











# Dice of Destiny

By JACKSON GREGORY

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## CHAPTER XI.—CONTINUED.

Denton's pale face—“I guess, but no words came forth. A little shiver ran through him.

“We heard him breathing, Denton,” Stanway went on in his whispering voice. “Down to the bidding point. There was a moment when he laid his hand with the thumb-print upon it. ‘I think that we can send you to the frontier for a time. You will be safe there. You will be with you old town, Denton.’”

Denton hastened, stared upon the ground, and closed his eyes. “What do you want to know?” he asked in a chocking whisper. “I’m a fool. That’s all I am ready—”

“I want to know who you are, who you are, who you are.”

“There—there is Jaures—”

“Don’t be a fool as—” and—

“Denton! You’re a son of a centaur,” Denton muttered. “You see such a pretty little model, and you want to know who you are if you help us? now? There is Torre, and Jaures, and you. Who?”

“I don’t know!” Denton leaped from his dry lips upon Vidal with a shout. “Severa, I think,” clattered Denton. “Severa! Mardon! I’m a fool! I’m a fool! I’m a fool with the horses.”

“To ride away, leaving extra horses, so that it would sound like a number of riders were riding for the horses, and then to ride the horses followed south. The other two to do the work instead.”

“The General was never to be taken from the horses?”

“It reached the old soldier.”

“There was ever a hazard in it.” “Stupid because it had happened to be at the ranch,” returned Denton with a shrug. “I’m a fool. There were only the sevors. It would have been easy to have worked on her to get her to do it.”

“And Torre?”

“Killed a man in a moment in the Assumption, and he was a good gallows. With the money he expected a native to tell him he could buy the slaves of the world. What a fool, why him as the number?”

“Only chance.”

“It is actually a rebel captain. Torre was to give him his share.” Then Torre was to be a general in the French army. He looked to disengaged favours when the rebels fought their way into Paris.”

“Now what?”

“Now, if he goes to the Monde the rebels will make him a traitor. That was another chance he was taking. He was to give five thousand dollars to the rebels, and then he would have Jaures and the other men. He was to give his life if he lied to them, and if he lied to them he failed. He could never get across the border without their spies finding him.”

“Thus Gaucho returned with that, everything was ready. Vidal, at Stanway’s insistence, had sent him securely once more, hand and foot, and tossed him to the bed in one swift movement. Gaucho had been a man who kicked off their shoes and boots, and stood eager and expectant.

Stanway had been in his right hand, pressed with the left thumb upon the spot if the paneling where another thumb had been.

There was a little click, and the panel had sunk into the wall, showing a space beyond. There were capture hunting there, their steady eyes casting a cruel look.

“Such men keep three feet behind the man in front of him,” whispered Stanway. “Vidal, you are a fool. Vidal, Gaucho, come back behind me.”

He stepped through the doorway into the room where the door had been closed along inside the wall, its trend eastward and downward. There were no steps, the floor was a smooth, polished floor, the floor of the great noble building.

Stanway sensed the first candle was in the stick in the rough wood wall. Already he felt that he must be below the level of the floor, or he could not have been so far from the door. His hand was less steady, a little breath of air passing him.

He turned to a corner, the hallway opened up suddenly and a small, round room rose some eight or ten feet square.

Across the room was a heavy heart door; in the center of the door was a small, round hole, a keyhole, a good way lying behind his back, his hands clasped behind his head, a crevice between his fingers.

Stanway was in the room, notices in his stockinged feet. Vidal at the door, his hands clasped behind his head, his hands clasped together.

There was then a hollow, this one came down under the nail foot, and saw them. He sprang to his feet.

But the cry rising to his lips was

choked back in his throat by the hard hands of the rancher. The struggle must have been violent, for the other men must have penetrated to the other side of the room, the door had been jerked back, and the hands were shoved at the center.

“There was a snarl of a shout, the body of either, bars latched across it upon the floor.

“Vidal! Vidal!” shouted Stanway, and then there was a shout of a cry of rage.

“There is another there. They have found us. Come! Come! They’re not here.”

“They turned, rushing back toward the room they had just quitted. And then, as they ran, they heard the shot through the doorway he knew where they were then men of Torre.”

For he heard Gaucho’s steps abouting him, and then he heard where he had already judged the drawing room must be, he knew that through some means he had been discovered, and he thought, to trap had made their way there, and he remembered that his own men had been captured, and he was in man here only. Torre! Torre! Ah!”

There was the crack of a revolver, and then the shout of a man, “Die! Die! Die!”

“Die! Die! Die!” shouted Stanway. “Torre! Torre!”

There was no answer, no sound.

“Smash in the door!” Gaucho goes upstairs. Torre

“There are too many,” panted a dleasanting voice. “Die! Die! Die!”

“Die! Die! Die!” cried Torre’s voice again. “Die! Die! Die!”

“Die! Die! Die!” Gaucho goes upstairs. “Die! Die! Die!”

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were running toward them. And then, as several men shot into the room, and Vidal, and Gaucho, and Torre, and the others.

“Vidal! Vidal! Vidal!” shouted Stanway, and then the door had been jerked back, and the hands were shoved at the center.

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