

like a flash and said, 'Are you the Robert Lane who lives on Somerset Crescent?' and I said I was. In my simplicity I thought he was going to compliment me on my tennis championship. He went over to his father and actually took the cheque out of his hand. There was a whispered conversation, and then the old gentleman said apologetically, "I am sorry, Mr. Lane, but the deal is off." I asked for an explanation, but I could not get it. They assured me they had no fault to find with me. The young man was especially emphatic in his protestations that he had nothing against me—but evidently the name Lane had unpleasant memories."

"Is this Friday, the thirteenth, or something?" asked Helen.

"No, it had to do with me, I am convinced," said Bob. "I can't think it out. I don't think I ever did anyone a mean trick. The young man is a fine, smart chap, in a good position. He wouldn't have any silly prejudices. He is assistant manager in the furniture department at Brenton's.

The silence in the room became almost vocal. Nobody moved.

"It's a long lane," said Helen, absently.