

Guy Garrick

By

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1. The Stolen Motor	4
2. The Murder Car.....	8
3. The Mystery Of The Thicket	14
4. The Liquid Bullet.....	21
5. The Blackmailer.....	28
6. The Gambling Den.....	37
7.The Motor Bandit.....	47
8. The Explanation	55
9. The Raid.....	64
10. The Gambling Debt.....	74
11. The Gangster's Garage	83
12. The Detectaphone	93
13. The Incendiary	107
14. The Escape	116
15. The Plot.....	124
16. The Poisoned Needle	133
17. The Newspaper Fake.....	143
18. The Vocaphone	149
19. The Eavesdropper Again.....	158
20. The Speaking ARC	169
21. The Siege Of The Bandits.....	178
22. The Man Hunt.....	190

23. The Police Dog	197
24. The Frame-Up.....	204
25. The Scientific Gunman	217

1. The Stolen Motor

"You are aware, I suppose, Marshall, that there have been considerably over a million dollars' worth of automobiles stolen in this city during the past few months?" asked Guy Garrick one night when I had dropped into his office.

"I wasn't aware of the exact extent of the thefts, though of course I knew of their existence," I replied. "What's the matter?"

"If you can wait a few moments," he went on, "I think I can promise you a most interesting case--the first big case I've had to test my new knowledge of crime science since I returned from abroad. Have you time for it?"

"Time for it?" I echoed. "Garrick, I'd make time for it, if necessary."

We sat for several moments, in silence, waiting.

I picked up an evening paper. I had already read it, but I looked through it again, to kill time, even reading the society notes.

"By Jove, Garrick," I exclaimed as my eye travelled over the page, "newspaper pictures don't usually flatter people, but just look at those eyes! You can fairly see them dance even in the halftone."

The picture which had attracted my attention was of Miss Violet Winslow, an heiress to a moderate fortune, a debutante well known in New York and at Tuxedo that season.

As Garrick looked over my shoulder his mere tone set me wondering.

"She IS stunning," he agreed simply. "Half the younger set are crazy over her."

The buzzer on his door recalled us to the case in hand.

One of our visitors was a sandy-haired, red-mustached, stocky man, with everything but the name detective written on him from his face to his mannerisms.

He was accompanied by an athletically inclined, fresh-faced young fellow, whose clothes proclaimed him to be practically the last word in imported goods from London.

I was not surprised at reading the name of James McBirney on the detective's card, underneath which was the title of the Automobile Underwriters' Association. But I was more than surprised when the younger of the visitors handed us a card with the simple name, Mortimer Warrington.

For, Mortimer Warrington, I may say, was at that time one of the celebrities of the city, at least as far as the newspapers were concerned. He was one of the richest young men in the country, and good for a "story" almost every day.

Warrington was not exactly a wild youth, in spite of the fact that his name appeared so frequently in the headlines. As a matter of fact, the worst that could be said of him with any degree of truth was that he was gifted with a large inheritance of good, red, restless blood, as well as considerable holdings of real estate in various active sections of the metropolis.

More than that, it was scarcely his fault if the society columns had been busy in a concerted effort to marry him off--no doubt with a cynical eye on possible black-type headlines of future domestic discord. Among those mentioned by the enterprising society reporters of the papers had been the same Miss Violet Winslow whose picture I had admired. Evidently Garrick had recognized the coincidence.

Miss Winslow, by the way, was rather closely guarded by a duenna-like aunt, Mrs. Beekman de Lancey, who at that time had achieved a certain amount of notoriety by a crusade which she had organized against gambling in society. She

had reached that age when some women naturally turn toward righting the wrongs of humanity, and, in this instance, as in many others, humanity did not exactly appreciate it.

"How are you, McBirney?" greeted Garrick, as he met his old friend, then, turning to young Warrington, added: "Have you had a car stolen?"

"Have I?" chimed in the youth eagerly, and with just a trace of nervousness. "Worse than that. I can stand losing a big nine- thousand-dollar Mercedes, but-- but--you tell it, McBirney. You have the facts at your tongue's end."

Garrick looked questioningly at the detective.

"I'm very much afraid," responded McBirney slowly, "that this theft about caps the climax of motor-car stealing in this city. Of course, you realize that the automobile as a means of committing crime and of escape has rendered detection much more difficult to- day than it ever was before." He paused. "There's been a murder done in or with or by that car of Mr. Warrington's, or I'm ready to resign from the profession!"

McBirney had risen in the excitement of his revelation, and had handed Garrick what looked like a discharged shell of a cartridge.

Garrick took it without a word, and turned it over and over critically, examining every side of it, and waiting for McBirney to resume. McBirney, however, said nothing.

"Where did you find the car?" asked Garrick at length, still examining the cartridge. "We haven't found it," replied the detective with a discouraged sigh.

"Haven't found it?" repeated Garrick. "Then how did you get this cartridge--or, at least why do you connect it with the disappearance of the car?"

"Well," explained McBirney, getting down to the story, "you understand Mr. Warrington's car was insured against theft in a company which is a member of our association. When it was stolen we immediately put in motion the usual machinery for tracing stolen cars."

"How about the police?" I queried.

McBirney looked at me a moment--I thought pityingly. "With all deference to the police," he answered indulgently, "it is the insurance companies and not the police who get cars back--usually. I suppose it's natural. The man who loses a car notifies us first, and, as we are likely to lose money by it, we don't waste any time getting after the thief."

"You have some clew, then?" persisted Garrick.

McBirney nodded.

"Late this afternoon word came to me that a man, all alone in a car, which, in some respects tallied with the description of Warrington's, although, of course, the license number and color had been altered, had stopped early this morning at a little garage over in the northern part of New Jersey."

Warrington, excited, leaned forward and interrupted.

"And, Garrick," he exclaimed, horrified, "the car was all stained with blood!"

2. The Murder Car

Garrick looked from one to the other of his visitors intently. Here was an entirely unexpected development in the case which stamped it as set apart from the ordinary.

"How did the driver manage to explain it and get away?" he asked quickly.

McBirney shook his head in evident disgust at the affair.

"He must be a clever one," he pursued thoughtfully. "When he came into the garage they say he was in a rather jovial mood. He said that he had run into a cow a few miles back on the road, and then began to cuss the farmer, who had stung him a hundred dollars for the animal."

"And they believed it?" prompted Garrick.

"Yes, the garage keeper's assistant swallowed the story and cleaned the car. There was some blood on the radiator and hood, but the strange part was that it was spattered even over the rear seat--in fact, was mostly in the rear."

"How did he explain that?"

"Said that he guessed the farmer who stung him wouldn't get much for the carcass, for it had been pretty well cut up and a part of it flung right back into the tonneau."

"And the man believed that, too?"

"Yes; but afterward the garage keeper himself was told. He met the farmer in town later, and the farmer denied that he had lost a cow. That set the garage keeper thinking. And then, while they were cleaning up the garage later in the

day, they found that cartridge where the car had been washed down and swept out. We had already advertised a reward for information about the stolen car, and, when he heard of the reward, for there are plenty of people about looking for money in that way, he telephoned in, thinking the story might interest us. It did, for I am convinced that his description of the machine tallies closely with that of Mr. Warrington's."

"How about the man who drove it?" cut in Garrick.

"That's the unfortunate part of it," replied McBirney, chagrined. "These amateur detectives about the country rarely seem to have any foresight. Of course they could describe how the fellow was dressed, even the make of goggles he wore. But, when it came to telling one feature of his face accurately, they took refuge behind the fact that he kept his cap pulled down over his eyes, and talked like a 'city fellow.'"

"All of which is highly important," agreed Garrick. "I suppose they'd consider a fingerprint, or the portrait parle the height of idiocy beside that."

"Disgusting," ejaculated McBirney, who, whatever his own limitations might be, had a wholesome respect for Garrick's new methods.

"Where did you leave the car?" asked Garrick of Warrington. "How did you lose it?"

The young man seemed to hesitate.

"I suppose," he said at length, with a sort of resigned smile, "I'll have to make a clean breast of it."

"You can hardly expect us to do much, otherwise," encouraged Garrick dryly. "Besides, you can depend on us to keep anything you say confidential."

"Why," he began, "the fact is that I had started out for a mild little sort of celebration, apropos of nothing at all in particular, beginning with dinner at the Mephistopheles Restaurant, with a friend of mine. You know the place, perhaps--just on the edge of the automobile district and the white lights."

"Yes," encouraged Garrick, "near what ought to be named 'Crime Square.' Whom were you with?"

"Well, Angus Forbes and I were going to dine together, and then later we were to meet several fellows who used to belong to the same upperclass club with us at Princeton. We were going to do a little slumming. No ladies, you understand," he added hastily.

Garrick smiled.

"It may not have been pure sociology," pursued Warrington, good-humouredly noticing the smile, "but it wasn't as bad as some of the newspapers might make it out if they got hold of it, anyhow. I may as well admit, I suppose, that Angus has been going the pace pretty lively since we graduated. I don't object to a little flyer now and then, myself, but I guess I'm not up to his class yet. But that doesn't make any difference. The slumming party never came off."

"How?" prompted Garrick again.

"Angus and I had a very good dinner at the Mephistopheles--they have a great cabaret there--and by and by the fellows began to drop in to join us. When I went out to look for the car, which I was going to drive myself, it was gone."

"Where did you leave it?" asked McBirney, as if bringing out the evidence.

"In the parking space half a block below the restaurant. A chauffeur standing near the curb told me that a man in a cap and goggles--"

"Another amateur detective," cut in McBirney parenthetically.

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