

BARNABY RUDGE

By CHARLES DICKENS

"There'll be no murdering, my dear. Not a bit on it. I tell you what, though, brother," said Dennis, cocking his hat for the convenience of scratching his head, and looking gravely at Hugh, "it's worthy of notice, as a proof of the amazing equality and dignity of our law, that it don't make no difference between men and women. I've heard the judge say, sometimes, to a highwayman or house-breaker as had tied the ladies, neck and heels—you'll excuse me making mention of it, my darlings—and put 'em in a cellar, that he showed no consideration to women. Now, I say that there judge didn't know his business, brother, and that if I had been that there highwayman or house-breaker, I should have made answer: 'What are you a-talking of, my lord? I showed the women as much consideration as the law does, and what would you have me do? If you was to count up in the newspapers the number of females as have been worked off in this here city alone, in the last ten year,' said Mr. Dennis thoughtfully, 'you'd be surprised at the total—quite amazed, you would. There's a dignified and equal thing, a beautiful thing! But we've no security for its lasting. Now that they've begun to favor these here Papists, I shouldn't wonder if they went and altered even that, one of these days. Upon my soul, I shouldn't.'

This subject, perhaps, from being of too exclusive and professional a nature, failed to interest Hugh as much as his friend had anticipated. But he had no time to pursue it, for at this crisis, Mr. Tappertit entered precipitately, at sight of whom Dolly uttered a scream of joy, and fairly threw herself into his arms. "I knew it, I was sure of it!" cried Dolly. "My dear father's at the door. Thank God, thank God! Bless you, Sim. Heaven bless you for this!"

Simon Tappertit, who had at first implicitly believed that the locksmith's daughter, unable any longer to suppress her secret passion for himself, was about to give it full vent in its intensity, and to declare that she was his forever, looked extreme, foolish when she said these words,—the more so as they were received by Hugh and Dennis with a loud laugh, which made her draw back, and regard him with a fixed and earnest look.

"Miss Haredeale," said Sim, after a very awkward silence, "I hope you are as comfortable as circumstances will permit of. Dolly Varden, my darling—my own, my lovely one—I hope you're pretty comfortable likewise." Poor little Dolly! She saw how it was; his her face in her hands; and sobbed more bitterly than ever. "You meet in me, Miss V., said Simon, laying his hand upon his breast, 'not a pretence, not a workman, not a slave, not the victim of your father's tyrannical behavior, but the leader of a great people, the captain of a noble band, in which these gentlemen are, as I may say, corporals and sergeants. You behold in me, not a private individual, but a public character; not a mender of locks, but a healer of the wounds of his unhappy country. Dolly V., sweet Dolly V., or how many years have I looked forward to this present meeting! For how many years has it been my intention to exalt and enoble you! I redeem it. Behold in me, your husband. Yes, beautiful Dolly—charmer—enslaver—S. Tappertit is all your own!"

As he said these words he advanced towards her. Dolly retreated till she could go no further, and then sank down upon the floor. Thinking it very possible that this might be maiden modesty, Simon essayed to raise her, on which Dolly, goaded to desperation, wound her hands in his hair, and crying out amidst her tears that he was a dreadful little wretch, and always had been, shook, and pulled, and beat him, until he was fain to call for help, most lustily. Hugh had never admired her half so much as at that moment.

"She's in an excited state to-night," said Simon, as he smoothed his rumpled feathers, "and don't know when she's well off. Let her be by herself till to-morrow, and that'll bring her down a little. Carry her into the next house!"

Hugh, had her in his arms directly. It might be that Mr. Tappertit's heart was really softened by her distress, or it might be that he felt in some degree indecorous that his intended bride should be struggling in the grasp of another man. He commanded him, on second thought, to put her down again, and looked moodily on as she flew to Miss Haredeale's side, and clinging to her dress, hid her flushed face in its folds.

"They shall remain here together till to-morrow," said Simon, who had now quite recovered his dignity—"till to-morrow. Come away!" "Ay!" cried Hugh, "Come away, captain. Ha, ha, ha!" "What are you laughing at?" demanded Simon sternly.

"Nothing, captain, nothing," Hugh rejoined; and as he spoke, and clapped his hand upon the shoulder of the little man, he laughed again, for some unknown reason, with tenfold violence. Mr. Tappertit surveyed him from head to foot with lofty scorn (this only made him laugh the more), and turning to the prisoners, said: "You'll take notice, ladies, that this place is well watched on every side, and that the least noise is certain to be attended with unpleasant consequences. You'll hear—both of you—more of our intentions to-morrow. In the mean time, don't show yourselves at the window, or appeal to any of the people you may see pass it; for if you do, it'll be known directly that you come from a Catholic house, and all the exertions our men can make, may not be able to save your lives."

With this last caution, which was true enough, he turned to the door, followed by Hugh and Dennis. They paused for a moment, going out, to look at them clasped in each other's arms, and then left the cottage; fastening the door, and setting a good watch upon it, and indeed all round the house.

"I say," growled Dennis, as they walked away in company, "that's a dainty pair. Muster Gashford's one is as handsome as the other, eh?" "Hush!" said Hugh, hastily. "Don't you mention names. It's a bad habit."

"I wouldn't like to be him, then (as you don't like names), when he breaks it out to her; that's all," said Dennis. "She's one of them fine, black-eyed, proud gals, as I wouldn't trust at such times with a knife too near 'em. I've seen some of that sort, afore now. I recollect one that was worked off, many year ago—and there was a gent'leman in that case too—that says to me, with her lip trembling, but her hand as steady as ever I see one." Dennis, I'm near my end, but if I had a dagger in these fingers, and he was within my reach, I'd strike him dead afore me!—ah, she did—and she'd have done it, too!"

"Strike who dead?" demanded Hugh. "How should I know, brother?" answered Dennis. "She never said; not she."

Hugh looked, for a moment, as though he would have made some further inquiry into this incoherent recollection; but Simon Tappertit, who had been meditating deeply, gave his thoughts a new direction. "Hugh!" said Sim. "You have done well to-day. You shall be rewarded. So have you, Dennis—There is no young woman you want to carry off, is there?"

"N—no," returned that gentleman, stroking his grizzled beard, which was some two inches long. "None in particular, I think."

"Very good," said Sim; "then we'll find some other way of making it up to you. As to you, old boy," he turned to Hugh—"you shall have Migs (her that I promised you, you know) within three days. Mind. I pass my word for it."

Hugh thanked him heartily, and as he did so, his laughing fit returned with such violence that he was obliged to hold his side with one hand and to lean with the other on the shoulder of his small captain, without whose support he would certainly have rolled upon the ground.

CHAPTER II.

The three worthies turned their faces towards The Boot, with the intention of passing the night in that place of rendezvous, and of seeking the repose they so much needed in the shelter of their old den; for now that the mischief and destruction they had proposed were achieved, and their prisoners were safely bestowed for the night, they began to be conscious of exhaustion, and to feel the wasting effects of the madness which had led to such deplorable results.

Notwithstanding the lassitude and fatigue which oppressed him now, in common with his two companions, and indeed with all who had taken an active share in that night's work, Hugh's boisterous merriment broke out afresh whenever he looked at Simon Tappertit, and vented itself—much to that gentleman's indignation—in such shouts of laughter as bade fair to bring the watch upon them, and involve them in a skirmish, to which in their present worn-out con-

dition they might prove by no means equal. Even Mr. Dennis, who was not at all particular on the score of gravity or dignity, and who had a great relish for his young friend's eccentric humors, took occasion to remonstrate with him on this imprudent behavior, which he held to be a species of suicide, tantamount to a man's working himself off without being overtaken by the law, than which he could imagine nothing more ridiculous or impertinent.

Not abating one jot of his noisy mirth, for these remonstrances, Hugh reeled along between them, having an arm of each, until they were in sight of The Boot, and were within a field or two of that convenient tavern. He hopped by great good-luck to silence by this time. They were proceeding onward without noise, when a scout who had been creeping about the ditches all night, to warn any stragglers from encroaching further on what was now such dangerous ground, peeped cautiously from his hiding-place and called to them to stop.

Because (the scout replied) the house was filled with constables and soldiers; having been surprised, that afternoon. The inmates had fled or been taken into custody, he could not say which. He had prevented a great many people from approaching nearer and he believed they had gone to the markets and such places to pass the night. He had heard the people who passed and repassed, speaking of them too, and could report that the prevailing opinion was one of apprehension and dismay. He had not heard a word of Barnaby—didn't even know his name—but it had been said in his hearing that some man had been taken and carried off to Newgate. Whether this was true or false he could not affirm.

The three took counsel together, on hearing this, and debated what it might be best to do. Hugh, deeming it possible that Barnaby was at that moment under detention at The Boot, he was advancing stealthily, and firing the house, but his companions, who objected to such rash measures unless they had a crowd at their backs, represented that if Barnaby were taken he had assuredly been removed to a stronger prison; they would never have dreamed, he said, of keeping him all night in a place so weak and open to attack. Yielding to this reasoning and to their persuasions, Hugh consented to turn back, and to repair to Fleet Market, where, it seemed, a few of their boldest associates had shaped their course on receiving the same intelligence.

Feeling their strength recruited and their spirits roused, now that there was a new necessity for action, they hurried away, quite forgetful of the fatigue under which they had been sinking but a few minutes before, and soon arrived at their place of destination.

Fleet Market, at that time, was a long irregular row of wooden sheds and pent-houses, occupying the centre of what is now called Farringdon street. They were jumbled together in a most unsightly fashion, in the middle of the road, to the great obstruction of the thoroughfare and the annoyance of passengers, who were fain to make their way, as they best could, among carts, baskets, barrow, trucks, casks, bulks, and benches, and to struggle with porters, tucksters, wagoners, and a motley crowd of buyers, sellers, pickpockets, vagrants, and idlers. The air was perfumed with the stench of rotten leaves and faded fruit, the refuse of the butchers' stalls, and of all garbage of a hundred kinds. It was indispensable to most public conveniences in those days, that they should be public nuisances likewise; and Fleet Market maintained the principle to admiration.

To this place, perhaps because its sheds and baskets were a tolerable substitute for beds, or perhaps because it afforded the means of a hasty barricade in case of need, many of the rioters had straggled not only that night, but for two or three nights before. It was now broad day, but the morning being cold, a group of them were gathered round a fire in a public-house, drinking hot puri, and smoking pipes, and planning new schemes for to-morrow.

Hugh and his two friends being known to most of these men, were received with signal marks of approbation, and induced into the most honorable seats. The room door was closed and fastened to keep intruders at a distance, and then they proceeded to exchange news.

"The soldiers have taken possession of The Boot, I hear," said Hugh. "Who knows anything about it?" Several cried that they did; but the majority of the company having been engaged in the assault upon the Warren, and all present having been concerned in one or other of the night's expeditions, it proved that they knew no more than Hugh himself, having been merely warned by each other, or by the scout, and knowing nothing of their own knowledge.

"We left a man on guard to-day," said Hugh, looking round him, "who is not here. You know who it is—Barnaby, who brought the soldier down, at Westminster. Has any man seen or heard of him?"

They shook their heads, and murmured an answer in the negative, as each man looked round and appealed to his fellow; when a noise was heard without, and a man was heard to say that he wanted Hugh—that he must see Hugh.

"He is but one man," cried Hugh to those who kept the door; "let him come in." "Ay, ay!" muttered the others. "Let him come in. Let him come in."

The door was accordingly unlocked. A one-armed man, with his head and face tied up with a bloody cloth as though he had been severely beaten, his clothes torn, and his remaining hand grasping a thick stick, rushed in among them, and panting for breath, demanded which was Hugh. "Here he is," replied the person he inquired for. "I am Hugh. What do you want with me?" "I have a messa, for you," said the man. "You know one Barnaby?" "What of him? Did he send the message?" "Yes. He's taken. He's in one of the strong cells in Newgate. He defended himself as well as he could, but was overpowered by numbers. That's his message."

"When did you see him?" asked Hugh, hastily. "On his way to prison, where he was taken by a party of soldiers. They took a by-road, and not the one we expected. I was one of the few who tried to rescue him, and he call-

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ed to me, and told me to tell Hugh where he was. We made a good struggle, though we failed. Look here!"

He pointed to his dress and to his bandaged head, and still panting for breath, glanced round the room; then faced towards Hugh again. "I know you by sight," he said, "for I was at the crowd on Friday, and on Saturday, and yesterday, but I didn't know your name. You're a bold fellow, I know. So is he. He fought like a lion to-night, but it was of no use. I did my best, considering that I want this limb."

Again he glanced inquisitively round the room—or seemed to do so, for his face was nearly hidden by the bandage—and again facing sharply towards Hugh, grasped his stick as if he half expected to be set upon, and stood on the defensive.

If he had any such apprehension, however, he was speedily reassured by the demeanor of all present. None thought of the bearer of the tidings. He was lost in the news he brought. Oaths, threats, and execrations were vented on all sides. Some cried that if they bore this tamely, another day would see them all in jail, some that they should have happened. One man cried in a loud voice, "Who'll follow me to Newgate!" and there was a loud shout and a general rush towards the door.

But Hugh and Dennis stood with their backs against it, and kept them back, until the clamor had so far subsided that their voices could be heard when they called to them together that to go now, in broad day, would be madness, and that if they waited until night and arranged a plan of attack, they might release, not only their own companions, but all the prisoners, and burn the jail.

"Not that jail alone," cried Hugh, "but every jail in London. They shall have no place to put their prisoners in. We'll burn them all down; make bonfires of them every one! Here!" he cried, catching at the hangman's hand. "Let all who're men here, join with us. 'Shake hands upon it. Barnaby out of jail and not a jail left standing! Who joins?" Every man there. And they swore a great oath to release their friends from Newgate next night, to force the doors and burn the jail, or perish in the fire themselves.

CHAPTER III.

On that same night—events so crowd upon each other in convulsed and distracted times, that more than the stirring incidents of a whole life often become compressed into the compass of four and twenty hours—on that same night Mr. Haredeale, having strongly bound his prisoner, with the assistance of the sexton, and forced him to mount his horse, conducted him to Chigwell, bent upon procuring a conveyance to London from that place, after carrying him to an office before a Justice. The disturbed state of the town would be, he knew, a sufficient reason for demanding the murderer's committal to prison before daybreak, as no man could answer for the security of any of the watch-houses or ordinary places of detention, and to convey a prisoner through the streets when the mob were again abroad, would not only be a task of great danger and hazard but would be to challenge an attempt at rescue. Directing the sexton to lead the horse, he walked close by the murderer's side, and in this order they reached the village about the middle of the night.

The people were all awake and up, for they were fearful of being burned in their beds, and sought to comfort and assure each other by watching in company. A few of the stoutest-hearted were armed and gathered in a body on the green. To these who knew him well, Mr. Haredeale addressed himself, briefly narrating what had happened, and beseeching them to aid in conveying the criminal to London before dawn of day. But not one man among them dared to help him by so much as the motion of a finger. The rioters, in their passage through the village, had menaced their fiercest vengeance any person who should aid in extinguishing the fire, or render the least assistance to him, or any Catholic whomsoever. Their threats extended to their lives and all that they possessed. They were assembled for their own protection, and could not endanger themselves by lending any aid to him. This they told him, not without hesitation and regret, as they kept aloof in the moonlight and glanced fearfully at the ghostly rider, who, with his head drooping on his

breast and his hat slouched down upon his brow, neither moved nor spoke.

Finding it impossible to persuade them, and indeed hardly knowing how to do so after what they had seen of the fury of the crowd, Mr. Haredeale besought them that at least they would leave him free to act for himself, and would suffer him to take the only chaise and pair of horses that the place afforded. This was not acceded to without some difficulty, but in the end they told him to do what he would, and go away from them in Heaven's name.

Leaving the sexton at the horse's bridle, he drew out the chaise with his own hands, and would have harnessed the horses, but that the post-boy of the village—a soft-hearted, good-for-nothing vagabond kind of a fellow—was moved by his earnestness and passion, and, throwing down a pitchfork with which he was armed, swore that the rioters might cut him into mince-meat if they liked, but he would not stand by and see an honest gentleman who had done no wrong reduced to such extremity, without doing what he could to help him. Mr. Haredeale shook him warmly by the hand, and thanked him from his heart. In five minutes' time the chaise was ready, and this good scapegrace in his saddle. The murderer was put inside, the blinds were drawn up, the sexton took his seat upon the bar, Mr. Haredeale mounted his horse and rode close beside the door; and so they started in the dead of night, and in profound silence, for Leaden.

The consternation was so extreme that even the horses which had escaped the flames at the Warren could find no friends to shelter them. They passed them on the road, browsing on the stunted grass, and the driver told them, that the poor beasts had wandered to the village first, but had been driven away lest they should bring the vengeance of the crowd on any of the inhabitants.

Nor was this feeling confined to such small places, where the people were timid, ignorant, and unprotected. When they came near London they met in the gray light of morning, more than one poor Catholic family who, terrified by the threats and warnings of their neighbors, were quitting the city on foot, and who told them they could hire no cart or horse for the removal of their goods, and had been compelled to leave them behind, at the mercy of the crowd. Near Mile-end they passed a house, the master of which, a Catholic gentleman of small means, having hired a wagon to remove his furniture by midnight, had had it all brought down into the street to wait the vehicle's arrival, and save time in the packing. But the man with whom he made the bargain, alarmed by the fires that night, and by the sight of the rioters passing his door, had refused to keep it; and the poor gentleman, with his wife and servant and their little children, were sitting trembling among their goods in the open street, dreading the arrival of day and not knowing where to turn or what to do.

It was the same, they heard, with the public conveyances. The panic was so great that the mails and stage-coaches were afraid to carry passengers who professed the obnoxious religion. If the drivers knew them, or they admitted that they held that creed, they would not take them, no, though they offered large sums; and yesterday, people had been afraid to recognize Catholic acquaintance in the streets, lest they should be marked by spies, and burned out, as it was called, in consequence. One mild old man—a priest, whose chapel was destroyed, a very feeble, patient, inoffensive creature—who was trudging away, alone, designing to walk some distance from town, and then try his fortune with the coaches, told Mr. Haredeale that he feared he might not find a magistrate who would have the hardihood to commit a prisoner to jail, on his complaint. But notwithstanding these discouraging accounts they went on, and reached the Mansion House soon after sunrise.

Mr. Haredeale threw himself from his horse, but he had no need to knock at the door, for it was already

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open, and there stood upon the step a portly man, with a very red, or rather purple face, with an anxious expression of countenance, was remonstrating with some unseen person upstairs, while the porter essayed to close the door by degrees and get rid of him. With the intense impatience and excitement natural to one in his condition, Mr. Haredeale thrust himself forward and was about to speak, when the fat old gentleman interposed: (To be Continued.)

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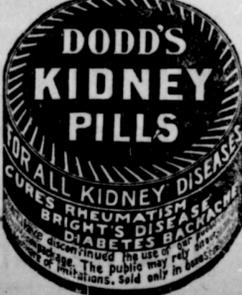


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