

member—the ring of my bet, that almost made me lose you? I told you about it, didn't I, on our day together, when I thought I should come back in two weeks?"

"You told me you hoped not to lose a thing you wanted. You didn't say it was a ring. But at Royalien—the newspaper correspondents' château near Compiègne—we came across a friend of yours, the one you made the bet with——"

"Jack Curtis!"

"Yes. He told me about the ring. And he was you were alive."

"Good old Jack! Well, now I'm going to slip that magic ring on your darling finger—the 'engaged' finger."

"But where is it?"

"The finger? Just now on the back of my neck, which it's making throb—like a star! . . . Oh, the ring? That's in the hobby-horse which I see over there, as large as life. At least, it's in him unless, unlike a leopard, he's changed his spots."

Jim wouldn't let me go, but drew me with him, our arms interlaced, to the tower end of the room where the hobby-horse he had once rescued from fire endlessly pranced. "This used to be my bank, when I was a little chap," he said. "Like a magpie, I always hid the things I valued most in a hole I made under the third smudge to the left, on Spot Cash's breast. 'Spot Cash' is the old boy's name, you know! When I won the bet and took the ring home, I had a fancy to keep it in this hidie hole, for luck, till I could find the Girl. Mother knew. She was with me at the time. But I was half ashamed of myself for my childishness, and asked her not to tell—not even the