

Peace on Earth

By Rex Day

Big Jim Fenton was smiling. The reason for this smile was the letter he was reading, a letter from his son saying he would be home for Christmas from college. It had been a long time since Jim had seen the boy, due to the work he was in, but now that he was the boss he could do just what he pleased and no one would dare dispute him. Let alone touch his boy.

At the same moment he laid the letter down, two thugs walked into the building and up to the door marked Fenton Enterprises; "Dis is da place, said the taller of the two. "Let's go in." Once inside the eyes of the two men opened in amazement. "Jeez didcha ever see such a place? Look at dem plush chairs and ain't dat some rrg on de floor. I'll bet dat cost him a grand." He sure must want somethin' awful important, haulin' us all de-way from Chi. Maybe we're in da big time after all."

Big Jim did want to see the two men. Big Jim as he was called was the biggest racketeer in the Middle West. His friends told him that and he believed them. Jim had made his way to the top the hard way. A couple of years in the reform school had done nothing but set him against society in the strictest sense of the word. Now don't go wrong, Big Jim hadn't been in the hands of the law since he had been released from reform school. They couldn't pin anything on him; he was always protected by an air-tight alibi. He was rich now and could hire his killers and thieves, if they got caught, well, hell! so what?

There was, as far as Jim was concerned, only room for one on top, a thought that was going to be well taken care of. Big Jim was beginning to worry and the cause of this worry was and up and coming gangster named Tony. Tony wasn't a big shot but he was tough and being tough kept him one jump ahead of all the other West side mobsters. He was friendly when it was time to be friendly and a cold hearted gunman when it was the least bit necessary.

The West side had been without a leader since Dan had been dealt a deuce high hand in an ace high game, that had been only a year ago too. They had been taking orders from Big Jim on the East side. Tony had a small mob he had organized when he thought Big Jim had given him a raw deal and he was giving Jim's illegal racket pain by stealing all the liquor of Jim's he could find. It was so much of a pain to Jim that he was beginning to tire of the game and was going to stop, but first he would talk to Tony.

Tony entered Big Jim's office and walked to the secretary's desk. He leaned over the rail and kissed her. She was his wife, which was a trick in Tony's favor, he knew everything that went on in the office. "Show me in honey," said Tony.

Big Jim stuck out a thick well groomed hand to Tony; "How are ya. Tony? Glad ya decided to drop in." "Alright, alright, what's the gag?" Tony replied. Jim's pupils dilated—but quickly resumed their natural size again. "Why I just wanted to talk to ya about the West side." "You know I haven't much time to take care of it, with all the money I am making over here and I thought maybe you would like to take charge." Tony began his part by slapping Big Jim on the shoulder, "How would I like? Boy it's a hundred per cent with me."

"I'm glad you like it Tony, and now if you will excuse me I have some work to do. Say why don't you drop around the house for dinner next Saturday about nine? We'll discuss it then."

"O. K. it's a date."

After Tony had gone Big Jim laughed, he laughed so hard he had tears in his eyes, and why not? He and Tony were pals and he was still on top. That's the trouble with these tough guys. They just aren't very smart.

Saturday came and with it came the two thugs from Chicago that Big Jim

had sent for. They were ushered into Big Jim's conference room. "Boys," began Jim, "I got a job for ya. It's a job that must be done perfect—so perfect that he don't live to talk. I'm paying ya the best and I want the best. Here's the plan, I want you and your buddy to take this tommy gun and rent a room across the street from my house, I'll give you the address later. At nine o'clock or a little before a man will start up the steps of my house. When he puts his foot on that bottom step, blast him and be sure ya got him. Now that's all, and to make it a deal, here's half the money and I'll mail the rest, so when you are through beat it out of town."

"O. K. boss. We gotcha. You can depend on me n' Lefty here. We'll be seeing ya."

At seven o'clock Saturday evening O'Leary answered his phone. "Hello. Sergeant O'Leary?" a cautious voice asked.

"Yeah this is O'Leary."

"If you want to see some excitement just be in front of Big Jim Fenton's house a little before nine tonight but stay out of sight. Never mind who it is, just be there!" Tony then left the phone booth and went out.

At eighty thirty the flyer came into the station and deposited a nice looking kid about twenty years old. His thoughts were about his father and how glad he would be to see him. At exactly the same time the train left the youngster at the station, Big Jim left the kitchen of his home. He had given orders to set the table for two. It was almost nine so Big Jim sat down to his dinner. As he did so hell broke loose in front of his house. He smiled very complacently and continued eating.

Big Jim ate his last meal a month later. He went to the chair in a daze, his mind had left him when they finally convinced him he had hired killers to murder his own son in cold blood!

THE BATTALION