

several seconds, Vincent sneering, threatening and triumphant; Pasqualli looking murderous hate and defeat.

Suddenly Pasqualli relaxed, leaned back in his chair and smiled. "Not go so fasta, Veencent. I changa my mind. I stay. I fixa it up with da kid. I foola you—peeg!"

Vincent let loose a torrent of profanity, waved a packet of papers, declared he had a witness who would swear to all he would that day put before the police, and so thoroughly cowed Pasqualli that he fell on his knees and begged for mercy.

"All right," said Vincent at length. "You are a dead Ginnie if you don't show up here to-morrow noon with twenty-five thousand in bills and you better have them so I can count 'em easily, because the longer it takes, the slimmer your chances are of getting away. Twelve o'clock, mind. Come right up here same as you did to-day. And don't try any games, for if you do, I'll put the cops onto you."

"All righta, I be here."

Pasqualli slunk from the room like a whipped cur and Jackie wiped the perspiration from his face, too excited to notice that his collar was wilted and he had swallowed his gum.

In a few moments Becky softly unlocked the door and they crept down the stairs like two mice.

Not until Jackie was outside the street-door, bag in hand, did he and Becky breathe freely.

"Becky, don't say nothings to nobody about this, because—"

"What you take me for?" she broke in. "A fool? If that landlady finds out, she is only too tickled to death of the excuse not to pay me my wages."

"I gota tell it the Chief what I heard it and then to-night about eight, I come back here with your bracelet. Watch for me."

"Bec-ky!" cried a shrill voice, "who are you talking to?"

"Yes, mam! The landlady's back! Goodbye."

The door clanged shut and Jackie retreated down the sidewalk chanting "Ai—caa—a-s clos" so well, that a bona fide rag-man listened to him with positive envy.

JAKIE took the subway and got down to Murphy's beat quickly. He trotted up and down the stifling streets looking for his gigantic friend for all the world like a stray spaniel searching for his master and, when he espied him at last, lounging under the shade of an awning, fell upon him in much the spaniel's manner.

"Moify!" he whispered, excitement making him almost incoherent. "Listen! Belief me, now you shall get it even. That guy Vincent ain't got it a chanct now much more for laughs at you. He's a 'zhulik' and—"

"Hey, talk United States. What's a 'zhulik'? what Vincent?" Thereupon Jackie unfolded the whole amazing tale and Murphy, much impressed, lugged him off to the station to repeat it to the Captain.

That officer appeared not to believe a word of it, but he called in two guileless-looking men whom Jackie decided were "detectives," to hear the story, gave a few terse orders and Jackie departed to buy Becky's bracelet. "Gee," he grinned to Murphy, "if Rachael knew I was buying presents for another lady, wouldn't she have it a jealousy?"

He found Becky awaiting him in the shadow of the basement stairs and coaxed her to go for a walk.

After her first transports over the bracelet had subsided, he announced that he must be smuggled in again next day at noon. At first she refused, but at length the bait of "a genu-wine ruby ring" decided her.

The next morning Jackie spent in a fever of impatience for the fatal hour to come. Fares were few and he spent the time between them in earnest conversation with Rachael.

"What if Pasqualli don't swipes it the money an' Vincent is all a bluff? What if they ain't nothin' doin' an' all they got is my say so? Oi, if they gets it stung on this case, the very leastest they can do is takes it away my license and make it of Moify a Bronxer cop. Rachael, it is a big lie what says it there is twenty-four hours to a day,

it's twenty-four years. Such a slowness I never seen it before."

At last the time came for him to leave his stand. He put Rachael in the stable and proceeded uptown to the scene of what he was confident was to be triumph.

As he neared number 99 he met the two detectives going in opposite directions. They exchanged knowing glances, and passing each other to all appearances complete strangers. Then he emitted the peculiar whistle which was to warn Becky.

She appeared at the front door and beckoned. "Quick! Everybody is at dinner." She hustled him up the stairs and into the trunk-room and gave him the key. Jackie sat down to await events. Shortly after Vincent came in.

It lacked two minutes to twelve by Jackie's Ingersoll when the banker arrived.

Vincent received him in silence and he lost no time about surrendering the money. In spite of his disguise Jackie recognized Pasqualli.

He watched Vincent count over the greater part of the bills, then opened the door and stole down stairs. Becky was on the watch for him and piloted him down the back way. One of the detectives was standing in the basement entry and Jackie flung himself upon him.

"I seen him get the money!" he panted. "We got them nailed now!"

"All right, old man. We'll go up now. The captain sent Murphy up in plain clothes and he and my pardner are in the vestibule waiting to nab the Ginnie as he comes out."

"I betcha Moify likes that job," said Jackie gleefully.

Becky stared at them speechless. The detective opened his coat and showed his badge of authority. "You go into the kitchen now and attend to your work," he commanded sternly, and she obeyed without a word, while he and Jackie lost no time in reaching the trunk-room.

Hardly had the door closed upon them when Pasqualli emerged. They allowed him to descend the stairs unmolested. Vincent locked his door with a sharp click.

In another moment they heard the vestibule door open, a muffled cry, and they knew that the unscrupulous Italian was now in safe hands. Then they slipped the bolt on the trunk-room door and the detective with leveled revolver and Jackie at his heels, burst in upon Vincent, surprising him in the act of counting the money.

"Hands up!" commanded the detective, and Vincent, pale and shaking, slowly obeyed.

The detective slipped his hand into his pocket and drew out a pair of handcuffs which he handed to Jackie, who adjusted them with great relish. Then the officer gathered up the money on the table, carelessly thrust it into his coat-pocket and marched his prisoner out of the room and down the stairs.

Thirty minutes afterwards the pair were safely landed behind the bars and Murphy and Jackie were leaving the station with countenances which bespoke entire satisfaction.

"How did you feel when you was hustlin' them crooks into the cooler, Moify?"

"Great! Jackie, you done me a favor. Now that Vincent is in de coop, I feel better. Next time he won't report me!"

"Say," said Jackie, "wouldn't I make it a fine detective?"

"Sure you would."

"What's the matter wit' us goin' into the business? We could have it a sign on Broadway what says it—SHIMOLESKI, MOIFY & CO.—Detective Agency, business strictly confidential."

"That sounds well, but who's the company?"

"Rachael, of course; she's always been my partner."

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