

# The Luck of Enoch Higgins

Charles R Tanner

*Maybe luck isn't just something that happens to you; it might be a sort of seventh sense or something.*

*Anyway, Enoch Higgins thought so and invented a way of developing that sense.*

Whenever I hear anybody speak of luck, I think of old Enoch Higgins. There was a fellow who really had luck. And even when his luck appeared to be at its worst, it turned out to be good. But then, Enoch sort of stacked the cards, you might say; he was the first man in history to ring in a cold deck on the Fates. Let me tell you how it happened.

In the first place, old Enoch Higgins was about the most exasperating man in our town. He had a way about him - testy, arrogant, domineering - none of those words described him completely, I'm forced to fall back on that one word, exasperating.

And poor Elmer Bidwell, who was engaged to Enoch's daughter, Laura, was in a position which made him the butt of all of Enoch's testiness, arrogance and domination. For Elmer had met Laura and fallen in love with her while still in school, and after graduation he had got a job as laboratory assistant in the big chemical works in our town, and lo and behold, the man he was assigned to work with was none other than old Enoch, his sweetheart's father.

It didn't take Enoch long to find out that the young "sprout" that was going out with Laura was none other than his lab assistant, and after that he cheerfully blackmailed him into working many and many an hour overtime, in Enoch's home. He'd come to the boy, sweet as pie (or at least, as sweet as he could), and invite him out to the house, and Elmer, all anxious to spend as much time as he could with Laura, would eagerly assent - and after supper Enoch would haul him away to the laboratory, and it would be eleven or twelve o'clock before he'd turn Elmer loose.

And, of course, long before that time, Laura would have become tired of waiting and would have gone to bed, or to a show, or maybe to some girl friend's house.

Well, it doesn't take a young fellow long to get tired of a thing like that. You can imagine how much those two were in love when I tell you that they put up with that situation, and with Enoch's intolerable ways for nearly a year before the events which I'm going to tell about took place. Put up with them and were still in love!

One day, after the usual invitation and supper, Enoch came to Elmer with a deck of cards in his hand. They weren't ordinary playing cards, there were only twenty-five of them and there were five of each kind. One kind had a circle on it, one a square, and one a star. The others were parallel lines and wavy lines.

Of course, you will probably recognize the fact that these were a deck of the famous E. S. P. cards, but at that time, Elmer had never heard of the famous Dr. Rhine, nor of his experiments with extra-sensory perception and telepathy, so he was quite ignorant of Enoch's intentions.

It took the old man only a minute to show the boy what he wanted, however. He shuffled the cards, laid them on the table and told him to guess the order in which the cards lay. It seemed a silly sort of game but Elmer did as he was ordered, and then handed Enoch the paper on which he had written his guesses. The old man glanced at it, said "Humph!" in a disgusted sort of way, shuffled the cards and ordered him to guess again.

Elmer guessed again. This time old Higgins was more interested. He studied the sheet on which his young friend had written his guesses, made a note or two on it, and in another minute Elmer was guessing for

a third time.

Pretty soon Laura excused herself and left the dining room. Elmer tried to catch her eye as she went out, but in vain. He sighed, picked up his pencil and under the imperious eye of old Enoch, began his fourth series of guesses.

After a while, they adjourned to the library. Higgins decided that he'd try to do a little guessing, himself, so Elmer had to shuffle and keep score. And they kept it up until long after midnight, and when Elmer left, Enoch insisted that he come back the next night.

Elmer came back, all right, for Higgins' request was a command, and jobs didn't grow on trees in those days. He came back the next night, too, and for many a night thereafter. And did his life go haywire, what with seeing Laura every night at supper, and yet practically never having a minute alone with her. Before long he was thinking half seriously of suicide, and seriously of joining the army.

And then old Enoch got another screwy idea. You see, even when he wasn't experimenting with Elmer, his entire mind was taken up with this strange, newly-discovered principle of extrasensory perception, or clairvoyance. Dr. Rhine's experiments had started him off, but old Enoch wasn't the one to tread the careful, patient path that Rhine had undertaken. That testy old codger wanted to get at the heart of things at once, and no sooner was he convinced of the authenticity of E. S. P. than he began to try it out in all sorts of unorthodox ways.

For instance, Elmer came to the house one evening, and for the first time since he'd been coming, there was wine on the table. Enoch insisted on him drinking a couple of glasses, and later, in the library, made him down a glass of whisky, straight. Then he started again with that infernal deck of cards. He seemed real delighted when Elmer couldn't guess one right in three times.

And whisky was only the beginning. Next time, Elmer had to take a dose of caffeine, and before long, he had him taking anytal and barbitrates and weird looking concoctions that Elmer felt sure were drugs. He tried him out with hormone extracts, too, and finally he began mixing the stuff.

And then, one night, after it seemed that Elmer had taken about everything in the pharmacopoeia, straight and mixed, he handed the boy some kind of stuff that tasted like arnica smells, and after Elmer drank it, he began his eternal card guessing and—ran through the deck twice without guessing a card wrong!

Now, if you know anything about the law of averages, you'll know what a remarkable statement that is. With five different cards in the deck, of course, a man has one chance in five of guessing right. Out of twenty-five cards, he ought to average five correct guesses. But Elmer guessed fifty right out of fifty!

And Elmer was scared. Elmer wasn't one of these heroic characters who want to be a master of men and wield weird powers and have people in awe of him; and when he pulled an im-possible stunt like that it was like having a ghost suddenly look over his shoulder.

So next day, at the laboratory, he pleaded sick when Enoch invited him, as usual, to come out for supper. And with one excuse or another, he managed to keep away from Higgins' place for a week. But by that time, his fear wore off, and his desire to see Laura induced him to again accept Enoch's invitation.

The old man said little before supper. That wasn't unusual, however, and Elmer knew better than to accept it as a favorable sign. It was after he had finished his supper and had lighted up one of his atrocious cigars that Enoch became—sinister.

"This extra-sensory stuff," he started off. You know, I've really be-gun to make some progress with it. I guess you realize that, Elmer, you got a dose that nearly scared you to death last week. Yes, it did," holding up a hand as Elmer started to protest. "You've been shying away from here all week because you got scared when I gave you that shot last Friday.

"But I've been working like a trooper all this week," he went on. "And at last I've got what I've been working for, I believe. Now, look here." Somehow he managed to pin both of them down with a single glance. "What I've been trying to do is to find but a satisfactory explanation of just what luck is. And I think I've got it.

You know, hunches, streaks of luck, so-called lucky breaks - they occur too often to be accidents, they should have a scientific reason.

"Well, I've found it. To make it short and sweet, I've learned that there are a certain combination of hormones - a certain balance that may occasionally occur in the body—that makes a person very susceptible to extra-sensory perception. 'Course, the perception is by the subconscious mind, and the subconscious transmits them, without explanation, to the conscious. The result is that the conscious mind feels it as a guess or a vague hunch, although really the truth has been perceived by the subconscious.

"Now," his eyes began to glisten, "now, I've found out just what that rare balance of hormones really is—and I can produce it, synthetically, in just the right combination."

Elmer looked at Laura, and she looked back at him. They didn't grasp the full implications of Enoch's statement at all. And Enoch saw that they didn't and snorted scornfully.

"Heh! You don't see it, do you? Look, I'll reduce it to words of one syllable, I can give you a shot of good luck, just like a doctor can give you a shot of dope. I've reduced luck to a chemical formula! Now roll up your sleeve, Elmer, and I'll demonstrate."

But right there Elmer drew the line. The guinea pig decided to emulate the worm that turned. It wasn't that he was afraid that Enoch's mixture wouldn't work—he was afraid it would, and I've already mentioned that Elmer had no desire to be a superman. And he told Higgins so, told him as respectfully as possible, but he told him.

"Heh!" the old man snorted again. "Still scared, eh? You never did have the sense the Lord calculated to put into a goose. Here I give you the chance of a lifetime to get fame and fortune; and you muff it. All right, I'll show you what you're missing, by ginger! I'll take it, myself!" And with-out any more ado, he rolled up his sleeve, right there at the supper table, and taking a hypodermic case out of his pocket, prepared and injected into his arm a shot of that goo which he had mixed up.

Elmer watched him for a while, nervously, but nothing happened. After a while, Higgins arose and started for the library. Elmer started obediently to follow, but the old man said testily, I don't need you no more tonight, Elmer. You and Laura get out of here and go to a picture show or someplace."

Elmer was pretty surprised. He'd never heard an order like that from old Enoch before. He hesitated a while, halfway suspecting that the drug had had some deleterious effect on Enoch's mind. But the old man sat down and picked up a magazine and proceeded to finish his cigar, quite naturally. So Elmer called to Laura, and they got out of the house before the old man could change his mind.

Next day, old Enoch worked in a vague, abstracted manner all morning, and when noon arrived, he asked Elmer to go to lunch with him. He pushed down his food in the usual silent manner; and when it was over, he leaned back and said, "Now, Elmer, I want you to tell me the truth; and don't try to hedge, or to lie out of it. Did you ever play the races?"

Elmer was relieved. He could truthfully say that he had never played the races in his life. But to his surprise, Enoch was disappointed again.

"Honest, Elmer," he grumbled. "You don't seem to be good for anything. You haven't even got a good constructive vice."

Nevertheless, he continued to quiz the boy, and pretty soon it developed that even Elmer's ignorance wasn't as great as Enoch's. Elmer had read a thing or two about racing. and had heard this and that from his friends, and the upshot of the thing was that they took the afternoon off and went to the race track. Elmer was sure that it was that serum that had put this idea into Enoch's head, and he was beginning to wonder how it was coming out.

Well, he soon found out. For Enoch looked the horses over as they paraded for the first race, and put a bet of two dollars on Haddock. Haddock paid six and a half dollars for two. Enoch bet the eight and a half on

Peasant Gal in the second, and had forty-one dollars and sixty-eight cents at the end of the race. Forty dollars of that went on Stillwell in the third; Stillwell was a long shot and Enoch cashed in his tickets for four hundred dollars!

Elmer felt sure he ought to be satisfied then, but no! He was at the window for the fourth race, sinking the whole roll on Whistler. He had nine hundred dollars at the end of that race, and finished the day with a profit of twenty-seven hundred and twenty dollars!

And that was only the beginning. You can imagine the effect that streak of luck had on old Enoch. If he was cocky and overbearing before, he became impossible now. He was right, and he knew it, and you couldn't tell him otherwise. And the worst of it was, he was right. Just you disagree with Enoch Higgins, and you could depend on it, you'd be proved wrong. His least guess would turn out to be fact, every time.

For instance, he took Laura and Elmer to supper one night at a hotel in town, and on the way back, he insisted on walking. Halfway home, he decided that they must take a short cut through a certain alley, and dragged the two with him in spite of their protestations. And about a hundred yards from the street, he suddenly ejaculated that "Heh!" of his and stooped over and picked up two neatly folded twenty dollar bills!

Another time, on the way home from the picture house, he suddenly decided to cut up through Jay Street, instead of going, as usual, down Martin. And the next day he showed Elmer an item in the paper which told of a successful holdup which had been perpetrated on Martin Street at just about the time they were avoiding it.

Day by day, Enoch's fortune was increasing. He hardly let a day go by without going to the races, and his winnings must have averaged about a thousand dollars a day! After a week or two, the hangers-on at the track began to notice and whenever Enoch showed up at a window, the place was mobbed by men trying to get bets clown on whatever horse Enoch favored. Of course, that interfered with the odds, and Enoch's profits began to drop off. By this time he was crowding his luck, and he wasn't satisfied with a day's winnings if they didn't run up into the hundreds of dollars. So he began to look around for some other way of gambling.

One day he asked Elmer about gambling houses, but that was the one thing in the world that Elmer knew less about than horse racing. But Higgins found out somehow, for the next evening he told Elmer to come along with him, and, calling a taxi: "Drive me to that place you told me about, Bert," he instructed the driver; and half an hour later, Elmer was amazed to find himself entering that almost legendary gambling casino, the Gilbert Arms.

If you've ever been to our town, you've heard of the Gilbert Arms. It was a swanky resort hotel in the early twenties, but first bankruptcy and then prohibition and bootleggers got hold of it, and at last it evolved into one of those shady roadhouses where anything can happen and usually does.

But old Enoch had tasted success in the gambling game and couldn't be stopped. Ordinarily, he was of a type that would have been as chary of visiting the place as Elmer, but with the luck he was having, he was convinced that none of the more or less sinister things that occasionally happened to Gilbert Arms visitors could happen to him.

So he barged into the Gilbert Arms, and after a talk with the head waiter, he was escorted into the famous Big Back Room. He was at the roulette table five minutes after he entered, He bought chips, stacked a hundred dollars on the red nine, and as the ball came to a stop, raked in his winnings with a smile.

Next he played the black twenty, and won again. Several people looked at him curiously. Still smiling, he played fifty on the black four.

Up to now, Elmer had tagged along behind him, silent and wondering. He didn't know why the old man had dragged him along in the first place. And he had been too full of wonder to say or do anything, for this was a new world to Elmer. But now it suddenly dawned on him that if he followed Enoch, he might get a little of the gravy, too.

So he peeled a five dollar bill off of his rather slim roll and put it on the black four, too. The wheel spun, slowed and stopped—in the red sixteen!

Enoch smiled happily, stepped aside and murmured to the boy, "I should have told you, Elmer. I lose once in a while so they won't get suspicious. Heh!"

But Elmer was cured right then. He bet no more. He more than half suspected that Enoch had had a hunch that he was going to bet, and had lost for just that reason.

But if Elmer was cured, not so with Enoch. He had only started. By one o'clock, he had broken the bank. The manager came, was very polite and very sorry that he was out of funds. He had felt sure, he said, that thirty-five thousand would see him through the night. Mr. Higgins' luck was without precedent. But if Mr. Higgins would come back again, he'd try to show him a little better entertainment.

Enoch grinned sardonically and agreed to come back soon - very soon. They left, and Enoch led Elmer around to the back of the building, and across the fields for a mile or more. When they finally emerged on a road, there was Enoch's car where he had parked it earlier in the day.

"I'm wise to that gentry, Elmer!" he snorted, when the boy demanded an explanation. "I've a hunch that there's a bunch of hoodlums waiting somewhere along the road right now, figuring oil getting this money back. But, by ginger, they'll have to go some to get it away from 'Lucky' Higgins."

Now, anybody would have thought that cleaning up a fortune like that would have satisfied Enoch. But no, he was ready to tackle the Gilbert Arms again, the very next night. And again he asked Elmer to go with him. I don't know why he was so interested in taking the boy along with him. Either he had gotten used to him or he just dragged him along to show him what he had missed by not submitting to Enoch's experiments.

Anyway, he asked Elmer to go along and, instead of dissembling, instead of telling him some cock and bull story that would have made Enoch order him to stay home, Elmer told him that he thought it would be a pretty dangerous thing to try to tackle those jackals two nights in a row. But Elmer's objection not only made Enoch more determined than ever, but made him determined to take Elmer along.

So off to the roadhouse they went, and, of course, by midnight, old Higgins had broken the bank again. The manager (who, by the way, was none other than the notorious "Budge" Radcliffe) came to Enoch, all apologies, and asked him if he would come to the office. He had no money in the house, Enoch had broken all records for continuous winning, but he had a proposition to make that he felt sure would interest one of Enoch's sporting nature.

Enoch swelled up like a pouter pigeon at the man's suave flattery, but Elmer felt cold right down to the bottom of his shoes. Radcliffe's record was clean enough, he'd never been caught or convicted of any crime; but Radcliffe's reputation was something else again. Rumor had connected him with every crooked deal that had been pulled in the county in the last five years. And Elmer had a gruesome hunch that once they entered Radcliffe's office, their chances of getting out would be about the same as that of the fly that visited the well-known spider. But Enoch arose and followed the manager, and when he saw Elmer lagging behind, he beckoned him imperiously to follow. And Elmer, per-force, followed; for even though he had little faith in his ability to protect the old man, he felt that it would be out of place to leave him alone to his doom.

Once in the office, sure enough, they were covered with revolvers in the hands of three very determined and very serious young men. The manager, debonair as ever, addressed hooch.

"I suppose you realize, Mr. Higgins, that I'm not in this business for my health," he started off. "And I'm no philanthropist, either. Now, you've taken about seventy thousand dollars from me in two days, and I'd be a fool if I let you get away with that.

"But—" he stopped long enough to light a cigarette and to emphasize what he was about to say. "I looked you up today, and I've found out that you are one of these scientist guys. I put two and two together, and I've figured out that you have a system. I've heard of hundreds of systems in my life and none I ever heard of worked; but I'd be a fool not to realize that you've got one that does.

"So-o-o—you'll be a good fellow and let me in on your system, and I'll be a good fellow and let you get

away with the seventy G's you've took me for. Ain't I right?"

Elmer would have sold his chances of getting out of there alive for a thin dime when he heard Enoch's answer. Enoch said, as cool and cocky as if he'd been talking to Elmer in his own dining room, "No, Mr. Radcliffe, you're not right!"

Elmer really began to tremble and was just about to begin protesting when it dawned on him that Enoch wouldn't have taken such a cocky attitude if he didn't have some kind of hunch that everything would come out all right. So he kept quiet and was just beginning to bless the Higgins luck when it dawned on him that it was the Higgins luck he was counting on, and that it couldn't be expected to cover him, at all. So he began to tremble all over again.

As for Radcliffe, when he heard Enoch, he could hardly believe his ears. There was Enoch, not a particularly hard looking old fellow, and there were three of the toughest hot-shots in town holding him down with big wicked pistols, and he was calmly refusing to do as he was told. For a minute, Radcliffe was speechless. If it had been merely the getting of his money back, he'd probably have let Enoch and Elmer both have it right then and there; but Radcliffe had watched Enoch's play all evening and he was positive that Enoch had a workable system that was worth far more to him than the money Enoch had won.

So at last he said, "Well, I'll give you till morning to think it over." Then he got up and said to one of the gunmen. "Hold 'em both, in the little room upstairs. And don't let that young one get around you. Remember, he knows too much, and he ain't worth nothing, either."

Then he and the others went out of the room and the remaining gangster motioned them out of the other door.

"You boys is going upstairs and think this over," he said. "And don't try any funny stuff, 'cause I get excited awful easy, see?"

They marched upstairs, entered one of the rooms and sat down. Enoch said nothing and Elmer followed his example. The gangster sat in one of the overstuffed chairs and toyed with his revolver.

An hour passed. Elmer was nervous, sweating profusely. Enoch yawned once or twice.

Another hour passed. It was well after two.

Elmer was showing signs of approaching nervous prostration. The gangster now began to show signs of being nervous, too. Enoch took a pair of dice out of his pocket and began toying with them. Their captor's face lit up, he cleared his throat, and: "I didn't know you had any bones witcha," he said, eagerly. "What about a game, huh? A nice, friendly little game, quiet-like, huh?"

Enoch agreed, and Elmer sighed the granddaddy of all sighs, and sank into a chair. The tension had broken at last and Enoch's luck had begun to function again, Elmer was sure.

The game lasted fifteen minutes and at the end of that time, the gangster's pockets were bare. He sighed and got lip from the floor.

"I thought it would last longer than that," he said, disgruntled. "Now what'll we do to pass the time?"

"I'll tell you what," said Enoch, in a seemingly speculative manner. "I'll roll a hundred dollars against one of the bullets in your gun. Just to keep the game going, heh?"

The sucker hesitated, and Enoch started to pick up his winnings unconcernedly. It was Inure than the other could stand; —he stepped away from us. broke his gun quickly and took out one of the cartridges. He came back, and in a minute or two, Enoch owned the bullet.

He offered to shoot another hundred and the first bullet for a second. But the sucker was getting wise and

hesitated a good ten minutes before agreeing.

Enoch won the second bullet. Then he offered to shoot for the third.

"The thug refused. Enoch snorted that famous contemptuous snort of his and settled down into his and settled down into his chair suggestively with his dice. The thug reddened and lost his temper, but he didn't give in. He stubbornly refused to bet another bullet, but he set there and eyed the cubes in Enoch hand as if he were a bird and they those mythical hypnotic snakes.

Enoch laughed. "What's the matter," he barked. "You act as if you were taking a chance. I'm the one that takes the chances. Even if you lost you'd still have the bun and three more bullets, wouldn't you?"

The gangster scowled, then his face brightened suddenly into a smile.

"Why, sure," he said. "Sure I have. Yeah, that's right. I still got three bullets, and that luck of yours can't last forever. Okeh! One more bullet against all you've won from me and a century besides. Are you on?"

He picked up the dice as he spoke, but Enoch covered his hand. "I ain't playing blind, son," the old man snarled. "Lay that bullet down there!" The gangster affected to sneer at this "piker's trick," but he stepped aside, broke his gun and laid the third bullet down on the floor. Then he picked up the dice, tossed them—and they came up seven!

Elmer was all fixed to sigh with relief, but his sigh changed to a gasp of alarm. It looked as if Enoch's luck had deserted him. But Elmer still wasn't fully aware of the devious and mysterious ways of that weird power. Before his gasp of alarm was half over, Enoch had jumped on the hoodlum (who had stooped to pick up his winnings), and the old man was shouting, "Come on, Elmer. Help me get him. I gotta hunch he only had three bullets in that gun!"

From his long hours of worry and nervous fright, Elmer was as tense as a guy-wire; and at Higgins' cry, he blew up like a dropped blunderbuss. It was a downright pleasure to throw himself on that thug and pound him and pound him, unmercifully. Elmer never did know whether the thug offered any resistance or not; all he remembered afterward was that Enoch and he sort of swelled up and flowed over the mug; and several minutes after, he was lying on the floor and Elmer and Enoch were standing over him and shaking hands and laughing fit to kill.

Then they tied him up, and Enoch took his revolver and reloaded it, and they cautiously left the room. It was dark in the hallway, and for a while, they searched in vain for the stairs. They found a flight at last, but they were a narrow flight that led, apparently, directly into the manager's office. And apparently the gang hadn't left or gone to sleep yet, in spite of the fact that it was nearly three o'clock, for a light came from under the door and the voices of Radcliffe and the others came through it.

Enoch stopped for a moment and stared at the door, speculatively. Then, in spite of the fact that Elmer was pulling at his sleeve and whispering that they better go back upstairs and hunt for another exit, he unlatched the door softly and, kicking it open, he stepped in quickly and covered the three men inside with his weapon.

Radcliffe snarled and leaped to his feet, but Enoch motioned him sternly down again. "Take it easy, Radcliffe," he snapped. "I got the upper hand now, and, by ginger, I can hold it. Besides, I'm here to do you a favor, before I go. One of your men is two-timing you, and I think you ought to know it. That rat there," he pointed, "if you search him, I've a hunch you'll find a letter that will prove what I say."

As he spoke, he was edging gradually around the men and working his way to the door opposite. And Elmer was hugging as close to him as he knew how. The crook whom he accused got white as a sheet, but he managed to smile scornfully and to spit with an air of braggadocio.

"Ain't dat a joke," he snarled. "If you didn't have me covered, I'd smash your ugly mug fer dat crack. Why, me and Budge is buddies. He'd trust me anywhere, wouldn't you, Budge?"

"I sure would," Radcliffe answered softly. "I'd trust you anywhere, Paoli."

And just to show him how wrong he is, turn out your pockets and show him what you've got there."

Paoli turned, if possible, just a little paler.

"Aw, gee, Budge..." he started to protest; but Radcliffe's soft tones turned to a snarl of: "Turn out them dam' pockets!"

Then, suddenly, Paoli and one of the others dropped behind the table at which they stood, and Radcliffe had a revolver in his hand and already it was smoking and the echoes of a shot were dying away, and Enoch was pushing Elmer through the door and into a hallway.

"I had a hunch about that letter," he panted as they ran down the hall and into the main dining room of the place. Looks as if my hunches were still working, eh, Elmer?"

From the sound of shots that still came from the office, it looked as if he were right. As the two left the building though, the shots died away, and Elmer realized that one group or the other had won the fight. And whichever side won, it was a pretty sure bet that they'd be hunting the ones that had started it all. Indeed, almost immediately, a jumble of shouted commands came distantly to them, and Elmer would have sworn that there was something shouted about the "old man and the kid."

They sped down the tree-lined avenue that led from the state highway to the house, making no attempt to get their machine which was parked on the side of the house. Both instinctively knew that they wouldn't have time to reach the car and set it in motion. So they ran, hoping that they'd find some place of concealment before the remains of the mob managed to organize a pursuit and try to find them.

Now, the chances are that Radcliffe and his men who still survived were less interested in capturing or harming Enoch and Elmer than they were in putting as much distance as possible between themselves and the terrible mess of things that had resulted from crossing old Enoch. Whether that is so or not, the fact remains that they rushed from the house and, instead of pursuing the fugitives, they went at once to the garage and in a moment or two, a big Cadillac swept out and down the road to the highway.

They didn't put the lights on, and so they were pretty close to Elmer and Enoch before those two realized that the noise they heard was a car bearing down on them. They probably thought it was a car on the highway, until Elmer, glancing back, saw the huge black mass descending on them out of the lesser gloom. He shouted a warning and leaped for the protection of the trees on the side of the road and then turned to see if Enoch was safe. To his horror, he saw Enoch, who had rushed for the other side of the road, turn suddenly and rush back, straight into the path of the oncoming juggernaut. He heard a thump and covered his eyes, he heard a terrible grunt from Enoch and a gleeful cry: "You got the old one, Budge," from the car. Then the sound of a motor rapidly dying away, and Elmer took his hands from his face to look into the gloom of the night, and wonder miserably if Enoch was dead or only mortally wounded.

Well, I guess that's the climax of the story. There's no use of telling what happened in the next few hours. Briefly, Elmer stood and wrung his hands for ten minutes that seemed like hours, and then, afraid to move old Enoch for fear he'd add to his injuries, he went back to the garage to get the car, found a telephone there and called a hospital. They came and got Enoch, took him to the hospital and it was four months before he got out.

Of course, the wealth that Enoch had amassed stood him in good stead, then. He could afford to have, and did have, the best and most famous surgeon in the country. The doctor was called from half way across the country, and came on a fast chartered plane. Of course, he had to operate, and he frankly said that he couldn't tell whether Enoch would live or not, until after the operation.

You can imagine Elmer's physical state, as he and Laura waited in the hospital for news of the operation. He walked the floor like a new father, trying to keep awake. The night before, he had sat up most of the time with Laura; the night before that, had been the night of the accident. Now, he was practically out on his feet. At last, after hours that seemed centuries, the doctor appeared. His eyes were glowing and Elmer knew, even



before he spoke, that the operation was a successful one. But just how successful, he didn't know until the doctor spoke.

"Mr. Bidwell," he said. "Do you know if Mr. Higgins ever exhibited any queer traits, any neurotic tendencies or tendencies toward hysteria?"

"Gosh, no!" Elmer was shocked.

"Just the opposite, I'd say, doctor."

"Did he ever take drugs of any sort?"

"No, not that I know of—" Elmer began, and then he thought of that dose of luck that Enoch had taken. After a moment's thought, he decided to tell, and unburdened himself of the whole story of Enoch Higgins' luck. To say the doctor was astounded was putting it mildly.

"Mr. Bidwell," he said. "I came out here to tell you that Enoch Higgins was the luckiest man I've ever seen in all my years of practice. I didn't imagine, of course, that his luck was artificial. But—well, now I don't know what to think. When I first looked at that broken skull of his, I noticed something, and when the time came to operate, I verified those suspicions. To be brief, Enoch Higgins had a small but well-developed cancer of the brain. Some things about it make it seem certain that it was artificially induced, probably by that drug he took. I removed it, and I can insure you there's no danger of its return.

"But if that accident hadn't happened when it did, the thing would have gotten beyond control in a few months and Enoch would more than likely have died of madness. He's the luckiest man I ever heard of!"

THE END