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# Collier's

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# The Thunder God

*A romantic story of love,  
hatred and adventure*

By  
**PETER B.  
KYNE**

*He held her hands, gazing  
down at her with a pleased lit-  
tle-boy expression. "It's a de-  
light to meet you again, Gloria"*

**M**R. BENJAMIN WHITTON signed the last of a stack of letters and pressed the call button to summon his secretary. He was looking at the clock when she entered.

"Eleven o'clock, Gloria," he confided. "Better get those letters in the mail and then vamose. It's Saturday, and in all probability I shall not need you again until Monday morning. Heraus mit you."

"I'm in no hurry, Ben," Gloria Justin replied. "Something might bob up before we close at one."

"If it does, it can bob down again, Gloria. You've worked extra hard all this week, so take a leaf out of my book and as the bird of time flies over you snatch a tail feather or two. How would you like to take a gallop in the park this afternoon?"

The girl's face lighted pleasurably. "I'd love it. With you, of course," she added.

"No, alone. I have a horse out at the academy, and he requires exercise."

"So do you, Ben."

"You're presuming to argue with your easy-going employer and ancient friend. I have other plans for this afternoon—and if you were the really kind-hearted girl you've always posed as being you'd exercise my horse for me."

"Oh, I will—gladly."

"Thanks. I'll phone the riding academy to have him ready for you at, say, two o'clock. I'm hung up here. Julian Grannis is calling."

"Indeed! I didn't know Julian was in town."

"Neither do I! I merely have a pre-

monition he's going to call.

"I'm acting on it."

"How remarkable!"

"Nothing at all remark-

able about telepathy. It's always been that way with Julian and me. Julian's mighty brain sends out an S O S for his old pal, and Old Pal never fails him as a receiving station. Julian's in trouble."

"How do you know, Ben?"

"Because I never receive his telepathic S O S unless he is. It may not be serious trouble, but it is of sufficient importance to him to cause him to wish to talk it over with me."

"I hope it hasn't to do with Mercedes, Ben?"

"I HOPE it has. Sooner or later Julie's going to have trouble with that wife of his, and the sooner the better, says old Ben Whitton, flicking the ashes from his cigar."

"Poor Julian!"

Mr. Whitton lighted a cigar preparatory to flicking the ashes from it, then leaned back in his swivel chair and fixed his glance on the chandelier. "Funny about Julian and me," he resumed. "The first time I had a telepathic message from him I was down in Sonora putting in an irrigation system for some American interests there. Julian was

in Peru on a job for a big copper mine up in the Andes. All day long I had been bothered by a feeling that he wanted to get in touch with me and talk things over. So finally I cabled him: 'Well, get it off your chest. What do you want me to do?'"

Ben Whitton smiled reminiscently. "That was shortly after we had got into the World War. Back came Julie's answer: 'Want you wait for me stop then we'll enlist together in the same regiment stop starting home tomorrow.'

"Well, I waited for the boy. By the time he reached San Francisco I was all cleaned up in Sonora, so we each secured a captaincy in an engineer regiment and went across.

Julian's digestion had gone wrong in Peru, and I discovered he was subject to attacks of acute indigestion. The

jackdaw never would take care of himself, so I tucked away in my kit a can of bicarbonate of soda—acute indigestion can kill a man, you know, while one is thinking of sending for the doctor. Well, we were billeted in the same châ-

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Illustrated by  
HAROLD  
BRETT

"Well," Ben commanded,  
"sing the song or tell the  
story. What trouble are you  
in now?"



teau. One night I awakened from a very sound sleep with the thought that Julian had just called me in terror and distress. I listened, but heard no outcry and decided I had been dreaming. However, I couldn't go to sleep without making certain, so I popped into Julian's room, and there lay the idiot, all tied up in knots.

"Julian," I demanded, "did you call me?"

"No," he replied. "I wanted to, but it seemed indecent to disturb your slumbers. It's that confounded indigestion again."

"So I mixed him a bicarbonate of soda highball and relieved him."

"In the Meuse-Argonne show he got knocked over and fell into a ditch among some bushes. He couldn't get out, and nobody came for him. But all night long he kept sending out his S O S for me, and I couldn't come. He was in that ditch three days, and all the time I knew he was alive, although listed as missing, which, in the case of a company commander, means, usually, that the missing one is dead. When we were relieved I went looking for him. Went straight to him like a setter after a dead bird, and got cussed for my pains. And now he's in trouble again. I feel it. But since he hasn't communicated with me, I know he's coming to see me, so I'll wait here."

"But he knows you will not be in your office after one o'clock on Saturday, Ben."

"He knows, my dear, that I'll be here when he wants me. It will never occur to him to remember this is Saturday. In all probability he thinks today is Sunday. Most forgetful man I have ever known." Ben Whitton sighed. "And I did want to go riding this afternoon."

A shadow darkened the ground-glass panel of Whitton's private office. Somebody knocked. "That's the old horse thief," Whitton declared positively.

"I'll bet you a dollar it isn't," Gloria Justin challenged.

"You cannot afford to bet a dollar so recklessly, my dear, and I am not sufficiently grasping to permit you to lose it. Of course that's Julian Grannis. Anybody else would go to the door of the

general office. But Julian's a direct creature. He's got me on his mind to the exclusion of everything else; he always cuts across lots to his objectives. Open the door, if you please, Gloria."

The girl drew the door open and stepped back with it, thus shielding herself from the visitor's gaze. "Hello, Butch," she heard him say.

"Come in, Julian," Ben Whitton called. "I've been expecting you."

"Still the same old warlock. I'm glad you waited. Thanks."

THEY shook hands, and then Julian Grannis looked across at the door which Whitton's secretary was closing. "Why, hello, Gloria," he saluted her, his voice resonant with genuine pleasure. "What are you doing here, opening doors for Ben Whitton?" He leaped up and ran across the room to her with eager hands outstretched.

"It's so good to see you again, Julian. I'm Ben's secretary."

"Oh!" And that was all of his comment. He held her hands an appreciable moment, gazing down at her with a pleased little-boy expression. "It's a delight to meet you again, Gloria."

"Proves there's some balm in Gilead, after all," Ben Whitton interjected.

Julian Grannis released her hands with seeming reluctance, and stood lost

in admiration. "We don't meet often enough, Gloria," he asserted. "This wicked world is always coming between one and one's old friends. Sit down, Gloria, and let's have a little visit."

"Some other time, Julian. I'm a business woman now and may not sit down and visit with the boss' friends when they call—at least not in the boss' office. Besides, I'm through for the day and am off on pleasure bound."

"But I shall see you on Monday, of course?"

"In the next office." She nodded to both men and left.

Julian Grannis gazed at the door a few seconds after it had closed behind her, then turned his head toward Whitton and, with an inquiring look, jerked it back again in the direction of the door.

"Old Justin blew up," Whitton replied. "Sunk three dry oil wells and couldn't pay for sinking the third. Now he's where the ivy doth entwine. Cirrhosis of the liver—worry. Gloria had to do something, so she went to a secretarial school and then came and asked me to help her find a job. Ordinarily it's awkward to have an old friend for a secretary, but trust Gloria to understand. She's a whiz-bang."

"You're a good old hunk, Ben. Always were, for that matter."

Ben Whitton shoved his humidors across the desk.

"Well," he commanded, "sing the song or tell the story. What trouble are you in now?"

Julian Grannis looked at his friend. He beheld a large man in the early thirties: a man with large freckled hands with hair on the back of them; a man with a heavy stern face; a man with a fighter's jaw and humorous eyes that nevertheless, for all their humorous glint, bored into one determinedly. He sat straight up in his chair, alert, seemingly ready for a spring at anything that might invite being sprung at. His

hair was thick and ruddy brown—more red than brown.

Grannis hesitated an appreciable period, and Ben Whitton leaned a little forward. "Money? How much? I have some."

Grannis shook his head.

"Domestic?" Whitton leaned forward and placed his elbows on his desk.

"Partially."

"Tell Father!" The humorous gleam in the dark brown eyes increased. "How's Mercedes?"

"Oh, no change." Julian spoke in the mild tone of one who expects no change and is slightly amazed to think that anyone might. "I'm liable to have the battle of the century with Mercedes," he added regretfully.

"Well, I think that will be interesting—provided you'll fight. You dislike battle so."

"Yes, that's true. Fighting's foolish. Ben, I'm going to change my base."

Ben Whitton looked mildly interested. "Divorce?"

"Good Lord, no. I've quit my job, old-timer!"

"That's serious, unless you have another and a better one. Have you?"

"All through working for the other fellow, Ben. I've learned all I wanted to learn as general superintendent for the Western Sierras Power Company. I've quit. I'm a capitalist."

"Well, I'm listening, Julian."

"A year ago my Uncle Jarlath popped off. You didn't know I had an Uncle Jarlath, did you? Well, neither did I until his executor got on my trail. Uncle Jarlath was a country banker in Missouri. He doted on eight per cent and deeds of trust. Well, he left me all he had to leave, the estate was settled last week and after selling out everything the executor mailed me a certificate of deposit for \$652,408.02 United States gold of the present standard of weight and fineness. Need any money, Ben? See your Uncle Julie if you do?"

"THANKS, I do not. You're going to give me that money to take care of for you? You'd better. If you don't, some low white man will take it all away from you, Julie."

"Aren't you glad I'm rich?" Grannis complained.

"Why should I be glad? You could never be anything but rich, old son, because you were born without a sense of material values. A \$50 suit of ready-



made clothing pleases you quite as well as a \$150 suit made to order by the best tailor in town! You regard clothing merely as something with which to cover your nakedness. With \$10 in your pocket you're as rich as you're ever going to be with Uncle Jarlath's hard-won dinero; so I fail to see why I should enthuse over your windfall. Of course, it will mean a great deal to Mercedes."

JULIAN squirmed slightly. "That's where the shoe pinches. It isn't going to mean anything to her."

"Of course it will. I know Mercedes better than you do."

His visitor shook a tousled head. "No, Ben. It isn't going to mean anything to her because I haven't told her anything about it, and I'm not going to."

Ben Whitton sat up very straight. "Well, what a savage brute old dog Tray has turned out to be! If you'll take my advice, you'll tell her. She'll never forgive you such deception. Few wives would," he added parenthetically. "Avoid trouble and tell her, Julie."

Grannis clasped a thin knee in his long, thin, good-looking hands. "I'll be in trouble if I don't tell her, and I'll be in trouble if I do. She'll have plans," he added darkly. "Oh, all sorts of plans."

"I daresay. Although a single man myself, I've always heard that women enjoy planning things."

"Well, I have plans of my own, Ben."

"Shoot, Luke, or give up the gun," Whitton urged cryptically.

"I've always wanted a laboratory where I could work out some theories regarding the long-distance high-tension transmission of hydroelectric energy."

"The General Electric Company or the Westinghouse people might be induced to provide you with one, if you can convince them that you have a sound theory to work out. They are aware of your standing in your profession."

"No, they're endowing colleges for that purpose. Besides, I want a free hand. So I'm going to put in a plant of my own and fuss with it in my own way."

"You will, in all probability, spend your six hundred-odd before you solve your problem," the astute Whitton warned him. "Then you'll have to put your trunk on your back again and go looking for another job."

"Well, I can do that if I have to. See here, Ben, I'm set on this plan, and I can't have Mercedes vetoing it. What she doesn't know will not trouble her. Besides, I'm not going to invest all my money in experiments. It wouldn't be fair to force Mercedes to pinch and scrape all her days. No, it wouldn't be fair."

"What salary have you been earning, Julie, since you went to work for the Western Sierra people?"

"Five hundred a month, a nice house to live in, free telephone, fuel, automobile and automobile expense."

"How much money have you saved the past two years?"

"None."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Mercedes couldn't stand the mountain life. And I do not blame her. We lived in Madrone, which

is a good-sized sawmill town about a mile from the power house, but the people there were dull and uninteresting—"

"Not to you, Julie."

"Of course not. Almost any kind of human being interests me. But to a woman raised as Mercedes has been raised—"

"Yes, I understand, Julie. So Mercedes has been living in San Francisco?"

"No, Los Angeles. I managed to get down to see her over the week-ends about once a month. And of course one cannot maintain two establishments and expect to save any money. I didn't

you when she knows you are going to live in San Francisco."

"She has already done so. She's at the hotel now."

"That's comforting to you, I daresay. And you have told her you are going to do—what?"

Julian Grannis smiled with a sort of little-boy wickedness. "I've told her I'm going into business with you, Ben. Whitton & Grannis, Civil and Electrical Engineers."

Ben Whitton smiled a little wistfully. "That is an association I have always wanted, Julie, but I fear it will not work out successfully."

"Oh, this is only going to be a theoretical partnership, Ben. It will not have to work out in practice. Just a blind to keep Mercedes off my trail, you understand, until I've worked out my problem of the high-tension transmission of hydroelectric energy over unlimited distance with practically no loss of energy in transit."

"If she should telephone, you can tell her I'll be back in five minutes and you'll have me call her up. Then you

can telephone me at my digs and instruct me to telephone her. If you help me, Ben, she'll never know what I've been up to, and if I win I'll be a multi-millionaire and she'll forgive me when she finds me out; if, on the other hand, I lose, she'll never know how close she came to doing a lot of planning. Am I your partner, Ben?"

"You know you are, Julie. I'll be your phonograph and your camouflage. At that, many opportunities will come through this office to bring you fat fees as a consulting engineer."

"Don't want 'em," Julie answered plaintively. "Not," he added, "until my money's all gone. Time enough to wear a collar again then." He drew a rectangular piece of paper from his pocket and handed it to his friend. "That's my fortune, Ben. Put it in your safe. Every time Mercedes sends my clothes out to the cleaners she goes through my pockets, of course—and I can never tell when she'll take a notion that my clothes require pressing and cleaning. She has to have everything just so."

"Well, she'll never succeed in having you just so," Ben Whitton rejoined with faint bitterness. "So that's all of your trouble, Julie?"

Julie nodded, hugely pleased with himself.

"Of course," Whitton, the practical, assured him, "you can make that legacy

pay you five per cent net with safety—thirty thousand a year at least. That's a lot of money for you, boy friend. Almost too much. Before embarking upon this laboratory scheme I'd think long and hard if I were you. You have here the means with which to live in ease and comfort the remainder of your days."

"I couldn't stand idleness, Ben."

"Well, work if you must, but don't work too hard. Will you and Mercedes dine with me to-night, Julie?"

"Sorry, old man, but I suggested the

same thing to Mercedes this morning. She was so sorry, but she had already accepted an invitation for us to dine with some friends of hers from Los Angeles."

"Well, then, some night next week. Julie, I hate to chase you out, but I think I have time to ride a few hours in the park this afternoon. You'll lunch with me, of course?"

"Of course. Come to think of it, I'm hungry too. I was so busy this morning I forgot to eat breakfast."

BEN WHITTON chuckled softly. How like Julie it was (he reflected) to forget to eat breakfast and only remember it when luncheon was suggested! He locked the draft in his safe, and, as he spun the combination, queried:

"Who's your banker?"

"Haven't got any, old son. Never have had. Mercedes does the banking for the Grannis family."

"That is, she has heretofore."

"Exactly."

"Hum-m-m! Julie, I doubt if you'll want to be bothered keeping your own accounts at that laboratory. You'll have to write letters, too, from time to time. You'll keep your accounts in this office, and Gloria Justin will be your secretary. For this you will pay her a moderate salary, which she can use nicely. Understood?"

"Delighted." (Continued on page 50)



A passer-by heard him murmur, "Remarkable. I must visit Upsala"

blame Mercedes, and I'm not blaming her now, you understand. To a woman of culture and refinement—"

"I understand perfectly. Where are you going to install your laboratory?"

"Somewhere on the outskirts of this city. I'll find an old deserted factory or brewery—cheap rent, you know."

"Mercedes will, of course, rejoin



# A Woman looks



*Kathleen Norris, beloved novelist, is a voter first, a Democrat second*

Keystone

**W**E APPEAR to have reached, as a people, one of those crises in our history when our need—our urgent, solitary need—is for a MAN.

We do not need more money, more power; we do not need more legislation and more constitutional amendments; we are menaced by no foes without, threatened by no factions within. We feel no necessity for radical changes of policy, nor the installation of elaborate new machinery. We do not, like Germany, need friends; nor, like France, need babies.

No! But we do need someone at the head of our affairs who is wise enough to appreciate the advantages and possibilities we have and strong enough to use them. We need a man at Washington who loves America and believes in her; who loves decency and goodness and the law, and believes in them too.

Happy the nation that, in such a moment, can find him. Or rather, happy the nation that does not have to try to find him now, at this last moment, when the air is thick with the smoke of political strife and filled with the clangor of party issues! Happy the nation before whom he stands, appraised, tested, adequate, the people's proven servant for the people's hour of need!

For there is no superficial election-year excitement to color the opinion in which Herbert Hoover is held by the American people. He stands on firmer ground than that. No frenzy of campaign oratory is going to affect in the least our opinion of him, because we know him already. We have known him for years. We know his history, and we know what he thinks about some of the more vital questions that are before us just now. And, finally and fundamentally, we know that what he sets out to do he will do.

## Who Wants a Mere Promise?

**A**BOUT how many of this year's possible candidates do we know as much as that, or one tenth as much? And how blind, how fatuous, how simple we would be to put mere Promise into office, when we could as easily put Proof!

Hoover is the only executive, as far as I know, who ever took the women



Mrs. Herbert Hoover

a big, silent, efficient American man planted in Belgium, fighting disease and starvation with American food, and fighting hate of the enemy with America's characteristic love for the suffering.

Why, what nation in the world ever gave a thought to the noncombatants before? What nation ever dared mix charity and goodness and common sense into a war? No note half so important to world welfare was ever struck by guns or sounded on bugles. The whole grim, bloody waste of life left no such impression on the history of the uni-

verse as did that quiet, tireless administration of what we all need first, no matter who wins or loses the wars—bread, and shelter, and a coat, and a friend.

If ever the wars of the world are to be ended, they will be ended by confidence, not distrust; by generosity, not meanness. In one simple act of kindness between individuals there lies a devastating power that reduces disputes, fear, quarrels to the empty things they are. Every philosopher who ever lived has expressed it in a thousand ways—that hate is a dead thing, subsisting upon material support, and that love lives.

If this is true between individuals, how can it be not true between countries and continents? And, granting that it is internationally, universally true, to what man in public office today—or likely to be in public office in the near future—can we point as having proved by his own life and influence and policy the soundness of that

theory as Herbert Hoover has proved it? He is a man who feels the suffering of the world with a personal pain, and whose life, almost since he grew to full manhood, has been quite simply spent in efforts to lessen that suffering.

## A Marriage for Love

**T**HE enemies of Herbert Hoover—and naturally he has them—have sometimes used that very fact to hurt him, or try to hurt him. Being absorbed in the work of the moment, whatever it is, he hears political and diplomatic buzzing only as a disturbing noise, utterly unimportant, outside the realm of his interest. And the probability is that he notes the flamboyant headlines a few days later—those sternly disapproving headlines as to Hoover's refusing to answer, Hoover's disinclination to commit himself—quite as little.

To talk to him socially is to approach a stone wall, a vague, gentle, absent-minded stone wall. He is always tired, at dinner or tea time. He listens, he looks at one thoughtfully; and meanwhile his mind is ranging far away. He is estimating the capacity of a cattle ship, the justice of a miner's working day and wage, or the question of primary-school lunches as related to small primary-school tummies.

His record stands back of that state-

ment. In the first place, he really was a poor boy, and he really did make his own money, as an engineer—he made a lot of it. He married the girl he loved, and he still loves her, and their sons; lately a granddaughter and a grandson have been added to the circle, and I gather they are also popular.

Some years ago, when in his early forties, he had acquired plenty of money for his and his family's really very simple needs. So he retired. And then he began his public service, not to make money, to cut melons, to buy privileges, but to spend it for America.

## He Never Failed Them

**T**HIS isn't news. Everyone knows this about Herbert Hoover. He went in 1914 to Belgium, and, because America's women were right behind him, and believed in him, he not only made hundreds of important friends for his country but he saved thousands of lives. The bewildered, starving women and babies over there were his charge. Day after day they turned to him for food and shelter and friendship, and he never failed them—nor us.

It's a truism that Europe does not appreciate, and cannot appreciate, America's attitude toward unnecessary suffering. A certain government official over there once told me that it was only when American tourists began to swarm all over the place that Europe awakened to the fact that countries don't have to have diseased, starving beggars perishing in their streets and parks.

The traveler of twenty or thirty years ago used to be besieged by the whining scores of the destitute; it was the horrible experience of a relative of mine to see two patient, mute, huddled babies, on a doorstep in one rich, proud city, quietly dying, like two small birds, of hunger and cold. It was America, "maternalistic, money-mad, dollar-hugging America," who taught them that there are ways of saving our little brothers and sisters such agony. And one of our conspicuous envoys was Herbert Hoover.

He managed the Food Relief in Belgium until America took charge of home supplies. And it was then that he walked into your kitchen and mine.

We know he did this. We know that sugar and meat were saved for the men who needed them—gladly and generously saved, economically and intelligently saved—and that we all made a game of meatless and sugarless and fatless days, because we were confident that we were really helping; that the



man who was at our head was not deceiving us.

In those days Hoover used to work sometimes for twelve hours at a stretch