

The Stolen Bank Notes

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never permit me to write to you for fear I'll tell you where it is. So I suppose the good-bye'll be like this. I'm sorry, little girl."

He heard her weeping and hurled himself against the bars in a passion. It passed after a moment.

"There's one thing you must do for me, Bell," he said, more calmly. "This sort of thing doesn't do any good. Brace up, little girl, and wait—wait for me. Eighteen years is not for ever; we're both young, and—but never mind that. I wish you would please go up to the flat and—do you remember my heavy, brown coat?"

"Yes, the old one?" she asked.

"That's it," he answered. "It's cold here in this cell. Will you please go up to the flat when they let you loose and sew up that tear under the right arm and send it to me here? It's probably the last favour I'll ask of you for a long time, so will you do it this afternoon?"

"Yes," she answered, tearfully.

"The tear is under the right arm, and be certain to sew it up," said Dolan again. "Perhaps, when I am tried, I shall have a chance to see you and—"

The Professor arose and stretched himself a little.

"That's all that's necessary, Mr. Mallory," he said. "Have her held until I tell you to release her."

Mallory made a motion to Cunningham and Blanton, and the woman was led away, screaming.

"Clever, aren't you?" he snarled as he caught sight of Detective Mallory. "Thought I'd try to tell her where it was, but I didn't, and you never will know where it is—not in a thousand years."

Accompanied by the Professor and Hatch the detective went back to his private office.

"Now, Mr. Hatch, we have the whereabouts of the money settled," said the Professor, quietly. "Please go at once to the flat and bring the brown coat Dolan mentioned. I dare say the secret of the hidden money is somewhere in that coat."

"But two of my men have already searched that coat," protested the detective.

"That doesn't make the least difference," snapped the scientist.

The reporter went out without a word. Half an hour later he returned with the brown coat. It was a commonplace looking garment, badly worn and in sad need of repair, not only in the tear under the arm but in other places. When he saw it the Professor nodded his head abruptly, as if it were just what he had expected.

"The money can't be in that, and I'll bet my head on it," declared Detective Mallory, flatly. "There isn't room for it."

The Thinking Machine gave him a glance in which there was a touch of pity.

"We know," he said, "that the money isn't in this coat. But can't you see that it is perfectly possible that a slip of paper on which Dolan has written down the hiding place of the money can be hidden in it somewhere? Can't you see that he asked for this coat—which is not as good as one as the one he is wearing now—in order to attract his wife's attention to it?"

Then, seam by seam, the brown coat was taken to pieces. Each piece in turn was submitted to the sharpest scrutiny. Nothing resulted. Detective Mallory frankly regarded it all as wasted effort, and when there remained nothing of the coat save strips of cloth and lining he was inclined to be

triumphant. The Professor was merely thoughtful.

"It went further back than that," the scientist mused, and tiny wrinkles appeared in the dome-like brow. "Ah! Mr. Hatch, please go back to the flat, look in the sewing-machine drawers, or work basket, and you will find a spool of brown thread. Bring it to me."

"How do you know there's a spool of brown thread there?" said the detective.

"I know it because Mr. Hatch will bring it back to me," snapped the Professor. "I know it by the simplest, most rudimentary rules of logic."

Hatch went out again. In half an hour he returned with a spool of brown thread. Professor van Dusen's white fingers closed on it eagerly, and his watery squint eyes examined it. A portion of it had been used—the spool was only half gone. But he noted—and as he did his eyes reflected a glitter of triumph—he noted that the paper cap on each end was still in place.

"Now, Mr. Mallory," he said, "I'll demonstrate to you that in Dolan the police are dealing with a man far beyond the ordinary bank thief. In his way he is a genius. Look here!"

With a pen-knife he ripped off the paper caps and then looked through the hole of the spool. For an instant his face showed blank amazement. Then he put the spool down on the table and squinted at it for a moment in absolute silence.

"It must be here," he said at last. "It must be, else why did he—of course!"

With quick fingers he began to unwind the thread. Yard after yard it rolled off in his hand, and finally in the mass of brown on the spool appeared a white strip. In another instant the Thinking Machine held in his hand a tiny, thin sheet of paper—a cigarette paper. It had been wound around the spool and the thread wound over it so smoothly that it was impossible to see that it had ever been removed.

The detective and Hatch were leaning over his shoulder watching him curiously. The tiny paper unfolded—something was written on it. Slowly the Professor deciphered it.

"47, Causeway Street, basement, tenth flagstone from northeast corner."

And there the money was found—\$109,000. The house was unoccupied, and within easy reach of a wharf from which a European bound steamer sailed. Within half an hour of sailing time it would have been an easy matter for Dolan to recover it all, and that without in the least exciting the suspicion of those who might be watching him. For a saloon next door opened into an alley behind, and a broken window in the basement gave quick access to the treasure.

"Dolan reasoned," the Professor explained, "that even if he was never permitted to see his wife she would probably use that thread and in time find the directions for recovering the money. Further he argued that the police would never suspect that a spool contained the secret for which they sought so long. His conversation with his wife, to-day, was merely to draw her attention to something which would require her to use the spool of brown thread. The brown coat was all that he could think of."

Dolan was a sadly surprised man when news of the recovery of the money was broken to him. But a certain quaint philosophy did not desert him. He gazed at Detective Mallory incredulously as the story was told, and at the end went over and sat down on his cell cot.

"Well, chief," he said, "I didn't think it was in you. That makes me owe you a hat."

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