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By MARK ENGLISH.

THE FIRST PART.

Doris Thobury, the sister of the children's ward, was telling the little ones stories, when the door opened and the matron and Dr Weston came in. Doris's cheeks took a deep tint, for she loved the kindly, grave-faced young doctor deeply

As the doctor went his rounds, she held each little patient's hand, for the pain never seemed so bad when Sister Doris was near, and when all the patients had been examined her duty for the day was over.

As she was going out of the Cottage Hospital gate, Paul Weston overtook her.

"May I accompany you?" he asked, and she smiled and nodded. They spoke of many things, and at last when they had reached a more secluded spot the doctor seized her hand.

"Miss Thobury," he said, "I love you—I love you with all my heart and soul. Will you be my wife?" She looked at him steadfastly as she answered "Yes." It was some time later when they parted, and when they did so Doris was the happiest girl in the world.

The next morning she received a telegram: "Come home immediately," it ran. "You are wanted at once." And a little later she was speeding towards her home.

At the very moment she was answering Paul Weston on the previous night, an interview was going on which was to alter her whole life.

"Those are my terms; take them or leave them. Accept them and I pull you through; refuse and you are ruined!" The speaker, Roger Armer, was a strong, hard man; he was Walter Thobury's manager, and the man he faced as he uttered those words was Walter Thobury himself.

Doris's father was a failure; he was weak and lazy, and as he faced his manager he looked frightened. His uncle had died and left him the huge business of Thobury and Co. But he did not trouble himself about the business; he left it all in the hands of Roger Armer. And now he found that he was on the brink of ruin, and only Armer could pull him through, and that he would only do so on one condition, and that was that he should marry Doris. And in his weakness and fear of ruin the crushed man agreed—actually agreed to sacrifice his daughter to save himself.

When he told Doris she was horrified. "Father," she cried, "you are not in earnest. Marry Mr Armer? I couldn't. You can't mean it." At last she cast aside all her hopes for the future and promised. That evening she wrote a short note to Paul Weston telling him she had changed her mind and could never be his wife.

Her engagement to Armer was announced, and eventually Doris Thobury became Doris Armer.

She found her husband domineering, and determined to break her proud spirit. She discovered, too, that she had been won by a trick, for her father's business had never been anything but perfectly solvent.

Paul Weston, a young doctor and her former lover, with whom she had been forced to break her engagement. He obtains for her a post as a nurse at a private house, which she thankfully accepts.

A few days after, she reads in the paper that the "missing Mrs Armer" has been found drowned, but actually the unrecognisable body that was discovered belonged to an unknown girl to whom Doris had given her clothes.

Then one day a new housekeeper arrived at Mr Farr's house, and Doris was horrified to recognise in her one of her thief-husband's accomplices.

One day Mr Farr's house is burgled and Doris, recognising her husband's work in this, rushes off to her old home to warn him.

Meanwhile Doris, who knows that he is the thief, bicycles over to Westways Court to warn him that a celebrated detective is on his track. She arrives at the lodge gates to discover he has had a motor accident, and that Isobel Vane is nursing him.

As a result, he loses his memory, and is taken to a nursing home by Doris, who acknowledges herself his wife. Roger does not recognise her, but he recovers, and they are about to start for home when Doris suddenly discovers that Roger is missing and cannot be found anywhere.

"ROGER AND RICHARD ARE AS
LIKE AS TWO PEAS."

"How late he is! Oh, I do hope nothing has happened to him!"

There was a note of deep anxiety in the woman's voice as she paced the bare-furnished room restlessly. It was the same room through the window of which Doris Armer had watched breathlessly the movements of the gang of thieves.

They were not all there now—only Wanda and Philip. Two of the gang were missing—Armer and Henry Barlow.

It was evident that Philip shared Wanda's anxiety, for every now and again he joined her at the window, and looked out into the gathering gloom.

"What can have detained him?" Wanda's haggard face grew more and more anxious as the time passed swiftly on. "The city offices must have been shut long ago. He only had to go to Roger's office, and get the necessary documents from the safe. Suppose"—Wanda laid her hand on Philip's arm—"suppose he should have been found out!" Philip looked grave, but he did his best to cheer his companion.

"Most unlikely," he said. "Roger and Richard are as like as two peas! Thanks to Barlow, Dick knew exactly where to go, and Dick himself remembers every detail of the office. I don't suppose it's changed an atom since the old days."

"Oh, how I wish they'd come! We shall certainly lose the train, and with it the boat connection. Our passages are booked, too. Oh, we should have gone long ago—after that haul of the Farr jewels! Dick promised it should be the last." She sighed wearily.

"Come, Mrs Armer, cheer up! There's lots of time yet! You know what Richard is—"

"Too venturesome!" Wanda cried passionately. "Never content! Always wanting to go one better than anyone else. He would have Mrs Vanderdecken's pearls. It was too risky! If he's trapped it will be owing to personating his brother."

"It was a fine piece of work," Philip said admiringly. "I never knew a neater one. Why, Roger's own wife believes Richard is Roger! You know, of course, that Doris Armer has got her husband away from Westways Court?"

"I heard something of it," Wanda said impatiently; "but I can think of nothing but why they are not here. Barlow was to see his wife and children off for Liverpool, then he was join Dick in the city, come here with him, and we were all to start together. Everything is packed ready." She indicated several bulky portmanteaux, that lay ready strapped, on the floor.

"Here they come!" cried Philip.

Wanda uttered an exclamation of intense relief. She ran to the door, opened

it, and looked over the balusters into the passage below.

"Someone's with them!" she whispered. "Who is it? Oh, Philip, is it a detective?"

"No," said Philip, in a low, astonished tone. "It's Roger Armer!"

"Roger! Impossible!" Wanda fell back a step, scarcely able to believe the evidence of her own senses. For Roger it was beyond a doubt who stumbled up the stairs his brother and Henry Barlow each holding him tightly by an arm.

"What is it, Dick—" began Wanda. But Richard held up a warning hand.

"There, old fellow! Here you are. Feeling better—eh? That's right. What you want's a drink, a rest, and a nice long sleep. You've been doing too much lately. Brain overworked—money-making in that office of yours. You remember Wanda, don't you? My wife, you know, old man. Get Roger a drink Wanda. Some of that good, strong liqueur brandy—you know the stuff I mean."

He gave the woman a significant look, and from her bag Wanda immediately produced a flask.

Whilst she was pouring the drugged brandy into a glass, Dick continued talking.

"We met each other on the steps of Roger's offices. The clerks had all gone—he laughed meaningly—"and so we had the place to ourselves. Barlow knew just where the papers were kept"—he winked knowingly at Philip—"and Roger signed the documents. Didn't you, old chap? Now take a sip, you need it!"

Wanda handed the glass to Roger.

During his brother's tirade he had said nothing, but now he answered quietly:

"Yes, I signed the documents, though for the life of me I can't remember what I did sign. But Barlow knows."

"Yes, sir, I know."

Henry Barlow came forward; and then suddenly Roger got up.

"Where's Doris? I want Doris. Something's wrong here!"

He pressed his hand, with the old pathetic gesture, to his brow. Memory was making a last mighty effort to break from the bonds that held her back.

A strange expression as of one awakening from a long sleep—half-dazed, half-conscious of the surroundings—flitted across Roger Armer's face.

The other's seeing this, glanced at one another.

"You're beginning to remember everything, aren't you, Roger?" Dick said quietly.

"Yes."

And then, with a quick movement as unexpected as it was alarming to the gang, Roger Armer sprang to his feet.

"You, Richard—you! Have you returned, then? Where am I? And where is Doris? I demand to know the meaning of this! Speak at once, or I summon the police!"

Roger's memory had returned, but he was dazed and bewildered by the strangeness of his surroundings. There were many gaps to fill up since the day when last he had remembered. But every minute things were becoming clearer.

He looked at the faces of the three men and the woman, and saw upon each countenance a look of relentless determination. He was trapped—and at the mercy of a ruthless, relentless gang of thieves!

No need to seek further for the gang who were responsible for the robberies that had baffled the police. His own twin brother, whom he had sent out of the country long ago, had returned, and was at his old tricks again.

But why was he there? Had he come of his own free will? Or had he been forced to come?

As yet he could not tell. All was vague, except for the fact that he was in the

power of a gang of desperate scoundrels.

And Barlow, too! He turned, and cast a look of utter contempt upon the black-mailer; and, even as he turned, Philip, at a sign from Richard Armer, caught his hands and forced them behind his back. A gag was thrust into his mouth a handkerchief pressed tightly over his face.

In vain he struggled. His captors were strong; and he, weakened by his recent accident, had no chance against them.

He felt himself carried away and laid upon a couch; and then everything tangible seemed to fade away.

For a few minutes Richard and Barlow stood looking down at the unconscious form.

"Off?" asked the latter. Richard Armer nodded.

"Yes; safe for at least ten or twelve hours." He stooped, and removed the gag. "After all, he is my brother, and gave me a chance when I robbed him years ago. Many would have sent me to prison. Roger didn't. I wish sometimes I'd taken that chance as he meant me to take it."

"You never have been content, Mr Armer—never! You were not meant to live a quiet, domestic life; there's too much of the adventurer in you. But no you can do what you like. There's enough and to spare for all. I don't mind telling you I sha'n't be sorry to get out of this country and begin afresh."

"Turn respectable—eh?" sneered Armer. Barlow coloured up.

"Only for you I wouldn't be what I am!" he retorted.

Richard Armer only laughed, and looked down at the handsome face of the brother he had personated so successfully. The likeness was certainly extraordinary.

"I'd forgotten you were so much alike!" Wanda, coming in at this moment, exclaimed.

"I wish to Heaven I was like him in other respects!" the man said bitterly.

"Philip says"—Wanda laid her hand timidly on her husband's arm—"there's no time to lose if we are to catch that train. And, Dick, we must catch it. Suppose they track Roger here! It was a risk to bring him with you."

"There was nothing else possible," put in Henry Barlow. "It wouldn't have done to leave him in the office—not till we were safely away. They might have arrested him for Dick here."

"It would not do for two Roger Armers to be on the stage together!" Richard laughed shortly. "He'll be all right, I suppose?" He moved away reluctantly.

"Oh, yes; all the better for the rest." Dick followed them slowly into the sitting room. He took a fountain pen from his pocket, and a leaf from a notebook, and wrote a few brief lines.

"Anyone got an envelope?"

Barlow produced one. Richard Armer folded the slip, placed it in the envelope, and fastened down the flap. He addressed the letter to "Mr Roger Armer, Westways Court, Bucks," and put it in a pillar-box.

DID YOUR HUSBAND NEVER TELL
YOU HE HAD A BROTHER?

A day and a night had elapsed, and still no news of Roger Armer came to his distracted wife.

Doris's distress and anxiety about her husband's strange disappearance can easily be imagined. She sent for Paul Weston, who answered the summons promptly.

Their inquiries resulted in very little; the only clue they obtained being that someone had seen a man answering to Roger Armer's description boarding a bus city bound.

"I shouldn't wonder if he has wandered to his old familiar haunts," Paul said. "I've may car here; we will go to the city."

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