**CHAPTER XXIVx**

**The Plan that gaed wrang**

"Bit noo," quo Kemp, wi a sidiewyes keek ooto the windae, "fit

are we tae dae?"

He meeved nearhaun his guest as he spikk in sic a mainner as tae

stop the chaunce o a suddenty glisk o the three cheils fa wir advauncin up the knowe road--wi an unca slawness, as it seemed tae Kemp.

"Fit wir ye plannin tae dae fin ye wir heidin fur Port Burdock? Hid ye ony plan?"

"I wis gaun tae clear ooto the kintra. Bit I hae cheenged thon plan raither since seein yersel. I thocht it wid be wyce, noo the weather is hett an inveesibility possible, tae makk fur the Sooth. Speecially as ma secret wis kent, an aabody

wid be on the luikoot fur a masked an rowed up cheil. Ye hae a line o steamers

frae here tae France. Ma thocht wis tae win aboord ane an rin the risks o the passage. Syne I could gae bi train intae Spain, or else Algiers. It widnae be hard. There a cheil micht aywis be inveesible--an yet live. An dae things. I wis usin thon gangrel as a siller kist an gear cairrier, until I jeloused foo tae get ma

buiks an ferlies sent ower tae meet me."

"Thon's siccar."

"An syne the orra breet maun ettle tae chore frae me! He’s hidden

ma buiks, Kemp. Hidden ma buiks! Gin I can lay ma hauns on him!"

"Best ploy tae get the buiks ooto him first."

"Bit far is he? D’ye ken?"

"He's in the toon polis station, jyled, bi his ain speirin, in the strangest cell in the airt."

"Vratch!" quo the Inveesible Cheil.

"Bit thon hauds up yer ploys a thochtie."

"We maun win thon buiks; thon buiks are necessar."

"Of coorse," quo Kemp, a bittie shakky, winnerin gin he heard

fitsteps ootbye. "Of coorse we maun win thon buiks. Bit thon

winna be hard, gin he disnae ken they're fur ye."

"Na," quo the Inveesible Cheil, an thocht.

Kemp ettled tae think o somethin tae haud the spikk gaun, bit the

Inveesible Cheil restertit himsel.

"Hyterin intae yer hoose, Kemp," he telt him, "cheenges aa ma plans. Fur ye’re a cheil that can unnerstaun. In spite o aa that his happened, in spite of this publicity, o ma buiks bein tint, o fit I hae tholed, there’s still mony possibilities, gran possibilities--"

"Ye’ve telt naebody I’m here?" he speired sherp like.

Kemp dauchled. "Thon wis unnerstude," quo he.

"Naebody?" Griffin speired.

"Nae a sowel."

"Ach! Noo--" The Inveesible Cheil stude up, an stickin his airms akimbo

stertit tae wauk ben the study.

"I made a mistakk, Kemp, a muckle mistakk, in cairryin this thing

throwe alane. I hae wyled awa virr, time, chaunces. Alane—it’s

winnerfu foo little a cheil can dae alane! Tae chore a bittie, tae skaith a bittie, an there’s the eyn.

"Fit I wint, Kemp, is a goalie, a helper, a a hidey-hole, an arreengement far I can sleep an ett an be in peace, an unsuspeckit. I maun hae a fier. Wi a fier, wi

maet an rest--a thoosan things are possible.

"Afore noo I hae gaen on dweeble lines. We hae tae conseeder aa that

inveesibility means, aa that it disnae mean. It means a bittie advantage fur lippenin in an sae furth--nae makkin souns. It's o a bittie help--a bittie help mebbe--in hoosebrakkin an sae furth. Aince ye've catched me ye could easy jyle me. Bit on the ither haun I’m hard tae catch. This inveesibility, in fack, is

anely guid in twa cases: It's eesefu in winnin awa, it's eesefu in approachin. It's byordnar eesefu, syne, in killin. I can wauk roon a cheil, fitiver weapon he his, chuse ma pynt, strikk as I like. Jink as I like. Flee as I like."

Kemp's haun gaed tae his mowser. Wis thon a meevement doonbye?

"An it’s killin we maun dae, Kemp."

"It’s killin we maun dae," repeatit Kemp. "I'm lippenin tae yer plan, Griffin, bit I'm nae agreein, bi the wey. Foo killin?"

"Nae needless killin, bit a weel-judged killin. The pynt is, they ken there is an Inveesible Cheil--as weel as we ken there is an Inveesible Cheil. An thon Inveesible Cheil, Kemp, maun noo stert a Reign o Fleg. Aye; nae doot it's fearie. Bit I mean it. A Reign o Fleg. He maun takk some toon like yer Burdock an terrifee an dominate it. He maun gie orders. He can dae thon in a thoosan weys--bitties o paper haived unner yetts wid be eneuch. An aa fa jink his orders he maun kill, an kill aa fa wid defend them."

"Humph!" quo Kemp, nae langer lippenin tae Griffin bit tae the soun o his front yett steekin an unsteekin.

"I think, Griffin," he spakk, tae hap his wannerin attention, "that yer fier wid be in a hard poseetion."

"Naebody wid ken he wis a fier," quo the Inveesible Cheil, wi virr. An syne o a suddenty, "Wheesh! Fit's thon doonstairs?"

"Naethin," quo Kemp, an o a suddenty stertit tae spikk lood an faist. "I dinnae agree tae this, Griffin," he reponed. "Unnerstaun me, I dinnae agree tae this. Foo dream o playin a gemme agin the race? Foo can ye hope tae win blytheness? Dinna be a lane wolf. Publish yer lear; takk the warld--takk the nation at least--intae yer trust. Think fit ye micht dae wi a million helpers--"

The Inveesible Cheil brukk in--airm ootraxxed. "There’s fitsteps camin upstairs," quo he in a laigh voyce.

"Styte," reponed Kemp.

"Lat me see," quo the Inveesible Cheil, an gaed forrit, airm ootraxxed,tae the yett.

An syne things happened unca faist. Kemp dauchled fur a secunt an syne meeved tae stop him him. The Inveesible Cheil lowpit an stude still. "Traitor!" skreiched the Voyce, an o a suddenty the dressin-goon wis lowsed, an sittin doon the Unseen stertit tae tirr his claes. Kemp tuik three faist steps tae the yett, an syne the Inveesible Cheil—his shanks hid vanished--raise tae his feet wi a skirl. Kemp haived the yett ajee.

As it lowsed, there cam a soun o hashin feet doonstairs an voyces.

Wi a faist meevement Kemp flang the Inveesible Cheil back, lowpit aside, an yarked tee the yett. The key wis ootside an ready. In anither meenit Griffin wid hae bin alane in the belvedere study, jyled. Apairt frae ae wee maitter The key hid bin slippit in faist thon foreneen. As Kemp yarked tee the yett it drappit wi a soun on the bass.

Kemp's face becam fite. He ettled tae grip the yett haunle wi baith hauns. Fur a meenit he stude ruggin. Syne the yett gaed sax inches. Bit he got it steekit again. The secunt time it wis yarked a fit wide, an the dressin-goon cam jammin itsel intae the openin. His thrapple wis grippit bi inveesible fingers, an he left his haud on the haunle tae defend himsel. He wis haived back, hytered an thrown heavy intae the neuk o the lobby. The teem dressin-goon wis flang on the tap o him.

Haufwey up the staircase wis Colonel Adye, fa’d gotten Kemp's letter, the heidbummer o the Burdock polis. He wis glowerin dumfounert at the sudden sicht o Kemp, follaeed bi the byordnar sicht o claes flang teem in the air. He saw Kemp haived doon, an warssle tae his feet. He saw him breenge forrit, an gae doon again, drapped like a bull.

Syne o a suddenty he wis strukk hard. Bi naethin! A muckle wecht, it seemed, lowpit on him, an he wis flang heidlang doon the staircase, wi a grup on his thrapple an a knee in his groin. An inveesible fit stude on his back, a ghaistly pammerin passed doonstairs, he heard the twa bobbies in the haa skreich an rin, an the front yett o the hoose slammed forcey.

He rowed ower an sat up glowerin. He saw, hyterin doon the

staircase, Kemp, stoory an bumshayvelt, ae side o his face fite

frae a cloor, his lip bleedin, an a pink dressin-goon an some

unnerclaes held in his airms.

"Gweedsakes!" quo Kemp, "the gemme's up! He's awa!"