

Good Luck Is No Good

By THOMAS THURSDAY



Good luck is no good when it's the other guy's luck that's good!

WAS *that* a tough break! And was his luck lousy? Where was he now? Sitting, but not pretty, in the county clinkolo. Next stop: State pen. Time: five years. And Maggie McGill had been waiting for him at the pier. Ready to sail for Europe on a honeymoon. He had been so dead sure of everything . . . It couldn't happen to Shrimpo Todd. It simply couldn't.

But it did. And how!

Mr. Todd, less than five feet, age twenty-six, with round blue eyes and auburn-blond hair, sat on the edge of his cot in the county jug. Alone and

also lonely. He had tried to tell his sad tale to Ike Malloy, the jail guard, but no dice. Ike had just lost three sure winners at the Hialeah track and was in no mood to listen to any sad tales but his own.

Never again would Shrimpo Todd have faith in luck, omens, hunches, mitt-readers, astrologists, white cats, humpbacks, four leaf clovers, or what have you. No, sir—or ma'am—faith in luck was a load of malarkey, sprinkled with the pure essence of baloney. Even his pet dream book had gone screwy on him.

The cell door opened and another guest of the

state entered. He was tall, dark, swarthy, sinister. Moreover, he had a supply of barber's enemy, viz., whiskers, all over his face. His suit, although fairly new, was as wrinkled as the mug of an Egyptian mummy embalmed at the time Rameses wore a bib and toyed with a rattle. His shoes were two weeks shy of a shine and his white shirt was of excellent silk.

Mr. Todd eyed his fellow guest with only mild interest. The mugg wasn't in his class. He could tell that without heavy thinking. Probably a poke-picker or some small-time bumolo like that.

The newcomer paid less than no attention to Mr. Shrimpo Todd which was somewhat disconcerting. Shrimpo liked attention. His ego was about three sizes larger than his stature. In brief, Mr. Todd had an idea that he was the berries minus the razz.

"What's your rap?" inquired Shrimpo.

No answer. The fellow was curled on the opposite cot, hands outstretched behind his head. He appeared to be gazing at a whole family of cockroaches playing bridge, or something, on the ceiling. Shrimpo thought the guy was deaf. He was damn sure he was dumb.

"I'm talkin' to yuh, fellow!" snapped Mr. Todd, in a louder voice.

"So what?" sniffed the reclining playmate.

"Can't you even be perlite? Or maybe you got a bellyache and don't feel like talkin'."

"I ain't got no bellyache and I don't feel like talking."

Mr. Todd felt offended. Who was this big tramp, anyway?

"Maybe you would like a bust in the beak," said Mr. Todd.

The tall man rose from his cot. He stood beside Shrimpo and looked down upon him like Mt. Everest over an Austin coupe.

"I ain't interested in hurting babies," he said. "I am here because I tried to kidnap a brat about your size."

"So that's your racket, hey?"

"Yeah, but it don't pay."

"What does?" complained Mr. Todd. "I think I have the best grift of all and have everything mapped out sweet and nifty. But what happens?"

"Who cares?" yawned his cellmate.

Shrimpo decided that the fellow's nerves were all shot and thought to humor him along.

"I know how it is," said Mr. Todd. "I had all the luck in the world, only it was bad."

"What d'yer mean, bad? Listen, punko, you don't know what luck is!"

"Oh, I don't, hey? Say, feller, suppose *you* had sixty grand in real cash right in your mitts for two whole days and then have the dicks grab you, huh?"

"Sixty grand? H'mm. That's just tip dough to what *I* was after. And I would have copped the jack only I don't get a break in the luck."

"**Y**EAH," said Shrimpo, "but you never had your paws on the dough. I acthelly had the sixty grand in my poke and still have forty of it cached away. They asks me what I done with the rest and I tells 'em that I been playing the ponies at Hialeah. Haw!"

"You must be a amachoor."

"Amachoor—hell!" snorted Mr. Todd. "I'm tops in the racket. I just didn't have no luck."

"Never heard of you. What's your name?"

"Josephus P. Todd and they call me Shrimpo for short."

"The 'P' stands for 'punk,' hey?"

Mr. Todd became somewhat peeved and irked. The fellow was positively rude and vulgar.

"Listen, guy," sniffed Shrimpo, "I ain't lookin' for no trouble but if you are, why, just step outside and—"

The other laughed long and loudly.

"I'd be tickled silly to step outside, and so would you. Le's forget it!"

Mr. Todd accepted that as a very nice apology and was pacified.

"What's your moniker?" asked Shrimpo.

"Roscoe L. La Mont, and they calls me Snatch La Mont."

"The 'L' stands for 'lousy,' hey?"

"That makes us even," grinned La Mont. "Le's be pals."

"Suits me. Er, what happens to make you muff your deal?"

"I was doublecrossed," replied La Mont. "I just got as far as composing the ransom notes to the old buzzard about how much it would cost him to get back his brat, when the door pops open and the cops wrap themselves around my neck. I think they was tipped by a mug who wanted to make the snatch himself and when I get out I'm gonna rub him out like a elephant trunk on a fly."

"I hate two-timers," sympathized Shrimpo. "Of course, I ain't saying I was doublecrossed, but

something happens, that's a cinch! I should of got away clean."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. The lay is right and I feel lucky as hell. I've always believed in hunches and even the stars says I am due for a neat haul. But I guess you read all about me in the papers, huh?"

"Naw. I don't read the papers, much, unless they have Popeye the Sailor. What was the name of the company you stuck up?"

"The name was a natural for me. It was called the Four Leaf Clover Iron and Steel Works. They have a payroll of sixty grand every two weeks and I am put wise by one of the guys in the office. He's all sored up account of them not giving him a raise for five years. Besides, he's a humpback and that means good luck to me. Just touch a humpback and the world is yours."

"You must have touched him with gloves on," grinned La Mont.

"Aw, I don't believe in that crapolo anymore!" snapped Mr. Todd. "I now believe if you get away with it, it's good luck, if you don't, it's bad luck."

"Maybe. How did they nab you?"

"Well, as I say, I get acquainted with this humpback ginzo one night in a poolroom. His name is Peter McCloskey and he is sort of practicing shots with the cue ball. So I ask him if he would like to take a friendly whirl at a game and he says okay. We play five straight games of Kelly and the little bum licks the pants off me. Then we go and have a few beakers of ale and he gets a bit mellow. He begins to cry on my shoulder and tells me how his boss ain't give him a raise in sugar since Grant has a shave, and that he is thinking of going on a one-man sit-down strike."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. We get to talking and he cracks about getting tired of being honest when he ain't appreciated and he says he's gonna get even with The Four Leaf Clover Iron and Steel Works if it takes fifty years. Right away I knew this beezo is right for a deal and so I go home with him and tuck him into his bed. He lives in a furnished room where the landlady has a puss like a battleship. Hard, what I mean. Anyways, he's three sheets in the wind from the ale and he begins to tell me his life's history. I am about as much interested in that as I am in five ears, but I have to kid the sapolo along in order to get the dope on the payroll."

"Have any trouble?"

"CINCH. He draws me a blueprint of the office where the dough is brought in from the bank. Shows me where the head man sits and where he sits. The jack is brought in with an armored car and I don't want no part of them babies. The time is set for Saturday at 11 a.m., sharp, which is three days away. I agree to go fifty-fifty with Peter McCloskey on the loot. To make it look like the real thing, he is to stick to his job for two weeks after the haul, then see me in Frisco for the split."

"Was you gonna shoot square with him?" asked La Mont.

"What do *you* think?"

"I get you. If he went to Frisco, you would be waiting for him in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, hey?"

"Yeah. So what? I don't get to Perth Amboy and if he went to Frisco he's a sucker. As I was saying, the lay looks like a pushover and I tell Maggie McGill—that's the dame I'm hot over—that I am booked for a heavy killing and to mark time for a few days. After which we are gonna take a trip around the world, with a gander at the Pyramids, the Panama Canal, and even Hollywood, where I got a brother on the cops, the big heel."

"Where's Maggie now?"

"The little tramp! Wimmen are all the same. Just because a guy makes a slip they give him the cold neck. And I was nuts about that skirt, too."

"Do you think she tipped off the dicks?"

"Naw. She was too dumb to tip off a bottle of milk that it come from a cow. She's just plain dizzy, that's all. I don't know where she is now but if she ain't slinging hash in some grease-gernt she's out of place."

"I never had no luck with molls, eyther," complained La Mont.

"Well, I get everything all set with this Peter McCloskey and spend the next few days dopping it out. I am supposed to reach the gernt at exactly 11 a.m. when there will be only two of them in the office, the paymaster and Peter McCloskey."

"Neat teamwork," admitted La Mont.

"That's what you think. But you never can tell from the way it looks from the way it don't look. Anyways, I get up the next morning and find a pure white cat in front of my door. This is grand luck and so I go out and buy the puss a whole pint of pure cream. On my ways back to the house I see a pin and pick it up. That is more good luck. That

afternoon I listen to a perffessor making a spiel on astrology and find that I am born under the planet Jupiter and my lucky day is Saturday. That is the day I am booked to make the haul. I buy one of his books for a buck and go home and read it.”

“He made ninety cents on that deal,” grinned La Mont. “I know, I use to high-pitch them m’self years ago.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. I use to bowl over the chumpolos with the same line.”

“Maybe you’re right,” conceded Shrimpo. “Anyways, everything is looking swell account of me getting all the lucky breaks right up to Saturday. I even play a nag called Four Leaf Clover at Hialeah and she romps home two lengths ahead of the favorite and pays five-to-one. And listen, the last nag in the race is named Black Cat. Was *that* a good sign!”

“Was it?”

“Let’s forget that. When I get home to the room that night the white puss has brought around its mother or maybe grandma and there are two pure white cats around at the door. That makes me feel swell and so I go out and buy them a whole quart of cream between them.”

“Cream? P’tooy!” snorted La Mont.

“Before I hit the flop that night to do some ear-pounding I wind my watch to make sure that I get there at exactly eleven bells, sharp. I put the ticker under my pillow and let both white cats sleep on the floor beside the bed. I snore like a top and dream of Maggie waiting to meet me at the pier and she’s tickled to see me. I am up at 7 a.m. and go over my plans.”

“Had it all figured neat, huh?”

“I’ll say I did. It was airtight, what I mean! So when the time comes to shove off I hire a taxi.”

“A taxi?” echoed La Mont. “What’s the idear, feller?”

“That’s a new trick I figgers out. This old stuff of having some mugs waiting for you outside, with the motor running, is the aprcay. Everybody’s wise to it. Now, with a taxi and a driver who don’t know what it’s all about, why, you got a new act. Of course, I had to pick my driver, but I got a break with him.”

“I find a red-faced hick who has just started to work that very day. His name is Hank Hooley and he comes from a little town up the state called Warn Falls, where he used to drive the hotel taxi

from the depot to the jernt. He’s still got straw behind his ears and I know he’s the guy I want. So I tell Hank to drive to within one block of The Four Leaf Clover Iron and Steel Works and I time it so that he’ll get there at exactly five minutes to eleven.”

“Don’t tell me that he gets a flat tire and delays the haul,” said La Mont.

“Hell, no. I wisht he *had* got a flat! I wouldn’t be in this canolo now. Anyways, I figger I will have plenty of time to grab the dough and dash back to the cab. But what happens?”

“You ought to know—you was there.”

“The cab stops almost a block from the jernt and I stall two or three minutes until about one minute to eleven. I take a gander at my watch and see that the time is okay. So I goes to the plant, walks through the outer office, where there’s just a few dames at work, and then crash into the paymaster’s room. But, what do you know? Instead of just *two* men, as Peter McCloskey tells me, I see five.”

“As I enter, Peter McCloskey makes a funny face at me, like he is trying to shoo me away, but I think he’s nuts and pay no attention. I tell the lads to stick ‘em up, they obey, and I grab the jack and beat it. Before leaving I warn the gents that I have four pals outside who will blow them to hell if they poke their beaks outside of the door before five minutes is up.”

“Clean getaway, hey?”

“**Y**EAH, nice getaway. I rush down the street and tell Hank Hooley, the cab driver, to chase his cab to the depot and do it speedy. He asks what train I want to make and I tell ‘im the eleven-fifteen. He says I have one hour to wait and I tell him he’s batty. I tell him my watch is okay and that it says eleven-six. Then he says that maybe I forgot that daylight saving time starts today and that my watch was screwy.”

“Was it?”

“Was it,” echoed Shrimpo Todd. “It was plum nuts. I didn’t even know that the clocks were all set back one hour. I then got the idear why there was five men in the jernt instead of two.”

“Then it wasn’t his fault, huh?”

“Nope, he was on the up-and-up. So I tell Hank Hooley to just keep driving straight ahead until I can figger out what I want to do. I don’t have to meet Maggie at the pier for five hours and I didn’t want to get there too far ahead of time. Then, the

first thing I know, I hear a siren screeching in the distance and I tell Hank to duck around a corner. He takes it on three wheels. I pass the lad a ten-spot and he thinks I'm balmy in the bean but who the hell cares what he thinks—I got sixty grand and that's that, ain't it?"

"Then what happens?"

"The cab slows down and I duck into the first basement I see. It is a shoe shop and what do you know? The guy who runs it is no less than Gimpy Gaylor! Remember Gimpy?"

"Ain't that the guy who got religion, or something, and went straight?"

"Yeah, that's Gimpy. So I calmly tell Gimpy that I have come to make a friendly call and would like to see some of his shoes. He says that I seem a bit excited and would like to know what I have in the bag. I tell him that I am also going straight and that I am now a traveling salesman for a tool company. He says he would like to see some of the tools and I tell him that he don't need the kind of tools I sell in his business. Then he remarks that he thinks I am a liar and that he thinks I have just made a big haul. The guy must of been a mind reader, hey? This gets me sored up and all I can do then is to bounce the end of my .45 over his conk and let him rest quiet and peaceful behind the counter."

"Your luck was beginning to change," said La Mont.

"You telling me! Say, I even trips over a black cat as I dashed up the stairs and almost bust my head against the concrete sidewall. Anyways, a streetcar is just passing and I leap aboard. Then what do you know? The conductor is cockeyed and if that ain't a hoodoo, what is?"

"H'mm," said La Mont.

"I keep riding for about half a hour, then hop off way out in the sticks some place and hail a taxi. Who should the driver be but Hank Hooley, the same guy who rides me to The Four Leaf Clover Iron and Steel Works!"

"Ain't that hot!" laughed La Mont.

"So he looks at me and grins from ear to here. He says that it is a small town, after all, and almost like Warn Falls. I hop in and tell him that I just want to go riding for a few minutes, then eat. He says that he is going home for supper pretty soon, and why don't I come home and eat with him?"

"Sure that lug was a taxi driver?" asked La Mont.

"I admit it was funny, but I begin to do some heavy thinking and decide to go home with him. Ten minutes later he stops in front of a flat house in midtown and we go up to his apartment. He says he thinks that I will like his mother and I find she is okay. A regular country town dame, with gray hair, and she sits me down to a feed that would have knocked your eyes out. It was home-cooked and tasty.

"Well, I can see that these folks are on the level and I decide to leave forty grand of the dough with him. Of course, I can't tell them what is in the bundle so I have to cook up a story about some personal belongings of my poor old mother and they fall for it. I ask them for some heavy wrapping paper, then go into a side room, out of sight, and separate forty grand from the pile, and wrap it up. I then tell them to please hold it until they hear from me, which may be sometime, but that I will be back. They hide it away in the top shelf of a closet and that was all settled. Then I bid them goodbye and head for home."

"What was the idear of leaving all that dough with strangers?" asked La Mont.

"I figgered that if I got caught they would have one helluva time finding the rest and when I go through the stretch I could always go back and get it."

"You took a terrible chance leaving it with strangers."

"For all I know, they still have the dough."

"How did they come to nab you?" asked La Mont.

"That's what's got me all balled up," said Shrimpo. "I don't think it was Peter McCloskey and I don't think it was Hank Hooley or his mother. The dicks who grabbed me say less than nothing, only they seem to be sure that they got the right boy. Anyways, I go back to my room and get ready to go to the pier to meet Maggie McGill and sail for Yurup and what else have you. But what happens? The scow sails at 5 p.m. and so I aim to stop off at some store and load up with some tourist togs and play the part of Lord Helpus or the like. However, it's no dice. I no more than get down to the landing of my house when two dicks leap from behind the balustrade and pin me down like a fly on tanglefoot. And—well, here I am."

"Dicks are funny like that," said La Mont. "I wouldn't trust none of them boids if I was you."

“WHO trusted ‘em?” barked Shrimpo Todd. “I never dreamed that anyone was on my trail, unless they sort of checked up on my other little business deals and took a chance on nabbing me as the right guy. But they ain’t got the forty grand and ain’t *that* something, huh? I’ll be out in five years and will I fly high then!”

“Only five years? Say, feller, that’s a pipe. Look at me. I got twenty and near got life. But I’ll scam out of this clinkolo. I have sneaked out of bigger and tougher pens than this trap. Wait and see.”

Shrimpo Todd pricked up both ears with alert interest. Escape was something he had not even dreamed about. However—

“Yeah?” said Shrimpo.

“Yeah,” said La Mont. “If I ain’t out of this trap within two days you can call me a bum. I may even make a break tonight.”

“How about taking me with you, kid?”

“Naw. I’m broke and you’re broke and that makes two broke. That will make it kind of tough, see? When I blow I can get staked to a passage to Central America. I ain’t worked around Panama for nearly six years. That’s where the gravy train runs for me.”

“But, listen, kid, don’t forget that I got that dough cached away with Hank Hooley and I would be willing to slip you plenty if you help me bust out of this rap.”

“Too much of a risk,” said La Mont. “I can cop the sneak alone okay, but it ain’t healthy to travel tandem. It smells bad and attracts too much attention.”

“I’ll slip you five grand!” said Shrimpo. “What d’yer think of *them berries*?”

La Mont went into silence for a full minute. He paced the cell, hands behind his back, puffing steadily on a cigarette.

“Five grand?” he finally asked.

“Yeah. Five grand. Cross my heart!”

“Never mind that heart hokum,” snapped La Mont. “Mugs like us ain’t got no heart.”

“If I don’t get you the dough, you can take me out and slug me dead!”

“Leave that part to me,” said La Mont. “I won’t even wait to take you out—I’ll plug you full of lead wherever you’re standing.”

“Okay—okay. Is it a deal?”

“Listen,” whispered La Mont. “This monkey that’s guarding this trap can be knocked slantwise with no trouble at all. He’s a stupe, see? I been

studying him ever since I got here. We call him over, like we want to talk to him, then grab him against the bars and twist his ears off. Then we get the keys and go to town.”

“Yeah,” said Shrimpo. “But after we do that, how in hell do we get out of this twenty-two story jug? I can’t fly like no eagle, what I mean!”

“Who says you have got to fly like an eagle?”

“You got a couple parachutes in your pocket?” asked Shrimpo.

“Listen,” said La Mont. “After midnight this elevator heel goes home. The elevator is operated after that automatic. You press a button and she goes up or down. It’s just a step from the basement to the street. It’s a cinch.”

“Suppose there’s some guys waiting at the landing?” demanded Mr. Todd.

“Oh, so you’re yellow, hey?”

“Okay—okay. You’re the boss. Let’s go. When do we start?”

“Tonight at twelve. Meantime, let’s grab a lil’ shut eye. We got some interesting work ahead of us.”

Both stretched full length on their cots. Neither really slept. Shrimpo was very much awake. His mind was working, pumping ideas. Joyous notions, pleasant schemes. When he was free, ah, yes, when he was free. Would he get even with one Maggie McGill! She had written him a scathing note, suggesting, too broadly, that he was a fathead, a roundhead, and a flathead to boot.

DISTANT chimes tolled midnight. Ike Malloy, the lone guard, snoozed in a corner chair, his rifle by his side.

La Mont began to moan. The buildup for attention from Ike. Ike snapped to life and wanted to know what was the matter. La Mont said that he felt sure that he was going to die. His heart always had been weak. He begged Ike to go over as he wanted to give him a farewell message to his dear old mother.

Ike went to the cell. La Mont flicked his hand through the bars, grabbed Ike’s skinny neck, then squeezed. Ike crumpled to the concrete floor. Getting the keys was the mere matter of a second. The door was opened and Ike was tossed into the cell.

The getaway was clean. A cinch. No trouble at all. Within a minute the two men were out in the street. La Mont’s whiskers attracted some attention

from the one or two night strollers who chanced to see him, but they took him for just another bum. Shrimpo's clothes were neat and rather gaudy. He appeared to be the good Samaritan just taking a poor fellow for a bite to eat.

A taxi swung around the corner. They both hailed it. Neither had a dime. The driver did not like the looks of La Mont, but Shrimpo appeared as if he might have some coin. The driver had two ears that hinted that he had failed to duck in many a bygone ring battle.

"I hope you guys have some money," said the driver.

"Who you insulting?" demanded Shrimpo. "We can buy this wreck fifty times over. Start sudden or I'll flatten you!"

"Don't get sore," said the driver. "Only I been gypped twice already tonight!"

This pacified Shrimpo.

"Okay—okay, mug—you got a fin-spot coming when this trip ends."

Half an hour later they stopped in front of Hank Hooley's house.

They mounted the three flights of stairs. After much knocking, Hank's mother answered the door. She was surprised to see Mr. Todd. And said that Hank was working on a night shift this week.

"Hank told me that you might be gone for nearly five years," said his mother.

"Yeah," said Shrimpo. "I was thinking of going to Yurup but I changed my mind. The weather over there ain't so hot, they tell me. Er, this is a pal of mine, Mr.—ah—Jones."

"Glad to know you," said La Mont, "Mr. Todd was telling me how good you was for keeping some things belonging to his mother."

"I come for the package," said Shrimpo.

Mrs. Hooley went inside and returned in a moment with the package.

"Thanks," said Shrimpo. "Tell Hank that I calls and that I will see him again tomorrow. Goodnight."

"Goodnight, lady," said La Mont.

They descended the stairs.

"Listen," said La Mont. "We got to slip that driver a five spot, like you promised. Have you got any five-buck bills in that package?"

They opened the package in the hallway. Shrimpo extracted a fin and then rewrapped the bundle. They entered the taxi and gave the driver a five, which made him lose his uneasiness.

"Listen," said La Mont. "I know a fence downtown in the Exchange Building. He's a good pal of mine. Suppose we go there and then you can slip me mine?"

"Okay," agreed Shrimpo.

They arrived at 1 a.m. They had to arouse the night elevator operator. They ascended to the ninth floor. La Mont led the way to the rear. The hallway was in semi-darkness. La Mont rapped on the door three times. A light flicked on. The door opened.

A red-faced man peeped out.

"It's oke," said La Mont.

The door opened wider. La Mont and Shrimpo Todd entered.

A black cat which was curled up on the window sill hissed at Shrimpo. Mr. Todd felt uneasy. Black cats were poison. Why the hell didn't they make all cats white?

La Mont took the package. Opened it. Shrimpo looked on. La Mont counted the money. It was all there—minus five bucks to the taxi driver.

"That's that," said La Mont.

"What d'yer mean—that's that?" demanded Todd in a shrill voice. "Are you gonna doublecross me?"

"You know, Mr. Todd," said La Mont, "I have long held the opinion that all crooks are basically saps."

The red-faced man entered the room from an outer office.

"Mr. Todd," said La Mont, "allow me to introduce my friend, Special Agent Henderson, F.B.I."

"Nice work, Cromwell," said Henderson to La Mont.

The senses of Shrimpo Todd seemed to leave him. Then his face became very patriotic, viz., red, white and blooey.

"You dirty rat!" screeched Shrimpo. "And to think I trusted you!"

"I believe I told you that one should never trust a cop. Especially one in your line of work."

The black cat made another hiss at Shrimpo.

"I might of known it was a plant when I sees that cat!" whined Mr. Todd. "What d'yer call him?"

"*Lucky*," said Special Agent Henderson.

"Kindly pass into the next room," La Mont was saying. "You'll find a couple of books to read while waiting for the wagon, which may be a little late coming."

Silently, Shrimpo entered the room at the left. It was small and sparsely furnished. Two chairs, a table, and a desk with two ancient-looking books on top. Shrimpo sat on the chair nearest the desk. Dimly he noticed the book nearest him. The title was not what Shrimpo had expected, viz., *Lucky Days Are Here Again*.

"Nuts!" snorted Shrimpo.

Back in the other room, La Mont and his playmate were leaving.

"A sap for the ages!" chuckled La Mont.

"How long d'yer suppose the stupe will wait there before he gets wise?" asked the other.

"He'll be there when the janitors clean up in the morning!"

La Mont pressed the button for the elevator.

"This G-man racket is a pip," said Special Agent Henderson alias Poker-Pan Perkins. "What does the 'G' stand for?"

"Grab," said La Mont as the elevator door opened.

Let's return to Shrimpo Todd.

He left the chair and walked to the open window. What he saw caused his heart to muffle a few beats. A series of connected fire escapes descended to the pavement. Boy, was his luck coming back. Woof!

He returned on tiptoe to the door leading to the other room. He listened but heard no sound. He figured the boys were making out their reports. Returning to the window he mounted the sill and landed on the fire escape. A minute later he was on the ground in the alley that led into a side street. Free!

It was but a few paces down the alley to the street. Just as he emerged, the brakes of a car

screached in high crescendo. It had swerved to avoid killing a snow-white cat that was in the middle of the street.

The headlights of Radio Patrol Car No. 13 flashed full into the face of Shrimpo Todd.

Officer Jack Hammer, accompanied by Sergeant Sim Dawson, leaped out and made a flying tackle toward Todd. Both fell to the ground.

"Hey," whinnied Shrimpo, "what and the hell's the idear?"

Officer Hammer was too busy to make any explanation. He clapped the cuffs on Shrimpo with much expertness and speed. Then he pushed Shrimpo to the rear of the car. Two other gentlemen were already seated therein, linked together in a common bondage, the same being handcuffs.

"For cripe's sake!" bellered Shrimpo, spotting La Mont and Perkins, "what's this gag all about?"

Then something seemed to snap in his mind. He went what they call berserk. In brief, crazy with rage. He brought both his cuffed hands back as far as they would go, then aimed them at the chin of La Mont. *Bam!*

"Le's go," said Officer Hammer, paying no attention to Shrimpo's fistic affair. "That's what I call a break. We grab two birds in front of the building and nail this monkey coming out of the alley."

"Yeah," admitted Sergeant Dawson. "But if it hadn't been for that white puss blocking the road we would of missed the little monkey."

"I have always said," remarked Officer Hammer, "that white cats bring good luck."

A fierce guttural noise came from the rear. It was Shrimpo Todd trying to make a speech.