

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 1923

## The Breaking Point

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

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(Continued From Yesterday.)  
"I was in the living room when Donaldson ran in. I hid there until they were all gathered around Lucas and had quit running in, and then I got away. I saw my mother in the grounds later. I told her where the revolver was and that they'd better put it in the billiard room. I was afraid they'd suspect me."  
"I have read the above statement and it is correct. I was legally adopted by Mrs. Alice Ford Hines, of Omaha, and use that signature. I generally use the name of Frederick Gregory, which I took when I was on the stage for a short time."  
"(Signed) CLIFTON HINES."  
Bassett folded up the papers and put them in the envelope.  
"I got that," he said, "at the point of a gun, my friend. And our friend Hines departed for the Mexican border on the evening train. I don't mind saying that I saw him off. He held out for a get away, and I guess it's just as well."  
He glanced at Dick, lying still and rigid on the bed.  
"And now," he said, "I think a little drink won't do us any harm."  
Dick refused the drink. He was endeavoring to comprehend the situation; to realize that Gregory, who had faced him with such sneering hate a day or so before, was his half brother.  
"Poor devil!" he said at last. "I wish to God I'd known. He was right, you know. No wonder—"  
Some time later he roused from deep study and looked at Bassett.  
"How did you get the connection?"  
"I saw Melis, and learned that Hines was in it somehow. He was the connecting link between Beverly Carlyle and the Thorwald woman. But I couldn't connect him with Beverly herself, except by a chance. I wired a man I knew in Omaha, and he turned in at a lighted window and wandering off to drive a taxi cab."  
Suddenly Dick laughed. Bassett watched him, puzzled and angry, with a sort of savage tenderness.  
"You're crazy," he said morosely. "Darned if I understand you. Here I've got everything fixed as slick as a whistle, and it took work, believe me. And now you say you're going to chuck the whole thing."  
"Not at all," Dick replied, with a new ring in his voice. "You're right. I've been ten sorts of a fool, but I know now what I'm going to do. Take your paper, old friend, and for my sake go out and clear Jud Clark. Put up a headstone to him, if you like, a good one. I'll buy it."  
"And what will you be doing in the meantime?"  
"Oh, piffle!" Bassett groaned. "Don't start that all over again. Don't pull any Enoch Arden stuff on me, looking in at a lighted window and wandering off to drive a taxi cab."  
Suddenly Dick laughed. Bassett watched him, puzzled and angry, with a sort of savage tenderness.  
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Dick stretched and threw out his arms.  
"Me?" He said. "What should I be doing, old man? I'm going home."  
Lucy Crosby was dead. One moment she was of the quick, moving about the house, glancing in at David, having Minnie in the kitchen pin and unpin her veil, and the next she was still and infinitely mysterious on her white bed. She had fallen outside the door of David's room, and lay there, her arms still full of fresh bath towels, and a fixed and intense look in her eyes, as though, outside the door, she had come face to face with a messenger who bore surprising news. Doctor Reynolds, running up the stairs, found her there dead, and closed the door in to David's room.

But David knew before they told him. He waited until they had placed her on her bed, had closed her eyes and drawn a white coverlet over her and then he went in alone, and sat down beside her, and put a hand over her chilling one.  
"If you are still here, Lucy," he said, "and have not yet gone on, I want you to carry this with you. We are all right here. Everybody is all right. You are not to worry."  
After a time he went back to his room and got his prayer book. He could hear Harrison Miller's voice soothing Minnie in the lower hall, and Reynolds at the telephone. He went back into the quiet chamber, and opening the prayer book, began to read aloud.  
"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept—"

His voice tightened. He put his head down on the side of the bed.  
He was very docile that day. He moved obediently from his room for the awful aftermath of a death, for the sweeping and dusting and cleaning curtains, and sat in Dick's room, not reading, not even praying; a lonely yet indomitable old figure.

When his friends came, elderly men who creaked in and tried to reduce their robust voices to a decorous whisper, he shook hands with them and made brief, courteous replies. Then he lapsed into silence, and they felt shut off and uncomfortable, and creaked out again.  
Only once did he seem shaken. That was when Elizabeth came swiftly in, and put her arms around him as he sat. He held her close to him, saying nothing for a long time. Then he drew a deep breath.  
"I was feeling mighty lonely, honey," he said.

He was the better for her visit. He insisted on dressing that evening, and on being helped down the stairs. The town, which had seemed inimical for so long, seemed to him suddenly to be holding out friendly hands. More than friendly hands. Loving, tender hands, offering service and affection and old-time friendships. It moved about sedately, in dark clothes, and came down the stairs red-eyed and using pocket

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she heard and understood, not the Lucy on the bed, but the Lucy that had not yet gone on to the company of heaven, carried him back to his bed, comforted and reassured.  
He was up and about his room early. The odor of baking muffins and frying ham came up the stairs, well as did the sound of Mike vigorously polishing the floor in the hall. Mixed with the odor of cooking and of floor wax was the scent of flowers from Lucy's room, and Mrs. Sayre's machine stopped at the door while the chauffeur delivered a great mass of roses.  
David went carefully down the stairs and into his office, and there at the long deserted desk, commenced a letter to Dick.  
He was sitting there when Dick came up the street.  
The thought that he was going home had upheld Dick through the days that followed Bassett's departure for the west. He knew that it would be a fight, that not easily does a man step out of life and into it again, but after his days of inaction he stood ready to

fight. For David, for Lucy, and if it wasn't too late, for Elizabeth. When Bassett's wire came from Norway, "All clear," he set out for Haverly, more nearly happy than for months. The very rhythm of the train sang: "Going home, going home."  
At the Haverly station the agent stopped, stared at him and then nodded gravely. There was something restrained in his greeting, like the voices in the old house the night before, and Dick felt a chill of apprehension. He never thought of Lucy, but David—  
The flowers and ribbon at the door were his first intimation, and still it was David he thought of. He went cold and bitter, standing on the freshly washed pavement, staring at them. It was all too late. David! David!  
(To be Continued)

Newfoundland dogs are a cross between dogs introduced by European fishermen and Labrador sledge dogs.  
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