

## DAILY SHORT STORY

## Silent Witness

By Frank Bennett



He knelt before the safe and set to work

**SPIKE EVANS**, gambler and ex-convict, stopped before the round pine door of John Reeve's lumber office. Slowly, noiselessly, his fingers found the chipped, precision doorknob. He twisted it, pushed, and the door opened without a sound.

The gambler's close-set eyes fastened on the old man in a wheel chair who was reading a newspaper in the glow of a kerosene lamp. He shut the door and as the latch rattled, the old man dropped the paper to his lap and spun the chair around his face and out a sound.

"Sorry, Reeve, if I startled you," Evans said unpleasingly.

The old lumberman's right hand groped for an electric bell.

"Ring the bell till the battery's dead," Evans grated. "I rapped Banton over the head and tied and gagged him. Even if he comes to, he can't help you."

THE old man pulled his hand away from the button and gripped the arms of his chair until his knuckles whitened.

"I know that tomorrow's pay day and that you've got the money, over \$6000, in your safe," Evans went on harshly. "I also know that dead men tell no tales. Slitting your throat will repay me with interest for that time you had me run out of town."

No sound came from the old man in the wheel chair. His face, except for the burning eyes, was expressionless.

"Don't you wish you could talk?" Evans bantered. "Too bad that, after that pile of lumber fell on you 10 years ago, you was never able to talk or walk, ain't it?"

**E**VAN'S eyes shifted to a small, old-fashioned safe. He crossed the room, knelt before the safe and set to work, slowly turning the dial, listening for the fall of the tumblers.

Suddenly, he looked up, an angry snarl on his yellowish face.

"I ain't got time to fool around like this," he said, drawing a slip of paper and pencil from his pocket, he rose and handed them to the old man. "Here," he grated. "Write the combination down for me."

The crippler wrote one word, "No."

The scar on Evans' face whitened. "Oh, you won't, huh?" he snarled.

He drew a slender-bladed knife, started toward the door.

"You'll either write the combination, or I'll slit Banton's throat as well as yours!"

He glanced back over his shoulder and saw old Reeve motioning him to return.

Grinning, he went back to the wheel chair and watched the old man write down a series of numbers on the slip of paper. He jerked the paper from the trembling old fingers and hurried back to Reeve.

**I**T took the gambler only a few minutes to get the money and stow it in a small black bag which he had brought. This done, he rose and glided back to Reeve.

The old man died quickly and silently.

**HORIZONTAL** Answer to Previous Puzzle

1	Brilliant young concert violinist.	8	Much lace.	9	You and me.	10	Simpleton.	11	Pattern.	12	Principle of heat.
2	He will be in — for two years.	3	35 To accomplish.	4	EDWARD RIVER	5	EDWARD RILL	6	ALAS	7	E STY
3	24 Kelp.	4	35 To accomplish.	5	EDWE AA	6	MA E	7	R PULCHRITUDE P	8	Y PET TIE ART
4	25 Beside.	5	36 Boy.	6	EN SIN	7	MA E M	8	ROB N DIP ON	9	NU ROB N DIP ON
5	26 Frostings.	6	37 Soberly.	7	TUB DAB	8	IDEAL TIL SOILS	9	TUB DAB SAD TRY	10	IDEAL TIL SOILS
6	27 Feet.	7	38 Sun god.	8	NORWAY	9	NORWAY	10	COMPOSER	11	IDEAL TIL SOILS
7	28 Box.	8	39 Form of "be."	9	NEEDY.	10	GRIG	11	TO ACCOMPLISH.	12	EDWARD RIVER
8	30 Ratite bird.	9	40 Airs.	10	35 To accomplish.	11	GRIG	12	EDWARD RIVER	13	EDWE AA
9	31 Morindin dye.	10	41 Dull red.	11	36 Boy.	12	ALAS	13	EDWE AA	14	E STY
10	32 He recently	11	42 Crystalline substance.	12	37 Soberly.	13	MA E	14	EDWE AA	15	R PULCHRITUDE P
11	33 Being.	12	43 Fable.	13	38 Sun god.	14	IDEAL TIL SOILS	15	EDWE AA	16	Y PET TIE ART
12	— with a	13	44 Fable.	14	39 Form of "be."	15	IDEAL TIL SOILS	16	EDWE AA	17	NU ROB N DIP ON
13		14	45 Crystalline substance.	15	40 Airs.	16	EDWE AA	17	EDWE AA	18	EDWE AA
14		15	46 Fable.	16	41 Airs.	17	EDWE AA	18	EDWE AA	19	EDWE AA
15		16	47 He recently	17	42 Circle part.	18	EDWE AA	19	EDWE AA	20	EDWE AA
16		17	33 Being.	18	43 Musical note.	19	EDWE AA	20	EDWE AA	21	EDWE AA
17		18	44 Fable.	19	44 Musical note.	20	EDWE AA	21	EDWE AA	22	EDWE AA
18		19	45 Crystalline substance.	20	45 Crystalline substance.	21	EDWE AA	22	EDWE AA	23	EDWE AA
19		20	46 Fable.	21	46 Fable.	22	EDWE AA	23	EDWE AA	24	EDWE AA
20		21	47 He recently	22	47 He recently	23	EDWE AA	24	EDWE AA	25	EDWE AA
21		22	33 Being.	23	48 He was a — prodigy.	24	EDWE AA	25	EDWE AA	26	EDWE AA
22		23	34 Needy.	24	49 Marks of bondage.	25	EDWE AA	26	EDWE AA	27	EDWE AA
23		24	35 To accomplish.	25	50 To eject.	26	EDWE AA	27	EDWE AA	28	EDWE AA
24		25	36 Boy.	26	51 Mother.	27	EDWE AA	28	EDWE AA	29	EDWE AA
25		26	37 Soberly.	27	52 Female fowl.	28	EDWE AA	29	EDWE AA	30	EDWE AA
26		27	38 Sun god.	28	53 Form of "be."	29	EDWE AA	30	EDWE AA	31	EDWE AA
27		28	39 Form of "be."	29	54 Musical note.	30	EDWE AA	31	EDWE AA	32	EDWE AA
28		29	40 Airs.	30	55 Saturic.	31	EDWE AA	32	EDWE AA	33	EDWE AA
29		30	41 Dull red.	31	56 Therefore.	32	EDWE AA	33	EDWE AA	34	EDWE AA
30		31	42 Crystalline substance.	32	57 Rudimental.	33	EDWE AA	34	EDWE AA	35	EDWE AA
31		32	43 Fable.	33	58 Mesh of lace.	34	EDWE AA	35	EDWE AA	36	EDWE AA
32		33	44 Fable.	34	59 King Wur.	35	EDWE AA	36	EDWE AA	37	EDWE AA
33		34	45 Crystalline substance.	35	60 Measures.	36	EDWE AA	37	EDWE AA	38	EDWE AA
34		35	46 Fable.	36	61 Note in scale.	37	EDWE AA	38	EDWE AA	39	EDWE AA
35		36	47 He recently	37	62 Declaims.	38	EDWE AA	39	EDWE AA	40	EDWE AA
36		37	33 Being.	38	63 Food.	39	EDWE AA	40	EDWE AA	41	EDWE AA
37		38	34 Needy.	39	64 Rich milk.	40	EDWE AA	41	EDWE AA	42	EDWE AA
38		39	35 To accomplish.	40	65 Idiots.	41	EDWE AA	42	EDWE AA	43	EDWE AA
39		40	36 Boy.	41	66 Deep purple.	42	EDWE AA	43	EDWE AA	44	EDWE AA
40		41	37 Soberly.	42	67 Lent.	43	EDWE AA	44	EDWE AA	45	EDWE AA
41		42	38 Sun god.	43	68 Sudden terror.	44	EDWE AA	45	EDWE AA	46	EDWE AA
42		43	39 Form of "be."	44	69 Young sheep.	45	EDWE AA	46	EDWE AA	47	EDWE AA
43		44	40 Airs.	45	70 Irrational.	46	EDWE AA	47	EDWE AA	48	EDWE AA
44		45	41 Dull red.	46	71 Afternoon.	47	EDWE AA	48	EDWE AA	49	EDWE AA
45		46	42 Crystalline substance.	47	72 Rich milk.	48	EDWE AA	49	EDWE AA	50	EDWE AA
46		47	43 Fable.	48	73 Idiots.	49	EDWE AA	50	EDWE AA	51	EDWE AA
47		48	44 Fable.	49	74 Deep purple.	50	EDWE AA	51	EDWE AA	52	EDWE AA
48		49	45 Crystalline substance.	50	75 Lent.	51	EDWE AA	52	EDWE AA	53	EDWE AA
49		50	46 Fable.	51	76 Sudden terror.	52	EDWE AA	53	EDWE AA	54	EDWE AA
50		51	47 He recently	52	77 Young sheep.	53	EDWE AA	54	EDWE AA	55	EDWE AA
51		52	33 Being.	53	78 Irrational.	54	EDWE AA	55	EDWE AA	56	EDWE AA
52		53	34 Needy.	54	79 Afternoon.	55	EDWE AA	56	EDWE AA	57	EDWE AA
53		54	35 To accomplish.	55	80 Rich milk.	56	EDWE AA	57	EDWE AA	58	EDWE AA
54		55	36 Boy.	56	81 Idiots.	57	EDWE AA	58	EDWE AA	59	EDWE AA
55		56	37 Soberly.	57	82 Deep purple.	58	EDWE AA	59	EDWE AA	60	EDWE AA
56		57	38 Sun god.	58	83 Sudden terror.	59	EDWE AA	60	EDWE AA	61	EDWE AA
57		58	39 Form of "be."	59	84 Rich milk.	60	EDWE AA	61	EDWE AA	62	EDWE AA
58		59	40 Airs.	60	85 Idiots.	61	EDWE AA	62	EDWE AA	63	EDWE AA
59		60	41 Dull red.	61	86 Deep purple.	62	EDWE AA	63	EDWE AA	64	EDWE AA
60		61	42 Crystalline substance.	62	87 Sudden terror.	63	EDWE AA	64	EDWE AA	65	EDWE AA
61		62	43 Fable.	63	88 Rich milk.	64	EDWE AA	65	EDWE AA	66	EDWE AA
62		63	44 Fable.	64	89 Idiots.	65	EDWE AA	66	EDWE AA	67	EDWE AA
63		64	45 Crystalline substance.								