to gossip about personal and community affairs and to discuss the problems of their trades. Anyone unable to attend knew little or nothing of events beyond his immediate environment.

Bushell proposed to print the news and make it available to all. The first issue of his Halifax Gazette was a single sheet of paper printed on both sides. It contained a publisher's foreword, a few items of local interest, some foreign and

colonial news. (most of it six months old), and three advertisements.

Modest as the venture was, it expressed an ideal of public service which endured.

Soon newspapers were established in other communities. Constantly this service has been extended until now the daily newspapers of Canada bring to every citizen the latest news of people, events and achievements in all parts of the world.

The first Canadian newspaper had seventy-two subscribers; today in more than two million homes throughout the country at least one daily newspaper is read.

Without this day-to-day record of social, economic and political affairs at home and abroad, progress would be retarded and the welfare of the individual and the nation seriously impaired.

* * * * *

CANADIAN DAILY NEWSPAPERS

You've spoiled a masterpiece, anyhow, blundering in on me like this, inspector. Don't you realize that my job is to write music." And mine to find a murderer," said Graves, callously. Come along, Allister.

For a moment it looked as though the young man was going to throw himself at the Scotland Yard official. Then the humour of the situation appealed to him. He grinned, and rubbed his stubbly chin.

"D'you want me to shave?" Please yourself.

Well, I won't. He tore off the dressing gown, pulled a grey sweater over his sinewy body, and gazed down at the scraps of music manuscript littering the floor.

A bad piece of work, anyhow," he grunted. All right, inspector, lead on. I'm ready for a meal, seeing that you're going to pay for it."

I'm beginning to appreciate that you really have come into a fortune," said Graves, bitterly, and opened the door.

(To be Continued)

TABLE TENNIS POPULAR

LONDON—(CP)—Developed from the old nursery game into a world-wide sport, the 16th international championships of the English Table Tennis Association attracted entries from 15 countries.

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NOTICE

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L. B. McMILLAN, Deputy Minister of Public Works & Highways L-5719-3-2-31

NOTICE!

We wish to advise our customers, that in the month of March, a change will be made in our billing routine.

At the present time customers' meters are read during the second and third week of each month. All bills are rendered and due the first day of the following month. This practice results in a large volume of work to be accomplished during the latter part of the month.

The new method, which will spread our work more evenly over the month, will involve continuous meter reading and billing throughout the month, thereby relieving periods of congestion.

The territory will be divided into six districts, each district being billed at a different time of the month. Each customer will be billed only once a month, but instead of bills being rendered the first of each month they will be issued as follows:

- District No. 1—Bills will be rendered & due 5th of month
- District No. 2—Bills will be rendered & due 10th of month
- District No. 3—Bills will be rendered & due 15th of month
- District No. 4—Bills will be rendered & due 20th of month
- District No. 5—Bills will be rendered & due 25th of month
- District No. 6—Bills will be rendered and due last day of month.

Fifteen days will be allowed after billing date before accounts are overdue.

In some cases the first bills under the new arrangement may cover a period greater or less than one month, depending on how the new meter reading date compares with the previous one.

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