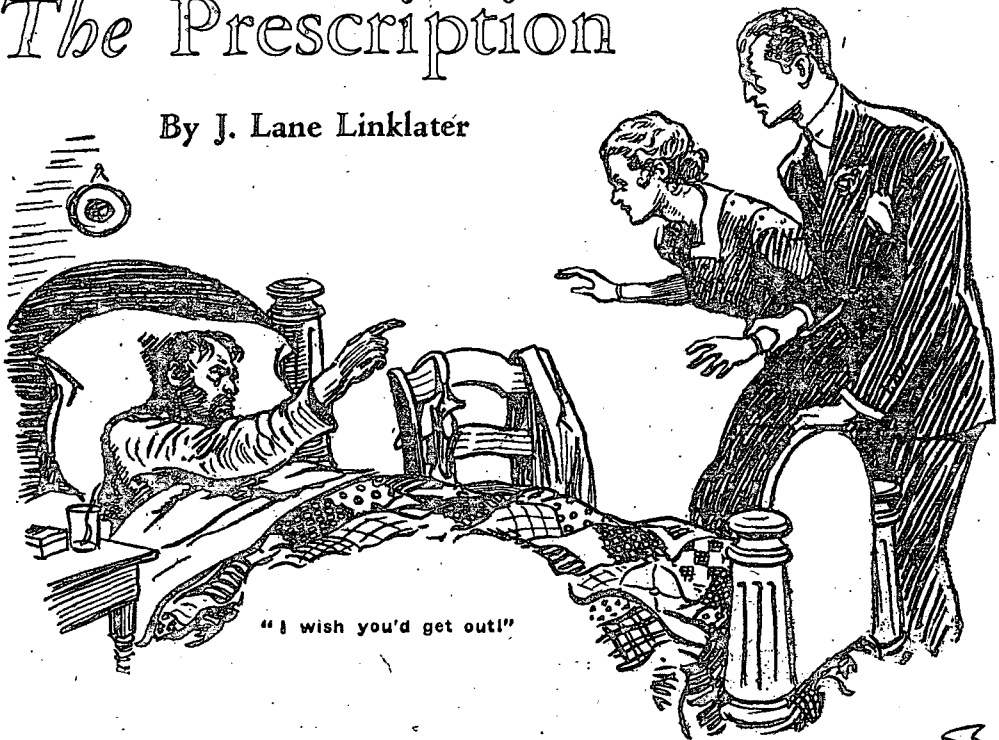


The Prescription

By J. Lane Linklater



Paul C. Pitt, That Debonair Outlaw, Risks the Noose in an Attempt to Save a Pretty Girl from Being a Bargain on the Auction Block



THE limousine, still gleaming in stately splendor in spite of the dust of several hours' driving, swept into the little town of Brixton. Paul C. Pitt, the handsome gentleman in the tonneau, spoke to the massive, meaty-faced chauffeur.

"We'll stop here, Dan. It's almost time for dinner. And it's a beautiful spot. The surrounding hills are covered with trees. And there are trees even down the main street. I like trees, Dan—"

"Yeah," grumbled Dan. "And it's a swell place for the law to catch up with us, boss. That monkey you outfoxed back in Slausen a coupla days

ago will maybe get in touch with the local cops—"

"We did nothing really wrong, Dan," Pitt chided him smoothly. "It's fear, not conscience, that's worrying you." He sighed lightly. "In any case, life was made for beauty. We can't permit these ugly details to interfere with our worship of beauty. Just stop here in the middle of the block."

Dan brought the limousine to a stop against the rough curbing. Pitt sank back against the cushions, his keen but kindly gray eyes casually surveying the town.

"Beauty, hell!" muttered Dan. "It's dough you need. You make two or

three grand just like that—then get rid of it just like that. Anyhow, there's nothing doing in a village like this. It's as dead as—"

"Dead? Not at all, Dan. Quiet, but not dead. And very beautiful. Where there's quiet, there's trouble. And where there's beauty, there's tragedy. No, Dan. We'll have dinner here in Brixton. But first we'll just sit here for a little while."

Dan's lips moved in profanely silent protest. He squirmed behind the wheel. But he knew that argument was useless. Dan liked to be lost to observation in the big cities: the smaller places, where Pitt and he were much more conspicuous, scared him. But Pitt invariably preferred the smaller towns.

Dan knew, too, that Pitt's ability to find interesting—and profitable—complications in unexpected places was no idle boast. With no more stock in trade than the limousine and the expensive baggage in it, they roamed the country aimlessly, stopping here and there with Pitt's own amazing intuition as their only apparent guide. Among the few who knew him, but rarely saw him, Pitt had a settled reputation for being able to discover slices of commanding human drama beneath the commonplace crust of ordinary human conduct.

Presently Dan turned complainingly. "There's an eating dump down on the corner, boss. I'm hungry as hell. And there ain't a thing doing around here—"

"Did you notice where we're parked, Dan?" Pitt cut in.

"Hell, no!" said Dan. "There ain't nothing—?"

"But there is, Dan. Just across the street is a doctor's office. You can see a lot by just watching a doctor's office."

He was silent then. A few pedestrians passed them occasionally, townsfolk, and stared curiously at the limousine and its unusual occupants. Pitt seemed not to notice them; he had eyes only for the door of the doctor's office. The office was a ground-floor room, like a small store. Inside the grimy window, a blind was drawn low. The worn letters on the window said:

RICHARD HOLLY, M. D.

Presently a man came along, hurried into the doctor's office. He was strong-looking, perhaps a farmer. His face was distorted, as if in pain. In a few minutes he came out again, hurried away.

"There goes a guy," offered Dan, "what looks as if he's in trouble."

Pitt chuckled. "You can't judge," he said, "by the expression on a man's face. If it had been a woman, I might have agreed, since women are more stalwart than men, Dan. That chap probably just had an ordinary stomach ache. No, I wouldn't pick him—"

HE stopped abruptly. The doctor's door had opened again, and two people emerged; a middle-aged man and a very young woman. Apparently they had been in the office for some time. The man was short and squat, his complexion dark, his eyes small and crafty, his nose hooked, his under lip protruding greedily. The girl was pale, but otherwise placid in manner; a small trim girl, lips sensitive, well-formed nose, eyes the clear blue of sincerity.

Behind them came another man, in shirtsleeves, obviously the doctor himself. They talked with him a few minutes. Dr. Holly's weak face seemed flushed, his graying hair unkempt.

Then the man and the girl got in a car at the curb and drove away. The

doctor reëntered his office, closed the door.

"Dan," exclaimed Pitt, softly, "there is something!"

"I didn't see nothing," growled Dan.

"But there was much to see," Pitt retorted, "for one who will use the seventh sense of discernment. There were three people. The man was gross, predatory, selfish, and—if I am any judge—he was swelling with triumph! The girl was a fine type, Dan, thoroughly unselfish and idealistic—and weighted down with defeat, although too courageous to display it."

"Okay," said Dan, hopelessly. "Maybe you got the sawbones sized up, too?"

"Just a tool, Dan. And Dr. Holly is even now at least half intoxicated—one could see that from here." He paused, thoughtfully. "Yes, a very interesting set-up."

"But where is there any dough in it?" objected Dan. "You got to have dough—"

"As you should know, Dan," Pitt reproved him, "my creed is that if we attempt something beneficial to others, the money question will take care of itself. That is," he added, smiling, "with the help of a little con-niving."

"You win," conceded Dan. "Can we go eat now?"

"I'll have a little drink first," said Pitt.

"But I don't see no grog shop—"

"I imagine," said Pitt, "that the doctor will take care of me." He stepped out to the sidewalk. "Keep your eyes open, Dan."

He strode across the street, his tall, immaculately-clad form moving with easy grace. It seemed to Dan, as he watched, that everyone in sight had

stopped to look at the gracious, imposing stranger with the dominating, Roman-featured face. In a moment, Pitt had vanished into the doctor's office. It was nearly half an hour before he reappeared and rejoined Dan in the limousine.

"A very interesting case, Dan," Pitt commented.

Dan groaned. He was sure now that there was no chance of getting out of Brixton until Pitt had followed through to the end.

"You got the snifter, huh?" he queried.

"One," said Pitt. "And the doctor took three. He'd already had several, so it was no trouble to get him to talk."

"He told you everything, huh?"

"No, not everything. But I found out about the man and the girl. The man's name is Eli North. He's the local money-lender. He'll lend money on anything from an opal to a potato farm. A very unpleasant person, Dan."

"Did he lend money to the dame?"

"No. To her foster-father, Dan. Or, at least, this Eli North got the girl's foster-father, whose name is Roscoe Street, in some sort of a deal. Now, Mr. Street is in what you call a serious jam."

"So what?" growled Dan.

"Eli North wants the girl, of course. She's the price he asks for releasing her foster-father, with whom she lives, having no parents of her own."

"She should tell him," said Dan decisively, "to go to hell."

Pitt shook his head. "But she's loyal to her foster-father, who, the doctor tells me, is in very bad shape—so bad, indeed, that a shock might easily kill him."

"She's in a spot," agreed Dan. "But what the hell—?"

"The money-lender is rushing things," mused Pitt. "The wedding is set for tomorrow noon."

Dan stared. "Say, did the saw-bones tell you all this?"

Pitt chuckled. "Not in so many words, Dan. But he told me more than he realized, the facts from which I could easily deduce the truth. Incidentally, I left the doctor sound asleep."

"Drunk, huh?"

"Not only that, Dan. I took the liberty of adding something to his last drink! something from his own supplies. You see, I wanted a few minutes to look about undisturbed."

"But you didn't find no dough," charged Dan, a bit belligerently.

"Of course not. But there were some things that looked more like an actor's equipment than a doctor's."

"Well," complained Dan, "I don't see no chance to pick up any dough from that mess."

"But we might be able," Pitt contended, "to do the girl some good. By the way, there's something resembling a hotel a little farther down the street. We can arrange for rooms there, and no doubt get some dinner."

II

IT was a small and shabby hotel, and the dinner wasn't very good, but Paul-C. Pitt accepted the limited service graciously and paid for it generously. After dinner, Pitt and Dan settled in two adjoining rooms.

"Jeez, boss," Dan groaned, "I wish we could get away from here. It gives me the willies—"

"Some time tomorrow, Dan," Pitt said. "This evening, I must see Miss Street and her foster-father. Please remember, in case anyone should ask

you, that I'm a doctor of medicine—Dr. Pitt, of New York."

"It-ain't the first time," Dan retorted, "you been a doctor. Over in Wassonville last week you was a magician. And a few days before that you was a explorer from China. I don't see how you get away with—"

"But tonight," Pitt said, smiling, "I'm plain Doctor Pitt. Not too plain, either. Indeed, I think that Dr. Holly believes me to be a physician of great distinction from New York—alcohol is a great aid to the imagination, Dan. However, I'll walk over to Mr. Street's house now. I understood that it's not far."

Dan sat down to an uneasy game of solitaire as Pitt left. It took Pitt's long legs not over ten minutes to stroll across to the edge of town where the Street house was located. The house was larger than most of its neighbors, but obviously run down. He knocked on the door.

The door opened. The pale-faced girl was looking up at him.

Pitt smiled at her. "You are Miss Street?"

"Yes, sir." Her voice was subdued. "What can I do for you?"

"I'm Dr. Pitt, of New York. I've been talking to your Dr. Holly about your foster-father. I'm stopping overnight in your town, and your father's case interested me. I thought perhaps I'd be able to do him some good."

The girl smiled, not very hopefully. "Thank you. Will you step in?"

In a moment, Pitt was in a small living room with her. "Perhaps we'd better go right upstairs," she suggested.

"In a few moments," Pitt agreed. "First, I'd like to know a little more about your father's case. Has he been ill long?"

"About a month, sir. Then he was

taken down with a heart attack. He's been in bed since, and he looks very bad."

Pitt wagged his head. "Pardon the digression," he observed, brightening, "but Dr. Holly tells me that you're to be married tomorrow."

The girl seemed to tense, but she remained passive.

"Tomorrow noon," she said.

"To a Mr. North, I understand," Pitt went on smoothly. "I happened to see him on the street this afternoon." Pitt gazed at her steadily. "I should think that a pretty girl like you would have had other suitors."

Bessie Street smiled wanly. "I—I had rather expected to marry a boy I went to school with. His name is Douglas Chappin. But—well, I guess that's all over."

"What happened to him?" queried Pitt.

"He went away some time ago. You see, he had no money. And he decided to go to medical college. He's just finishing his training now, at the hospital over at Canding, and he—oh, I'm sorry, but what's the use of talking about that?"

She seemed on the verge of tears.

"And now you're marrying someone else!" Pitt's voice was gently reproving. "When is he expected back here?"

"Sometime tomorrow. But I—I—"

The girl's voice broke suddenly. Pitt took her by the arm. "We'll see your father now," he said.

She led him up the stairs to the upper floor. Just outside a door she stopped. "We keep things as quiet as possible," she whispered. "And the room is quite dark. You see, light bothers father a lot."

She pushed open the door. Pitt followed her in. The room was almost

dark. One small light in a far corner threw rays across the room, played weirdly on the haggard face of the man in bed.

The man stirred, stared at Pitt out of sunken eyes.

"Father," said the girl in a low voice, "this is Dr. Pitt of New York. He's been talking to Dr. Holly about you, and thought he might be able to help—"

"He can't help me," snapped the man querulously. "I know what's the matter with me. Holly is good enough for me." He stared at Pitt again. "Did Holly send you to me?"

"Not quite," admitted Pitt pleasantly. "Coming to see you was really my own idea. I hope you don't mind."

"But I do mind. And I wish you'd get out!"

Pitt ignored the order. "Your hands," he chided the man with sudden curtness, "are dirty! They should be kept clean—"

"Get out!" Street spat the words at him.

"Now, Father," protested the girl, "that's really not the way—"

"I know what I'm doing," argued the man angrily. "Get out!"

THE girl looked at Pitt appealingly. Pitt, standing over the bed, seemed quite unperturbed. Presently he turned to the girl, took her by the arm again, and without a word walked with her to the door. Out in the hall, he closed the door.

"How often does Dr. Holly visit your father?" he said very quietly.

"He comes every morning at eight o'clock, before father has his breakfast."

Pitt nodded. "Get me," he said, "a small pan of warm water and some soap," he said.

The girl seemed uncertain for a moment. She gazed up at Pitt, and found something reassuring in Pitt's gaze. She hurried noiselessly down the stairs and returned in a few minutes with the water and soap.

"You'd better wait outside," Pitt told her.

He grasped the knob, shoved open the door without a sound, disappeared inside. The door closed behind him. The girl, waiting anxiously, heard a startled exclamation in the room in a few moments, and her father's voice raised angrily. The voice subsided quickly, and for a little while there was only a murmur.

The door opened again presently. Pitt emerged, closed the door behind him.

"How is he?" gasped the girl.

"Just now," Pitt admitted calmly, "he's feeling worse!"

The girl caught her breath. "Worse! But what did you do? What—?"

"But I wouldn't worry, if I were you," Pitt told her. "Indeed, I think he'll be much better—after you're married."

"Yes," whispered the girl. "I know that. Dr. Holly told me that, too. But—"

She stopped suddenly. In the room there were sounds of feet thudding toward the door. Then came the noise of a key rasping in the lock."

The girl looked up at Pitt, a little wildly. "He—he's locking himself in!"

"As I expected," murmured Pitt. "Don't worry about that, either. Will you show me out now?"

Bessie Street led the way downstairs again. At the front door, Pitt stopped. "Pardon my freedom, Miss Street," he said, "but isn't it true that

the man you're planning to marry tomorrow—this Eli North—has some powerful financial advantage over your father?"

"Why, I—well, I don't know if I should—"

"I should know," Pitt said firmly, "if I'm to be of any help."

"Well, yes," admitted the girl. "Father owes Eli fifteen thousand dollars. He has father's note—"

"Fifteen thousand!" Pitt repeated. "And of course he'll destroy the note when you marry him?"

"I think that's the understanding." Even in the dim light, the flush on her cheek was perceptible. "It's silly! I'm not worth any such sum! I—"

"You," returned Pitt, warmly, "are worth ten thousand times that! For that matter, I'm inclined to think that Eli North will pay a little more than that."

He pushed open the door. The girl, apparently, noticed for the first time that he was holding a sheet of note paper in his hand. Her position, at his elbow, enabled her to glimpse it.

"Pardon me," she said diffidently, "but that paper—I couldn't help noticing it."

Pitt shrugged. "It's in the nature of a prescription," he said.

"But it's in father's handwriting!"

"To be sure," said Pitt. "He just gave it to me."

Bessie Street looked amazed. "You mean he's writing a prescription for himself?"

Pitt's eyes were half closed. "The prescription," he said, "is for the doctor! Well, don't worry too much, my dear. Tomorrow may be better than today. Goodnight."

The girl watched him wistfully from the doorway as she strode down the garden walk to the street. He reached

the hotel in a few minutes, found Dan nervously shuffling cards. . . .

PITT sank into a chair. "I found the girl to be even more delightful than I had thought, Dan," he said softly. "She's a girl of the kind that you and I can never be worthy of. She's beautiful, true—"

"Yeah?" scowled Dan, unimpressed. "But how about dough?" "She has no money, Dan. Nobody connected with the case has any money—except Eli North." He glanced at his watch. "I think I'll run over and see Dr. Holly. He should be out of his stupor by this time."

"What the hell," growled Dan, "can you get out of him?"

"I have a prescription," Pitt said calmly, "for him! And perhaps he, in turn, will give me a prescription for Mr. North!"

"But this guy North don't even know you."

Pitt chuckled. "And *he* doesn't know about the prescription yet."

"I don't get you," Dan complained. "Why—?"

But Pitt wasn't listening. He was counting currency out on the rickety table.

"Five hundred and seventeen dollars," he announced presently.

"You—you ain't gonna give it away?" Dan asked fearfully.

"Not at all. But I'm going to invest five hundred of it," stated Pitt.

"But that won't do you no good," objected Dan. "You'll be leaving this burg tomorrow some time—if the law ain't got you first. So what—?"

"Perhaps," said Pitt, "we can give the investment away. Incidentally, while I'm out I'm going to send a telegram to a young chap named Douglas Chappin."

"Never heard of him—"

"Doug was the girl's sweetheart, and he's due back here tomorrow. He doesn't know she's going to be married tomorrow, and I don't think it would be fair to make the poor fellow go through the agony of watching Bessie marry this fellow North. So I'm going to wire him."

"Okay," grumbled Dan. "But that still ain't getting you any dough. And by the time you pay the hotel bill you won't have a dime left."

"That," agreed Pitt, "would be sad."

"Sad?" said Dan. "It'd be plain hell! Why, we'd be stuck—"

But Pitt was strolling out of the door. He was gone nearly two hours, and when he returned Dan was pacing the floor anxiously.

"I made the investment all right, Dan," Pitt said, almost gaily.

"Sure. But—"

"And I sent the telegram," Pitt went on.

"Yeah," said Dan. "Even that costs dough. But what—"

"I also called on Mr. Eli North," added Pitt.

Dan gaped at him. "You did what?"

"I called on Mr. North. He's looking forward to his marriage tomorrow with great eagerness. A very offensive person, Dan, and very foxy. However, he thanked me for calling."

"Thanked you?"

"Of course. You see, the situation isn't entirely on the level. I made it clear to him that I knew something about it. Then I pointed out that the way to keep himself out of trouble was to be open and above-board."

"Yeah? Well, I still don't get it."

"It's quite simple, Dan. I merely told Mr. North that in a case like this

the way to transfer money or property to another person is in the presence of witnesses, and in such a way as to make it plain that any such payment was in exchange for legitimate services. He understood at once that I was making things quite safe for him."

A little hope crept into Dan's grin. "But he didn't give you some dough for the advice, huh?"

"Money?" Pitt said in a shocked tone. "I wouldn't think of accepting money from Eli North. I'd feel contaminated, Dan. Besides, it might not be quite legal."

"Wouldn't that be too bad!" grumbled Dan. "Anyhow, if you don't get it from him, how the hell are we gonna get outa here. He's the only one that's got any—"

"It's time to go to bed," Pitt evaded. "We must look our best for the wedding tomorrow."

III

AT eleven o'clock in the morning, the limousine was drawn up in front of Mr. Street's house. Dan was at the wheel, staring glumly at the house. Paul C. Pitt was inside, in the living room with Dr. Holly and Bessie Street.

The girl was dressed neatly, all ready for the wedding. Her face was drawn and pale, but her manner composed.

The doctor was as pallid as the girl, but not as calm, his face showing the discomfort of the alcoholic addict when deprived of his stimulant.

Pitt turned to the girl. "How is your father this morning?"

"I—I really don't know," she stammered. "He wouldn't let me in to see him. Dr. Holly saw him, though."

Pitt looked enquiringly at the doctor.

"I guess he'll be all right," mumbled Dr. Holly.

They waited, then, in silence. Presently they could hear a car coming to a stop. The door bell rang. With a sigh, the girl got up and went to the hall. She came back a minute later with a short, squat man, his dark little eyes afire with eagerness. His face wore an unaccustomed polish, and a large silk handkerchief dangled prominently from the pocket of his new frock coat.

"Good morning, Mr. North," Pitt said courteously.

North rubbed his hands together. His face was broken in an expansive grin. "Well, well!" he gurgled. He eyed the girl avidly. "All ready, my dear?"

"All ready," said the girl, in a very low voice.

"Fine! Fine! Well, pretty soon we'll go around to preacher Watson's and get it over with, eh? But first, to celebrate the occasion, we'll attend to a little business."

"Business?" said Bessie Street, flushing.

"That's right." With a flourish, Eli North flipped a slip of paper from his pocket. "Here, my dear, is your father's note for fifteen thousand dollars! A lot of money, my dear! But it don't mean anything to me," he added, leering at her, "when I'm getting you! See!"

Deliberately, he held the note in front of him, ripped it in two, flung the pieces in the air with a grandiloquent gesture.

"I—I'm sure," the girl murmured, "I'm very grateful, Eli."

"One thing more," went on Eli North. "As you know, I've had Dr.

Holly take care of your father during his illness. He's done his best, and to show my appreciation I want to pay him—and pay him good!"

Again his hand went into his pocket and came out with a sheaf of currency. He riffled it with his fingers.

"Twenty-five hundred dollars!"

He handed it to Dr. Holly. The doctor, looking startled rather than surprised, too it.

"Very generous," murmured Pitt.

"Sure," said Eli North. "That's me! Well, now we can go around to the preacher's—"

"Not just yet," interposed Pitt, mildly.

NORTH glared at him. "What you mean, not yet? There's nothing to stop—"

"Oh, just a few little adjustments," Pitt said blandly. He turned to Dr. Holly, who, absent-mindedly, was still, holding the money in his hand. "I'll take the money, my good doctor!"

Without waiting for discussion, Pitt simply reached out and took the money. The doctor made no protest.

"You see, Mr. North," Pitt explained, as the money vanished into his own pocket, "Dr. Holly sold out to me last night. He sold me his equipment, his clientele—and *all bills due him*. So, of course, this money belongs to me!" Pitt smiled pleasantly. "Perhaps he didn't know that you were going to pay him in this open fashion!"

Eli North was sputtering. "But that—that was *your* idea!"

"What was my idea?" queried Pitt, serenely.

"Why, to pay it like it—it—" North glanced quickly at the girl and subsided.

Mr. North was staring out of the window. The girl seemed dazed.

"Okay," snapped North, recovering himself a little. "Okay, if that's the way is it. But now we can go on with the wedding—"

"I think," Pitt interrupted, "that Bessie should know a little more about it. I think she should know that's she's been deceived!"

North mumbled incoherently.

"I don't understand," Bessie said.

Pitt spoke very gently. "I'm sorry to have to disillusion such a loyal young lady. The truth is that your foster-father is not ill!"

"Not ill? But—"

"And he's in no danger of dying from shock. It was just one of Mr. North's little schemes to hurry you into marrying him. When I first called on Dr. Holly yesterday, I looked through his visiting bag. There I saw things that belong to the theatrical profession rather than to the medical.

"That excited my suspicions. Then when I came out to this house and found that your father insisted on his room remaining dark, I decided to make sure, which was why I asked for soap and water."

"It's unbelievable," Bessie gasped.

"I promptly told your father," Pitt went on, "that I would tell you at once that his pallor and his sunken eyes were faked—unless he gave me a letter to Dr. Holly. I took the letter to Dr. Holly and convinced him that it would be better for him to sell out to me than to have me make known his fraudulent activities to the State Medical Board. After that," concluded Pitt, smiling, "I had a little talk with Mr. North."

"But," sputtered Eli North, "you didn't say anything to me about buying out Holt here."

"That," said Pitt, "would have spoiled the prescription."

Bessie Street became suddenly alive.

"Then I don't have to get married!"

"Oh, but you do!" Pitt told her.

The girl's eyes were fixed on him, puzzled. The door of the living room was flung open suddenly. A young man was standing there. He was a pleasant-faced young man, and he didn't seem able to see anyone in the room except the girl.

"Doug!" cried the girl.

"Bess!" cried the young man.

They were in each other's arms.

"I got your telegram, darling," he said. "But I'm afraid—"

"Telegram?" said the girl. "I sent no telegram!"

"Don't joke with me. It told me to hurry home and marry you—today! I got the license, as instructed, but I—I'm afraid I can't do it, Bess!"

The girl was looking over his shoulder at Pitt. Pitt's face was unrevealing, but she smiled at him.

"Why can't you marry me now, Doug?" she said.

"Why, I have nothing! I've got to get an office and build up a practice. To do that, I'll have to make money first. I couldn't have you sacrifice—"

"That," Pitt put in, "has been taken care of, Doug, my boy. You see,

Dr. Holly here has decided to leave town." Pitt had a legal-looking document in his hand. He scratched his signature on the bottom of it with his fountain pen. "Dr. Holt's equipment and practice are hereby assigned to you!"

"But I—I don't even know you, sir!" protested the young man.

"You can just remember me as Dr. Pitt," said Pitt. "Dr. Pitt, of New York."

"Remember you?"

Pitt shrugged. "I can't stay here. I won't be seeing you again. And it's pleasant to be remembered—by some people. My man is waiting for me very impatiently right now. I'd suggest that you tell Mr. Eli North the way to go home, then go around and see preacher Watson." He shook the young man's hand. "Goodbye, and good luck!"

He strode out to the hall and had reached the front door when the girl's voice halted him. "Wait, please!"

She was running after him, caught up with him, flung her arms about his neck and kissed him.

Pitt regarded her solemnly. "I shall remember that kiss," he said, "as long as I live." And then he strode down the walk toward the limousine. . . .

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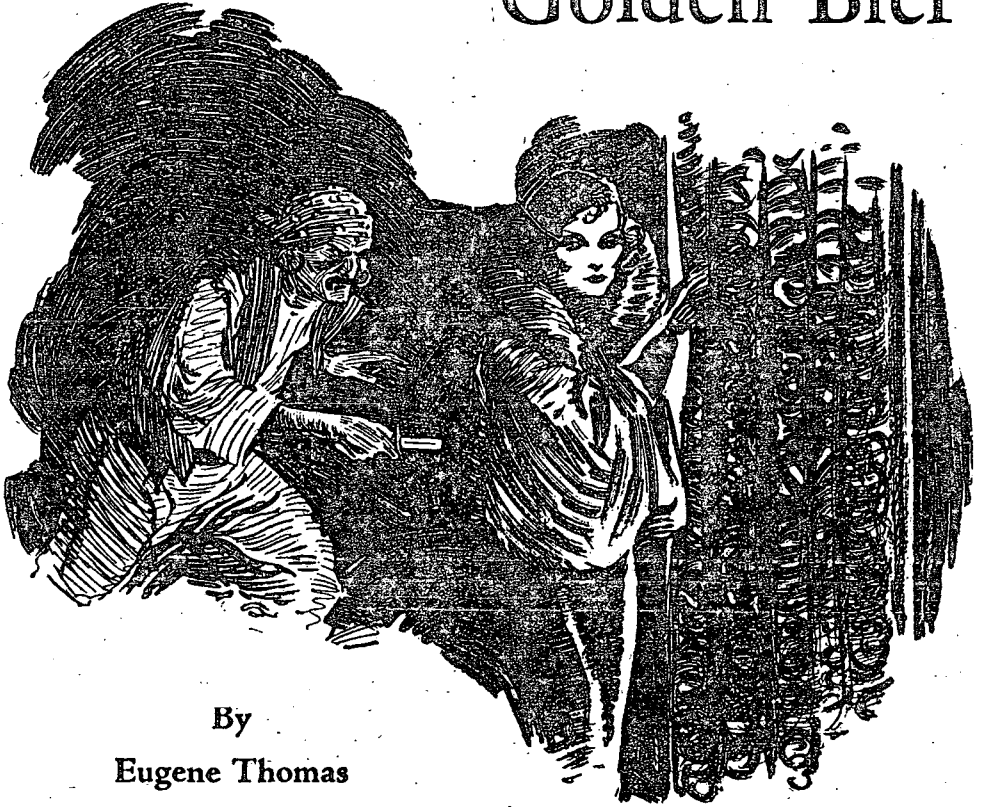
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The Cross Killer and the Golden Bier



By
Eugene Thomas

*For the Vanquished, Death
—for the Victor, a Coffin
—When Vivian Legrand
Matches Wits with the
Most Murderous Man in
the Wide Reaches of Spain*

At that instant, there was the
merest shadow of a movement
in back of Vivian Legrand



CHAPTER I Treasure Chest

GENERAL Count Morales, head of the Spanish police, had come in person to the village of Zucorra because of the near insurrection

afflicting that community. Tomás Delgado, lawless parent of the celebrated bandit, Cruz Delgado, with his partisans had stood the siege of their neighbors; but then these Zucorran belligerents had joined forces to beat off the interfering attack of soldiers and po-