THE BEACON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1918

The Secret Lonesome Gove Samuel Hopkins Adams Copyright, 1912, by the Bobbs-Merrill \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

> CHAPTER XVII. The Master of Stars.

TULY 5." remarked Kent, with his lids dropped over the keen gaze of his eyes. "It was the following morning that the unknown body was found on the beach near

Mr-near the Nook" Ar -near the Nook." Marjorie Blair's face showed no comprebension. "I have heard nothing of ny halv." she replied.

"bid none of the talk come to your ears of a strange woman found at Lonesome Cove?

"No. Wait. though. After the fuveral one of the cousins began to peak of a mystery, and Mr. Blair shut

"Your necklace was taken from that ody."

Her eyes grew wide. "Was she the thief?" she asked cagerly. "The person who took the necklace from the body is the one for whom 1 am searching. Now, Mrs. Blair, will you tell me in a word how your husband met his deato? Your father-inlaw gave you to understand, did he not, that Wilfrid Blair met and quarreled with-with a certain person and was killed in the encounter which followed?"

"How shall I ever free myself from the consciousness of my own part in it?" she shuddered. "Don't-don't speak of it again. I can't bear it."

"You won't have to very long," Kent assured her. "Let us get back to the jewels. You would be willing to make a considerable sacrifice to recover them?"

"Anything!"

"Perhaps you've heard something of this man?"

Drawing a newspaper page from his pocket, Kent indicated an advertisement outlined in blue pencil. It was elaborately displayed as follows:

Your Fate Is Written In the Heav-CONSULT THE Star Master Books to His Mystic Gaze-Be Guided Aright'In Business. Love and Health Thousands to Whom he has pointed Out the Way of the Stars Bless Him for His Aid. CONSULTATION BY APPOINT-MENT

brow as if in concentration of thought. Marjorie Blair felt an anholy desire to haugh. She glanced at Professor Kent and to her surprise found him exhibiting every evidence of discomposure. "Stupid of me." he muttered in apology. "Gets on one's nerves, you know. Awesome and all that sort of thing

fussing with the stars." forces respond to the master will of the date, year, month and day of your

birth, if you please?" "March 15, 1889," replied Mrs. Blair. Propelled by an unseen force, a celes tal globe mounted on a nickeled stand

ard, rolled forth. The starmaster spun it with a practised hand. Slowly and more slowly it turned until, as it came to a stop, a ray of light, mysteriously appearing, focused on a constellation.

"Yonder is your star," declared the astrologist. "See how the aural light seeks it."

"Oh, I say!" murmured he of the monocle. "Weird, you know! Quite gets on one's nerves. Quite"-

"Sh-b-h-h!" reproved Preston Jaz. "She "Silence is the fitting medium of the night." higher stellar mysteries. Madam, your life is a pathway between happing and grief. Loss, like a speeding comet. has crossed it here. Happiness, like "And the re the soft moon glow, has beamed upon was before?" it, and will again beam, in fuller ef-

fulgence." With beautifully modulated intona-tions he proceeded, while one of his visitors regarded him with awe struck reverence, and the other waited with patience-but unimpressed, so the orator felt, by his gifts. His voice sank, by deep toned gradations into slience. The ray winked out. Then the woman spoke. "Is it possible for your stars to guide

me to an object which I have lost?" "Nothing is hidden from the stars," declared their master. "You seek jewels, madam?" (Kent had let this much you?" out, as if by accident, in the morning's conversation.)

"Your birth stone is the bloodstone. Unhappy, indeed, would be the omen if you lost one of those gems." (He was fishing and came forward toward her almost brushing Kent.) "But I say," cried Kent in apparently uncontrollable agitation; "did your stars tell you that she had lost some jewelry? Tell me, is that how you knew?

In his eagerness he caught at the long fingers, gathering in the ample foids of the gown, pressed nervously upon the wrist. Preston Jax winced away. All the excited vapidity passed from Kent's speech at once.

"The jewels which this lady has lost," he said very quietly, "are a set of unique rose topazes. I thought-in fact, I felt that you could, with or without the aid of your stars, help her to recover them."

"Only the last one." "Bring it to me.", Obediently as an intimidated child. the astrologer left the room, presently

returning with a plain sheet of paper with handwriting on one side. With drooping head and chin

a-twitch the master of stars stood studying Mrs. Blair and Kent while "Fear nothing." said Jaz. "The star they read the letter together. It was in two handwritings, the date, address him who comprehends them. Madam, and body of the letter being in a cle ruuning character, while the signature. "Astraea," was in very fine, minute, detached lettering. The note read: All is now ready. You are but to carry

out our arrangements implicitly. The place is known to you. There can be no difficulty in your finding it. At two hours after sundown of July the 5th we shall be there. Our ship will be in waiting. All vill be as before. Fail me not. Your reward shall be greater than you drea ASTRAEA.

Kent folded and pocketed the letter. "Had you ever been to this place before?" Kent asked of Jax.

"No. "Then how did you expect to find

"She sent me a map. I lost it-that

"What about the ship?"

"I wish you'd tell me. There wasn't ny ship that I could see." any ship that I could see." "And the reference to all being as it

"You've got me again there. In most every letter there was somestand. She seemed to think we used to know each other. Maybe we did. Hundreds of jem come to me, I can't remember 'em all. Sometimes she called me Hermann. My name ain't Hermann. Right up to the time I saw her on the heights I was afraid she was taking me for somebody else and that the whole game would be queer ed as soon as we came face to face.' "What did she say when she saw

"Why, she seemed just as tickled to set eyes on me as if I were her Hermann twice over."

"Exactly," replied Kent, with satisfaction.

"Well. how do you account for that?"

Passing over 'the query, the other proceeded: "Now, as I understand it. you put yourself in my hands unreservedly.

"What else can I do?" cried Preston Jax.

"Nothing that would be so wise. So astrologer's arm, the right one, and his do not try. I shall want you to come to Martindale Center on call. Pack up and be ready. Come, Mrs. Blair. Remember, Jax, fair play, and we shall pull you through yet."

In the taxi Marjorie Blair turned to Kent. "You are a very wonderful person," she said-Kent shook his head-"and. I think, a very kind one."

morsefully" and set forth in somewhat exotic language that the writer, fearing a lapse of courage that might confuse his narrative when he should come to give it, bad "taken pen in nand" to commit it to writing and would the recipient "kindly pardon naste?" Therewith twenty-one typed pages.

"Quite enough." said Chester Kent, and dived into the turbid flood of words. And behold' As he turned, so o speak, the corner of the narrative he current became suddenly clear. The reader ran through it with inreasing absorption. Preston Jax. whose real name was John Preston. ad, after a rebellious boybood, run tway to sea, lived two years before the mast, picked up a smattering of ducation, been assistant and capper for a magnetic healer and had finally formulated a system of astrological prophecy that won him a slow but inreasing renown.

"This Astraea affair looked good from the first." So began Preston lax's confession, as beheaded and stripped down by its editor. "It looked ike one of the best. You could smell noney in it with half a nose. Her first etter came in on a Monday. I recollect. Irene, my assistant, had put the red pencil on it when she sorted out the nail to show it was something special. But don't get her into this, Professor Kent. If you do it's all off, jewels and ul. Irene has always been for the straight star business and forecast zame and no extras or side lines. Be ides, we were married last week. "She quoted poetry, swell poetry.

First off she signed herself 'An Adept.' gave her the Personal No. 3 and followed it up with the Special Friendly No. 5. Irene never liked that No. 5. She says it's spoony. Just the same, it fetches them-but not this one. She began to get personal and warm bearted, all right, and answered up with the kindred soul racket. But come to Boston? Not a move! Said she couldn't. There were reasons. It looked like the old game-flitter headed wife and jealous husband. Nothing in that game unless you go in for the straight holdup. And blackmail was always too strong for my taste. So I did the natural thing-gave her special readings and doubled on the price.

She paid like a lamb. "Then, blame if it didn't slip out she wasn't married at all! I lost that letter. It was kind of endearing. Irene put up a howl. It was getting too personal for her taste. I told her I would cut it out. Then I gave my swell lady another address and wrote her for a picture. Nothing doing. But she began to hint around at a meeting. One day a letter came with a hundred dollar bill in it. Loose, too, just like

you or me might send a two cent stamp. 'For expenses,' she wrote, and this. I was to come at once. Our souls had ugnize and join each other, she said. Here is the only part of the letter I could dig up from the wastehasket' Here a page was pasted upon the document. "'You have pointed out to me that

ooking document. The note began det around her neck. The stones were "Esteemed sir," concluded "Yours re- dke soft pink fires. I had not ever seen any like them before, and I stood there trying to figure whether they were rubies and how much they might be worth While I was wondering about it she half turned, and I got my irst look at her face. "She was younger than I had reckoned on and not bad to look at, but jueer, queer' Something about her

struck me all wrong-gave me a sort of ugly shiver. Another thing struck ne all right, though That was tha she had jewels on pretty much all her ingers. In one of my letters to her 1 gave her a hint about that-told her that gems gave the stars a stronger hold on the wearer, and she had taken it all in. She certainly was an easy subject.

"A bundle done up in paper was on the ground near her. I ducked back, very still, and got into my robe. The arrangement in her letter was for me to whistle when I got there. I whisiled. She straightened up.

'Come,' she said. 'I am waiting.' "Her voice was rather deep and soft. But it wasn't a pleasant softness. Some way I did not like it any better 1 liked ber looks. I stepped out into the open and gave her the grand bow.

"The master of the stars, at your command.' I said.

"'You are not as I expected to see you,' she said. "That was a sticker. It might mean most anything. I took a chance.

"'Oh, well,' I said, 'we all change.' "It went. 'We change as life changes,' she said. 'They never found you, did they?'

"From the way she said it I saw she expected me to say 'No.' So I said 'No.' "That was left for me to return and do,' she went on with a kind of queer joy that gave me the shivers again. The instant I saw your state ment in the newspaper I knew it was your soul calling to mine across the ages. "Our boat is at the shore."'

"In that last letter she mentioned ship. And, now, here was this boat business. (Afterward 1 looked for sign of either, but could not find any. I thought perhaps it would explain the other part of the 'we' and 'our.') If I was going to elope by sea I wanted to know it, and I said as much. "'Are you steadfast?' she asked.

"Well, there was only one answer to that. I said I was. She opened her package and took out a coil of rope. It was this gray-white rope, sort of clothesline, and it looked strong.

"'What now?' I asked her. "'To bind us together,' she said Close, close together, and then the plunge! This time there shall be no failure. They shall not find one of us without the other. You are not afraid? "Afraid! My neck was bristling.

"'Go slow,' I said, thinking mighty hard. 'I don't quite see the point of

'Didn't I curse myself for not re membering what I had written her? No clew, except that the poor soul was plumb dippy-too dippy for me to marry at any price. It wouldn't have held in the courts. Yet there might have been \$5.000 of diamonds on her. 1 suppose she felt me weakening. "'You dare to break our pact?' she says in a voice like a woman on the stage. Then she changed and spoke very gently. 'You are looking at these. gewgaws,' she said and took a diamond circlet from her finger. 'What do these count for?' And she put it in my hand. Another ring dropped at my feet. Mind, she was giving them to me. 'These are as nothing compared to what we shall have,' she went on, 'after the plunge. Wait!' "She had dropped the rope, and now she went into her paper parcel again, kneeling at my side. I had stooped to look for the fallen ring when I felt her hand slide up my wrist and then a quick little snap of something cold and close. A bracelet, I thought. And it was a bracelet! "'Forever! Together!' she said and clerk stood up beside me, chained to me by the handcuffs she had slipped on my right wrist and her left. 'How much to let me off?' I asked as soon as I could get breath. You see, it flashed on me that it was a police trap. Her next words put me on. "'The stars! The stars! she whispered. 'See ours-how they light our pathway across the sea, the sea that awaits "More breath came back to me. It wasn't a trap, then. She was only a crazy woman that I had to get rid of. I looked down at the handcuff. It was of iron and had dull rusted edges. A hammer would have made short work of it, but I did not have any hammer I did not even have a stone. There would be stones in the broken land beyond the thicket. I thought I saw a way. "'Yes, let's go,' I said. "We set out. At the edge of the thicket was a flattish rock with small stones near it. Here I pretended to slip. I fell with my right wrist across a rock and caught up a cobblestone with my left hand. At the first crack of the stone on the handcuff I could feel the old iron weaken. I got no chance for a second blow. Her hands were at my throat. They bit in. Then I knew it was a fight for my life. "The next thing I remember clearly she was quiet on the ground and I was hammering, hammering, hammering at my wrist with a blood stained stone. I do not know if it was her blood or mine. Both, maybe, for my wrist was like pulp when the iron finally cracked open and 1 was free. 1 canght a glimpse of blood on her temple. I suppose I had bit her there with the stone: She looked dead.

and jumping around her as she ran that was an awful night full of awful things. But the one worst sight of all worse even than the finding of her fterward-was that mad figure leapug over the broken ground toward the cliff's edge I held my breath to listen for her scream when she went over. I never heard it.

"But I heard something else. I leard a man's voice. It was clear and strong and high. There was death in it, I tell you, Mr. Kent. Living boron gripped at the throat that gave that err. Then there was a rush of little stones and gravel down the face. of the cliff. That was all.

"Beyond me the ground rose. I rap up on it. It gave me a clear view of the cliff top. I thought sure 1 would see the man who had cried out from there. Not a sight of him! Nothing moved in the moonlight. I thought he must have gone over the cliff too. I threw myself down and buried my face.

"How long I lay on the ground I do uot know. A wisp of cloud had blotted out the woman's star, now, and by that I knew she was dead. But the moon was shining high. It gave the light enough to see my way into the guily, and I stumbled and slid down through to the beach.

"I found her body right away. It ay with the head against a rock. But there was no sign of the man's body. the man who had yelled. I felt that before I went away from there I must conceal the cause of her death and everything about it that I could. if th was known how she was killed they would be more likely to suspect me.

"I went back and got the rope. ] got an old grating from the shore. 1 dragged the body into the sea and let it soak. I lashed it to the grating. I stripped the jewelry from her, but, J could not take it. That would have made me a murderer.

"There is a rock in the guily that I marked. Nobody else would ever notice it. Under it I hid the jewelry. k can take you to it, and I will.

"I got on my coat and sunk my robe in a creek and got myself to the rails road station for a morning train. And when I got home I married Irene. and I am through with the crooked work forever. This is the whole truth If any human being knows more about the death of Astraea it must be the man who shouted as she fell from the cliff and who went away and did not come back.

"(Signed) PRESTON JAX, S-M."

CHAPTER XIX.

In the White Room, NNALAKA, July 15 .- To Hotel Eyrie, Martindale Center: Dust 571 and send up seven chairs. Chester Kent." "Now, I wonder what that might d the day clers Eyrie as he read the telegram through for the second time. "Convention in the room of mystery, maybe?" Nor did the personnel of the visitor who, in the course of the late afternoon, arrived with requests to be shown to 571 serve to efface this impression. First came the sheriff from Annalaka. He was followed by a man of unmistakable African derivation, who gave the name of Jim and declined to identify himself more specifically. While the clerk was endeavoring, with signal lack of success, to pump him, Lawyer Adam Bain arrived and so emphatically vouched for his predecessor as to leave the desk lord no further excuse for obstructive tactics Shortly afterward Alexander Bing came in with a woman beavily veiled and was deferentially conducted alone Finally Chester Kent himself appeared, accompanied by Sedgwick and third man unknown to the clerk pompously arrayed in frock coat and silk hat and characterized by a painfully twitching chin. "Who have come?" Kent asked the That functionary ran over the list. "We shall not need in 571 ice water, stationery, casual messages, calling cards or any other form of espio said Kent. He led his companies the elevator. Sedgwick put a hand on his a "The woman with Blair?" he asked der his breath. Kent nodded. "I rather hoped that she wouldn't come," he said. "Bi might better have told her, so far as he knows."

Preston Jax Suit 77 Mystic Block, 10 Royal Street

Mrs. Blair glanced at the announcement.

"I want you to go there with me today." said Kent.

"To that charlatan? Why, Professor Kent, I thought you were a scientific man. I can't understand your motives. but I know that I can trust you. When do you wish me to go?"

"I have an apointment for us at high

As the clock struck 12 Kent and Mrs. Blair passed from the broad noonday glare of the street and were ushered into the tempered darkness of a strange apartment. It was hung about with black cloths and lighted by the effulgence of an artificial half moon and several planets contrived, Kent conjectured, of isinglass set into the fabric with arc lights behind them. A faint, heavy but not unpleasant odor as of incense hovered in the air. The moon waxed slowly in brightness, il-

lumining the two figures. "Very well fixed up," whispered Kent to his companion. "The astrolo-ger is now looking us over."

In fact. at that moment a contemplating and estimating eye was fixed upon them from a "dead" star in the farther wall, Preston Jax did not, as a rule, receive more than one client at a time. Police witnesses travel in pairs, and the starmaster was of a susicious nature. Now, however, he beheld a gentleman clad in such apparel as never police spy nor investigating rent wore, a rather puzzling "swell-(the term is culled from Mr. Jaz's envious thoughts), since it appeared to be individual without being n any particular conspicuous. The isitor was obviously "light."

Quitting his peep hole, the starmaser pressed a button. Strains of music. oft and sourceless, filled the air (from a phonograph mumed in rugs). 'Ine moon glow paled a little. There was soft rustle and fluctuation of wall traperies in the apartment. The light waxed. The smooth shaved starmaster stood before his visitors.

They beheld a man of undistinguished size and form eked out by a splen-did pomposity of manner. To this his garb contributed. All the signs of the lac had lent magnificence to the black, loose robe with gaping sleeves which he wore. Mrs. Blair ") noted with vague interest that it was all hand embroidered.

With a rhythmical motion of arms and hands he came forward, performed/a spreading bow of welcome and drew back, putting his hand to his

Blackness, instant and impenetrable, was the answer to this. Kent raised his voice the merest trifle. "Unless you wish to be arrested 1 advise you not to leave this place. Not by either exit." "Arrested on what charge?" came half chokingly out of the darkness.

"Theft." "I didn't take them." "Murder, then." "My God!" So abject was the terror

and misery in the cry that Kent felt sorry for the wretch. Then, with a certain dogged bitterness, "I don't care what you know; I didn't kill her."

"That is very likely true," replied Kent soothingly. "But it is what I must know in detail. Find your foot lever and turn on the light."

The two visitors could hear the astrologer grope heavily. As the light flashed on they saw, with a shock, that he was on all fours. It was as if Kent's word had felled him. Instantly he was up, however, and said: What am I up against? How did you find me?"

Thrusting his hand in his pocket the scientist brought out a little patch of black cloth, with a single star skilfully embroidered on it.

"Wild blackberry has long thorns and sharp," he said. "You left this tatter on Hawkill cliffs."

At the name the man's chin muscle throbbed with his effort to hold his teeth steady against chattering.

"What do you want?" "A fair exchange. My name is Ches-

ter Kent." The starmaster's chin worked conisively. "The Kent that broke up

the Co-ordinated Spiritism Circle?" "Yes." "It's all bargaining with the devil," observed Preston Jax grimly. "What's

the exchange?" "I do not believe that you are guilty of murder. Tell me the whole story plainly and straight, and I'll clear you

in so far as I can believe you inno-For the first time the seer's chin was

at peace. "The topazes are cached under a rock near the cliff. I couldn't direct you,

but I could show you." "In time you shall. One moment. As you realize, you are under presump-tion of murder. Do you know the iden-

tity of the victim?" "Of Astraca? That's all I know bout her. I don't even know her last

"Why Astraea?"

"That's the way she signed berself. She seemed to think I knew all about her without being told."

"And you played up to that belief?" "Well, of course, I did."

"Yes. you naturally would. But if yon had no name to write to how could

rou answer the letters?" "Through personal advertisements. She had made out a code. She was a

mart one in some ways. I can tall you." "Have you any of the letters here?"

our stars, swinging in mighty circles. are rushing on to a joint climax. Together we may force open the doors to the past and sway the world as we

sought to do in bygone days.' "And so on and cetera," continued the narrative. "Well, of course, she was nutty-that is, about the star business. But that don't prove anything. The dippiest star chaser I ever worked was the head of a department in one of the big stores, and the fiercest little business woman in business hours you ever knew. That was the letter she first called me Hermann in and signed Astraea to. Said there was no use pretending to conceal her identity any longer from me. Seemed to think I knew all about it. That jarred me some. And, with the change of writing in the signature, it all looked pretty queer. You remember the last letter, with the copperplate writing name at the bottom? Well, they all came that way after this; the body of the

letter very bold and careless; signature written in an entirely different hand. "But hundred dollar bills loose in letters mean a big stake. I wrote her 1 would come, and I signed it 'Hermann.' just to play up to her lead Irene got on and threw a fit. She said her woman's intuition told her there was danger in it. Truth is, she was stuck on me herself, and I was on her. but we did not find it out until after the crash. So I was all for prying Astraca loose from her money if I had to marry her to do it. She wrote some slush about the one desperate plunge together and then the glory that was to be ours. That looked like marriage

to me. "You saw the last letter. It had me rattled, but not rattled enough to quit. There was a map in it of the place for the meeting. That was plain enough But the 'our' and 'we' business in bothered me. It looked a bit like third person. I had not heard anything about any third person. What is more. I did not have any use for third person in this business. The stars forbade it. I wrote and told her so and said if there was any outsider rung in the stellar courses would have sudden change of heart. Then I put my best robe in a bag and bought a ticket for Carr's Junction. You can believe that while I was going through the woods i was keeping a bright eye out for any third party. Well, he was not there, not when I arrived anyway. Where he was all the time I do not know. I never saw him. But I heard him later. I can hear him yet at night.

"She was leaning against a little tree at the edge of the thicket when I first saw her. There was plenty of light from the moon, and it sifted down ab the trees and fell across ber

"All I wanted was to think-to think -to think. I was pretty much dotty I guess.

"While I was trying to think she came alive. She was on her feet before I knew it and off at a dead man. broken bandcuff went jerking "Then he doesn't know all?" "No. And perhaps she would be can tant with nothing else. It is her right And she is a brave woman is Marjo Blair, as Jax here can testify. have seen her under fire."

"She is that," confirmed the with the twitching chin.

This, then, is the final asked Sedgwick. "Final and complete."

Greetings among the little group the white hung room, so strangely harship thrown together by the cast of the hand of Circums were brief and formal. Only Pres Jax was named by Kent, with the ment that his story would be fort

Adv. in the Beacon For Results



"You are a very wonderful person," she said.

Kent shook his head again. "Be kind to me and leave me to go home alone." Kent stopped the cab, stepped out and raised his hat. She leaned toward him

"Just a moment." she said. "Perhaps I ought not to ask, but it is too strong for me. Will you tell me who the woman was?"

Kent fell back a step, his eyes widening.

"You don't see it yet?" he asked. "Not a glimmer of light-unless she was some - some unacknowledged member of the family."

"No; not that"

"And you can't tell me who she was?"

"Yes. but not just now. Try to be patient for a little, Mrs. Blair." "Very well. Your judgment is best. doubtless. Of course you know whose hand wrote the body of that letter?" "Yes; try not to think of it." advised Kent "It isn't nearly so ugly as it

seems.' She looked at him with her straight. fearless, wistful glance.

"That it should have been my hus band who gave the thing most precious to me to another woman! But why did he write the letter to Preston

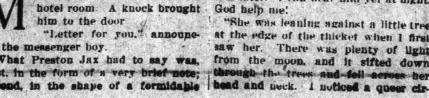
Jax for her to sign?"

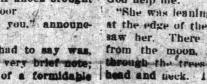
Chester Kent shook his head.

CHAPTER XVIII. The Astrologer's Tale.

IDNIGHT found Kent in his

What Preston Jax had to say was. int, in the form of a very brief note:





ed the messenger boy.