

MISS VEE THROWS THE DARE 301

The more I chewed it over, though, the stronger I was for breakin' loose about dockin' time. Maybe I didn't want to go to the pier; but if he was bent on throwin' the gate on me, that was another proposition. I got sorer and sorer and I was on the point of chuckin' the job at Piddie's head and walkin' out on my own hook, when who should come stormin' in, scowlin' and grumblin' to himself, but Mr. Robert. And he had a worse attack than I did.

"Torchy," says he, wheelin' around half-way to his office, "ring up Pier Umpty-nine and find out when that blasted steamer is due."

"The Kaiser boat?" says I. "She'll dock about two-forty-five."

"Eh?" says he, some startled. "Now, how the—— Never mind, though. Sure about the time, are you?"

"Yep," says I.

"Dash it all!" says he. "That's Marjorie, though! Any word from the Consolidated Bridge people yet?"

"Not yet," says I, and slam goes his door.

Took me three minutes by the clock to dope out the combination too, which shows how gummed up my gears was. But when I'd fitted them two remarks together, about Marjorie and the bridge people, and had remembered the