

"The Net"

— BY —
Rex Beach

Author of
"The Ne'er Do Well," "The Spoilers," "The Silver Horde,"
"The Barrier," "Pardners," Etc.

"There's a rumor of jury-fixing. I hear one of the talesmen was approached with a bribe before the trial."

"I can scarcely believe that."
"I'll bet it's true just the same. I've known what they were up to. I'd have got on the jury myself. I'd have taken their money, then I'd have fixed 'em!"

"You'd have voted for eleven hemp neckties eh?"

"I'd have hung each man twice."

Although Blake at first refused to credit the rumors of corruption, the following days served to verify them, for more than one talesman confessed to receiving offers. This caused a sensation which grew as the papers took up the matter and commended editorially. A leading witness for the State finally told of an effort to intimidate him, and men began to ask if this was destined to prove as rotten as other Mafia cases in the past. A feeling of unrest, of impatience, began to manifest itself, vague threats were voiced, but the idea of a bribed or terrorized jury was so preposterous that few gave credence to it. Nevertheless, the closing days of the trial were weighed heavily with suspense. Not only the city, but the country at large, hung upon the outcome. So strongly had racial antipathy figured that Italy took note of the case, and it assumed an international importance. Biased accounts were cabled abroad which led to an uneasy air in ministerial and consular quarters.

During the exhaustive arguments at the close of the trial Norvin and Bernie sat together. When the opening attorneys for the prosecution had finished, Dreux exclaimed triumphantly:

"We've got 'em! They can't escape after that."

But when the defence in turn had closed, the little man revealed an indignant face to his companion, saying:

"Lord, they're as good as free! We'll never convict on evidence like that."

Once more he changed under the spell of the masterly States-attorney, and declared with fierce exultance:

"What did I tell you? They'll hang every mother's son of them. The jury won't be out an hour."

The jury was out more than an hour, even though press and public declared the case to be clear. Yet knowing that the eyes of the world were upon her, New Orleans went to sleep that night serene in the certainty that she had vindicated herself, had upheld her laws, and proved her ability to deal with that organized lawlessness which had so long been a blot upon her fair name.

Soon after court convened on the following morning the jury sent word that they had reached a verdict, and the court-room quickly filled. Rumors of Caesar Maruffi's double identity had gone forth; it was hinted that he was none other than the

dreaded Belisario Card, that genius of a thousand crimes who had held all Sicily in fear. This report supplied the last touch of dramatic interest.

Blake and Bernie were in their places before the prisoners arrived. Every face in the room was tense and expectant; even the calloused attendants felt the hush and lowered their voices in deference. Every eye was strained toward the door behind which the jury was concealed. There came the rumble of the van below, the tramp of feet upon the hollow stairs, and into the dingy, high-ceilinged hall of justice filed the accused, manacled and doggedly guarded. Maruffi led his black head held high. Normando brought up the rear, supported by two officers. He was racked with terror, his body hung like a sack, a moisture of foam and spittle lay upon his lips. When he reached the railing in the prisoner's box he clutched it and resisted loosely, sobbing in his throat; but he was thrust forward into a seat, where he collapsed.

The judge and the attorneys were in their places when a deputy sheriff swung open the door to the jury-room and the "twelve good men and true" appeared. As if through the silence of the tomb they went to their stations while eleven pairs of black Sicilian eyes searched their downcast features for a sign. Larubio, the cobbler, was paper-white above his smoky beard; Do Marco's swarthy face was green, like that of a corpse; his companions were frozen in various attitudes of eager, dreadful waiting. The only sound through the scuff and tramp of the jurors' feet was Normando's lunatic murmuring. As for the leader of the band, he sat as if graven in stone; but, despite his iron control, a pallor had crept up beneath his skin.

Blake heard Bernie whisper:

"Look, they know they're lost."

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon a verdict?" came the voice of the judge.

The foreman rose, "we have."

He passed a document up the bench, and silently the court examined it.

The seconds were now creeping minutes. Normando's ceaseless mumbling was like that of a man distraught by torture. A hand was used to silence him. The spectators were upon their feet, and bent forward in attention; the cordon of officers closed in behind the accused as if to throttle any act of desperation.

The judge passed the verdict down to the minute clerk, who read in a clear, distinct monotonous tone:

"Celso Fabbri, Frank Normando, mistrial. Salvatore di Marco, Frank Garcia, Giordano Bolla"—the list of names seemed interminable—"Caspar-do-Cressi, Lorenzo Cardoni, Caesar Maruffi"—he paused for a moment while time halted—"not guilty."

After the first moment of stunned stupefaction a murmur of angry disapproval ran through the crowd; it was not loud, but hushed, as if men doubted their senses and were seeking corroboration of their ears. From the street below as the judgment was flashed to the waiting hundreds came an echo, faint, uniformed, like the first vague stir that runs ahead of a tempest.

The shock of Norvin Blakes amazement in part blurred his memory of that dramatic tableau, but certain details stood out clearly afterwards. For one thing he heard Bernie Dreux giggling like an overwrought woman, while through his hysteria ran a stream of shocking curses. He saw one of the jurors rise yawn and stretch himself, then rub his bullet head, smiling meanwhile at the Cressi boy. He saw Caesar Maruffi turn full to the room behind him and search for his own face. When their eyes met a light of devilish amusement lit the Sicilian's visage; his lips parted and his white teeth gleamed, but it was no smile, rather the nervous, rippling twitch that bares a wolf's fangs. His color had come flooding back, too; victory suffused him with a ruddy, purple congestion, almost apoplectic. Then heads came between them, friends of the prisoners crowded forward with noisy congratulations and outstretched palms; the rival attorneys were shaking hands.

Blake found himself borne along by the eddying stream which set out of the court-room and down into the sunlit street, where the curbs were lined with uplifted faces. Dreux was close beside him, quiet silent now. A similar silence brooding over the whole procession, which emerged from the building like a funeral procession cortege. When the moments passed home the truth to its members they felt indeed, as if they had come from a house of death, for they had seen justice murdered, and the chill was in their hearts.

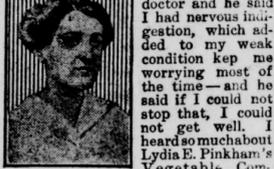
But there was something sinister in the hush which gagged that multitude.

Many readers will doubtless recall, even now, the shock that went

THIS WEAK, NERVOUS MOTHER

Tells How Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Restored Her Health.

Philadelphia, Pa.—"I was very weak, always tired, my back ached, and I felt sickly most of the time. I went to a doctor and he said I had nervous indigestion, which added to my weak condition kept me worrying most of the time—and he said if I could not get well, I heard so much about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound I decided to try it. I took it for a week and felt a little better. I kept it up for three months, and I feel fine and can eat anything now without distress or nervousness."—Mrs. J. WORTHLINE, 2842 North Taylor St., Philadelphia Pa.



The majority of mothers nowadays overdo, there are so many demands upon their time and strength; the result is invariably a weakened, run-down, nervous condition with headaches, backache, irritability and depression—and soon more serious ailments develop. It is at such periods in life that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will restore a normal healthy condition, as it did to Mrs. Worthline.

through America at the conclusion of the famous New Orleans Mafia trial of twenty years ago. They will, perhaps, remember a general feeling of surprise that an American jury would dare, in the face of such popular feeling and such apparently overwhelming evidence, render a verdict of "Not guilty." In some quarters the farcical outcome of the trial was blamed upon Louisiana's peculiar legal code, just as we have been inclined to attribute the result of the recent Cammorrist trial at Viterbo to the ineptitude of Italian court procedure. But the truth is our northern cities had not at that time felt the power of organized crime. New York, for instance, had not been shaken by an interminable succession of dynamite outrages nor terrorized by bands of Latin-born Apaches who live by violence and blackmail; therefore, the tremendous difficulty of securing convictions was not appreciated as it is to-day.

There was a universal suspicion that the last word concerning the New Orleans affair had not been written, so what followed was not entirely a surprise.

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At The Feet of the Statue
Two hours after the verdict there was a meeting of the Committee of Justice, and that night the evening papers carried the following notice: "MASS-MEETING"
"All good citizens are invited to attend a mass-meeting tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock at Clay Statue, to take steps to remedy the failure of justice in the Donnelly case. Come prepared for action."
It was signed by the fifty well-known men who had been appointed to represent the people. That incredible verdict had caused a great excitement; but this bold and threatening appeal brought the city up standing. It caused men who had been loudly cursing the jury to halt and measure the true depth of their indignation. There was no other topic of conversation that night; and when the same call appeared in the morning papers, together with a ringing column headed,

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"AWAKE! ARISE!
it stirred a swift and mighty public sentiment. Never, perhaps, in any public press had so sanguinary an appeal been issued.

"Citizens of New Orleans, it read in part, "when murder overrides law and justice, when juries are bribed and suborners go unwhipped, it is time to resort to your own indefeasible right of self-preservation. Alien bands of oath-bound assassins have set the blot of a martyr's blood upon civilization. Your laws, in the very Temple of Justice have been bought, suborners have loosed upon your streets the midnight murderers of an officer in whose grave lies the majesty of American law.

"Rise in your might, people of New Orleans! Rise! A similar note was struck by editorials, many of them couched in language even stronger and more suited to fan the public rage. The recent trial was called an outrageous travesty of justice; attention was directed to the damnable vagaries of recent juries which had been impelled to try red-handed Italian murderers.

"Our city is become the haven of blackmailers and assassins, the safe vantage ground for Sicilian stiletto bands who slay our legal officers, who buy jurors, and corrupt witnesses under the blooded eyes of Justice. How much longer will this outrage be permitted?" So read a heavily typed article in the leading journal. A wave of fierce determination ran through the whole community.

Margherita Ginni was waiting at Blake's place of business when he arrived, after a night of sleepless worry. She, too, showed evidence of a painful vigil; her hand was shaking as she held out the copy of the morning paper, inquiring:

"What is the meaning of this?"

"It means we're no longer in Sicily," he said.

"You intend to kill those men?"

"I fear something like that may occur. The question will be put up to the people plainly."

She clutched the edge of the desk, staring at him with wide, tragic eyes.

"Your name heads the list. Did you do this?"

"I am the chairman of the committee. I did my part."

"But the law declares them innocent," she gasped—"all but two, and they can be tried over again."

"The law!" He smiled bitterly. "Do you believe that?"

"I believe they are guilty—who can doubt it? But this lawlessness—this mad cry for revenge—it is against all my beliefs, my religion. Oh, my friend, can't you stop it? At least take no part in it—for my sake."

His look was hard, yet regretful.

"For your sake I would give my life gladly," he said, "but there are times when one must act his destined part. That verdict holds me up to the public as a perjurer; but that is a small matter. Oh, I have had my scruples; I have questioned my conscience, and deep in my heart I see that there is only one way. I'd be a hypocrite if I denied it. I'm wrong, perhaps, but I can't be untrue to myself."

"We know but a part of the truth," she urged, desperately. "God alone knows it all. You saw three men—there are others whom they did not see."

"They were seen by other eyes quite as trustworthy as mine."

She wrung her hands miserably, crying:

"But wait! Guilty or innocent, they have appeared in judgment, and the law has acquitted them. You urge upon the people now a crime greater than theirs. Two wrongs do not make one right. Who are you to raise yourself above that power which is supreme?"

"There's a law higher than the courts."

"Yes, one; the law of God. If our agency has failed leave their punishment to Him."

He shook his head, no trace of yielding in his eyes.

"One man was killed, and yet you contemplate the death of eleven!"

"Listen," He cried, "This cause belongs to the people, who have seen their sacred institutions debauched. If I had the power to sway the citizens of New Orleans from the course which I believe they contemplate, I doubt that I would bring myself to exercise it, for it is plain that the Mafia must be exterminated. The good of the city, the safety of us all demands it." He regarded her curiously. "Do you realize what Maruffi's freedom would mean to you and Oliveta?"

"We are in God's hands."

"It would require a miracle to save you. Caesar would have my life, too, he told me as much with his eyes when that corrupted jury lifted the fear of death from his heart."

"So, cried the girl. "You fear him, therefore you take this means of destroying him! You goad the public and your friends into a red rage and send them to murder your enemy."

Her hysteria was not proof against the look which leaped into her eyes—the pallor that left him facing her with the visage of a sick man.

Continued next week

A HOT ONE

A lawyer was cross-examining a witness who had a very red nose, and asked him:

"Are you addicted to drink?"

"That's my business," replied the witness, indignantly.

"Ah, sir, is that your only business?"

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Comfort Lye is a very powerful cleanser. It is used for cleaning up the oldest and hardest dirt, grease, etc.
Comfort Lye is fine for making sinks, drains and closets sweet and clean.
Comfort Lye Kills rats, mice, roaches and insect pests.
Comfort Lye will do the hardest spring cleaning you've got.
Comfort Lye is good for making soap. It's powdered, perfumed and 100% pure.



is splendid for —

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Toasters, Electric Irons, Electric Lights, Fixtures

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Come in and inspect our up-to-date stock. We also handle the Jewel Gas Range.

Frank Light

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We will be pleased to cash your cheques or coupons without charge.

Detach your coupons promptly, and deposit them in the Bank. The money will immediately be earning interest for you again.

Your account will be appreciated.

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Stove pipes 6 or 7 inch, per length 30c

Elbows, 6 or 7 inch, each 30c

Coal Hods, Stove Pipe Collars, Stove Boards

See our "Doherty High Oven Range"

Wright & Allen

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By cleaning or dyeing—restore any articles to their former appearance and return them to you, good as new.

Send anything from household draperies down to the finest of delicate fabrics. We pay postage or express charges one way.

When You think of
Cleaning or Dyeing
THINK OF PARKER'S

Parcels may be sent Post or Express We pay Carriage one way on all orders

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Parker's Dye Works

Cleaners and Dyers Limited

791 Yonge St. Toronto



the commissioner to four different gas old amalgamate. He investigate the case asked the council and er to co-operate with ution he might come ize.



WASHER

Washer for Itself ne Year

er Electric Washer money to pay for year. It saves the 's wages; it saves t saves the clothes. four times as long a this machine. It



a than the washer operates for 2c. an not to run than a sewing machine. It is moderate in price. We have a Time Saver ready to show you. Let us demonstrate it in your own home. Phone or call at our Store.

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tt Agents
Aylmer, Ont.

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food



"I Wonder Would It Help Me?"

THIS question has been answered by many thousands of women who have found health and happiness in the use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

Sleeplessness, irritability, nervousness, gloomy forebodings of the future, depression and discouragement—these are some of the symptoms which tell of exhausted nerves.

In order to avoid nervous prostration or some form of paralysis it is well to get the building up process established at once by use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

50 cents a box, 6 for \$2.75, all dealers, or Edmanon, Bates & Co., Ltd., Toronto.



When you "feel mean"—dull, tired, nervous, bad digestion, no appetite—

Don't you find out, afterwards, that your bowels were not acting freely and naturally?

Due, of course, to a liver gone on a strike. Take two or three pills—once. After that, only one, until you're all right.

