

SILENT LIPS

BY ANNIE O. TIBBITS
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CHAPTER XXVI—(Continued)

"Yes, read it," she said, "and that is why I am keeping it. Claude," her voice changed abruptly, and with a sudden abandonment she flung out her hands to him. "Claude," she cried, "I've loved you long enough. Marry me! It is not true that you married Hetty Lancaster, oh, I know it cannot be true, and I care for nothing else, for nothing in the world except you, Claude."

He stood quite still. He felt her clinging arms upon him, and his face grew gray and ghastly. He gave a sudden harsh, choking laugh.

"Heaven help me, it is true," he cried. "I loved her," he added, slowly, brutally. "You were never in it with her, and never will be. I should love her still if I could find her. There was never a girl like her in all—shire, and it was just my confounded luck to bungle things—just my abominable luck. Curse it all!"

He stopped. Evelyn had moved suddenly and swiftly to one of the desks, and was standing with her back to him. There was a quick rustle of paper, the scratching of a pen, and then she turned again and was swiftly crossing the room.

"Where are you going?" he cried.

She made no reply. She only hastened her steps. The last remnant of her self-control had gone. She was white to the lips, with her eyes hard and bright, and glittering with an ungovernable passion. For one mad moment she was a woman

"Sir Geoffrey Waring!" he said in an awed voice. "Mr. Thomson will no doubt see you at once, sir, if you will step in."

Geoffrey did so, and soon afterward the man he remembered so well—the man who once upon a time, long years ago, had known him only as a poor lad in a corduroy coat, hustled in. He had grown stout and prosperous. His mill had done well, and the master was no longer a man who worked with his employees, but who drove them.

He looked into Geoffrey's face without recognition, looked into the face of the lad he had employed, and did not know him!

"Sir Geoffrey Waring?" he said, in an only voice. "I am extremely honored. No doubt you have heard of the steps I am taking for turning my mill into a company."

Geoffrey nodded.

"Then it is fortunate you are here at this moment, for Jackson's clerk—the lawyer you know—is here, too, and will give you any information you wish. It will be very satisfactory, indeed, Sir Geoffrey, if we can persuade you to become one of the directors."

Geoffrey let himself drift, and a few minutes later he found himself following Thompson over the mill, through the workrooms he had known so well long years ago when he had worked there.

He looked about him curiously. There were men that he remembered still, women

"A friend of his, and you're welcome," the man cried. "But stand away."

Geoffrey fell back, and the spokesman came forward and confronted the owner of the mill.

"We've heard all about the company you're forming," he cried, "but you've got to deal with this first, before you do anything to that, and we're set on it. We're going to have our rights. Twice in these last two years you've promised us a rise of wages that we've never had. Twice—once when Hutton's gave their men a rise, and once when Priddox's men went out on strike you promised us more wages if we'd keep in. And we stuck to you, every man of us. We were loyal to you. But we never got our rises. We were never a blessed farthing the better off for being faithful to you, and so now we're determined to get what you owe us—the rise in wages you promised us two years back. We want all you owe us—the two years' extra money that we haven't got. An' we're going to have it out of you one way or the other, Mr. Thomson. Are you going to give it to us fair and square or are we going to get for ourselves?"

For a moment Thomson was taken aback. For a moment fear overcame him, and he blanched his face and unbuttoned his speech he had staided himself. He drew himself up.

"I am not to be terrorized," he said, boldly. "This is not the way to get any rise or anything else, and I shall certainly not listen to any demand made in this way. Let me pass."

None moved. All the mill seemed to be curiously still. Only the spokesman threw up his arms, and instantly at the edge of the crowd there was a queer responsive movement.

"Are you decided upon that?" he asked.

"Certainly," said Thomson.

"Are you sure?" "We'll give you two minutes to make up your mind," the man went on. "We've took you by surprise, the day was when you weren't a hard master, and there's some of us as can't credit as you'll be hard now, though"

in a way that no ordinary flames would leap. Their plans had been well laid. No fireman had arrived, but a ladder had been raised against the wall, and beneath it were huddled a group of people with strained, anxious faces. They were looking up breathlessly in strange silence.

"They're watching for Ted Sealey," some one said huskily in Geoffrey's ear. "It's the sixth time he's gone, and he's hurt and fit to drop as it is. They tried to prevent him going the last time, but it was no good. They say now there's a woman shut up in the mill still."

"Ted Sealey?" Geoffrey repeated.

"Yes, there's been some mistake, and some women got left behind and cut off. Ted got them out, and now they say that Barker, the lawyer's clerk, got left there, too, and Ted's gone after him. It looks as if it would be a miracle if he ever got out again."

He stopped suddenly, for a shadow appeared amidst the leaping flames at one of the windows, and an instant later a hoarse cheer went up from the crowd. It was Ted, and Ted with a burden in his arms!

The cheer was repeated. Then a man ran up the ladder and took from him a loose heap that looked more like a charred bundle of clothing than a man. It was Fred Barker.

Ted raised himself to the sill, the fire roaring behind him, and sat for a moment, his feet on the ladder. A shout went up from the crowd.

"How are you, lad? Are you all right, lad?"

He waved one hand. The other hung cold at his side.

"I'm all right," he cried in a queer dead voice. "Yes, lad, I'm all right."

He swung himself slowly on to the ladder and began to descend. They had laid Barker down on blankets, and now turned to help Ted. A whisper ran through the crowd. Barker was dead or dying; but suddenly the whisper ceased and changed to a quick, sharp cry.

Geoffrey gave a start and ran forward. The ladder, bending already under Ted's weight, had snapped suddenly. There was a crash, and a sharper cry, and then sudden, horrible silence.

Geoffrey plunged in amidst the crowd, pushing them right and left, until he reached the silent group beneath the flaming windows. Some one was forcing them back.

"Air—air—give him air," he cried, "and some one get another doctor at once."

A dozen turned to fetch one, but at that instant Dr. North stepped from among them and bent over him. He lay quite still, and in spite of the great crowd about them, the crackling and roaring of flames and spitting of glass above their heads seemed to be the only sound. A fire engine had dashed up, and was busy playing from the other end of the street, and now the hiss of water mixed with the angry roar of the fire.

And in the midst of it all Ted lay quite still, with the familiar face about him; he lay, seeing none of them, speechless, unmoving.

A short distance away, equally silent, lay Barker, the old-time dandy, the capable fop, with all his smartness gone, his clothes charred and blackened, and his mean face changed beyond recognition. He was breathing heavily, raising slowly, coming by degrees gradually back to life. He tried to lift his head at last, and the other doctor, who had been trying to force something between his lips, slipped his arm round his shoulders.

"Is there any one of you wish to see?" he said in a low voice. "You may send for them if you wish."

Barker's head moved slowly round.

"Bessie," he whispered.

The doctor bent his head lower to catch the feeble voice.

"Yes, Bessie who?" he asked.

Fred made no reply. His hands were fumbling among the charred bits of paper which once had been his pocketbook. There were the remains of what had once been letters, and Barker's dull eyes brightened and sharpened as the doctor drew the little bundle out.

"Look," he cried. "Look quickly."

The doctor, not knowing for what to look, opened the bundle slowly, and let the letters loose. They were nearly all burned beyond hope. He held them up one after the other, unrecognizable scraps of paper that almost fell to pieces as he opened them, but Barker's eyes went past them anxiously. It was not for those he looked. It was for something else.

The doctor came upon it suddenly, a piece of notepaper, thicker than any of the others, surmounted by a crest. He looked at it curiously. It was the earl's crest, and the thick, wax paper had been blackened and not burned through. Some of the writing was easily visible upon it, and below the embossed crest a date stood out in stiff, bold letters.

The doctor had no time to examine it, even if he wished. Barker's burnt and helpless hands were stretched out in agony toward it.

"Give it to me—and an envelope, quick," he cried, in his weakening voice. "Some one—address it—before it is too late."

He stopped suddenly and fell back heavily. "Perhaps he is here," he added, "among the crowd—call and see—quick—before it is too late."

"Who?" asked the doctor. "Who is it you wish to see?"

The answer came at once, and he heard it in surprise.

"Sir Geoffrey Waring," Barker said, "see if he is among the crowd."

It seemed ridiculous to suppose that he would be, but the doctor rose to his feet, and raising his voice, called out Geoffrey's name. He did not expect to get any reply, and he gave a start when Geoffrey himself turned from bending over Ted and came forward.

"Are you Sir Geoffrey Waring?" the doctor asked.

Geoffrey nodded. He was aware that there was a movement of surprise among the crowd, that they were staring at him in flat astonishment, but the next instant he had forgotten it. Fred Barker, flat on the ground, was staring up at him with blind, flat, fast-glancing eyes, holding toward him two weak, charred hands, a blackened piece of paper.

He took it from him, and as if in a dream he heard the little clerk's voice, instant he had forgotten it. Fred Barker, gasping words he had never thought to hear, said: "I am the confessor you signed eight years ago. Geoffrey Clavering, confessor of forgery you never committed—that sent you out of Oldcliffe in disgrace. I know you were innocent, and that you signed it to shield Lord Fanshawe—you can take it back now—it is yours and Bessie will be glad I have given it back to you."

His voice stopped. These round words

looking in bewilderment at the dying man and at the other who had been called Sir Geoffrey Waring, and who was now Geoffrey Clavering, who had once worked as a lad in that very mill that was burning so fiercely now.

But they had no time to try to understand what it meant. Barker was getting restless again.

There is something else I have, to say," he whispered, "and I must be quick. It is what Bessie would wish—you must make a note of this, and let me sign it. Somebody make a note—"

Geoffrey pulled out his pocketbook and leaped a little lower to catch the dying words.

They came slowly, feebly—weak and faltering words that were yet more powerful than the shouting of the crowd he had him—that meant more to him than the roar of a thousand tongues.

"I—I am dying, and I must tell what

"Have you got that?" he asked. "Have you written it? Then let me sign it."

He tried to raise himself, but fell back helplessly. Geoffrey, with his face set and desperate, leaped forward.

"For heaven's sake help him to prove this before it is too late," he whispered to the doctor. "Let him sign what he has said—help him to do it, for heaven's sake."

The doctor shook his head and pointed to Barker's charred and helpless hands.

"A mark will be all he will be able to make," he whispered back, "and you will have to wait for that."

Geoffrey put down his hands helplessly. Wait? Hetty had waited eight years, eight years, and God was forcing the silent lips to speak at last. Surely he would wait another five minutes? He looked down at the changing face before him, and his heart stood still. Suppose he did not

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MONCTON BOYS DIVE TO DEATH

Edward Williams Could Not Swim and He Sank in Humphrey's Pond

Moncton, N. B., July 28.—With the remark to his companions, "Watch me," Edward Williams, aged fifteen, of this city, went to his death in the mill pond at Humphrey's Mill yesterday afternoon. Young Williams, with some companions had been swimming in the pond during the afternoon and were on their way home to Moncton when they met more boys en route to the pond to swim.

Williams and his chums were persuaded to return and Williams was the first to get in. He went out on some logs and while his companions stood on shore he called to them to watch him dive.

With this remark he plunged into about eight feet of water. When he reappeared it was at once seen he was beyond his depth and in distress. Being unable to swim, he went down again and the second time he came to the surface his struggles were very feeble. The third time he went down he failed to rise.

None of the boys were able to swim but Williams' brother climbed out on the logs and made every effort to aid his drowning brother. It was with difficulty that he was pulled ashore by his young companions.

The alarm was given and men who ran to the scene were able in a short time to bring Edward Williams' lifeless body to the surface. Dozens were one of a family of four. Their mother is a washerwoman living in Pearl street and the father is working near Campbellton. The deceased had been employed in the Dominion Textile Company's mill here but was having a half holiday Saturday.

Humphrey's pond has been the spot for quite a number of boys swimming and playing on logs and this is the third or fourth drowning there within the last few years.

RETURNED AFTER ANNUAL RETREAT ON SATURDAY

Many Catholic Clergy Passed Through the City from St. Joseph's—Fifty-seven Priests Were Present.

The annual retreat of the Catholic clergy of the St. John diocese, which was opened in St. Joseph's College, Memramou, on Tuesday last, was concluded on Saturday and the clergymen dispersed for their various stations.

His Lordship Bishop Casey and the St. John priests arrived home on Saturday afternoon. Others who passed through here on Saturday evening were Rev. Fr. Doyle, of Milltown (N. B.); Rev. Fr. O'Flaherty, St. Andrews; Rev. M. T. Murphy, of Debec Junction; Rev. F. J. McMurphy, of Woodstock; Rev. C. P. Carleton, of Peterborough; Rev. D. Le Blanc, of Central Kingsclear; Rev. Thomas Levey, of St. Stephen, and Rev. Dr. McLaughlin, assistant priest at Milltown. Rev. J. Carson, of St. George, went through on Saturday morning.

At 9 o'clock mass in the cathedral yesterday, Bishop Casey spoke briefly on the retreat. Fifty-seven priests had been present, and all had returned home spiritually refreshed. Rev. Fr. Carson, St. George, conducted the retreat.

Father Gasson went to Fredericton Saturday evening and preached in St. Anthony's church, St. Mary's, yesterday. He was the guest of Rev. J. Ryan, the pastor.

Rev. F. M. Lockary, who has been stationed at the palace, has been appointed pastor of the missions of Albert county, succeeding the late Father McAvilly. The missions of Sackville, and those of Port Elgin have been assigned to a separate parish, and Rev. A. J. LeBlanc, of St. Bernard's parish, Moncton, has been appointed pastor.



A man ran up the ladder and took from him a loose heap.

I know of the death of Mr. Lancaster—Hetty Lancaster never murdered him. It was Claude, Lord Fanshawe, who killed him—poisoned him. No one knew that he was going—no one saw him go except me and Hetty Lancaster. And only I knew what he meant to do."

His voice stopped for a moment, and he lay very still, with his eyes fixed, without seeing, on Geoffrey's face. The men about them had ceased to watch the burning mill, and moved it slowly along the paper.

A dozen heads bent forward to watch, as Barker scratched his name with his finger on the final "r" a dozen hands were thrust out to Geoffrey, and perhaps almost the last words the dying man heard were the whispers of the men who heard his confession.

speech again? Suppose he could not sign after all?

Waves of shadow went swiftly over Barker's face and with sudden, strange strength he raised himself.

"A pen—and be quick," he gasped unsteadily. "Let me sign."

Geoffrey thrust one into his numb, burned fingers. They could scarcely grasp it. They clung stiffly round it, dead, helpless, lifeless fingers—moved it slowly along the paper.

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in Sheffield street once, but after the hunter he retired—suddenly. Lord Fanshawe sent him away. He had been expecting him to drink himself to death for eight years, but he is still alive. The drink does not kill him. When I told Bessie, she said that God kept him alive—on purpose."

His voice faltered and stopped. His hands moved restlessly about his charred clothes.

"Perhaps it's true," he went on in a whisper. "Women know things sooner than men. It is funny how near Bessie is to death and he never dies. He gave the poison to Lord Fanshawe the very day Mr. Lancaster was found dead. Lord Fanshawe killed him, because he knew too much. He had found out about John Andrews, and he meant exposing us. Everybody thought John had embezzled Giles' money, but I was I who did it. I doctored the books, and Fanshawe and I shared the money. Fanshawe's crime was as mine and we the first—God help me now, it was not the first nor the last."

Once more his voice trailed away into silence, and then suddenly he roared. His dull eyes brightened a little.

"I'll sign—I'll bear witness to that," they said.

(To be continued.)

SCHOONER BOBS TOWED TO VINEYARD HAVEN

Vineyard Haven, Mass., July 28.—Schr. Bobs, Parrish's (N. S.) for Vineyard Haven, for orders, with a cargo of lumber, which had been ashore on Chatham Bar, was towed here today by the tug Pallas. She is full of water, but the extent of her damage cannot be ascertained before discharging.

Schooner R. Bowen, Campbellton (N. B.) for Baltimore, lost port anchor while anchored on Nantucket Shoals during the westerly gale yesterday. While making this harbor last night she struck some obstruction attached to the sunken schooner Sagamore off East Chop, but sustained no visible damage.



"To your work, you curs. Go back to your work, and let me pass at once. Do you hear?"

scorned with only one thought in her heart, one desire—to be avenged on the man who had spurned her.

She pulled open the door and hurried into the corridor, staring round her with a wild white eyes. In the hall-room at the far end dancing was in full swing. A couple lingered round the doorway, but the corridor was nearly empty. She turned and hurried down it, and a footman, meeting her, stared at her stupidly as she thrust the note into his hand.

He thought she was hysterical. He said afterward he could scarcely believe it was Miss Walter who stared up into his face.

"Take it at once," she cried, in a quick, high-pitched voice. "You must not lose a minute. It is important—a matter of life and death—more than one life and death!" She gave a sudden harsh laugh, and then sobbed again. "Don't wait for anything, don't even give me time to call you back. Go!"

She turned from him, and half stumbled, half ran toward an alcove, and, dropping into a lounge, pressed her palms against her ears to shut out all sounds, and shut her eyes.

The footman glanced down at the note in his hand.

It was addressed to the Inspector of Police, Oldcliffe!

en whose faces scarcely seemed to have changed. Some of them looked up as he passed and once or twice he drew in his breath, expecting recognition. But it never came, and in the faces he fancied he saw instead of the old eager, happy air, a sullen look, as if they resented his appearance.

It had not seemed like that in the old days. It had been all work and bustle and good spirits. Even the wheels had sung as they spun, and the whir of the traps and the hum of the dancing bobbins had been almost like music in the old days.

Now, surely, there seemed to hang about the workshops a sullen air, an air of restraint and sadness.

He stared about him, and then at last followed Mr. Thomson through a narrow gangway into another part.

"We have added this, this last year," Thomson said proudly, "and I feel I shall be justified in adding yet another building twice the size to meet the demands of my business. This is why I wish to form a company."

His chest swelled out, and at the entrance to the new rooms he stood, his thumbs in the armpits of his waistcoat and his hard face smiling and complacent.

But in this room the faces of the workers, thin faces most of them, and all looking worn and many ill and hungry, were still more sullen. They were older hands—most of them men, and as Geoffrey and Mr. Thomson entered the hard look seemed to settle still more sharply upon the faces.

Geoffrey and Thomson stood for a moment looking round. The movement and noise and bustle went on. Then suddenly everything seemed to come to a standstill, and before either realized it there was a movement among the workers. They had collected in a group before them, and one of them stood out, looking Geoffrey straight in the face.

"You, bein' a stranger, had better quit," he said roughly, "but we're goin' to deal with Mr. Thomson and now. It's all arranged, and you can quit if you want to. We'll see you out."

Geoffrey stared uncomprehendingly, but apparently Mr. Thomson understood only too well. His face had changed and grown a sudden ghastly gray. He pulled out his lips uncertainly, and his eyes wandered helplessly over the sullen, menacing group about him. He looked round. He was surrounded. There was no way of retreat. He was helpless among the enemy—among the work people he had been sweating for years, the people—friends once—whom he had alienated.

"You'd better quit," the workmen repeated. "We're goin' to have things settled tonight. Shall we wait for you?"

Geoffrey shook his head.

"No, I'll stay. I've got a friend here myself."

"A friend?"

"Ted Sealey," Geoffrey replied, and there was a shout.

we've had years' experience to prove as you aren't what you used to be. But we'll give you a chance. Two minutes."

"Bah!" The master's rage broke loose. "Every man who has a hand in this will be instantly dismissed," he shouted. "To your work, you curs. Go back to your work, and let me pass at once. Do you hear?"

Apparently no one heard or cared. The spokesman waited a moment, looked into Thomson's convulsed face, and then suddenly blew a whistle.

"Good heavens! the mill's on fire!" he cried harshly.

"Yes, yes, it's after," he said, "and all the women are out, and we're going to keep you here until the flames catch the gangway. Then you can run if you like."

Thomson gave a sharp cry, but before he could speak some rushed up. "Ted's caught and shut off," he cried hoarsely. "He went back for summat at the last minute, and he's there in the midst of the fire, in the very heart of it, mates."

Every one instantly forgot all about Thomson. A hundred voices clamored at once.

"What did he go for? What brought him back? What to be done?"

A score of men had disappeared for help. A dozen others began making attempts to get back into the other part of the mill.

But already, as it was, the gangway was filled with smoke, and amidst the clamor of voices, there began to be heard a dull, sinister sound, the roar of fire.

They looked at each other with blind, white faces. For a moment they seemed helpless and stupefied and then there began a move toward the other side of the new building, and the way out into the great yard.

Geoffrey went with them, drifting helplessly among them. They forgot all about him, they even forgot Thomson and the effect their reverence was having upon him in their dismay; but when they did recall him to the street in front they stood in horror.

The road was full. A crowd that was rapidly increasing stood up at the burning building. The soot, blown hot violently, prevented their going easily, and taken care that they should not fall. There was a strange smell of paraffine in the air, and the flames were leaping in the windows

CHAPTER XXVII.

There was something strange about Ted Sealey, something wrong. He had altered for the worse of late, had taken to queer hours and was neglecting his work. Geoffrey did not find him at his lodgings either that night or next day when he called, and Mrs. Sharpe sank her voice and leaned forward and whispered mysteriously in his ear.

"They're working overtime at the mill, but I reckon you won't find 'em there," he said. "He ain't the lad he was. He's going wrong, is Ted Sealey, an' all through that brazen lass of Merrill's. He weren't here last night, nor the night before that."

Geoffrey turned away, disappointed and vaguely uneasy. It all sounded so mysterious that he couldn't believe it. But somehow he could not shut him. He inquired at the mill early in the morning, only to find that he had not arrived, and the timekeeper at the door shook his head.

"There's no tellin' with him of late," he said, "and if you're a friend of his you'd better give him a warnin'. He's a good workman, but the master won't stand too much of it, and he's bin going lately."

The old man's words colored in his ears all day, and sent him back to the mill again late that afternoon. He found that he did not go much to the mill, and to the employees' entrance, but to the office door, where an impudent clerk lifted up a frosted glass window and said "Hello."

Geoffrey handed in his card, and the youth's manner underwent a sudden change.

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