

# The Riverman

By Stewart Edward White  
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"I'll have to get an extension of time," said Orde to himself. "Of course Joe will let me have more time on my own personal note to the firm. And Heinzman surely ought to. I saved a lot of his logs in that jam. And if he doesn't want to I guess an offer of a little higher interest will fetch him."

Finally he pulled up opposite the Orde house, sprang up the walk and into the front door.

"Hello, sweetheart!" he called cheerily.

The echoes alone answered him. He cried again and yet again, with a growing feeling of disappointment that Carroll should happen to be from home. A moment later Mary, the Irish servant girl, came through the dining room, caught sight of Orde, threw her apron over her head and burst into extravagant demonstrations of grief.

"What is it, Mary?" he asked very quietly.

But the girl only wept the louder. Orde sprang forward to shower her with questions. These elicited nothing but broken and incoherent fragments concerning "the missus." "oh, the sad day!" At this moment Bobby appeared from the direction of the kitchen. Orde, frantic with alarm, fell upon his son. Bobby could only mumble something about "smallpox" and "took mamma away to the doctor."

"Where was she exposed?"

At this moment a calm, dry voice broke through the turmoil. Orde looked up to see Dr. McMullen standing in the doorway.

"It's all right," said the doctor. "Your wife was exposed to smallpox and is at my house to avoid the danger of spreading contagion. She is not ill."

"Where was she exposed?"

"Down at Heinzman's. You know—or perhaps you don't—that old Heinzman is the worst sort of anti-vaccination crank. Well, he's reaped the reward."

"Has he smallpox?" asked Orde.

"No; his daughter Mina. Lord knows where she got it. Mrs. Orde happened to be with her when she was taken with the symptoms that begin the disease. As a neighborly deed she remained with the girl. Of course no one could tell it was smallpox at that time. Next day, however, the characteristic rash appeared on the thighs and armpits. I telegraphed to Redding for a nurse. Until she came Mrs. Orde stayed by like a brick. Don't

know what I should have done without her."

"When was this?" asked Orde.

"Seven days ago."

"How is Mina getting on?"

"She'll get well. I suppose I'll have old Heinzman on my hands, though. Emotional old fool. Rushed right in when he heard his daughter was sick. Couldn't keep him out. And he's been with her or near her ever since."

"I'm going to step up to your house and see Mrs. Orde."

"You can telephone her," said the doctor.

He called up Dr. McMullen's house on the telephone.

"You're a dear, brave girl, and I'm proud of you," said Orde.

"Nonsense! There was no danger at all. I'd been vaccinated recently. And somebody had to take care of poor Mina until we could get help. How's Bobby?"

After lunch Orde went downtown to his office. Newmark came in. "Hello, Joe!" said Orde, with a slight constraint. "Too bad you got sick just at that time. We needed you."

"You know I'd have been there if possible."

"Well, we had a lively time, you bet, all right, and got through about by

the skin of our teeth." He arose and walked over to Newmark's desk, on the edge of which he perched. "It's cost us considerable. I'll have to get an extension on those notes."

"What's that?" asked Newmark quickly.

"I don't believe I'll be able to meet those notes. So many things have happened—"

"But," broke in Newmark, "the firm certainly cannot do so. I've been relying on your assurance

that you would take them up personally. Our resources are all tied up."

"Can't we raise anything more on the northern peninsula timber?" asked Orde.

"You ought to know we can't," cried Newmark, with an appearance of growing excitement. "The last seventy-five thousand we borrowed for me finishes that."

"Can't you take up part of your note?"

"My note comes due in 1885," rejoined Newmark, with cold disgust. "I expect to take it up then. But I can't until then. I hadn't expected anything like this."

"Well, don't get hot," said Orde vaguely. "I only thought that northern peninsula stuff might be worth saving any way we could figure it."

"Worth saving!" snorted Newmark.

"Well, keep your hair on," said Orde, on whom Newmark's manner was beginning to have its effect, as Newmark intended it should. "You have my Boom company stock as se-

curity."

"Pretty security for the loss of a tract like the upper peninsula timber! I thought you'd surely be able to pay it," retorted Newmark, now secure in the position of putting Orde entirely in the wrong.

"Well, I expected to pay it, and I'll pay it yet," rejoined Orde. "I think Heinzman will renew the notes."

He seized his hat and departed. Once in the street, however, his irritation passed. As was the habit of the man, he began more clearly to see Newmark's side and so more emphatically to blame himself. After all, when he got right down to the essentials he could not but acknowledge that Newmark's anger was justified.

"Mr. Heinzman?" he asked briefly of the first clerk.

"He is at home ill."

"Already?" said Orde. He drummed on the rail thoughtfully. The notes came due in ten days.

"Well, who's in charge?"

"Mr. Lambert."

Orde passed through the grill into the inner room.

"Hello, Lambert," he addressed the individual seated at Heinzman's desk.

"So you're the boss, eh?"

"Yes, I'm the boss," said he non-committally.

"Heinzman holds some notes due against our people in ten days," said Orde. "I came in to see about their renewal."

Lambert struck a bell, and to the bookkeeper who answered he said, "John, bring me those Newmark & Orde papers."

The clerk returned and handed to Lambert a long manila envelope. Lambert spread its contents on his knee.

"Note for \$75,000 with interest at 10 per cent. Interest paid to Jan. 10. Mortgage deed on certain lands described herein."

"I want to renew the note for another year," Orde explained.

"Can't do it," replied Lambert. "Mr. Heinzman gave me especial instructions in regard to this matter just before his daughter was taken sick."

"But I'll give him 12 per cent for another year."

"He said not to renew even if you offered higher interest."

"What does he intend about this mortgage?"

"To foreclose."

"Where's your telephone?" Orde asked.

He tried in vain to get Heinzman at his house. The bell had been removed. Orde left the office at a loss how to proceed next.

"There's the year of redemption on that mortgage," he reminded himself. "We may be able to do something in that time. I don't know just what," he added whimsically, with a laugh at himself. He became grave. "Poor Joe," he said. "This is pretty tough on him. I'll have to make it up to him somehow. I can let him in on that California deal when the titles are straightened out."



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Orde did not return to the office. He felt unwilling to face Newmark until he had a little more thoroughly digested the situation. He spent the rest of the afternoon about the place playing with Bobby. Three or four times he called up Carroll by telephone. After dinner they sat on the porch until Bobby's bedtime. Orde put his small son to bed and sat talking with the youngster as long as his conscience would permit. Then he retired to the library.

Suddenly Orde leaned forward, his senses at the keenest attention. After a moment he arose and quietly walked toward the open window. Just as he reached the casement and looked out a man looked in. The two stared at each other not two feet apart.

"Good Lord, Heinzman!" cried Orde. "What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"Dake me somewheres," he whispered hoarsely. "I haf broke quarantine, and dey vill be after me."

"What do you mean by coming here and exposing my house to infection?"

Heinzman began to blubber and cried aloud in greatest agony:

"I haf somedings to say to you." He grasped Orde by the arm. "Dey are dere mit shotguns to kill me if I broke quarantine. And I haf left my daughter, my daughter Mina, all alone to come and tell you. And now you don't listen."

"Come with me," said Orde briefly.

He led the way around the house to the tool shed and lit a lantern.

Heinzman sat down on a nail keg.

Orde looked at him curiously. He was half dressed, without a collar, his thin hair unkempt. His eyes burned bright as though from some internal fire.

"What is it?" asked Orde.

"Ach, Orde," cried the German. "I am tortured mit hollenqualle—what you call?—hell's fire. You, whose wife comes in and saves my Mina when the others runs away—you, my best friends! It is schrecklich! She vas the noblest, the best! She might take the disease; she might die. It vas noble." He shuddered. "My Mina left to die all alone!"

Orde rose to his feet.

"That is all right," said he. "Now let me get you home."

"No!" cried Heinzman. "Listen to me! I haf your note for sefenty-five t'ousand dollars. No?"

Orde nodded.

"Dot money I never lent you. Nol I'm not crazy. Sit still! I know my name is on dot note, but the money came from your partner, Newmark."

"What?" Orde asked in bewilderment.

"Den ven you could not pay the note I vas to foreclose and hand over dot northern peninsula land to Joseph Newmark, your partner."

"Impossible!" cried Orde.

"I vas to get a share. It vas a trick."

"Why do you come to tell me now?"