

Writing

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The Mysterious Car

By WILFRED BROWN

(Continued)

HARKINS hurried out of the office building. He was in the car, the tumbly spot, disconnected the locking device with his key, and in a moment was threading his way among the north-bound vehicles; out on the parkway he speeded, for the night was cold and clear, and the tang of early autumn was in the air.

In Westchester, a cozy bachelor dinner awaited him, then an easy chair, a pipe and book by the log fire. Why hurry? he asked himself contentedly as he swung around a curve into a lonely stretch of road.

Something cold and hard touched his right ear. He did not move his head. He knew that some one was holding a gun. "What do you want?" he called back.

"Stop!" It was a soft feminine voice, but very firm.

"The female of the species?" he ejaculated, bringing the car to an abrupt stop.

"Turn around and drive back to 220 Broadway," commanded the voice.

"On the way?" called Harkins cheerily. "Anything else, m'am?"

No answer, but the something cold and hard still irritated his ear. He hoped she knew what she was about—he didn't, but he obediently reversed the car about and headed for his office. He had a great respect for firearms; he had served in France and he knew how short-tempered a gun could be. At Columbus Circle he stopped.

"I'm going to look around," he announced.

The gun left his ear, but when he stiffly turned his aching neck he found the rear of the car in shadow and only the gleam of the still menacing weapon.

"Miss Hold-up, put down that gun or I shall call a policeman," he yelled.

"You? Call an officer?" She was contemptuous. "Drive on, please, before I turn you over to the police for stealing my car."

"Your car?" he blurted, but the policeman's whistle ordered them to move with the traffic. "Your car?" he repeated over his shoulder.

"Certainly, or my father's car. You are very daring—but please go back to 220 Broadway."

In amazed silence he did drive back to the office building, but it was dark and deserted save for scattered lights.

"What shall I do now?" he asked patiently.

There was a silence, then in a wavering voice she answered him: "I don't know. I never arrested a man before."

"Neither have I," he confessed, "but perhaps this officer on the corner can straighten things out."

Patrolman Ditty listened to their tales. The girl spoke in a low, cultivated voice, saying that she had driven the car downtown that afternoon to her father's office, had locked it with the safety device and taken the elevator to his private office. Finding him in conference with a client she had gone back to the car, settled herself in the tummy and in the gloom of the raised top had napped a little.

"I woke up out on the parkway," she ended, "and so I groped and found the place where my father keeps his pistol—and I made the thief turn and drive back here."

"See your license, miss," growled the officer.

She produced it and also repeated the car number.

The officer poked around the machine with a searchlight. "Wrong dope on that, miss," he came back to report. "This is the same make but a different number. Now, young feller, I think I'll lock you up."

He took the girl's name and address, put her in a taxicab and then commanded Harkins to drive to the police station.

"Why did you let the girl go?" asked Harkins, peevishly. "She had my car."

"She's J. B. Porter's daughter—she's all right."

At the station house Harkins was permitted to use a telephone. He called J. B. Porter's apartment. A clear, sweet voice responded: "I am sorry, but my father is not at home. Any message?"

"This is Harkins, Mr. Porter's legal associate. I am in the Tomb."

"The Tomb?" she gasped. "I am so sorry."

"Thank you," he grinned into the transmitter. "My automobile was stolen—or taken by mistake and here I am!"

"Oh! How strange—you were arrested because some one stole your car?"

"Well—she said my car was her car—and with the evidence all against her she got away—" he sighed deeply. "Got away?" came the faint echo.

"Because she mentioned her father's name—and they won't let me talk any more—say I'm talking too much."

"Coming right down," he heard before an officer elbowed him away from the instrument.

Then came J. B. Porter, shaking with laughter, and a lovely girl who clung to her father and begged Harkins' forgiveness for her blunder. J. B. Porter balled his future son-in-law (none of them knew the fact just then) out of jail, and all went happily thereafter.

Harkins says the pleasantest hours of his life were spent in the Tomb prison, and as for a bachelor home in Westchester—why, a New Jersey home, a log fire, two easy chairs and no book at all is much to be preferred.

CLARENCEVILLE

Mrs. Fred Menke,
PHONE 25F23

Blue Bird Circle was entertained at the home of Mrs. George Farmer of Graham road Wednesday. A large number attended. Mr. and Mrs. Howard Nelson and two children, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Durham and son, motored to Stockbridge Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Headerle are entertaining her aunt, Mrs. Leverette of Kalamazoo at their home on Oxford avenue. On Sunday Mr. and Mrs. Headerle and family, Mr. and Mrs. Green of Mt. Clemens, Mr. and Mrs. Frank of Detroit visited with Mr. and Mrs. Kumerfelt at their cottage at Island Lake.

The Ladies Aid of the M. E. Church will give a dinner on Thursday, October 18 at the church at noon. The public is in-

vited to attend. Mrs. L. G. Meyer was elected president of the Aid at the last Aid meeting.

Mrs. Robert Jones entertained the Cheerful Circle at her home Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. William Beverly and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Sheridan and daughter Dorothy, spent Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Aldrich.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Ludy of Windsor, Ontario, visited with Mr. and Mrs. Charles French of Hugo avenue, Sunday.

Next Tuesday evening the entertainment committee of the Edgewood Rebekah Lodge will hold a public party at the hall.

The T. T. C. A. will hold a pedro party Friday evening at the hall. The public is invited.

Mrs. John Lane and Miss Elmore White entertained seventeen friends at a shower in honor of Mrs. Edward Christensen at Mrs.

Lane's home Wednesday afternoon.

The S. C. A. football team won another game Sunday, winning the game from the All-Americans. The score was 6 to 0. Joe Holbrook made the touchdown. They will play Utica Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Milton Purkey are entertaining a friend, Fred King of Chicago for two weeks.

Mr. and Mrs. George Ferris entertained Mr. and Mrs. William Worley and two sons, William and Ernest of Chatham, Ontario over Sunday. On Sunday they all motored to Big Beaver.

Mrs. Ervin Tower entertained twenty-seven ladies of the Edgewood Rebekah degree staff at a dinner and shower in honor of Mrs. Percy Allsbach Tuesday at noon, at the hall.

Rally Day services at the Clarenceville M. E. Church were well attended Sunday morning. The program given by the Sunday

School children and solo by Rev. Richards were especially enjoyed. Services will be held Sunday morning and evening.

Mrs. Barnum of Purling Brook road, spent some time in Detroit last week on account of the serious illness of her mother, who is in St. Mary's hospital.

The Misses Helen Nelson, Martha Jorgensen, Irene Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Menke and son Fred, attended the football game at Ann Arbor Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Nelson, Mrs. William Eckler, Mrs. Walter Durham and Mrs. Walter Liverence spent Friday in Detroit.

On Thursday afternoon Mrs. Wesley Hudson of Detroit and Mrs. Fred Menke attended the Fox Theatre.

The companies comprising the Bell System are spending about \$1,000,000 a day in construction work during 1923.

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