

It was more in a spirit of curiosity and speculation than in any other mood that John followed the little woman with the grip. Even in his most reckless days he had never been a purse-snatcher, but he found a certain fascination in the grip and its possible contents. The whole adventure suited his mood. The mission, Sister Bandon, Sister Johnson, and all the rest of his new life seemed to fall far behind him.

It was in this speculative frame of mind that John was moving along when suddenly two men, and then a third, stepped out from doorways before him and walked at about his own pace, and in the same direction, for the distance of a block. Then one of the two men quickened his gait and passed the woman with the grip; one crossed to the other side of the street; and the third continued to walk ahead of John. In this fashion the four persons under John's scrutiny walked to the next corner, where the woman waited for a coming street-car.

John's trained eyes were alert. He saw the man on the other side of the street run across to await the same car. The man who had been walking ahead of the woman stepped out to the curb, looked up the street, and then, as if suddenly discovering that the car he wanted was coming, stepped out to the tracks to wait for it. The third man who had walked in front of John, hurried rapidly up the street. For a moment John was puzzled by this action.

gleams from the windows of the brown-stone houses. John saw the three men string along in Indian file. The two men ahead were keeping close together.

By this time John's interest in the affair was more than mere curiosity. He realized that he was going to have a hand in whatever was to be done. The men carried slug-shots or revolvers he knew, for he saw that their right hands were doubled into fists in their pockets.

Soon he saw the man in the rear cross the street; he could see that this was the one who had taken the car a block further up-town than the other two. John could not explain the man's action, but there was little time for wonder now.

Evidently, according to the program of the thugs, the woman was to be "slugged." In the light from the residence windows they did not intend to give her a chance to make an outcry. John knew what it would mean. One man would walk up behind the woman, and by making some remark, perhaps, cause her to turn her head. She would be met with a blow across the forehead—a heavy, cruel blow that would instantly knock her senseless, and possibly even kill her.

John walked quickly up behind the woman. He leaned forward toward her and his left hand started for the grip. Then it drew back, seemed to hesitate a moment, darted forth, seized the grip by the handle—and John was dashing off at full speed, his long coat standing



His left hand seized the grip by the handle.

"He's going to get on at the next corner," said John to himself.

He looked about him for a policeman. There was none in sight. And moreover, the three men had as yet done no wrong.

When the car came John boarded it. There was nothing to indicate that any one of the five persons who entered it had ever before seen any of the others. The woman gave a sigh of relief, and placing the grip beside her, settled comfortably into her seat. John posted himself behind her.

As the car whirled through the business district, gathering and distributing its jostling burden of humanity. John kept his eyes on the woman and her satchel. He wished that he could feel the weight of his heavy old revolver in his hip-pocket but that was no longer there. It had gone the way of the drinks and the smokes.

When the car had gone some distance up-town and had reached the residence district, the woman gave signs of stirring. John took this to mean that she was going to alight at the next crossing, and he gave a signal to the conductor. The woman repeated his signal, and one of the men who sat ahead of her, watching her reflection in the window before him, turned about and ostentatiously did the same thing. The five alighted, John behind the rest. The woman stepped hurriedly to the curb-stone and started down a dark side street, which was lighted largely by

out behind him and the grip swinging in his left hand.

He heard the woman's shriek and the pounding of feet on the sidewalk. There was a shot, too, but he heard no whiz of a bullet, as he had expected. This made him turn his head to see what was happening. He caught a moving-picture glimpse of the woman with her hands in the air, and of two men running after him. Across the street he saw the flash of a revolver as another shot sounded; but the weapon had not been turned toward him. It had apparently been pointed at the two men who were following him.

He ran on, and then turned again. One of the men had fallen; the other was standing, and a man was crossing the street, leveling a revolver at the erect figure.

A block further on, if you had met John you would have seen a very calm and unconcerned man walking at a moderate speed with both hands swinging empty by his sides. He had resorted to his old trick of hanging his booty from his watch chain and buttoning his loose overcoat over it. At the next crossing he boarded a cross-town car, and was soon back in the business district. As he alighted from the car he hummed a tune—"Saved by Grace."

Not long after this a certain jeweler, watching his clocks and awaiting the hour to lock his doors and depart, was surprised to see a man enter the store and set on a show-case the very satchel

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