

## ADDIO

By THOMAS BEER

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWARD L. CHASE

THE red-haired child was male, small, and plainly pretending that he was a native horse. He cavorted on all fours ahead of Noel, saying "Yuff!" repeatedly and getting in Noel's way. Noel slowed, burdened with his suitcase and fishing rods and entangled in the chain of his terrier. Several men watched his progress down the platform, grinning, and from the rear a woman ordered Bud to get out of the gentleman's road. But Bud galloped on, shedding green candy pellets from some pocket in his faded pink garment, and butted his head on the leg of a young man in a conductor's cap. Then he wept.

Persons in blue shirts leaned from the windows of the blistered coach and spoke kindly to Bud, who howled until a red-haired woman marched up and righted him with two slaps. She had a baby tilted over her shoulder and she told Bud: "You're an awful nuisance. I got a mind to put you on the cars and send you home to your papa."

"Sure," said the conductor, "I'll fetch him off down to Addio. Get out from under, Bud. Here's somebody tryin' to get on the train."

Bud made a distinct attempt to follow Noel's dog up the steps of the smoker, but was repressed. The tourist sank into the first dirty plush seat, dropped his burdens and looked through the window at Bud's mother, who was pretty. She was the prettiest woman he'd seen in two hours' stay in the terrier city of Olean. She wore no hat and stood, tugging in a sweet drawl to the conductor while Bud sniffed, sitting on the platform. Two large men in overalls strode up the aisle and descended to shake hands with her.

She drawled: "Yeh, Mr. Carlson's lots better. But the folks at the hospital say he'd ought to stay here mebbe a week. Yeh, Charlie!" she spoke to the conductor—"you tell Addio his pa's gettin' on all right and feelin' good but awful weak. Now, Bud, cry cryin' or I'll send you home to papa right off like a shot."

Bud observed that he wanted to go home to papa. The men laughed and one asked: "Hey, Sally, what's it feel like bein' a millionaire's wife?"

"Get out," said the pretty woman. "Millionaire nothin'." The lawyers write it'll come to 'bout sixty-seventy thousand dollars. But it'll be months before we get it. They got to sell off Mr. Moretti's store and all. Yeh, Charlie, tell Addio to send up baby's other bottle. He's busted two."

The conductor said "Sure," and halted a move on the platform for Bud to crawl under the coach. The engine languidly whistled.

Bud's mother withdrew her son, wailing, up the platform and called back: "Yeh, Charlie, tell Addio I bought him some new and clothes 'n' morline. And you fetch up baby's bottle to-morrow. I'll come down and get it."

"Get out," said the pretty woman. "Sure," the two men scrambled into the coach and the train left Olean. Noel lit his pipe and patted the terrier, which had assumed the very superior expression of all West Highland terriers in public.

Noel said, "Balliol, we're nearly there, old son," and thought of Bud's mother.

An informal and popular character, certainly. Her family don't go to Oil City. Ask for a ticket to North Juniper. No one announces the stations, so tell the conductor to put you off at North Juniper. Do not be discouraged by the appearance of North Juniper. Telephone me and wait at the station with the stolid courage of your



"Get Out From Under, Bud. Here's Somebody Tryin' to Get on the Train"

race until I come for you. The agent at North Juniper is a great friend of mine. If you explain who you are he will give you a drink, perhaps."

Noel returned the letter to his case and beheld the conductor near him. Gathering his energies the explorer beamed and said, offering his ticket: "You'd not mind telling me when we come to North Juniper? I get down there."

"Sure, I'll tell you," the official nodded, taking the ticket; "but what the hell do you want to get off there for?"

"I—I'm visiting a—friend who lives about there."

The conductor said affably, "Oh, yeh. The Rawlin' boys, I guess? They're the only folks live anywhere near Juniper you'd be likely to be visitin'. Yeh. English, ain't you? I never seen a Britisher that was black-headed before. Or dark-complected."

Noel shyly told him, "I'm afraid I'm rather tanned. Your American climate. I've been swimming rather a lot and —"

"Yeh? You folks ain't got much climate in England, by all accounts. Well, it's a hot summer. Got a fishin' pole in that case? Awful good fishin' up at the Rawlin' place. M' kid brother works there—in the sawmill. Saved his leg' thumb off last Tuesday," the conductor reported proudly; "and two Danes stabbed each other Thursday. Mr. Rawlin's got near a thousand men on the place. Pretty lively this summer. Y'ought to have a good time," the man assured him, and passed on down the aisle. Noel heard him explaining to men deeper in the coach, "An English kid. He's goin' to Rawlin's Hope to visit. Expect he's somebody Sanford Rawlin' met in France."

A furry thin man came from the next coach and bawled down the smoker: "Hey, Charlie, wasn't that Addio Carlson's wife you was gassin' at, back at the station? Yeh? Well, what's she doin' in Olean?"

The conductor bawled back: "Old Carlson got took with appendicitis last Sunday. He's in hospital. Sally come up to nurse him."

The furry being now examined Noel, who was awed. He went on, "How much money's this Addio come into off his uncle?"

A chorus answered, "Sally says it ain't more'n sixty-seventy thousand dollars."

"Ain't that enough?" asked the interlocutor. He retired to the forward coach after another stare at Noel. This railroad seemed more sociable than the one which had brought Noel to Olean. Several young fellows in blue

shirts came lounging up to meet Balliol and to compliment the terrier's dignity. Noel smiled and nodded; he was receiving sixty thousand dollars to pounds English at the current exchange. With such sum banked, it appeared that Addio Carlson's baby might break endless bottles. Certainly Addio Carlson's pretty

wife should get some decent frocks and a smart hat. Who was Addio? Some well-known farmer of the wooded valley, of course. There were

stretches of bright farmland among the heavy trees. One of Balliol's admirers dropped from the coach at a tiny station and mounted a thick plow horse hitched to a maple trunk.

"Better not let the pup run 'round too loose up at Rawlin's Hope," a lank boy advised. "The rattlers are changin' their skins. They'll snap at anything. Couple of lumberjacks got bit last week."

"Rattlers? Rattlesnakes? Does one find them so far east as Pennsylvania? I thought—Texas, or rather farther west."

The lank boy hauled up his shirt and showed a pair of white marks on a freckled rib line. "Ten years back," he said, "N' gee, pop filled me so full of redeye I was drunk a week. Yeh, there's plenty rattlers 'round. Addio Carlson was sayin' the woods round Juniper's full of 'em. Says one come in the station and tried to buy a ticket, other day."

An older youth yawned: "Patch of slate right behind the station at Juniper. Rattles like slate. They lie out on it and get warmed up. Say, is it true they ain't any snakes in Ireland?"

They left the coach at various stations. Other men replaced them. Noel felt himself growing famous. He was an English feller on his way to visit the Rawlin' boys up at Rawlin's Hope. As prospective guest of a lumber magnate he was marked. Balliol had constant callers, and the woods changed to a valley, tortuous, fanned by a shallow pleasing river in which lads were bathing under the atrocious sun of this American noon. Cinders filled Noel's car. When he wiped his face the handkerchief came away grimy. The train went in jerks about bends and the hills rose ever steeper.

At one o'clock the conductor said: "North Juniper's next stop, friend, where you get off. Be there in a minute. The train clattered around a sharp curve. Noel climbed down the steps to a baked oblong of planks and saw his trunk flop from the baggage car to the end of this empty platform. The heat seemed to flow like invisible water about him. He gasped, blinking, his eyes brayed by the flung glitter of the window, from which a brown frown jumped into the light."

"Hey, Addio," said the conductor, "Sally was down to the station at Olean. Says you gotta send up the kid's other bottle. Your dad's some better but ain't well yet, and she's bought you some underduds. How y' gettin' on?"

The brown man drawled: "Fine. Hey, you give me a yell in the mornin' and I'll have the bottle ready. Anybody get off?"

"Yeh, this gentleman's goin' up to the Rawlin's. S'lond, Ad. Heard any more about your money?"

"Not yet," said Addio, and stepped back as the train rolled off. He stood with his hands jammed into the pockets of soiled yellow canvas breeches and grinned at the conductor.

"Hey, Sam! How you, Ed? Hear your wife's got a baby. Carl! and the high drawl lived against the train's jumbled noises.

He looked after it, then turned his tanned face toward Noel, fixing his prodigious brilliant eyes on Noel's feet. "You goin' up to Rawlin's Hope? That's kind of crazy, unless they promised to give you a job. They're full up. Been turnin' people away for a month."

Noel said: "Oh, I'm merely going to visit. Mr. Sanford Rawlin'—"

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Addio cried: "Oh, I getcha. You're that English feller San Rawlin' was talkin' about yesterday. Yeh, c'mon inside and sit down. Come ahead."

He shuffled his red carpet slippers across the planks to the sill of a painless door, stumbled on it, said "Hell!" and ushered Noel into a cell hotter than open air but dark by the sunlight. Here he picked up a telephone from a table where a telephic apparatus chattered and commanded: "Hey, Gertie, gimme Rawlin's. . . . Set down on the bed or somewhere. There's ice in the box, there, and the hooch is on the shelf right over. . . . That you, Mike? This is Addio. Gimme San Rawlin', will you? . . . Aw, hustle!" He stared through a window at the brassy river and told Noel, "You ain't just as likely to be off fishin' but they can send down a boat for you. . . . That you, Sam? This is Addio. Hey, your friend from England's here. . . . Yeh. . . . Sure, I'll give him a drink. . . . C'mon, guy, Sam wants to talk to you."

From somewhere Sanford Rawling said: "I'll be down as fast as I can get there, Bretherton. It's thirty miles and they've been tearing up the road. Addio can give you a ride. He's a live away or you could have a decent meal. I'll be there in an hour. I ——" His grave voice stopped and no sound succeeded it.

"It'll take San a hour or some to get here," Addio remarked from the ice chest by a battered oak bedstead. "You better have some chow. M' mother-in-law sends me things."

A round of roast beef and a pat of butter emerged from the ice chest. Balliol set up an optimistic whine.

Addio lowered his astonishing eyes and said: "Hey, pup, where you? Your dog? . . . West Highland terrier? Never heard of 'em." He stooped and explored Balliol with his nervous fingers, saying: "One of them low-lyin' hounds. . . . Well, pup, how 'bout a dish of milk?"

He spilled milk broadly on the oilcloth of the floor, filling a saucer. Balliol, an economist, lapped it up before commencing his meal. Addio planted beef, bread and butter on a rickety table at the bedside. A thin erect blue scar between his level black brows stirred as he smiled. He shuffled to the shelf where the whisky stood and knocked down a tumbler's milk bottle which didn't break as it bounced off Balliol's spine to Noel's foot.

Addio commented: "Lucky, huh? I got to send it up to m' wife in the mornin'. She's surin' dad up at Olean. He took appendicitis last week. She's got the kids up with her. . . . Hey, there's my call."

He leaned, frowning, on the table by the window and tickled of some response by telegraph. Against the brazen river and the soon his face was sad in profile, but boyish and comely still under the random mop of black hair.

He jerked about his head to ask Noel: "Notice anythin' wrong with the wire while you was talkin' to San Rawlin'? Oil City says somethin' wrong up this way."

"Rawlin' stopped speaking rather suddenly."

Addio said "Humph!" and picked up the telephone. After a useless clicking of the catch he nodded. "Busted wire, I guess," and tapped off a few words by telegraph. His eyes roved, and he shrugged, flexing his tough arms. "Wonder where? Well, let's catch some chow."

Noel sat on the bed, as no other seat seemed convenient, and ate sandwiches of cool beef. Addio dilated the woe of linemen in this valley. There were landlides in spring from the steep hills, and forest fires. This spring the wires up to Rawling's Hope had been down for three days and the whole plateau of the vast lumber camp had been cut off.

"Dad used to ride up in m' mother-in-law's flivver with messags. He ain't but one leg and he'd stall the car and have to get out and crank her and his pe'd get stuck in the mud. N' then the bridge busted down — it's down the river a mile — and m' mother-in-law couldn't send

the flivver over — she lives across from here — and there was hell."

"Rather," Noel murmured. The three windows showed no house. He saw a road mounting the slope behind the station. Poles escorted the streak of dusty clack. South, the four rails blazed, curving, and west was the rim of brush that separated the track from the river. He asked, "You've been station master here some time?"

"Oh, it's dad runs the station. Yeh. He's been agent here twenty years. Worked up at Rawlin's and lost a leg. Tree fell on him. Mr. Rawlin' got him this job. It's all right, but kind of lonesome. Be glad to get out. Ain't no one to talk to but folks on the cars, and there ain't but four locals a day. Yeh, we'll be glad to move off. Y' see, m' uncle in Phil'delphia died and left me his money. So, soon as I get it I'm going to buy out the old guy that runs the store up at Rawlin's. Bud's pretty near old enough to go to school."

"Oh, there's a village on Mr. Rawling's land?"

"Sure. Five-six hundred people in summer when they're cuttin' trees, and plenty in winter. And there's a movie and a church. Awful civilized." He appropriated a slice of bread for which Noel was reaching, then lifted his head and said, "Somebody whistlin'!"

"I don't hear anything."

Addio closed his eyes and solemnly frowned. Then he nodded. "Yeh. It's m' brother-in-law. Over the river." Noel saw a figure, a pink point, wading into the shallows opposite the station. He said, "You've awfully good ears."

"I got to have." Addio frowned, hacking beef from the roast. "I bet m' mother-in-law's been tryin' to phone me and couldn't, so she's sent Ed. Funny. In winter, if the river freezes, all they got to do stand on the other side and say 'Hey, Addio!' just out loud, and I can hear it like they was standin' on the tracks here."

"Isn't 'Addio' the Italian of 'good-by'?"

Addio said, "Yeh. M' mother was Italian. Name of Flora Moretti. Died off when I got born. Dad asked her what to name me. She said 'Addio,' and checked out.

Dad named 'a Swede thought it was some kind of name and damn' me it. Wops are funny. Went down to Phil'delphia to m' uncle's funeral — he run a grocery — and all his wop friends kept talkin' it at me. I can't speak a word of it."

He held his arms on his ripped blue shirt after toasting Balliol a fragment of beef, and brooded, shutting his eyes once more. Noel finished his food wisely and timidly noted the tattooed 483 Inf. under crossed rifles on one of the bronze forearms.

Addio mused: "Well, it was awful nice of Uncle Rico to leave me his money. There's Ed."

Ed was a red-haired boy of fifteen or sixteen, bare, wet and annoyed. He leaned through the window from the platform and said: "Hey, Add, who cut the phone wire? Mamma was tryin' to get you."

"It's busted somewhere."

Ed grunted. "Sure, it's busted. You can see it. 'Bout fifty yards down the track. Mamma's makin' you a cake and wants you to come over 'n' get it."

"Cause it ain't done yet. Hey, I pretty near walked on a rattler comin' over."

Addio rose and strolled to the telegraph table. He picked up an envelope and opened it, handing the contents to Ed across the window sill. Balliol went to nose the discarded cover. Ed squinted at the letter and announced: "It's from them lawyers in Phil'delphia. Want me to read it, Add?"

"Yeh."

The boy perched on the sill and read, singsong: "'Dear Mr. Carlson: In reply to your father's letter of July eighth we must inform you that Ottavio Moretti has no claim to any part of your late uncle's estate. He seems to be a remote relative and was probably suffering from delusions and feels aggrieved —"' The reader giggled. "Fancy word, huh? 'aggrieved' that your uncle left him nothing. His statement to you that he is the rightful heir of your late uncle is man-manifestly absurd. Should Ottavio Moretti visit you again or annoy you in any way please inform us directly and we will take steps to have him restrained. Yours very truly, Acton and Bland, per — per someone or other. Is that about the feller that came and talked to you 'las' week, Addio?"

"Yeh, that's him," said Addio, taking back the letter. He frowned at the celling, then drawled to Noel: "Say, I got to get this cake. San Rawlin' ought to be here pretty quick. You don't mind stayin' alone?"

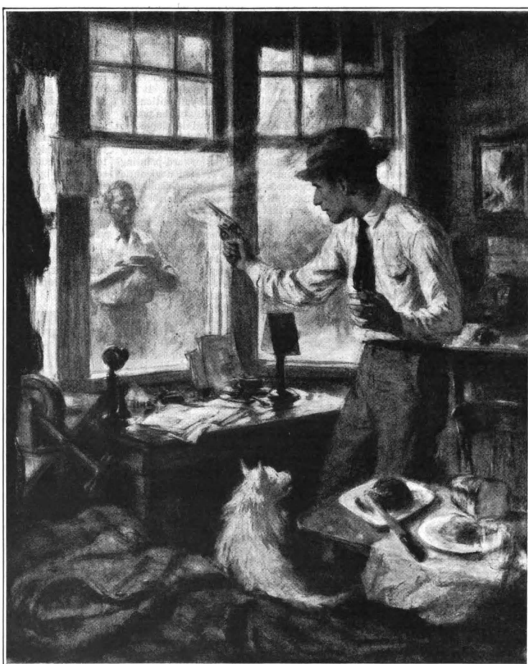
"Oh, rather not," Noel assured him, and watched Addio climb through the window.

The red slippers shuffled over the four rails and into the low brush, speckled with stones of a bluish gray. Addio explained to Ed that this was an English feller going to visit San Rawlin' while he shovels a flat-bottomed skiff from the shore. Ed civilly rowed the boat.

Balliol climbed on Noel's suitcase by the window to observe, his paws on the sill. He barked moselessly.

Noel said: "Yeh, old son, a very decent sort, Addio is. His table manners are 'a bit slack and he never looks at a boy for more than a second. Better write the gov'nor about him. Travel does enrich the mind." Noel wiped his face, took off his coat and adopted a square yellow telegraph blank. He sat at the telegraph table and wrote: "Dear Father: Have just lunched with the son of the station master at Juniper, Pa. He is an Italian-Swedish-American of my age or thereabouts, and appears to be illiterate. However, he has

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Addio Didn't Move. Noel Aimed the Revolver and Fired Three Times

## ADDIO

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came into fifteen thousand pounds from the estate of his late uncle, who was a tradesman in Philadelphia. The thermometer read 95 degrees and Rawling is coming 80 miles by motor. The weather is fine, these things will appear probable to you, but I am —" Balliol barked three times, although Noel saw nothing of interest outside the house. He heard a faint rustle, a goodish bit about rural America. Informally seems to be the prevalent tone of social intercourse. I have been left to make a case of North Juniper while my host goes to —"

"What's the matter, old son?" Balliol had scrambled from his post and had put his hand on Noel's shoulder. "What's the matter, Noel said, 'What's frightened you, Balliol?' He rested a hand on the window sill and ducked his black head under the eash. He said again 'Old son, the cinder-strewn planks his low steamer trunk, dotted with labels. There was nothing else. Noel murmured, 'Absolutely nothing.' He said again, 'There was something.'"

It was a curious and muffled ticking, like a large watch somewhere at hand. It came from the arid track or the red flowers of the desert, beyond the horizon. The sound increased and was an ecstasy of pulsing noise, a furious cantanet. It wanted and was gone. The dog wailed at Noel's feet. Noel said 'Old son, I see your pipe.' The sound of his calves still aching and raw. They had felt so one Flemish woman when he found the tube of his gas mask torn, and green vapor rose in beauty from the burner. He said again 'Old son, the match throw the match toward the edge of the platform.

A brown sticker passed from the lid of his suitcase trunk. Something thumped, planks and writhed. Something whirled. Noel slammed down the window. The snake's head rose and dipped over the eash. He saw a large rattlesnake, a name unknown, has been sunning himself on his luggage. He has now gone across the metals into some bushes. I feel that he is a rattlesnake. A rattlesnake again. A further episode of this day will be duly reported. Your Lordship's most obedient but rather alarmed servant, Noel said, 'Oh, you filthy brute! You brute!'

He picked up Balliol for company and water. The large rattlesnake, name unknown, has been sunning himself on his luggage. He has now gone across the metals into some bushes. I feel that he is a rattlesnake. A rattlesnake again. A further episode of this day will be duly reported. Your Lordship's most obedient but rather alarmed servant, Noel said, 'Oh, you filthy brute! You brute!'

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reached for his pipe, smoldering in the mess of bright glass. He found all this preposterous, and dusted the pipemast on a sleeve of his blue shirt.

To be sure! Black hair, tanned face, blue shirt. The swine took him for Addio. He might be killed for Addio.

By cable, from New York: The Honorable Noel Hugh Vincent Bretherton, only surviving son of Baron Bretherton, of Sholes, was found killed at North Juniper Station, in the state of Pennsylvania. The police have, as yet, no clew to the identity of Mr. Bretherton's assailant. Mr. Bretherton was twenty-six years old. He was educated at Harrow and served, during the war, as —

Oh, pull yourself together! Noel stared at the rear window. No good. The fellow could see him as soon as he started up the road.

Jump through the platform window and pick up the revolver? Make a fight for it? Of course this fellow had cut the telephone cable. The man was mad. Drugs? Why didn't he come in to see the effect of his two shots? Balliol pattered over and sniffed Noel's hand. The telegraph instrument chattered suddenly. Why the devil didn't they teach one to use the telegraph? Noel sighed and plucked a blank from the edge of the table. He snatched a Desert Eagle. A hand came just tried to shoot me. I think he is an Italian named Ottavio Moretti, a drug addict who has a grudge against the station-master's son. He seemed rather tall. His face was yellow. He wore a black or dark suit. I have lost my revolver. If he kills me this should help the police. I am in a trap here. Sanford Rawling should arrive very soon, now. The man may run off he sees a motor coming down the lane from the hill. It is ghastly o —

Rage made Noel's hand shiver. He glared at the window sill and thought of his revolver. Why not? The man hadn't hit him in two shots at close range. Balliol raised his gray skull and barked, once. There was a noise of cracking brick on the wall.

Noel said, 'Here he comes, old son.' The sound wavered and hung in the air. Noel stared at the opening four feet away and crouched. The fellow would peer through. Jump and get his revolver. That was it. He was slow about it. Reconnoitering, of course. Noel patted Balliol to keep the terror quiet. A heel struck Noel's metal. The man was crossing the road. And then the man yelled 'Ah! Dio!'

He yelled twice, hideously. Then feet rattled on wood and receded. Balliol barked and leaped at the window sill. Noel pulled him down. The fellow was running away. Noel said 'What the deuce?' and got up. He jumped through the window and stared.

It was true. The man ran south between the rails nearest the shore. He went in great strides, his arms flung wide, and his flapping black coat spoke against the curve. Yet there was no one in sight. Noel peered up the road behind the station and across the river. He looked quickly at Balliol, who had gone to smell the trunk. He picked up his revolver and resented the nick on its handle. Sweat had darkened the front of his shirt and his mouth felt unpleasant. He went back into the station and drank a tumbler of ice water. Then he came out to stare again down the rails, jerked up his head and saw a bright low motor car descending the lane from the hill. Its driver waved an arm. Noel waved the revolver and still held it when Sanford Rawling halted the car at the end of the platform and swung his lean legs, shod in leather gaiters, over the door.

Noel liked young Rawling because he wasn't talkative or ill at ease. He noted the wreckage and his level head gave tenor: 'That crazy relation of Addio's been here again?'

'Very much so. Addio's gone to his mother-in-law's place, so I had all the benefits. He pegged off down that way for some reason or other. I dare say something frightened him. Noel made his report and Rawling rubbed his brown nose with a glove, pondering.

'I hate keeping you here, Bretherton, but we'd best wait until Addio comes back. We're all awfully fond of the boy and this lunatic may come along again. You say the telephone's out of order? I ought to get the police. Let's see if we can't get it fixed.'

The telephone was still useless. Rawling smoked, making friends with Balliol, and Noel, flushing, destroyed his letter to his father. He put his revolver in his coat pocket, made himself a sandwich of beef and was eating this when Rawling said, 'Car on the tracks.'

It was a hand car, pumped along the inner rails from the south by a single man. It laid to a stop by the platform and the mechanic nodded to Rawling. He said: 'How you sir, say, where's Addio?'

'Over at Mrs. Mouilly's. Was he? The mechanic sat down on the vehicle and drawled, pointing south: 'Why, Mike and me was sent up from the Junction to see where this break in the telephone line is. There's a guy dead on the tracks, down a piece. Looks like a Eystalian. He ain't been dead a minute, neither. Snake bit him the neck. Jug 'lar vein, I guess. But he's got O. Moretti on a letter in his coat—got a match, air?—in his coat. We was wonderin' if he's some relation of Addio's. Moretti was Addio's uncle's name that let 'im that cake, huh?'

Rawlings said: 'I'd better go look at him. Stay here, Noel. Keep out of this sun.'

The hand car rolled off. Noel stared dizzily into the station and dropped into the one chair. Casual! A man dead of snakebite on a baking track beside a river. The man might have butchered him. 'Ah! Dio! The snake cranked around about the matter. The man had walked on it. It bit. They were changing skins in this terrible season and would snap at anything. 'Ah! Dio! The man was sick. He put his face in his hands and let Balliol nuzzle his leg unawared. Someone approached, whispering ragtime. Probably Rawling, from a view of death. Noel got up and walked to the window. Addio was strolling from the river. He carried a huge white cake on a platter before his blue chest and his face was tilted up to him carelessly, as if its pounding wouldn't bother his eyes. His yellow breeches swung through the brush and his red slippers appeared on the barren soil by the rails. He called, 'Hey, you, still here?'

Noel called 'Ramp!' Then he screamed, 'Look out! Jump!'

Addio stood still between the rails. The snake lay like a neatly coiled brown rope four feet to the left of his bare ankle. The whirring had begun. Addio didn't move. He took down his mustache and Noel croaked 'Right! Jump!' and tore at his pocket. The head waded delicately above the coil, and Addio didn't move.

Noel aimed the revolver and fired three times. The coil writhed in mad twistings of color in which appeared scarlet and yellow. Addio walked from it slowly and came to the platform.

He said: 'I guess that did for him. Say, I couldn't make out if you meant I'd better jump right or left! Don't let the pup go now, him. I'm a lot obliged. And he smiled.

Noel lurched back to the table and put his face in his hands again. He lived, for a time, in gray convulsions. The hand car rolled up and the Irish line-man buried the snake's smashed head. Another mechanic told Noel cordially that he was a pretty good shot. He was aware that Rawling had been on the platform and went gently to Addio and eating a slice of the preserved white cake. Presently Noel was sitting beside Rawling in the motor and Addio planked Balliol on the floor of the machine.

'What?' 'Fraid I've been a whole lot of trouble to you. Wasn't exactly my fault.' 'You're quite all right,' Noel said, and stretched out his hand. But Addio ignored it. He stood with his hands in his pockets and nodded, grinning handsomely. Rawling drove the car away and Noel said: 'You promised I should have a frightfully quiet time here.'

'You shall. We'll go fishing to-morrow. Addio used to work with me a lot before the war. He misses it, poor kid. Well, he's got a good wife and he'll have plenty of money now. And he's learned to get about very well. I suppose those are compensations.'

'Compensations? For what?'

'Hadden't you noticed? Oh, that was why you tried to shake hands with him? I was wondering. He's a strong kind, you know. High explosive. The Argonne business. I must tell him you didn't notice. He'll get a laugh out of it, poor kid.'