

burned over their heads. The small voice said something in a whisper too low for even Elgar's straining ears to catch, and then the other man burst into a bellowing laugh, which grated most horribly on Elgar's nerves, keyed up as they were to the extreme pitch of endurance.

"Haw, haw, haw! Well, of all the jokes I ever heard, that takes the cake! To think of the young innocent, begging, pleading, and imploring to be allowed to help smoke out his own people. Great Scott! it is enough to make a fellow choke with laughing. Haw, haw, haw!"

A white light of understanding flooded the mind of Elgar. Oh, why had he been so dense? Who else but his Uncle Bob would be most likely to have encountered the venomous hate of Reuben Shore?

Flinging out his arms with a shrill cry, which burst from him although he was absolutely unconscious of it, Elgar literally fought his way out of the crowded store, intent on flying to the rescue, but just as he reached the door the clock at the back of the counter struck twelve, with noisy, jarring strokes.