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The other drew a cigarette case from his pocket: selected one and lit it.

"Everything is rum, my inveterate optimist," he said. "Wasn't it rum to get a letter from me from the wild and woolly interior of the dark and dismal desert?"

"That was rum," admitted Peter gravely. "I got all sorts of ideas from that. There's a tale I've been readin' about a feller that got pinched for a perfe'ly innocent crime." Amber grinned. "He was sent to penal servitude, one day—"

"I know, I know," said Amber, "a fog rolled up from the sea, he escaped from the quarry where he had been workin', friend's expensive yacht waitin' in the offin'—bang! bang! warders shootin', bells ringin', an' a little boat all ready for the errin' brother—yes?"

Peter was impressed. "You're a reader, Amber," he said, with a note of respect in his voice. "I can see now that you've read 'Haunted by Fate, or the Convict's Bride.' It's what I might describe as a masterpiece. It's got—"

"I know—it's another of the rum things of life—Peter, would you like a job?"

Peter looked up over his spectacles. "What sort of a job?"—his voice shook a little. "I ain't so young as I used to be, an' me heart's not as strong as it was. It ain't one of them darin' wangles of yours—"

Amber laughed. "Nothin' so wicked, my desperado—how would you like to be the companion of a gentleman who is recovering from a very severe sickness: a sickness that has upset his memory and brought him to the verge of madness—" He saw the sudden alarm in Peter's eyes. "No, no, he's quite all right now, though there was a time—"

He changed the subject abruptly. "I shall trust you not to say a word to any soul about this matter," he said. "I have a hunch that you are the very man for the job—there is no guile in you, my Peter."

A knock at the door interrupted him.

"Come in." The handle turned, and Whitey entered.

"Oh, here you are," said Whitey. He stood by the door, his glossy silk hat in his hand, and smiled pleasantly.

"Come in," invited Amber. "You don't mind?"—he looked at Peter. The old man shook his head.

"Well?" "I've been lookin' for you," said Whitey.

He took the chair Amber indicated. "I thought you might be here," he went on, "knowing that you visited here."

"In other words," said Amber, "your cab passed mine in the Strand, and you told the driver to follow me at a respectable distance—I saw you."

Whitey was not embarrassed. "A feller would have to be wide to get over you, Captain," he said admiringly. "I've come to talk to you about—" He saw the prospectus on the table. "Ah! you've seen it?" "I've seen it," said Amber grimly—"a beautiful production. How is the money coming in?"

"Not too well, not too well," lied Whitey, with a melancholy shake of the head. "People don't seem to jump at it: the old adventurous spirit is dead. Some of the papers . . ." he shrugged his shoulders with good-natured contempt.

"Very unbelievin', these organs of public opinion," said the sympathetic Amber, "tellers of little faith, these journalists."

"We didn't give 'em advertisements," explained Whitey—"that's the secret of it."

"You gave the 'Financial Herald' an advertisement," reflected Amber, "in spite of which they said funny things—you gave the 'Bullion and Mining Gazette' a good order, yet they didn't let you down lightly."

Whitey changed direction. "What I want to see about," he said slowly, "is this: you've had convincin' proof that we've located the

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