

# fantastic ADVENTURES

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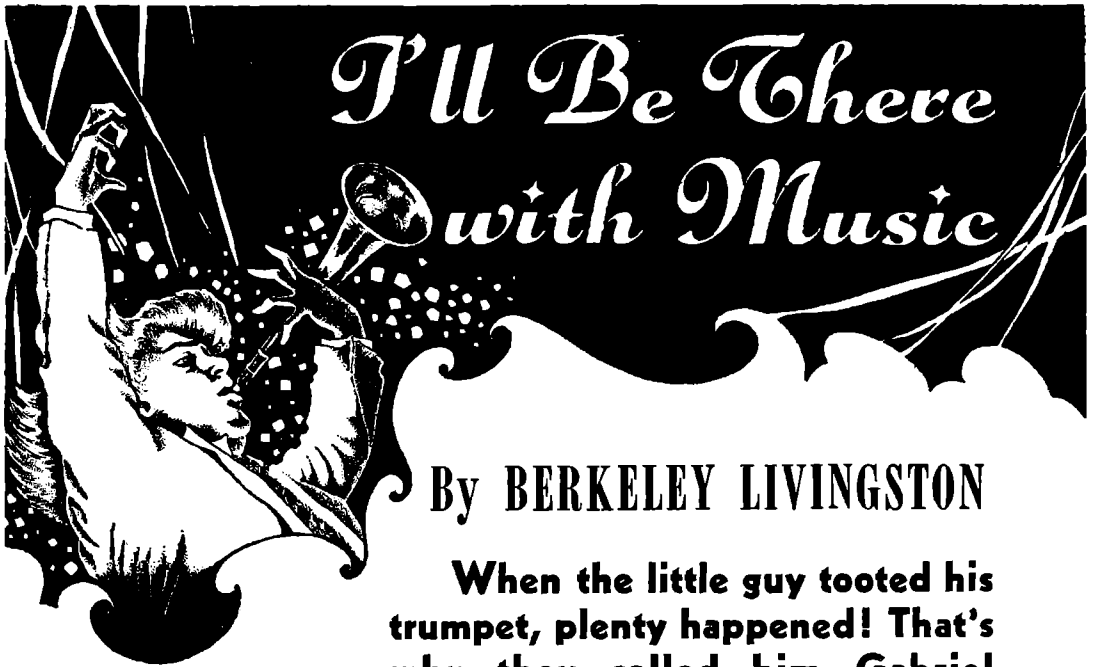
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# I'll Be There with Music

By **BERKELEY LIVINGSTON**

**When the little guy tooted his trumpet, plenty happened! That's why they called him Gabriel**

**W**ILLIE THE WEEP was angry. After a hard day's work of "faking a gimp," he had made only enough for a pint of his favorite rotgut. Arriving at Moe's Mansion, the flophouse he called home—rates, twenty-five and thirty-five cents—he went up to 205—his room.

But when he opened the door he saw the bed was already occupied. So! It had come to this! Well, he'd tell Moe a thing or two. . . .!

Moe looked at the mottled, thirty-years-with-the-whiskey face of Willie the Weep and knew something was wrong. Of course, Willie's voice helped too.

"A fine thing," Willie said, his voice hoarse with indignation; "here I am, the best 'gimper' in town, comin' in for my night's flop, and what do I find? Some other 'bo in my room!" His voice dropped dramatically. "In *my* room!"

Here, Willie reverted to character.

Tears began to course down the well-worn channels of dirt on his cheeks. His voice fell off into a tearful whine.

"I ask you, Moe," Willie wept, "is that the way to treat me? Me, one of your best customers. Did I ever take one of your two-bit rooms? No. I always got the best; a thirty-five-center! So what do you do? You give it to some stranger; some guy you'll never see again. How could you do this to me, Moe? When you know that since I've had 205, I've always been lucky?"

Willie heaved a lugubrious sigh. The record had come to a tearful end.

A look of pain crossed the fat-heavy face of Moe Maybrick, owner of Moe's Mansion. Another complaint. Ever since he had made his flophouse a two-priced affair, nothing but trouble had crossed the threshold. It was then Moe discovered that opera stars and baseball players were not the only ones with temperament. The occupants of



Jane, dressed as a flower girl, was ready for her song

Moe's Mansion also had it.

For those bums who had thirty-five cents for a night's flop, looked down their noses at the less fortunate ones who had to content themselves with a two-bit room. It was all very aggravating. Especially when the only difference between rooms was that the higher priced one had a chair.

"All right, Willie," said Moe, as he came out from the beaver-board affair which served as his office, "let's go up and take a look. I can't understand it, because I didn't give your room to anyone else. But we'll see."

Willie was right, though. For there on his bed lay the completely clothed figure of a man.

"Look," Willie yelped indignantly, "he's a two-bitter! He sleeps with his clothes on!"

"Shut up," Moe growled, "I don't know how or when this stiff got in, but he's going out—after I collect thirty-five cents."

With that Moe reached out and grabbing a generous portion of the stranger's jacket, yelled, "Hey you—wake up!"

The stranger stirred, sighed and at last opened gentle blue eyes to stare up into Moe's face. As though not satisfied with what he found there he subjected Moe to a thorough inspection, his eyes at last coming to rest on Moe's tiny feet. He then did a repeat performance with Willie.

"Well," asked Moe, "satisfied?"

"Ah," sighed the stranger. And after a few seconds silence, a silence which also embraced Moe and Willie he sighed again.

Willie and Moe noticed that the second "ah" had a strange note of satisfaction in it.

**N**OW that the stranger was awake, Moe was all business, although he

knew it was a pretty hopeless cause. Experience had taught him that once a bum slipped by the desk and into a room, there was very little chance of collecting.

"All right, 'bo," Moe growled, "get up off that flop and reach into your kick. I'll take thirty-five."

The stranger lost no time in getting off the bed. Moe and Willie were quick to observe that, for a bum, he was rather well dressed. A suit of dark material fitted the small, plump frame neatly. The white shirt he wore was spotless. And his fresh-colored, apple-cheeked face, topped by a head of snow white hair, looked as clean and scrubbed as though it had just been washed.

"Ah!" said the stranger again, smiling a white-toothed smile.

Moe was getting a little tired of this "ah" business. Maybe that was the only word the little guy knew. But Moe wanted room rent. So he tried again: "Look, buddy, let's not go into that again. All I want is my money. And then, just for the record, you can tell me how you got in here."

While Moe was giving his collection speech, the smile had gradually left the plump little man's face. A worried frown creased his forehead. Turning his back to Moe and Willie he carefully looked over the room.

"Hm," he said in a low voice, "now where could it be?"

"Where could what be?" asked Moe.

The stranger evidently hadn't heard him, for he had walked over to the chair beside the bed and looked between its legs. Then he lowered himself to his knees and peered beneath the bed. Not satisfied with that, he crawled under it!

Willie the Weep and Moe looked at each other, consternation in their eyes. Willie's right hand went up in the di-

rection of his forehead and made a slow circling gesture.

"The guy's nuts," Willie whispered.

"You're right," Moe agreed.

They both turned again to face the bed from under which they could hear scuffling sounds. The cherubic face of the stranger regarded them intently and a gentle smile parted his lips. "It wasn't there," the little man announced matter-of-factly. He came out from under the bed and carefully brushed his clothing.

Moe was getting desperate. He had to get down to the office. God alone knew how many bums had found free lodging for the night since he had come up here.

"Look, Mister," Moe said, his hands wide in a gesture of friendship, "maybe you didn't leave it here. Maybe you left it at the last place you were in."

"Oh, dear, I hope not." Consternation made the stranger's voice go up an octave.

Suddenly an explosive "ah" burst from the little man's lips. He had remembered at last! Moving purposefully to the bed, he reached under the pillow and pulled out a trumpet!

Triumphantly he showed it to Moe and Willie. Elation was bright in his voice as he said, "I knew it was here, somewhere."

Then, while the two spectators to his treasure hunt stood in open-mouthed bewilderment he tucked the trumpet under his arm and walked past them through the open door. They could hear his voice fading off down the staircase:

"I knew it was there, somewhere!"

**H**ARRY the Hock, a song in his heart, and larceny on his mind, was well pleased with himself as he sauntered down the street. Harry was a pawnbroker. A pawnbroker is a

man to whom you give your all in exchange for a little ticket, usually worth five dollars, which says you may have your articles back—if you can pay one hundred per cent interest on the loan.

Harry had been playing his favorite role that afternoon. That of being a benefactor to someone who needed money. Harry was talking to himself.

"Now let's see," he ruminated, "the diamond weighed a carat and a half. Of course, it was an old fashioned setting. Still I should get seven hundred for it. Oh, well, so I gave the guy a break. I gave him seventy-five dollars! Hm, that'll only be a profit of six hundred and twenty-five dollars. Maybe he would have taken fifty?"

So wrapped in his thoughts was he, that he failed to see the plump little man, with a trumpet under his arm, emerge from the entrance to Moe's Mansion.

Their meeting was on the informal side. To the casual bystander, it looked like the six foot tall pawnbroker had attempted assault on a much smaller opponent.

The little man rebounded from Harry, his hands wildly swinging around in search of someone or something to grab hold of. The trumpet fell to the sidewalk. Something about the sound of metal striking the walk made Harry stop short. Or perhaps it was the mellow, yellow gleam of its metal in the early evening sunlight, which got his eye. At any rate he reached the trumpet first. When he straightened up, the little man was at his side.

"Here you are, sir," Harry said, returning the trumpet. "Ain't hurt a bit."

"Thank goodness," gasped the little man. "I was so afraid that it was. And I must play for some people, tonight."

Harry had appraised the weight of the instrument, when he picked it up.

"Solid gold," was his thought, "and this old duck was just coming out of a flophouse. Maybe I can swing a little deal."

Aloud, Harry said, "Nice horn you got there."

Then, in a more hesitant manner, as though he were just one music lover addressing another:

"But a little old-fashioned, ain't it?"

The gleam in Harry's eyes, however, was not from musical appreciation.

But Harry had hit the right note.

The little stranger's eyes lit up proudly.

"My dear sir," he said, "this is the only horn of its kind in the world."

"A family heirloom, hunh?" asked Harry.

"I should say!" replied the other. "It has been in my keeping for many years. I would be lost without it."

"Maybe you want to sell it?" Harry asked slyly.

The little stranger made the mistake of waiting too long to answer.

It gave Harry the Hock a chance to go into action. It was Harry the Hock — super-buyer and super-salesman. His close-set eyes were a gleam with the battle of barter. His long, horse-like face was shining with the perspiration of persuasion, and all the while his tongue poured out a steady stream of words.

"Look," Harry said, placing a cajoling arm around the little man's shoulders, "I know how it is with you, old timer. I saw you come out of this flophouse. You've got the shorts, ain't you?"

Harry didn't wait for an answer.

"Well, old timer," he went on, "your troubles are over. Harry the Hock is at your service. I suppose you know about me? Everybody does! And I

want to tell you, brother, you're a very lucky man. Because only an hour ago someone came to me for a trumpet. Which gives you and me a chance to make a little money, hunh?"

**H**ARRY the Hock let out a horse-laugh that caused his thoroughly bewildered audience of one to jump almost out of his shoes.

Harry grabbed him again, and went on with his spiel.

"Now look, brother. I know it's a kind of old-fashioned horn, but this sucker I got coming tonight won't know the difference. You see, he's buying it for his kid. So what d'ya say? I'll give you a saw buck and it's a deal. Right?"

The little man tore himself from Harry's clutch, and retreated a few steps. His face was pale with indignation. Fire seemed to leap from the blue eyes.

"My—dear—sir! This trumpet is priceless! Why, I wouldn't be without it! No! It's out of the question. I told you I have to play tonight and I don't intend to disappoint my audience."

Harry was quick to realize that the situation was getting out of hand. Quickly he switched to another tack.

"That's what I was going to say, brother, I could see you weren't one of those *corny* trumpet men. You got a following! I know. So why take a chance on blowing some wrong notes. I'll tell you what, brother. I'll raise the ante to twenty bucks and throw in any trumpet in my joint—for free!"

Harry could have served as a model for a "statue of magnanimity" with arms thrown wide, head back, and shoulders squared.

But the little man wasn't having any. Indeed, he seemed to have lost all interest in Harry. His entire attention

was taken up in a minute inspection of his trumpet. Perhaps the fall had injured it. Satisfied, at last, that it was unharmed, he lifted it to his mouth and softly blew a few chords.

The pawnbroker recognized the symptoms. He had had dealings with musicians before. This old duck was out of the world! Harry knew that something had to be done, but fast. Then he remembered a couple of twenty dollar bills in one of his vest pockets. Maybe the sight of folding money would break down the old guy's resistance. But just as he reached for the bills, the stranger swung the trumpet toward him and blew a terrific blast from it.

Perhaps it was the unexpected sound. Or maybe the sun reflected a blinding light from the mouth of the trumpet. Whatever it was, Harry met with a catastrophe. For in trying to shield his eyes, Harry brought out too quickly the hand with the money in it. He had put the diamond, which he had bought that afternoon, in that same pocket. And he neither saw nor heard it pop out to fall and roll into the gutter.

When he was able to see again, it was too late. The little stranger was half-way down the block. Trumpet back in its accustomed place, under his arm, the plump little figure was trotting along toward the busy intersection at the end of the block.

"Nuts!" said Harry the Hock, reproachfully. "I was too sure of that sale. If I'd of offered fifty, he'd have sold. Oh well, can't make every chump." And with that philosophic remark Harry went regretfully on his way.

Nor did he see the little street urchin run over to investigate the shining object, which had fallen from Harry's pocket.

FINNEGAN, the traffic cop on the corner, wiped the sweat from the leather lining of his uniform cap, using a none too clean handkerchief.

"By all that's holy," he grumbled, "another scorchin' day like this, and I'll be ready for the booby hatch."

An impending traffic crisis at his corner brought forth a string of expletives on the stupidity of all drivers. He was so busy straightening out the traffic jam for the next few minutes that he didn't see what was causing a crowd to collect on one of the four corners.

It was the clear, brassy, high notes of a trumpet, which called his attention to the gathering of the rubbernecks.

For a few seconds Finnegan stared in startled disbelief. This was the last straw! Bellowing his rage he lumbered up, his beefy face red with anger. Unmindful of women, children and idiots, he ploughed his way to the center of the crowd. And there he came face to face with a plump little man in a dark suit.

The golden trumpet was glued tightly to the little man's mouth. The distended cheeks and sweat-beaded brow testified to the effort he was making in the business of blowing his horn. And scattered on the sidewalk before him, were the nickels and dimes which the crowd had evidently contributed.

Finnegan lived for moments like these. Here, before him, was the culprit, caught in the very act of disturbing the peace. And Finnegan had him cold.

Fixing the trumpet player with a steely look, the traffic cop slowly folded his arms across his large chest. Legs spread wide, he stood glowering down on the little man.

Strangely enough the culprit was paying no attention to Finnegan. He was engaged just then in executing some difficult runs on his instrument.

Finnegan's opening words were as a calm before the storm.

"And what makes you think," he asked softly, "that I'm needing to be serenaded?"

The little man cocked an inquiring eyebrow in his direction; but the music went on.

Storm signals were beginning to fly in Finnegan's face and voice.

"Or maybe you were thinking this corner was Carnegie Hall then."

Finnegan was becoming sarcastic, a bad sign.

Here Finnegan took a deep breath; then the storm broke!

"Well, you can stop that Banshee wailing, right now! 'Tis enough to wake the dead! There'll be none of this musical begging on Finnegan's station."

But the stranger played on. Finnegan knew there was something wrong somewhere. Usually the poor citizen who was caught in his clutches would be begging for mercy. But this old guy just wasn't paying any heed to him.

Finnegan wasn't conscious of the pleading tone in his next words.

"It'd be a fine thing if the sergeant should come by. He'd be wanting to know if one musician was enough; if maybe the chief ought to hire a regular band."

**H**OW long this could have gone on was never disclosed. For, intermingled with the sound of the trumpet was a new sound; the raucous note of an automobile horn being used at its loudest.

Down the block, weaving in and out of traffic at express train speed, came a low slung raffish looking roadster. Hunched over the wheel was its driver. His drunken blood-shot eyes were fixed unseeingly on the street. He knew only

enough to keep his hand on the horn.

And it was just at that moment that little, four year old, Marie Tonnetti decided to see what the world was like across the street. Quite unconcerned over the dangers of traffic, she blithely stepped off the curb and began her journey—full in the path of the hurtling juggernaut with the drunk at its wheel. Now only a hundred feet away, the car bore down upon her at insane speed.

A thrill of horror ran through the crowd. Women began to scream. Others turned away, too faint-hearted to look. In a few seconds it would all be over.

Finnegan took in the situation in one short glance. Forgetting the trumpet-playing beggar and everything else other than the little girl in the path of the racing car, he ran as fast as his two hundred and forty pounds could go. But he would never be able to make it. The car was only forty feet from little Marie.

And the miracle happened.

Seemingly of its own volition, the front wheels of the car swerved to one side. At least that was the way it seemed; for no one saw the driver make any attempt to twist the steering wheel. The car, still going at terrific speed, crashed head-on into the concrete abutment of a safety island.

And high above the tortured, rending scream of steel meeting concrete, was heard the triumphant trumpet of the little stranger.

**T**ERRY SHANNON, ace newshawk for the *Argus*, a morning sheet, was having his usual argument with his friend, 'Drums' Morton. Drums worked for Louie Jones at the Crystal Cavern, a bright spot with a shady reputation.

"Why don't you face the facts,



Drums?" Terry demanded. "You know the Cavern is just a hangout for Louie Jones' hoodlums. That more killings are plotted there than on a movie set."

"That's just it, Terry," Drums replied. "That's why I don't like to see you stick your neck out by hanging around so much. Louie'll get wise some day and you'll wind up in the river, wearing a concrete nightshirt!"

Terry Shannon's Irish jaw set in a stubborn line. And the be-damned-to-you look in his eyes showed how he felt about it.

"I don't care what Jones thinks," Terry stubbornly replied, "something is going to pop one of these nights and I want to be there when it happens. And the *Argus* is going to have a six column spread Extra, when that night comes."

Morton shook his head in hopeless resignation.

"Well, don't say I didn't warn you, pal," he said.

It was then they heard the sound of a trumpet from down the street.

Morton's muscular fingers gripped Terry's forearm hard.

"Say!" he exclaimed admiringly, "whoever is blowing that horn sure knows his business."

Terry had been looking around to locate the source of the sound.

"Oh, oh," he said, "it's coming from the middle of that crowd on the corner."

"Well, come on then," said Drums, breaking into a run, "I want to see who that guy is!"

They arrived just in time to catch the incident of the speeding car.

"Listen, Drums," Terry directed. "Get the old guy out of here. I'll meet you at the Smith's drug store as soon as I get the angle on this crash."

When Terry Shannon talked that way, Drums knew there was something

brewing in the reporter's mind. He didn't waste time in asking any questions. Slowly and inconspicuously he walked up to the little man. Linking arms with him, he firmly pulled him across the street, to the place Terry had designated.

A few minutes later, Terry came over, a big grin on his handsome face.

"What's up, pal?" Drums wanted to know.

"I'll tell you," Terry grinned, "as soon as I 'phone in my story."

When Terry came out of the drug store, the grin was even wider.

"Ye old editor just gave me a mighty fine pat on the back," Terry boasted.

"Yes sir," he continued, "that was a mighty good story I just turned in."

"Cut out all this, and give us the lowdown. What did you tell the editor?" Drums demanded.

"Oh nothing," Terry replied lightly. "Just that Gabriel blew his trumpet on the corner of Clark and Fourth to-night."

"Gabriel! Have you gone nuts, Terry?"

"No, no! You don't get it, chum," Terry explained. "That's because you have no nose for news. What was it that happened? A crash! Worth ten lines of print. But I dressed it up and pointed out a moral. That there is a Gabriel blowing his trumpet on every corner. Tonight, our little musical friend, here, played the part of Gabriel to some drunken driver. And in so doing gave me a story."

TERRY smiled down at the little stranger, who was staring up at him, mouth agape, consternation written large on his face.

"Thanks, little chum," Terry said.

"But I—" the little man began.

"I know. Of course, you're not Gabriel," Terry hastened to reassure him.

"I hope you didn't mind my making use of you tonight."

Somewhat mollified, the little man said, "Of course not, sir. Now, if you don't mind, I shall be on my way."

"Just a minute—Gabriel!" It was Drums who stopped him this time. "I may not know what's news," he admitted, "but I do know music when I hear it!

"Mr. Gabriel," Drums continued, "I don't know whether you're working or not. But if you're not, I can use a trumpet man in my band."

"In your band?" asked the little man.

"Yes," Drums answered. "I've got a swing outfit over at the Crystal Cavern. And I need a trumpet man. So what do you say? Union scale and Monday nights off!"

"Did you say the Crystal Cavern?" the little man asked.

Drums nodded.

The little man looked at him for a few seconds, without saying anything, as though he were weighing the proposition.

"Yes," he said finally. "I think I will accept your offer. It sounds attractive."

Terry had been looking at his watch. "Hey," he broke in, "it's a quarter to eight. Let's get cuttin' before Louie fires you."

**A**LTHOUGH it was very early in the evening, the parking lot beside the Crystal Cavern was already half filled. Cabs were beginning to arrive with patrons who wanted to catch the first floor show.

"Psst! Mr. Morton!"

Gertie the hat check girl, called to Drums as they came into the brilliantly lighted lobby.

They walked over to the gesticulating girl.

"What's up, kid? What's eating you?"

Gertie was very much excited and very much in love as she looked up at Drums, worship in her eyes.

"Gee, Mr. Morton," she babbled excitedly, "Janie, your singer, got a bad case of laryngitis and Mr. Jones is blowing his top!"

"To hell with Jones! But that's a shame about Janie," Drums groaned.

"What's all the excitement about Jane's laryngitis," Terry wanted to know. "She'll miss a couple of nights, that's all."

"That's where you're wrong," Drums said sadly. "We got a tip there'll be a talent scout from R. K. O. here tonight. and he's coming just to hear her!"

"So he'll come back in a couple days," reasoned Terry

Drums shook his head sadly.

"No, he won't. He's catching the show between planes. Poor Jane, she worked so hard, just for this opportunity!"

Terry was sympathetic. Everybody liked Jane.

"It's tough," agreed Drums at last, "but I've got to rehearse some numbers for the early show. Let's go, Terry."

They turned away from Gertie and walked back to the little man who was staring about him in a wondering silence. He was holding the trumpet tightly in one hand.

"Holy jumpin' cats," Drums groaned, "look at the horn he's got."

"What's the matter with it?" Terry asked.

"Can't you see, you dope? It's not a trumpet at all. Why it's just a horn. There no music in a thing like that."

"Take it easy pal," Terry cautioned. "It may not look like a trumpet, but remember how it sounded."

Relief came into Drums' eyes.

"That's right, Terry," he said. "Let's take a look at that horn. Don't remember ever seeing one just like it."

He walked over to the little white haired man. "May we see your horn, oldtimer?"

"Certainly," the old man replied, pride glowing deep in his eyes. He handed the trumpet to Drums. "It has a very interesting history."

It was an unusual instrument. As long as an average trumpet, it had no stops or valves. In fact, it looked like an old-time hunting horn.

Drums examined the curved mouth.

"Look at the fine engraving in the gold," he said to Terry.

"Oh, the engraving!" interrupted the old man. "An Italian friend of mine named Angelo, did that. A true artist!"

Terry had to acknowledge that it was beautiful work. Insofar as he could make out, it appeared to be a scene in Heaven. Cherubs peering out from behind clouds; and the robed figure of a bearded man, some sort of book in his hand, beside a throne. Flanking the throne on the other side was another robed figure. The face on this figure looked strangely familiar. In attempting to see who was on the throne, Terry held the mouth up to where it would catch the most light. It did, too much of it, almost blinding Terry with its radiance. Little black spots danced before his eyes as he handed back the golden trumpet.

"I only hope the boys in the band don't kid you too much about that horn," Drums said.

THE band's dressing-room was behind the elaborate stage of the Crystal Cavern. The eight men, who were already there, looked at the stranger in open curiosity.

"Okay, gang," Drums said, "meet, uh—Gabriel; our new trumpet man."

The chorus of friendly, and frankly amazed, greetings which followed Drums' announcement, brought a sweet, gentle smile to the old man's lips.

It was Terry, however, who brought up the point that Drums had forgotten.

"It'd be a fine thing, pal, if old Gabriel here, doesn't know any modern tunes."

Drums clapped a hand to his forehead.

"Good Lord; I never thought of that! How about it, Gabriel?"

The old man smiled and said "As a matter of truth, I do not know any modern airs. But if you will play any song just once, I think I can repeat it from memory."

Jimmy Bryant, first sax in the band, whistled admiringly. "Some memory you've got there, Jackson," he said.

"There's only one thing to do," Drums said. "Let's see how right he is." He walked over to an elaborate set of traps at one side of the room. "All right, gang. Let's try an easy one: St. Louis Blues."

When they finished, the old man lifted the oddly shaped trumpet to his mouth and played a perfect solo of the song they had done. They went through their entire repertoire; and not once did the little man fail to strike the right notes. Not only did he play the songs perfectly, but his improvising was something to listen to. Before he was through, they all realized that he was by far the best trumpet player they had ever heard.

At the end of their session, the whole band crowded around the old man to congratulate him.

Jimmy Bryant was in ecstasy.

"Jackson," he yelled, "I see where you're going to take a solo in every number. When those cats out there hear you, they'll tear down the joint."

Someone in the band wanted to see

the trumpet. Jimmy took it from the old man and passed it around. Somehow or other, somebody became careless. The trumpet slipped from his hand and fell to the floor. And when it was picked up again they could see that the gleaming mouthpiece had cracked in two.

The old man was panic-stricken.

"Whatever will I do?" he moaned. "I simply must play tonight."

They were at a loss to understand why he was so panicky. After all, it was only the mouthpiece. And though it, like the horn, was made of some rare metal, still it could be replaced. There were plenty of spare mouthpieces lying around.

But when they tried to insert a substitute, it didn't fit. One after another was brought out, but none fitted. Terry finally made a suggestion.

"Say," he said, "remember those horns you fellows used in that circus skit in the floor show? You know, those horns you used as a flourish for the opening. Well, I'll bet the mouthpiece from one of those will fit Gabriel's trumpet."

They dragged out the property trunk and in a few seconds a horn, not unlike the old man's, was brought into view.

Its mouthpiece proved a perfect replacement for the broken one. The glowing smile on the old man's face repaid them amply for their trouble. And when he blew a few practice chords, none could tell the difference.

**S**OMEONE knocked timidly at the rehearsal room door.

"C'mon in," Drums called cheerfully. "The door isn't nailed." But when he saw the woebegone look on the face of the slight, pretty girl who came in he hurriedly came over to her.

"Now don't feel so badly, Janey," he said tenderly. "I'll see that you'll

get another crack at that talent scout some day."

He took her by the arm and led her across the room toward the group of musicians.

"Janey," Drums said, "I want you to meet Gabriel, our new trumpet man."

"I'm awfully glad to meet you, Mr. Gabriel," Jane whispered.

The old man took both her hands in his. His gentle blue eyes saw a heart-shaped face, great brown eyes and lovely mouth. His smile seemed to embrace her as he said, "Don't worry, child. Maybe you'll sing tonight, as you've never sung before."

"Thanks, Mr. Gabriel," she whispered tearfully. "I'll try. But I just know I can't!"

A buzzer sounded its warning somewhere in the room. Drums looked at his watch.

"Eight-thirty, boys; let's get out there," he said. Then it was that someone noticed the old man had no tuxedo.

"Too late for that," Drums said. "I'll have the electrician give him a baby spot when he takes his solos."

"I'll be at my usual table, pal," Terry called, as they were filing through the door leading to the stand. "See you later."

"Right," said Drums, and closed the door after him.

The bandstand was at one end of the large horseshoe-shaped floor, the bar at the other end. The large dance floor between was already crowded. The tables which bordered the floor were almost all taken, as the band went into its first number, Tuxedo Junction.

Terry Shannon had made his way to his favorite table, just off the bandstand. He ordered a bottle of beer from the waiter, and sat listening to the music.

Peggy O'Brien, the only girl in

Terry's life slipped quietly into the chair across from him. "Hello, darling," she said softly.

Terry's eyes were tender. "Hello, sweetheart. Tell me, what did the doctor tell you?"

"Just what we thought he was going to say. That Dickie needs an operation. He'd be able to walk again after that!"

There was something in her voice that was left unsaid.

"I see," said Terry slowly. "How much does he want?"

"A thousand dollars, Terry. Oh, darling, where can I get that much money? It's impossible!"

TERRY shook his head sympathetically. He knew how much Peggy loved her younger brother, Dick. Just a year before, Dick had been struck by a hit and run driver. The doctor at the hospital had saved his life but had told Peggy that he would never walk again. Since then she had spent whatever money she had in vain attempts to get someone to make him well. And now, after finding this famous surgeon, she discovered that he wanted more than she could afford to pay. Terry knew what a blow it was to her.

"Now listen, honey," he said, his voice strong with emotion, "we'll get that money. I've never let you down and I'm not starting now. Just don't worry about it."

Her fingernails bit deep into his palm, so fiercely did she grip his hand.

"Oh, my dear," she said. "You're sweet to say that. But I know you haven't the money, either."

The band had finished the medley which preceded Jane's featured number. The one for which the talent scout was waiting. Terry told Peggy what had happened to Jane.

"What a shame!" Peggy exclaimed.

The band had gone into the first bars of "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To," and Jane, wearing the brief costume of a flower vendor, was waiting at the mike for her lead.

Terry knew the microphone would amplify even her smallest whisper, but it wouldn't be enough. There were too many high notes in that song. In his mind's eye he could see the talent scout shaking his head.

And then, just as she started to sing, the old man stood up and began to accompany her on his trumpet.

Terry could see by the surprised and startled faces of the band that the old man had made a mistake. But it was too late to correct it now. The electrician had his instructions and when he saw the little man with the golden trumpet stand up he put the baby spotlight on him.

Terry had to admit the effect was good. The spot highlighted the white hair and ruddy, round cheeks of the musician. And in the light, the trumpet seemed to glow in a golden haze. Even more wonderful was the music the old man was playing. He seemed to be leading Jane in her singing. She had sung the first few words into the mike, but when the old man started to play she moved away from it and sang directly at the audience. Neither Terry nor anyone else had ever heard her sing so well. He could see that the talent scout was visibly impressed. Jane had made the grade.

"I thought you said Jane had laryngitis," Peggy said reproachfully.

Terry's face mirrored his bewilderment. "Listen, Peg," he said, "ten minutes ago that girl couldn't talk above a whisper. I tell you, I heard her."

"Then she got over it mighty fast, because some of the notes she hit were

almost as high as the trumpet sounds," Peggy said.

The moment Jane finished with her song all the lights in the night club went on. Two men came in from one of the wings, rolling a metal stand before them. A small barrel was attached to the stand.

Tumultuous applause greeted its appearance. And when Louie Jones, the owner of the Crystal Cavern made his way to the front of the bandstand, the applause swelled to a roar.

**I**F IT is true that animals have their counterparts in humans, then a snake fathered Jones. Sinuously slender, he had a small reptilian-shaped head. His gleaming black hair was brushed flat against his skull. Strangely enough, women were fascinated by him.

Terry turned away in disgust. "Here we go with the old come-on," he said.

Jones was making an announcement over the microphone.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "it's 'Lucky Barrel' night at the old Crystal Cavern again. If each of you will examine the Lucky Barrel ticket you were given when you came in tonight, you will see that it bears a number. The duplicate of all tickets are in this revolving barrel."

Here one of the attendants, twirled the barrel on its brackets, to the accompaniment of a long roll from Morton's drum.

"The prize tonight," Jones continued, "will be one thousand dollars—in cash. So examine your ticket carefully and remember your number." He turned and went over to the barrel, as all lights went out, with the exception of a large spot focusing on the three men at the barrel.

"One thousand dollars," whispered Peggy feverishly. "Oh, Terry, maybe

I'll be the lucky one tonight!"

"Now look, honey," Terry admonished, "don't go building yourself up to an awful letdown. I've told you before the whole thing is fixed. Jones has the winning number palmed in his hand.

He just fishes around in that barrel to fool the customers. You'll see," Terry concluded, "one of his friends will be the winner, as usual."

In the meantime, Jones had been going through the business of rolling up his sleeves, to show the customers the whole thing was on the level. Now he was ready to draw out the winning number. The barrel was spun around several times to mix the tickets well.

It was stopped and Jones gave Drums the signal for his trumpet man to blow a fanfare while Jones fished out the winning ticket.

Jones was an excellent actor. The absorbed look of concentration on his face, as he swished his hand around in the barrel, was something to marvel at. So was the look of startled horror which appeared a second later. For instead of a fanfare, the little man had let loose such a blast of sound from his trumpet that it startled everyone present.

Terry was quick to note how feverishly Jones was swishing around in the barrel. He knew what had happened. The unexpectedly loud blare of the trumpet had caused him to drop the winning ticket among the others in the barrel.

"I've waited a long time for this," Terry gleefully whispered. "There's going to be an honest winner in the house tonight."

Jones face bore a sickly smile, as he removed his hand from the barrel. His voice had lost its cheerfulness as he read off the winning number from a ticket in his hand.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he an-

nounced, somewhat sadly, "the winning number is . . . five hundred and eighteen. Will the person who holds that ticket please come up here for his or her money."

**TERRY** was looking at Peggy as though she had gone mad. Her lips were moving, but she wasn't saying anything.

"What's wrong, honey, don't you feel well? What are you trying to say?"

Peggy nodded dumbly and pointed to the ticket in her hand. Then he saw the number. 518! He snatched the ticket from her shaking fingers and rushed up to the bandstand, shouting as he ran, "The winner! The winner!" Here it is Jonesy, old pal, here it is!"

Whatever hope Jones had that one of his friends held the lucky number was squelched at the sight of the young man who was wildly waving a ticket above his head. Glumly, he drew a thin sheaf of bills from an inner pocket and handed it to Terry.

"Here you are—one thousand dollars," Jones said sadly. "And I hope it brings you luck."

"Yeh, I know, you hope it brings me luck—all bad," Terry said, grinning up at the night-club owner.

Just as Terry turned away to rejoin Peggy, he heard Jones ask one of his assistants. "Who is the old guy who blew that trumpet?"

"Some guy Drums hired tonight, boss."

"Well," Jones said, "Tell Drums to fire him tonight, too."

Back at the table, Terry said to Peggy, "Here you are, darling. You get the prize and now Dickie can get his operation and everything will just be fine. Happy, dearest?"

The tear-wet, shining eyes of the girl gave him all the answer he needed. A lump was in the throat of Terry

Shannon as he said, "And now, honey, let's sit back and enjoy ourselves."

On the bandstand, Drums gave the little man the signal to take his solo number. When he came up front, into the glare of the large spotlight, a wave of laughter ran through the audience.

"Who is he — Gabriel?" someone shouted.

The rest of the crowd took up the cry, "Gabriel! Gabriel!"

Strangely enough, the little man was unabashed by the laughter and noise. Softly, at first, he began to play. Then more loudly. Soon it seemed that the very walls were assisting him. The crowd had never heard anyone play like that before. And when he was done, he received the biggest ovation of the night.

Terry should have been happy, sitting there with the girl he loved, but something was bothering him. A phrase kept running through his mind, "Almost as high as the trumpet sounds." He kept trying to connect that phrase to something else. An automobile crash, a girl singing, a prize which was won by someone who needed it, and a strange golden trumpet. But there was a piece missing to the puzzle. What was it?

His thoughts were shattered by the arrival of a late group. From the bustle the waiters and Louie Jones were making, Terry knew somebody of importance had arrived. By craning his neck he was able to make out who it was.

"Our next governor, Bentley Merrit, just came in, Peggy," he said. "If you feel like standing on the table, you can see his bald head!"

"Thank you, no. I don't feel like standing on the table," Peggy said firmly. "But didn't you tell me that Louie Jones was backing the other man?"

"Say, that's right," Terry said. "Maybe he's switched sides. After all, Louie likes to ride a winner."

"I thought Merrit said he was going to clean up places like this," Peggy said.

Terry shrugged his shoulders. "You know what they say about 'the ways of children and politicians.'"

A MAN walked by their table at that moment and in the semi-darkness jostled against Terry. He mumbled an apology and continued on to a table not far removed from Merrit's party.

Terry had become strangely quiet. Something about his strangely watchful attitude caught Peggy's attention.

"What's wrong, Terry?" she whispered.

"That guy who just bumped into me is carrying a gun," Terry said.

He was peering intently at the man, trying to place him. He knew he had seen him before, in some newspaper picture, perhaps.

Louie Jones was talking to Bentley Merrit. Terry could see Merrit shaking his head to some question of Louie's. At last he gave in to whatever request Louie had made. Louie Jones, thin lips parted in a smile, stepped onto the bandstand and held up his hands for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he announced, "tonight we are being honored with the presence of a special guest. Bentley Merrit, our next governor, is with us. Perhaps we can get him to say a few words."

Louie Jones walked back to Merrit's table. Applause and cries of "Speech! Speech!" greeted the announcement. Merrit was smiling, quite pleased with the demonstration. A spotlight came swinging out to his table and Merrit rose to his feet to say a few words.

And once again the little man with

the snow-white hair made a mistake. As Bentley Merrit parted his lips to speak, the trumpet player rose from his chair, lifted his instrument and began to play.

The sound did not shake the walls, as when Jones had reached into the barrel. Nor was it sweet and tender, as when Jane had sung. Instead, it was almost sad, low and wailing, delivered in a minor key. There was a strange quality to it that haunted the mind. Somehow it was a song of farewell, yet held within it a promise of return. And through the notes, as a central motif, ran a thread of melody that was almost a command, saying:

*"Heed my words! I leave you now, but someday you shall hear my horn again . . . someday . . . someday . . ."*

Other than the notes pouring from the horn, the room was in absolute silence. People sat at their tables as though turned to stone, their faces shining with an inner light. Bentley Merrit, standing in the brilliant glare of the spotlight, was enraptured by the music as everyone present.

Louie Jones, who had started to rise from his place at a nearby table when Gabriel first began to play, had dropped back into his chair. He sat unmoving, his eyes glued to the old man's face.

There were two within the room, however, whom the song had failed to touch. Terry Shannon's eyes had never wavered from the slender, dapper figure of the man at the next table. The man whose pocket contained a gun. . . .

And then, without warning, the dapper one moved. With a single, lithe movement his hand dipped under the left lapel of his dinner coat, then reappeared, a long-barreled revolver in his hand. A silencer had been fitted over the barrel itself.

Even as Terry screamed a warning, the gunman levelled the weapon at the



spot-lighted figure of Bentley Merrit and pulled the trigger.

**L**OUIE JONES sat motionless in his chair, his eyes gleaming in the reflected light from the trumpet's bell. Yet he did not blink under the brilliance, nor did he hear the melody.

For Louie Jones was very dead. The blue-bordered hole in his temple testified to the accuracy of the gunman's aim.

Not that Louie had planned it that way. It was Bentley Merrit who was to have been the target for the killer Louie had hired.

Louie Jones hadn't taken into consideration the little, white-haired man with the golden trumpet. Nor had his gunman.

At the exact moment that the killer's finger tightened on the trigger, the golden trumpet had sounded a weird, disharmonious note. Startled, the gunman's hand had wavered slightly. And the bullet, intended for Bentley Merrit, had found a last resting place in Louie Jones.

Terry snatched the empty beer bottle from his table and leaped forward, bottle held high.

The petrified gunman was still standing, gun in hand, when Terry reached him. The bottle, wielded with terrific force, crashed down on the hoodlum's skull. A second blow was not needed. He went down and stayed down.

A policeman, one of the guards assigned to Merrit, appeared at Terry's side.

"I'll take care of this guy," he said.

"O. K.," fella," Terry said, "but remember, the reward is mine."

The policeman stared at him. "What reward?"

"Well," Terry said, "if you'll take a good look at this lug, you'll see that I've

just knocked out Frankie Moroni. This guy's got a five thousand dollar price on his head."

For Terry had remembered at last who the gunner was. He had also found the lost piece to the puzzle that had been bothering him. He remembered now where he had seen the face of the little stranger. In the engraving on the trumpet. He was the other figure flanking the throne. Terry understood, now, the allegorical meaning of the engraving. The figure with the book in his hands, was the Recording Angel. The throne was the throne of God; and the other figure was—Gabriel!

Other things also became clear. The Italian friend who had done the engraving. What was his name? Angelo? The little stranger had meant Michelangelo.

Gabriel had come to pass judgment. And when he blew his trumpet all who heard received their just dues. So a drunken driver had died in a wreck. A policeman had become a hero. Jane had sung so well that her future was assured. And Jones had first lost one thousand dollars, then his life. Peggy had won the prize that her brother might walk again. And last, he, Terry, had knocked out a killer with a five thousand dollar reward on his head.

"And," said Terry, talking to himself, "I'm going a little crazy, from all this excitement. Calling that little old guy Gabriel! I must be nuts!"

**H**E WAS still shaking his head when he came back to their table. Peggy stared at him strangely. "Are you all right, Terry?"

"Yeah," he said, "sure I'm all right." Then, making up his mind, "Come on, honey, I want to ask that little trumpet player some questions."

But when they reached the band-

stand the little man had disappeared. He seemed to have vanished. It was Jimmy Bryant who had been the last to see him.

"Sure," he said, "I know where he is. After the shooting, I saw him go back to the rehearsal room."

"Let's find him," Terry suggested. "I want to talk to him."

But the room was empty.

"Where do you suppose he went?" asked Drums.

"The only other door to this room leads to the lobby," Terry said, "and you've got a watchman posted out there to make sure no one steals the stuff in here while you're playing. Let's ask Old Tom if he saw him."

The old man who sat facing the door looked up at them in startled wonder at their question. "Nope," he said. "Ain't no one come in or out since you boys started to play." Nor could they shake him from his story.

It was Drums who saw the mouthpiece.

"Hey, fellas," he said, "the old guy must have been here. Here's the mouthpiece we gave him."

Jimmy Bryant took the mouthpiece in his hand. "That's right," he said, "see, here's where we nicked it, to make it fit."

"All right, he was here; but where did he go?" someone asked. "Old Tom didn't see him, and he didn't come back on the stand."

Jimmy Bryant grinned and said, "Well, we called him Gabriel. Maybe he went back to Heaven to do some real blowing."

Terry joined in the laugh that followed, but he thought, "Yes, Jimmy, maybe it was Gabriel. But I'll bet he's somewhere else right now, blowing his trumpet for judgment—and justice."

THE END.

# »»» Introducing ««« THE AUTHOR

**BERKELEY LIVINGSTON**

**Author of "I'll Be There With Music"**

**I** THINK the best way to start this, is to come to a conclusion: That had I shown a greater interest in arithmetic instead of reading, I would not now be 'ritin.

The fairy tales of my childhood and the stories of Merriwell and kindred heroes of my youth set my fancy free. In my mind, I was always evolving newer and better vehicles for their deeds. But I am anticipating.

I was born in Chicago, November 26, 1908. An incident occurred during my high school years which put my feet on the writing path. Ben Hecht's and Charles MacArthur's play "The Front Page" was running in a Loop playhouse. I played hookey one afternoon and went down to the Loop with the most honorable of intentions. I was going to do research at the Public Library. It was certainly no fault of mine that my feet led me into the lobby of that theatre. To my surprise I found, after paying the required price, that I had acquired a seat to "The Front Page."

So impressed did I become with Hildy Johnson, the central character in the play, that I resolved to become a reporter. Well, there are various ways of doing that. I went to a Midwest university school of journalism for two years before I discovered that could be the wrong way. It was during my sophomore year that I made the horrible discovery that perhaps the path of journalism would never be trod by my feet.

It was a chance remark of a professor of a certain course that I was taking that sent me out into the world without a college degree. He stood up in class one day and said, "Students (No, it wasn't Kay Kyser), there has arrived a period in your course when I find it necessary to bring a certain truth to your attention. That whatever success you may have in your career will depend upon the amount of labor you put into it. Particularly the career all of you here have chosen: writing. Because yours will be a labor of the

brain. And let me assure you that thinking can be much more difficult than anything else."

Somehow I lost my taste for journalism as of that moment. I had always been under the impression that reporters led a life of wine, women, and song. Now I was being told that they also worked. That was too much!

The next several years of my life were spent in a succession of "got a job"—"lost my job." In 1936 I met a friend of mine in San Francisco whom I hadn't seen in a number of years. He had been working as a research man for a large chemical manufacturer. But something had come up which made him leave the position he had held. We sat in a waterfront fish grotto talking over old days in Chicago when a remark fell into the smoky air of that dive which led to the most serious undertaking of my life: it led, in fact, to my becoming a writer. One of us said, "And do you remember how we used to invent fantasies of South Sea life?" We looked at each other wordlessly. I pulled out my bank book and saw that I had saved up the goodly sum of \$800. Within two weeks we were on our way to Hawaii, the first step in a South Sea tour, which took two years. Two years spent in paradise.

But \$800 did not last forever. And so I found myself back in San Francisco, enriched in spirit and knowledge, but poor in purse.

Walking past a newsstand one day I picked up a magazine called *South Sea Stories*. And the great adventure began. I had lived there, knew the native life, knew all there was to be known about it. I decided then and there to do a story based upon an incident I had seen take place in Samoa. I sent it off to the editors of that magazine and in a short while received a check. My first story and my first check. I must say I cluttered up the mails with a succession of sea and adventure stories from that day on.

"I'll Be There With Music" was born in a Chicago night club. A little baldheaded trumpet man took a ride and sent the cats out of the world and he became Gabriel blowing judgment day.—*Berkeley Livingston.*



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