

# TRICK FOR TRICK

By RADNOR M. COOTE

*How the new recruit to the detective force got in bad on his first job.*

THE gray-haired inspector of police looked at the young recruit to the force with all the intensity that long experience had given him.

"I hope that you realize the importance of the assignment I have just given you," he said.

"I certainly do, sir," replied Jordan, with a fearless look.

"Then take a few clothes," continued the inspector, "And follow the only clue we are able to give you. Go to the city which I have told you about; investigate all the financiers, and see if by any chance the bonds which were stolen from the bank in the city have been negotiated. They may have been hidden somewhere; nobody knows anything about them, except that probably the thief is the cleverest we have known in a good many years."

The young man, with a tact far beyond his years, said nothing, but left the office, followed by a satisfied look from the inspector.

"He'll do," said the latter to himself. "No swelled head about that kid."

But within the breast of the young detective were far different feelings.

"If I can only find the man who stole those bonds," he thought, "there will be no stopping me until I reach the front rank of the force."

He had been assigned to the case so late in the morning that he appreciated the necessity of haste, and it took him but a very few minutes to reach his apartment, gather together a few necessary articles of wearing apparel, and take the car for the station.

Once there, he threw down his suitcase, bought his ticket for the one city where there seemed to be any possibility of finding the thief, grabbed his bag once more, and boarded the train just as it was moving out of the shed. "At least I have been expeditious so far," he told himself.

The young man had traveled very little, and so had never realized how companionable were the occupants of smoking-cars—especially three

young men, sitting near him, who seemed to be anxious to discuss the coming election and the results to the working men of the country.

With the realization that he carried in his mind the most important financial secret which had stirred up the stock market during the past ten years, Jordan remained very quiet, only responding to the questions which it would have been rude for him to refuse to answer.

At length, having reached his destination. Jordan said good night to his traveling friends, and, picking up his suit-case, prepared to leave the train.

"You getting off here?" said one of the three. "So are we. Where do you stop?"

With a feeling that it would be unwise to give the slightest information to any one, no matter how friendly, Jordan replied that he had not yet made up his mind.

The young man's reply seemed to interest his companions, and they had no sooner alighted from the train than Jordan felt a pair of strong arms about his neck, and heard the remark:

"Come, give it up, kid; we've got you."

Jordan's astonishment was about as real as that of the stray cur dog when some stranger gives him a gentle pat instead of the kick he expects.

"What are you talking about?" he demanded.

"Ah, say," replied one of the three, "don't you suppose we know you've got those bonds in that suit-case of yours?"

Jordan laughed, with his superior knowledge.

"You're certainly mistaken," he said; and then, with a reticence which would not be expected of him, he refrained from remarking that he, and he alone, had been put on the very case they were talking about.

"It's easily proven," continued the other. "Look in your bag."

Again Jordan laughed.

"Certainly," he replied.

Two of the three casually took hold of Jordan's arms, while the third opened the

suit-case. There, bold and blatant in their green strength, were disclosed two hundred thousand dollars' worth of negotiable bonds.

This time it was the friendly trio who laughed, while Jordan stood transfixed by the horror of the situation.

"The very bonds I have been sent to find," he reflected: "found in my own suit-case."

And then his natural ingenuity, the quality which had secured for him his present job, began to suggest possibilities to him. But a few moments elapsed, during which the friendly trio were congratulating themselves on their easy capture, before a plan of campaign had mapped itself out in the mind of the young detective.

"I guess I was pretty easy," he said aloud; "but, you see, I thought I could get away with the stuff. Won't you kids divide, and let's all have a good time?"

The righteous indignation expressed by each of the three detectives was wonderful to behold.

The spokesman of the party drew himself up to his full height and spoke to Jordan with all the dignity of a really great man.

"The inspector told us he had sent you on this case," he said, "and that he was a little afraid that if you should happen to catch the thief the temptation to compromise with him would be too great for you to withstand. For that reason he delegated us to follow you and see that you kept straight. And what a mighty lucky thing it was that he did."

Jordan cast a casual glance about the station, as though seeking a means of escape, when one of his new acquaintances turned and grabbed him roughly by the arm.

"Here, none of that," he said. "We've got you. kid, and we mean to keep you safe."

"All right," again laughed the young man. "Only I thought I saw a pal who may have some of the bonds. You don't know how many bonds were lost, do you?"

He felt fairly confident in making this remark, as he knew that the inspector had given him all the data the force possessed concerning the robbery.

There was a hasty consultation among the three friends, and then a laughing remark that they did not care what Jordan did so long as they had him safe; so, if he wanted to do anything to help

them be more successful than they had already been he might go ahead.

And it was then that Jordan came to a firm decision.

He *knew* that the bonds had not been in his suit-case when he left his home. How had they come there? There was only one explanation, and with that one thought in his mind he resolved to make fools of the three men who now had such complete mastery of him.

"Say, kids, this thing has worried me to death," he began. "For humanity's sake find some hotel, and let me get a few minutes' sleep. You know I can't get away."

The suggestion was not unacceptable to the trio.

"Where shall we go?" inquired Brown, who had already done most of the talking.

Jordan's eyes had not been idle while the others were standing apart, considering his request.

"Oh, let's go to a little joint I know, if you aren't afraid that I've got too many friends there."

They scoffed at the idea; and Jordan, calling a cabman, spoke quietly to him. The driver nodded assent, and the four climbed into the four-seater, every one except Jordan displaying a large revolver, and remarking that they were "on the job." Jordan had long since given up his pistol to his captors.

It was not a long drive they took; but, nevertheless, the friendly trio made frequent investigations of the country, and finally informed Jordan that they had decided to take the first train back to inform the inspector of what had happened.

But the information thus imparted failed to reach his ears, for the prisoner was found "dead to the world" in the bottom of the cab.

"What'll we do?" asked Brown.

"Stop at the first possible place and get him revived," replied another of the trio.

The result of a hurried interview with the cabby brought them to a small hotel on the outskirts of the city, where new and sudden developments awaited them. No sooner had the cab containing the four detectives drawn up before the door of the little hostelry than Jordan, suddenly regaining consciousness, darted in through the front door, threw himself upon a

small, dark man, who wilted under the attack, and for the third time gave a long laugh.

“Oh, I figured it out, all right!” he cried. “I knew that I was not in cahoots with the man who stole the bonds, and yet they were in the suit-case I carried. But the joke of the whole thing is that when you accused me I discovered that the case I carried was not mine. I must have changed, and grabbed the wrong one at the station when I left there. As we got off the train I saw a case exactly like mine, so all I had to do was to keep my own

in sight. This the cabby helped me to do by following this man who carried it. We’ve got the bonds, but it wasn’t you boys who regained them.”

The small dark man shrugged his shoulders.

“I thought I was very clever to be so apparently careless with my valuable case,” he said.

To-day Jordan is the chief inspector of the force.