



Captain Bellamy
grabs O'Hara

By
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Baldy Simmons, the sage of Broadway, faces the fury of an armed killer in the dressing room of Julie Hart, dancer!

ONE evening Baldy Simmons is having dinner with Julie Hart, who dances in night clubs for a living, when Captain Peter Bellamy, of the Homicide Squad, comes wearily to their table and sits down. The reason Captain Bellamy is weary is because practically every time he turns around some citizen of Manhattan kills another citizen in streets or hotels or bar-rooms.

Bellamy is getting very tired of this, because the newspapers are beginning to ask what in goodness name the Homicide detail is doing—playing gin or something? And the Police Commissioner is making remarks no decent family paper dares print.

“Were it not that I have only three more years to go before starting to draw a pension, I walk straight down to West Street and jump into the river,” Bellamy insists.

"Look," says Baldy, "you are a fine officer. You use all modern methods like fingerprinting, laboratory analyses and such things, but sometimes it seems to me you miss on the more obvious things. Why not, say on the next murder, take a leaf from the book of Sherlock Holmes. It is considered smart to sniff at the old boy, but it must be admitted his batting average is very high, indeed."

"Meaning what?"

"Meaning even a phrase here and there is often the solution of a problem—and observation and deduction are not words to lie fallow in a dictionary."

Captain Bellamy orders a Moscow Mule, and looks at Miss Julie Hart, whose lovely face makes almost any man forget his woes and the upsets of life.

"Do you know what my dear, baldheaded friend is talking about?" he asks.

Miss Julie Hart spears a stalk of asparagus covered with Hollandaise sauce, and nibbles it daintily.

"All I know," she says, "is that I listen attentively to Mr. Simmons, and learn something every day. Crime, however, is a little out of my line, even though, while working in Kansas City, I meet some very naughty boys. However, if Baldy says it is possible to catch a murderer by working on a couple of words, I believe him. I believe anything he says."

"What a spot to be in with a gorgeous hunk like you," mutters the Captain wistfully.

THE bar of the Cafe Moderne is semicircular and of blond wood. The stools before it make a brave, modernistic show in chromium and red leather. Only three or four people are gathered around, drinking and chatting, for the cafe is a late spot, and it is now hardly more than ten o'clock. In the opposite wall is a door leading to the gambling room. A guard

stands there, a bulky man, with enough stomach to spoil the fit of his tuxedo.

Baldy is having a nightcap with Julie when three men shoulder up to the bar, and order Scotch. They are quite average looking men, and Mr. Simmons does not recognize them, though he knows practically everyone of any consequence on Broadway. One has a kind of pickax nose and little black mule eyes. The second looks like a dumb cluck, with the shoulders of a wrestler. The last is a mild looking gazoo, with blond hair and washed out blue eyes.

They do not appear to be very interesting, while Julie is, so the bald one pays no further attention to them. Mule eyes says, "Make sure you do not foul this up, Hippo," but Mr. Simmons pays no attention, for he is talking about his companion's engagement at the Mocambo, where she is due very shortly to do her act, while Mr. Simmons goes home for a little shuteye.

The lad with the schnozzola looks over, and says, "Hello, Julie," in a voice that sounds like a nail scratching on slate. "I do not expect to see you here. As a matter of fact, I do not expect to see anyone I know. Are you still good at keeping that pretty trap of yours shut?"

Miss Hart nods, almost as if hypnotized.

"Beat it, then," says Pickax, "and never forget what happens to Kitty Kilduff."

Baldy is about to take umbrage at this remark, and maybe belt this character one where it does the most good, but the man and his two companions start toward the door of the gambling room.

"Pay the check quick, and let us get out of here," Julie says.

Just as the bartender reaches for the tab, Baldy sees the trio brush by the guard. It seems as though the guard starts reaching for his equalizer, but they push him inside with them;

"Now, what—" Mr. Simmons begins, but the lady whispers, "This is no time to

talk.” They hustle outside into a cab, which is one of those two way radio affairs.

“Look,” says Baldy to the jockey. “Call your office right away, and have them get in touch with the police. It looks like the beginning of a holdup in there.”

The driver has trouble with his gadgets, and it takes a couple of minutes before he locates the radio operator at the other end.

“All right,” Mr. Simmons goes on. “Pull across the street and wait there. If the police do not arrive before these jokers come out, we follow them.”

“No, no,” cries Julie. “If they see us, I am a cooked goose. Please, let us get out of here.”

The taxi jockey turns around; and looks back into the cab.

“Listen, mister,” he said. “I ain’t a hero and I do not wish to be a hero. If there are guys with guns in there let them go their own way. I go the other. We tip the police, and that is all expected of any good citizen. Please tell me where you want to go right now, or get out.”

Mr. Simmons gives in.

“Lindy’s. I feel like a salami on rye. Drop me there, and take Miss Hart to the Mocambo.” When they are on their way, he asks gently. “What gives, baby? If those jokers really pull a job in the Moderne and get away before the cops arrive, you, at least, are able to put the finger on them.”

“This,” says Julie, “I refuse to do.”

BALDY explains slowly and carefully that her approach is all wrong. It is the duty of every citizen to help apprehend such people as murderers, thieves and kidnapers. Besides, Captain Bellamy’s nervous system is in very poor shape as it is, and another sad affair is likely to put it out of kilter altogether. In addition, Mr. Simmons points out, if the hoodlums are clapped into jail, Miss Hart is as safe as a royal flush in a poker game. But, Julie is obdurate.

“You talk till you are hoarse, Baldy, and that is all the good it does. I know what happened to Kitty Kilduff and you do not. If anything is figured out from a word or two, as you explain to Captain Bellamy, well and good, but those words are certain to be yours, not mine.”

Next morning, sure enough, the blatters come out with a sensational story of what happens at the Moderne. Three men, none of whom is recognized by anybody, bust into the gambling room, and knock off thirty thousand fish. While they are distracted for a moment taking dough out of the safe the guard goes for his rod, and they blast him as full of holes as any sieve you ever see. The police arrive, but get there several minutes too late to apprehend the bad boys.

Descriptions of these predatory rascals are sketchy at best. After piecing together what they are able to discover, the police are quite as much in the dark as ever. Going around looking for a middle-sized blond man, a middle-sized one with black eyes and a husky one with wrestlers’ shoulders is like seeking the well known needle in the equally well known haystack.

Baldy does not wish to get Julie in bad with the coppers for not telling what she knows. Julie is a very sweet kid, but is paralyzed with fright, and probably with more than good reason. The trick is to find out what she knows, and pass it on to Captain Bellamy, while not betraying the source. If he is able to work this out, Mr. Simmons also proves his contention that the Sherlock Holmes theory of observation and deduction is by no means as dead as a pickled herring.

Well, Baldy gives the old brain a thorough beating, and finally comes up with an idea. This does not arrive until mid-afternoon the day after the holdup and slaying. The mental steps go like this: Julie knows the black-eyed killer. In some way he is tied up with a girl named Kitty Kilduff to

whom a very unpleasant thing happens. The problem is how to discover mule-eye's name.

The key to the problem is the name "Kitty Kilduff." It is possible there are hundreds of damsels by this name in the United States, and tracking them all down is a Herculean task. However, since Julie spends the last year before coming to New York in Kansas City, it seems reasonable to believe the man she fears and this Kitty character at one time or another are citizens of KC. At any rate, this is a good assumption—and all of Mr. Sherlock Holmes' assumptions are based on pure reasoning, or an approximate facsimile of the same.

Baldy hies himself to police headquarters to see Captain Bellamy. Pete is unhappier than ever, with a new unsolved slaying on his hands, and not a single clue he is able to observe hanging around.

"For the moment," he admits, "I am sunk by at least a thousand fathoms deep. Even you, with all your detective theories, do not come up with a complete description of the guilty parties."

"Well," says Baldy, "at the time I have an opportunity to observe them closely they are only three joes having a drink, and I do not take stock of everyone I see hoisting a Scotch and soda."

THE captain moans softly around his tattered cigar.

"I turn to the stool-pigeons, and some of them are busting out in a sweat to do me a favor. Not one of them has any idea who the three heisters are. If you really are able to prove the Sherlock Holmes ideas are not only something in a book, this is certainly the best opportunity you are likely to have in a month of Thanksgivings."

"You may, indeed, be right," murmurs Mr. Simmons. "As a starter, I suggest you call the Kansas City police, and ask if they

know anything about a gal named Kitty Kilduff, whom we suspect passed out of this life sometime during the past twelve-month. Particularly get the dope on her men friends and such things."

Bellamy ruminates over that for a bit. "Kansas City, eh? The town has a ball club in the American Association, ships a lot of beef, and once has a noted massacre of gangsters. How do you figure it fits in with the affair at the Cafe Moderne?"

"Go ahead and see," says Baldy.

The homicide man knows Mr. Simmons is not a person to make this suggestion just to run up a long distance call to the police department. Even if his ideas about observation and deduction and other Sherlock Holmes methods sound screwy to an up-to-date cop, it is impossible to deny that Baldy is a very smart cookie, indeed. So, the captain puts in the call, tells what he wants, and they sit around chewing the fat until the KC boys call about a half hour later with all the information they are able to gather.

After he listens, and makes notes, Bellamy hangs up and speaks in this wise: "Miss Kitty Kilduff is a singer in one of the better traps, a very good looking dame with pipes that attract no little attention, along with her legs. It seems that Kitty has the misfortune to fall under a train some ten months or so back, and get killed. Her only boy friend is a character with a bad reputation. His name is Harry Bushel, and he is so upset by the accident he leaves Kansas City flat on its back. He is five feet eight inches tall, weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds, black hair, small black eyes, no particular identifying marks."

"There," says Baldy triumphantly, "is your man. I am willing to wager a grand or two he is the leader of the trio who stick up the Cafe Moderne. There is no possible doubt about it. Put the arm on Bushel, and you get the other two along with him. Now

that you know who the guy is, maybe one of your stoolies is able to tell where he hangs out.”

Captain Bellamy shakes his head.

“Sometimes I wonder about you, Baldy,” he says. “Is it true that instead of riding in taxies you use a broom like the old witches used to do?”

The telephone jangles. Bellamy listens, mutters “Okay,” and hangs up.

“Take another look in your crystal ball,” he mutters. “They just find Bushel’s body in his hotel room. He has a bullet between the eyes, probably put there by a gun with a silencer, because nobody hears a shot. Bushel is clean as a whistle, too—not a dime of the thirty thousand on him!”

WHAT Bellamy has heard throws the gaff right back into the fishermen’s laps, because they have no information at all about Harry Bushel’s associates. Chances are one or both bump him off for his share of the dough. Captain Bellamy calls Kansas City back again, but this time the coppers are no help at all. They delve deeply into their records, but do not find that Bushel ever pals around with two guys who answer the general description of bulky shoulders or blondie.

As a matter of fact, they do not even have anyone like this pair on the wanted list.

“All right,” says the homicide man, “so they get together in some other place. You discover Bushel is out of Kansas City, I don’t know how, but tell me where these other dudes hail from. It is very important that we lay hands on them at once.”

“I realize this quite well,” admits Baldy, “but sometimes even Sherlock Holmes has to do a bit of legwork. I have another thought cooking. Once it comes to a boil, I will pass the results on to you.”

Thereupon he takes himself off to the hostelry where Julie Hart makes her abode, and gives out with the happy news of Harry

Bushel’s demise.

“You no longer have anything to fear,” he says, “If you pass out the names of Harry’s pals we get the whole matter straightened out, and your name does not even appear in the matter.”

“But, I do not know them,” Julie protests. “I meet Harry a number of times in KC with Kitty Kilduff, but I never see the other two before we observe them in the Cafe Moderne.”

“You are sure you do not hold out on me?”

“Absolutely. I have nothing to be afraid of now. The blond and the big shouldered guy do not know me. Besides, if they kill Bushel, it is a diamond bracelet to a bag of pecans that they get out of town as fast as they can. It is likely that Bushel picks them up in Chi or San Loo, or some other place. Anyway, I cross my heart I do not know them.”

Mr. Simmons rubs his bald pate. “Under no circumstances do I admit this to Captain Bellamy,” he says, “because it makes a bum out of my observation and deduction theory, particularly the observation part. However, it sticks in my mind that I hear one of them called by a nickname. For the life of me I am unable to recall what it is.”

“Oh, that!” exclaims Julie.

“Yes, that. Do you remember?”

“Of course. You keep telling me to keep my eyes and ears open, and not forget things. Harry calls the big fellow ‘Hippo’!”

Baldy snaps his fingers.

“That’s it. You’re a sweet gal, Julie, and a smart one.” He reaches for the phone, and calls homicide.

“All I am able to report at the moment,” he says, “is that the fellow who is built like a wrestler is known as ‘Hippo.’ I do not know where he hails from, but maybe if you contact the FBI, John Edgar Hoover’s boys are able to give you a rundown. It is reasonable to believe that the Feds have

something on him.”

“Hippo, eh? It is an unusual monicker, and may be a lead. For an amateur, you come up with the darnedest stuff. If you run across this Hippo in your wanderings just give me a fast call.”

“You think I won’t?” asks Baldy Simmons.

That same evening Baldy goes to the Mocambo to wait around for Julie, because he is not quite as sure as she is that all danger to her goes by the board.

While he is sitting there, O’Hara, the blond man with the pale eyes, who helps holdup the Cafe Moderne, is on his way in the same direction. Though it is a warmish evening, O’Hara feels cold sweat on his palms and forehead. Having killed Harry Bushel, and made off with the undivided thirty grand, he has an idea what Hippo Smyle does, if Hippo catches up with him.

HIPPO likes to inflict pain, and has no inhibitions about killing anyone the hard way. O’Hara is very sensitive about pain, when it concerns him. He does not bother about the police, because he figures there is no way for them to tie him in with either job. O’Hara has no record, and not having been in the service even his fingerprints are not on file.

He teams up with Bushel in St. Joseph, Mo., and the St. Joseph cops think him clean as a whistle. All he has to worry about is Hippo, who must read the papers by this time, and figure who knocks the boss off. O’Hara is able to get away with the killing easily, because the three pals stay in different hotels, and do not appear together publicly.

However, there is really nothing to worry about, even with Hippo, because O’Hara has a scheme all worked out; a scheme that does not miss under any combination of circumstances. He goes into the Mocambo, sits down at a table, and orders a Scotch and

soda.

The spotlight scissors the dance floor from the rest of the room. Beyond its radiance patrons are vague gray shapes, jewel tipped with glowing ends of cigarettes. O’Hara smells the chorus before it dances out, the chorus smell of perfume and powder and raspberry lipstick. The girls wear only brassieres, the briefest of panties, and open work slippers that make the most of red lacquered toenails.

The chorus retreats to a ruler-straight line at the rear of the floor. The band strikes a fanfare. Out dances a tall and lovely girl, hair as dark as midnight in the desert, and a figure to make a man’s heart stop. A moment before the chorus girls seem pretty and desirable. Now, in contrast with this beauty, they now are insipid.

That’s the dame, O’Hara thinks, the one Bushel talks to in the Moderne. What a dish. The guy who does not go for that is nuts or something.

He watches the gorgeous slim legs, the hip slide with shoulders thrown back, presenting the profile of her body. For a moment he is sorry for what it is necessary to do before the night is over. However, he shakes off that moment of sentiment. Thirty thousand dollars and his own safety are more important than any girl in the world—no matter how pretty she happens to be.

Baldy Simmons is sitting in Julie’s dressing room, waiting for her to finish the last show. So far he has not been notified by Captain Bellamy if Hippo is identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, but he has a pleasantly warm feeling this is exactly what happens. In the meantime he sticks around to play bodyguard for Julie, which is a task any male in the world accepts with yips of joy.

Mr. Simmons is reading *Variety* to kill time until the last show is over when the door opens. The band is just starting Julie’s last number, so Baldy looks up in surprise. There in the doorway is the blond man who

is with Bushel in the Cafe Moderne holdup and killing.

Old nude noggin decides to play it straight and pretend not to recognize the fellow. So, he nods, says, "Hello," and goes on with his reading.

O'HARA shuts the door, and half slips a pistol out of a side pocket to make the situation clear.

"No squawks," he says. "You remember me, and I remember you. If I am caught the coppers scrag me for killing the guard, so it does not matter if I also admit I lay Harry Bushel among the nasturtiums."

"I see what you mean," agrees Baldy. He also sees it is very unlikely this blond a lad leaves either Baldy Simmons or Miss Julie Hart alive when he goes on his not so merry way. But, what he is doing here now is really something of a puzzler, too.

I am always telling Captain Bellamy, Baldy thinks, that part of the Sherlock Holmes theory is that anybody gets out of a jam if he uses his brain in the right and proper way. This is as good a time as any to prove it. Our friend here obviously has some dreary plans made for Julie and me. If I miss out, the newspapers have a couple more murders to yawp about.

"I beg your pardon," he says, "but I do not get the name."

"The name is O'Hara, but you are not around to remember it, so do not break your neck with politeness."

"Well," says Baldy, "you may as well sit down. Julie still has a couple minutes left of her number, and I do not assume you come to her dressing room to see me."

O'Hara accepts the invitation, keeping his hand on the butt of his gun. He just waits, kind of glum and saying nothing until Julie comes in. She wears her scanty stage costume, and is sweating and a little out of breath from her dance.

Her eyes grow large, for she recognizes

him just as Mr. Simmons does.

"Shut the door," O'Hara says. He is making no attempt to hide his pistol. Promptly, Miss Hart does as he requests. Then she takes a kimona off the hook, and covers her loveliness.

"What do you want?" Julie asks.

Still holding the gun, O'Hara slips a cigarette out of the pack, tucks it into his mouth, snaps a match on a fingernail and puffs hungrily. "I want you to do me a favor. I have an idea, and you are the one to make it work."

Now we find out what this lad is up to, Baldy thinks, and then it devolves upon me to outguess him. This is what Sherlock Holmes does to Prof. Moriarity and other wise Johns, so it is not fair to let my hero down. Besides, to be even more practical, I am not yet ready to leave this world of tears, and am quite sure Julie agrees with me on this point.

"What is it?" asks Miss Hart.

"Oh, it is very simple," O'Hara goes on. "You know I am in on the deal at the Cafe Moderne, so I may as well admit I knock off Harry Bushel, and take all the dough myself. Naturally our other pal, Hippo Smyle, is gunning for me, and it is necessary to cut him down before he does the same for me."

"Your reasoning is sound," agrees Baldy, "but where do we fit into such a scheme?"

It is apparent that O'Hara is very pleased with himself, quite blown up with pride at having figured something so well. He smiles, and spins the gun on his index finger.

"It is very simple," he says. "Within half an hour this trap is closed tighter than an old-time speakeasy. Hippo is staying at the Hotel Majestic. Julie must call him, and say I am coming here. What happens? Hippo arrives on the double, and I gun him down before he has a chance to shoot me. Cute, eh?"

And, even cuter, Mr. Simmons thinks, is that after you finish Hippo, you also knock off Julie and me to get rid of witnesses. If we

refuse to call Hippo, the problem is complicated for O'Hara, but this does nothing to help us, for what good is the deal if we are not around to see what happens?

"Yes, it is an excellent idea," Baldy agrees. "But there are several points that seem to be on the foggy side. What makes you think the Hippopotamus does not smell a rat, and refuses to answer such a summons?"

"Because Bushel keeps saying Julie Hart is the only person in the Cafe Moderne who recognizes him, and as soon as he gets a few minutes to himself he knocks her off. Naturally, Hippo Smyle figures I go along with this idea, and take over the job myself. It is certainly a thought that appeals to him."

"Is he not likely to ask how Miss Hart gets his telephone number, assuming no one is supposed to know where he hides out?"

O'Hara grins. "This, of course, is what occurs to the average intelligent person. However, Hippo is the most stupid man I ever meet, all muscle and no mind. He is so happy to get a cut at me that he rushes over here pell mell without giving thought to anything else in all the world. On this premise I am willing to bet the entire thirty thousand I grab from Bushel as he lies still, white and not too beautiful on the floor."

Mr. Simmons shrugs. "You seem to have the answers. Now, there is just one more question, if you do not mind. How do you know Hippo is at the hotel, and not gum-shoeing around town on a still hunt for you?"

"There is such a possibility," O'Hara admits, "but Hippo is more likely to have someone else do the hunting for him, being a very lazy person and having bad feet, anyway. If he is not in at first, we call call again. Go ahead, Julie."

THE girl looks at Baldy with frightened eyes, and he nods reassuringly.

"What's the number of the Majestic?" she asks.

"Now, how would I know the number?" O'Hara snorts. "There is a telephone book at your elbow. Look it up."

"It is completely unnecessary," says Baldy. "You may be new in town, but I live here twenty-five years. The number of the Majestic is Saxony 3-9342."

Julie reaches across the litter of bottles and boxes on her dressing table, and pulls the telephone toward her. Her nice knees, visible in an opening of the kimona, are trembling. She is frightened half to death, and has reason to be. Baldy leans forward, watching, every nerve in him tight as a fiddle string.

"Saxony 3-9342, the Majestic Hotel?" asks Miss Hart. "Hippo Smyle, please." There is a slight pause. Then: "This is Julie Hart at the Mocambo. You know, the girl Harry Bushel talks to at the Mocambo. The blond fellow you are with that night is in the club, and says he is coming back to see me. After what I read in the papers about Harry, I am scared. You will come, Hippo? Thank you."

She hangs up. O'Hara pats his hands together in applause.

"You waste your time dancing, baby," he says. "You play that part like Ingrid Bergman."

"All right. Now, do I get dressed and go?"

O'Hara's pale blue eyes goggle.

"Go? Are you batty? Go where? To the police? Act your age, honey! You go nowhere now, or afterward."

"You mean to kill us?"

"Of course, I mean to kill you. However, take it easy. You still have a half hour. It takes Hippo that long to get here from uptown."

Julie turns to the dressing table, and begins to clean the stage makeup off her face.

"Please excuse me," she says. "I do not wish even the police to see me looking all

made up like this when they find my body.”

“What a body it is, too,” the killer murmurs. “I am a most unhappy guy when the time comes to put a bullet in you and your fat friend here.”

Julie pays no attention to this, and goes on with the job of remaking her face. As the big moment comes closer, O’Hara gets a little nervous. He sits with his back to the door, watching both Baldy and the girl at the dressing table. He is not concerned about the door at the moment, because it is impossible for Hippo to arrive for some time yet.

Baldy begins to see the door inch open quietly and slowly. So, he begins to talk.

“You hear Bushel says Julie knows how to keep her mouth shut. So do I. Why give us a bad time of it? We will never do anything to hurt you.”

“Quite true,” agrees O’Hara, “and you never get the chance. I am sorry, but even you are compelled to admit there is no other way.”

By this time the door is half open. Baldy is afraid even to glance in that direction for fear the blond man suspects. Then, suddenly, the portal is flung wide, and in leaps Captain Pete Bellamy, who laces a strangle hold around O’Hara’s neck.

Behind the captain come a couple of plain clothes men, who whip handcuffs on the killer, before he realizes what happens.

“Nice work,” says Mr. Simmons, “What goes with Hippo?”

“Four squad cars move in as soon as I get the telephone message. No doubt they have the big bum tied up like a sackful of oats.”

BELLAMY gets on the telephone himself, and finds that the murderous Mr. Smyle is already gaffed. O’Hara keeps looking at Baldy, and shaking his head.

“I do not know how to figure this out,” he mutters.

“Mr. Simmons gets on Bushel’s trail through the mention of Kitty Kilduff’s name,” the captain says.

“Look, copper,” snaps O’Hara, “I do not care how this baldheaded chump gets wise to Bushel. What I wish to know is how you show up when all this dame does is call Hippo.”

“You tell him, Baldy,” says Bellamy.

“It is quite simple,” says Mr. Simmons. “Since you are new to the town, O’Hara, you do not realize Saxony 3-9342 is the number for Homicide and not the Majestic Hotel. So, Julie is able to tell the whole story to Captain Bellamy without arousing your suspicions. All I worry about is whether she fumbles her assignment.”

Miss Hart now stands up.

“If you gentlemen,” she says, “are kind enough to take this bum out of here, I get dressed and go on my way. There is no chance of my fouling up the detail, Baldy, I know Saxony 3-9342 is not the number of the Majestic Hotel, because I lived there once, myself. So, I figure it is someone you want tipped off to what is happening. When I hear Captain Bellamy’s voice I know everything is all right. Yes, sir,” says Julie Hart, “that Sherlock Holmes is a very smart guy, indeed.”