

from the brick walls and the smoke that puffed out in tiny clouds from every crack and crevice. But suddenly he heard a sound away up there through the smoke, and he stopped and listened. Yes, there could be no mistake—someone was calling—a child's voice, muffled and choked with fright and smoke, and with all the strength of will and lungs he answered it.

He thought he could almost catch a sob of joy, and then it came again—stronger and clearer for the hope in it. "Here—on the third floor, to the right—I'm locked in—oh please, please come."

With an answering yell he turned and dashed up the stairs, three at a time. On the third floor landing, a fireman passed him.

"Better hurry out o' this, young feller," he shrieked through the roar of the fire and the yells from the crowd, "things is gettin' too hot for safety here an' that's an empty flat—folks moved out a week ago," and he passed onto the smoke. He had given his warning to an able bodied man. If said man chose to disregard it—why, that was none of his business. He did not even hear the blows which echoed out of the dusk behind him.

Harrington was almost in despair. He had nothing to work with but his fists and they were already bruised and bleeding, and still the locked door held. He almost gave up and his hands drooped down the panels, when suddenly they caught—caught on a key. Fool. Why had he not thought to look for a key before? But then, of course, he had thought it was inside. In a second the door was open and he was groping his way in, crying out at every step, listening breathlessly for an answer, and then when it at last came, faint but certain, going toward it swiftly, thankful for the knowledge that the room was quite empty and there was nothing for him to stumble over. The cries came from an inner room and its door, too, was locked, but now his hand dropped straight to the lock, turned the key that was there and he was inside the room beside a girl of—well he could not tell her age—it might be anything, for her poor little body was frightfully misshapen, and though her voice was young her face was drawn and old. "Can you walk?" he asked, and she nodded "yes."

Without another word he threw his arm around her, and side by side they turned into the hall. There was no time or breath for talk. The smoke was blinding—choking. Harrington felt in his own pocket as he muttered "handkerchief" in the girl's ear, and she understood him. On they fought down the stairway, with now and then a rudy glare breaking through the dark behind them. The stairs were hot to their feet—they could not bear their hands upon the walls or bannisters, but were forced to go blindly down, groping with their feet alone for the landings and turns of the stairway. The girl's knowledge of the place stood them in good stead now. She had said nothing to him, but Harrington had half unconsciously felt the guidance of her body and the pressure of her hand upon his arm and trusted himself to her.

The way seemed endless—each moment grew into an hour, and then, at last, as strength and breath were almost gone, he felt a breath of sweeter air strike on his forehead, and a moment later they stumbled, half fainting, down into the street—the last ones out of the burning house.

Harrington hardly heard the cheers of the crowd, or felt the hands that helped him up. The next he knew he was lying

back in an ambulance, with the girl beside him, the doctor's face close above them both, and Marvin's head poked through the back as he talked excitedly, asking, praising, wondering, all in one breath.

In a moment more, Marvin had dropped down, and the ambulance had started on its way. As Harrington realized it he sprang up, but the doctor held him back. "Not now, my boy," he said. "You let some one else write that story—you've done your part," and though inwardly fuming, Harrington let his head fall back again against the cushion, and his eyes met the girl's.

She began to thank him, but he stopped her. "Don't," he said, hoarsely. "Anybody would have done it—how did you come to be there?"

The girl's eyes widened into horror. "He did it," she murmured. "I saw him light the fire, and rushed to tell, and then he saw me, and caught me and carried me into that empty flat and locked the doors," and her wan face grew drawn and haggard with the remembrance.

Harrington had forgotten his bruises—his aching head and smarting eyes. He looked at the doctor, but that worthy was sprawled across this little seat at the back watching the people on the street and whistling "A Hot Time in the Old Town" as the most appropriate tune for a fire. He would not hear, and Harrington, every newspaper instinct in him roused to the utmost, leaned eagerly forward, and by short, terse sentences drew the story from the frightened girl.

Her father, the janitor, had been discharged the day before for drunkenness, and it had aroused every evil instinct in the man. He was drunk when the notice came, and through the day he grew drunker, till by night he was insane with drink and anger.

She had watched him as much as she dared, fearful that he would attempt some mischief, and had at last followed him to the basement—had seen him light a pile of shavings there, and then on to their living rooms, where he had fired the curtains—the bedding—everything that would catch readily, and then, as she tried to slip past him, had seen her, and, turning with an oath, clasped her in his arms. Why he had carried her to that empty flat she did not know—he might have left her in their burning rooms—but carry her he had and though she screamed and beat upon the walls with all her little strength, no one had heard, though she could hear so clearly and understand so well—so frightfully, so horribly well.

As Harrington heard the story, told in short, panting gasps his heart throbbed so heavily that at times he had to strain his senses to hear her at all, and then he could feel his strength slowly coming back to him—in fact, he almost forgot that he had ever lost it.

He, and he alone, knew the story of this fire—knew it as no other man could know it, for the girl, already weak and faint, had gone beyond her strength in the telling, and the doctor, still whistling softly to himself, was working over her. Nobody would be allowed to see her that night, Harrington knew. Besides, who would think of asking her how it started? Some women reporters might be sent to try and find out how she had felt, and what she had to say about her rescuer, and what thoughts had passed through her mind when things looked as though she might be roasted at any moment, but as for the cause—the thing reporters and police and insurance men and owners were hunting for, she would not be thought to know of that. He had a "scoop," one of the biggest the paper had had for a long time, and he must—he would—get

down to the office and write it up himself.

As that determination came to him, the ambulance stopped with a swinging jolt, and he saw other faces join the doctor's at the rear.

"Here, tend to the girl," he called to them—"she's done for—dying. I'm afraid, I can look after myself," and he slipped to the ground beside them. His head spun, and his legs shook treacherously, but by a tremendous effort of his will, he stiffened nerves and muscles—watched his chance—dodged swiftly behind a huge orderly, and in a second more was through the great black gates, and speeding up the silent street towards the rattle and the roar of the elevated trains a block or two away.

The ticket seller stared at him, wondering and almost frightened, and showed signs of stopping him until he saw that magic badge. The guards on the train snickered to each other, and treated him with the patronizing way they reserved for drunken men, and the other passengers drew back in dismay from his dirty, tattered clothes and smoke grimed face. But Harrington did not notice them. His whole mind and strength was bent on the work before him, and as the train whizzed on, he was thinking over every aspect of the story that he would write—composing it from first to last, and he knew that he would not forget one word, and would be able to write it all. After that he neither knew or cared what would happen.

It was 11 o'clock when he reached the office. The forms for the first edition closed in a quarter of an hour, and most of the copy was in, though here and there were swiftly gliding pencils and rattling typewriters, driven by distracted looking men. Marvin was there, hammering out his story as fast as keys and fingers could go, and Kelley, who had come in first, had just handed in his copy, and was standing, the center of an animated ring, when suddenly Miss Evans, who had just plumed on her hat and started toward the door, gave a little cry, and stepped back.

It was Harrington. He was very straight and his face had a grim, set look, while even through the dirt they could see the red in his cheeks and the light in his eyes.

He pushed by the office boy that guarded the door, opened the gate himself and marched in among them, while a sudden silence fell on the great noisy room.

The night city editor looked up.

"Hello" he began, and then realized that he had forgotten the "cub's" name and stammered a little. What had the kid come back in that plight for? Marvin and Kelley covered the story—this report would be no good, and yet the fellow would expect to be considered a hero for coming at all, and the night city editor said something forcible under his breath. He was not a soft hearted man.

But Harrington did not heed. He walked straight up to the desk.

"Can you," he asked, and they could hear his voice all through the room "Can you hold the forms open for fifteen minutes longer?"

The night city editor stared, and even those who were writing grinned.

"I suppose I could," the night city editor began sarcastically, when Harrington interrupted him. "Then you must," he said simply; "it will be worth your while," and he walked directly over to Greyson's desk, drew towards him some scattered sheets of copy paper and the typewriter there and began to write.

It seemed to the men that watched that they had never seen the keys fly so, and as they saw the burned, bleeding hands that pressed them one or two gulped audibly and Miss Evans shut her eyes.