

The Blind Man's Eyes

(Continued from page 27.)

She did not reply. He stared at her and seemed to comprehend.

He shouted to the men around Dibley and ran toward them. They called in answer to his shout, and she could see Dibley pointing out to them the way Eaton had gone. The men, scattering themselves at intervals along the edge of the wood and, under Avery's direction, posting others in each direction to watch the road, began to beat through the bushes after Eaton. She sat watching; she put her cold hands to her face; then, recalling how just now Eaton's hand had clung to hers, she pressed them to her lips. Avery came running back to her.

"You drove him out here, Harriet!" he charged. "Dibley says so."

"Him? Who?" she asked coolly.

"Eaton. Dibley did not know him, but describes him. It can have been no one else. He was hurt!" The triumph in the ejaculation made her recoil. "He was hurt and could not drive, and you drove him out"—his tone changed suddenly—"like this!"

For the first time since she had left the garage she was suddenly conscious that she was in her night-dress with

only a robe and slippers. She drew the robe quickly about her, shrinking and staring at him. In all the miles she had driven that night with Eaton at her side, she never a moment had shrunk from her companion or thought how she was dressed. It was not the exaltation and excitement of what she was doing that had prevented her; it went deeper than that; it was the attitude of her companion toward her. But Avery had thought of it, and made her think of it, at once, even in the excitement under which he was labouring.

He left her again, running after the men into the woods. She sat in the car, listening to the sounds of the hunt. She could see, back of her, in the light of the burning bridge, one of the armed men standing to watch the road; ahead of her, but almost indistinguishable in the darkness, was another. The noise of the hunt had moved further into the woods; she had no immediate fear that they would find Eaton; her present anxiety was over his condition from his hurts and what might happen if he encountered those, he had been pursuing. In that neigh-

bourhood, with its woods and bushes and ravines to furnish cover, the darkness made discovery of him by Avery and his men impossible if Eaton wished to hide himself. Avery appeared to have realized this; for now the voices in the woods ceased and the men began to straggle back toward the cars. A party was sent on foot across the ravine, evidently to guard the road beyond. The rest began to clamber into the cars. She backed her car away from the one in front of it and started home.

She had gone only a short distance when the cars again passed her, travelling at high speed. She began then to pass individual men left by those in the cars to watch the road. At the first large house she saw one of the cars again, standing empty. She passed it without stopping. A mile farther, a little group of men carrying guns stopped her, recognized her and let her pass. They had been called out, they told her, by Mr. Avery over the telephone to watch the roads for Eaton; they had Eaton's description; members of the local police were to take charge of them and direct them. She comprehended that Avery was surrounding the vacant acreage where Eaton had taken refuge to be certain that Eaton did not get away until day-

light came and a search for him was possible.

Lights gleamed at her across the broad lawns of the houses near her father's great house as she approached it; at the sound of her car, people came to the windows and looked out. She understood that news of the murder at Basil Santoine's had aroused the neighbours and brought them from their beds.

As she left her motor on the drive beside the house—for to-night no one came from the garages to take it—the little clock upon its dash marked half past two.

CHAPTER XX

Waiting.

HARRIET went into the house and toward her own rooms; a maid met and stopped her on the stairs.

"Mr. Santoin sent word that he wishes to see you as soon as you came in, Miss Santoine."

Harriet went on toward her father's room, without stopping at her own—wet with the drive through the damp night and shivering now with its chill. Her father's voice answered her knock with a summons to come in. As she obeyed, pushing the doors open, he dismissed the nurse; the girl, passing Harriet as she went out, returned Harriet's questioning look with a reassuring nod; Basil Santoine had endured the shock and excitement of the night better than could have been expected; he was quite himself.

As Harriet went toward the bed, her father's blind eyes turned toward her; he put out his hand and touched her, seeming startled to find her still in the robe she had worn an hour before and to feel that the robe was wet.

"Where have you been, Daughter?" he asked.

She hesitated, drawing the robe out of his hand. "I—I have been driving Mr. Eaton in a motor," she said.

"Helping him to escape?" A spasm crossed the blind man's face.

"He said not; he—he was following the men who shot Cousin Wallace."

The blind man lay for an instant still. "Tell me," he commanded finally.

She told him, beginning with her discovery of Eaton in the garage and ending with his leaving her and with Donald Avery's finding her in the motor; and now she held back one word only—his name which he had told her, Hugh. Her father listened intently; when she had finished, he made no move, no comment, no reproach. She had seated herself on the chair beside his bed; she looked away, then back to him.

"That is not all," she said; and she told him of her expedition with Eaton to the ravine before the attack in the house.

Again she waited.

"You and Mr. Eaton appear to have become rather well acquainted, Harriet," he said. "Has he told you nothing about himself which you have not told me? You have seen nothing concerning him, which you have not told?"

Her mind went quickly back to the polo game; she felt a flush, which his blind eyes could not see, dyeing her cheeks and forehead.

"No," she answered. She was aware that he did not accept the denial, that he knew she was concealing something.

"Nothing?" he asked her again.

She put her hands to her face; then she drew them quickly away. "Nothing," she said steadily.

The blind man waited for a moment; he put out his hand and pressed the bell which called the steward. Neither spoke until the steward had come.

"Fairley," Santoine said then, quietly, "Miss Santoine and I have just agreed that for the present all reports regarding the pursuit of the men who entered the study last night are to be made direct to me, not through Miss Santoine or Mr. Avery."

"Very well, sir."

She sat still after the steward had gone; she thought for an instant her



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