

"What's up, Amber? What are you looking for?"

"Blood, my Peter," said Amber; "gore—human gore. I was obliged to strike a gentleman hard, with a knobby weapon—to wit, a fist."

"Hey?" Peter was on his feet, all eagerness, but Amber was still smiling.

"Go on with your reading," he said, "there's nothing doin'."

That was a direct and a sharp speech for Amber, and Peter stared, and only the smile saved it from brusqueness.

Amber continued his inspection, removing his coat, and scrutinising the garment carefully.

"No incriminating stains," he reported flippantly, and went to the table, where his packages lay. He had resumed his coat, and, diving into one of the pockets, he produced a flat round leather case. He pressed a spring, and the cover opened like the face of a watch.

Peter was an interested spectator. "That is a compass," he said.

"True, my Peter; it is a compass—but it has the disadvantage that it does not cump: in other words, it is a most unblushing liar of a compass; a mis-leader of men, my Peter; it is the old one who is the devil of compasses, because it leadeth the feet to stray—in other words it's a dud."

He shook it a little, gave it a twist or two, and shook his head severely. He closed it and put it on the table by his side. Then he turned his attention to the other packages. Very gingerly he unwrapped them. They were revealed as two flat plates of steel, strangely engraved. He leant over them, his smile growing broader and broader, till he broke into a gleeful little laugh.

He looked up to meet the troubled and puzzled eyes of Peter, and laughed out loud.

"Amber, there's a game on," said Peter, gloomily; "there's a dodge on, and I'm not in it. Me that has been with you in every dodge you've worked."

This was not exactly true, but it pleased Peter to believe that he had some part in Amber's many nefarious schemes.

"It's a Dodge and a Game, my Peter," said Amber, carefully wrapping up the plates. "It's this much of a game, that if the police suddenly appeared and found these in my possession I should go down to the toms for seven long bright years, and you for no less a period."

It may have been an effect of the bad lighting of the room, but it seemed that Peter, the desperate criminal, went a little pale at the prospect so crudely outlined.

"That's a bit dangerous, ain't it?" he said uncomfortably. "Takin' risks of that kind, Amber,—what is it?"

"Forgery," said the calm Amber, "forgery of Bank of England notes."

"Good gaw," gasped Peter, and clutched the edge of the table for support.

"I was thinkin' the same," said Amber, and rose. "I am going to take these precious articles of virtue and bigotry to a safe place," he said.

"Where?—be careful, ol' man—don't get yourself into trouble, an' don't get me into trouble—after me keepin' clear of prison all these years,—chuck 'em into the river; borryer a boat down by Waterloo."

He gave his advice in hoarse whis-pers as Amber left the room, with a little nod, and continued it over the crazy balustrades, as Amber went lightly down the stairs.

He turned into the Borough, and walked quickly in the direction of London Bridge. He passed a policeman, who, as bad luck would have it, knew him, and the man looked at him hard, then beckoned him.

Amber desired many things, but the one thing in the world that he did not wish was an interview with an inquisitorial policeman. To pass on, pretending not to have noticed the summons, would annoy the man, so Amber stopped, with his most winning smile.

"Well, Mr. Amber," bantered the constable, "I see you're out-going straight now?"

"So straight, my constable," said Amber earnestly, "that you could use

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