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IZZY, THE BUSY RUM SLEUTH, AND HIS DIZZY LIFE

IN THE POPULOUS rum-running circles around New York City, the name of Izzy Einstein has become an epithet of terrible meaning. No other prohibition agent has been half so successful in collecting illegal liquids, and landing the possessors in jail. He is a new type of detective, it appears, produced by the dry age, and in his hands the ancient and more or less honorable art of sleuthing has shown new and dazzling developments. Izzy Einstein stands forth with his trusted lieutenant, Moe Smith, says a journalistic appreciator of the metropolis, "as the master hooch-hound, alongside whom all the rest of the pack are but pups." Next to Volstead himself, Izzy Einstein represents all that is good or bad, depending upon the point of view, in the matter of prohibition. He is ruthless, cold, clever, and horribly unsympathetic. He has been known to play on his violin until the gentler feelings of a large-hearted restaurant proprietor were so stirred that a drink was proffered, whereupon Izzy at once added another arrest to the thousands for which he is responsible. There is hardly a dealer in wet goods within fifty miles of the metropolis, says Truman H. Talley, writing in the *New York Times*, "who doesn't keep a weather eye out for 'that Izzy Einstein,' whose seven-league methods have played havoc with the bootleggers, and whose next exploit is awaited among that gentry about as eagerly as the plague." Mr. Talley proceeds, in appreciatory vein:



Bootleg Whisky

The failure of most plainclothes men to disguise their true status is almost notorious. A "bull" is a "bull," the crooks say, whether in uniform or not. Whether it is poor stage management or bad acting, the cop in civilian attire and the agency detective usually stand out as tho wearing a Cardinal's hat, and it was to the task of effectively overcoming that traditional fault of sleuthing that Izzy bent his energies when he left Postal Station K and joined the rum squad. He decided upon a category of true-to-life disguises that would fit him for all the avenues, highways and alleys in the labyrinth he was entering, and, like the true actor rehearsing for a long run, he not only learned his parts but grew into them. He became a man of parts. He prepared himself to move in high, low and medium circles—on the excellent theory that the taste for liquor and the desire to sell it are no respecters of persons—and in all those circles he has since been whirling with rapidity and a quick-change adeptness.

"Dress clothes for Broadway and overalls for the water-front," Izzy says in partial explanation of his method, but that by no means tells the story. For all his careful self-training in the false-whiskered art, Izzy is blessed with a foundation admirably fitted for the deceptive trimmings he assumes. Heavy-set, smiling, broad-faced, an earnest and convincing talker, a man who looks you straight in the eye as beguilingly as a shrewd poker player with at least four aces, he would appear upon brief observation

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to be the quick-sale type of merchandise dealer—an energetic business builder, perhaps.

To others, in a change of clothing, a marked resemblance to the neighborhood butcher or grocer might be noted. He might be a manufacturer of garments. To hear him talk of automobile accessories, or kindred subjects, would not be surprizing. He is the twin of many a merchant. He literally looks the part of New York's man in the street. Yet tho in every-day attire and for purposes of getting evidence on the average New York saloon he may appear to be a composite picture of all the city's delicatessen dealers, he becomes the husky hunky in his rough duds when he sallies into longshoreman territory. That done, and, presto, he is faultlessly accoutered for an evening's round of the gay jazz palaces, where he appears to be nothing so much as the man who has just put through a big deal and wishes only to celebrate his success, regardless of expense.

A day with Izzy would make a chameleon blush for lack of variations. Up with the milk strikers and car crews, along the docks in the morning hours of ship-to-truck loading, in and out of the best and the worst of noon-hour lunch bars, on one or more of any number of special coups in the afternoon, to the restaurants in and near New York for dinner, and an evening devoted to social and semi-social events where flask, private stock and cellar contribute to the festivity—his day is just one booze complex after another.

No stock is too small and no still too large for Izzy to tamper with and tap. Even the sum total of his conquests is so great that he has long since lost track of it. So crowded with seizures and confiscations has his career been that he remembers only some of the notable ones. Two thousand

cases of whisky and 367 barrels of wine constituted one little haul. A 700-case seizure of whisky he mentioned as another trifle.

One of his earliest exploits, in which he takes pride even tho the haul was slight, occurred last Fourth of July when New York's great wet parade was held. Not only did Izzy march with the wets—

He followed some of them into the by-paths, with devastating effect on the unsuspecting dealers in the very article for which the demonstrators were perspiringly parading. In one of the drug stores at which he stopt he asked for a half-pint. It was sold him. He stuck it in his pocket and sauntered leisurely toward the door. Some wares caught his eye. He casually looked them over. Nothing precipitate about Izzy. A minute or two elapsed after the purchase of the flask, and to all intents and purposes the purchaser was about to go on his way. The cautious druggist called to him as his hand was on the door.

"Come back, friend, and I'll sell you some real stuff," the druggist called out. Izzy turned. "I wasn't sure who you were when you came in and I gave you colored water. You might have been a prohibition agent, and I have to be careful. But you haven't tried to pinch me, so I guess you're all right."

Whereupon the druggist took back the decoy bottle gave the "all right" customer its equivalent in real whisky. Then Izzy arrested him.

The effectiveness of Izzy's natural disguise is illustrated by an experience in the once roaring but still hard-boiled Forties where the dispensers, to continue dispensing more than a few hours, must know the foe the minute he darkens the door. Izzy and two fellow-agents set out to get the evidence on one of those few remaining bars that exist presumably as lunch counters. His

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*More Bootleg Whisky
with counterfeit label*

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two companions remained outside while Izzy entered and stepped up to the bar. Mopping his brow and with the air of one much fatigued, Izzy in whispered but despairingly earnest tones asked for something to brace him up. The bartender made a quick survey of the suppliant and seemed satisfied.

"All right, I guess," the bartender said, having glanced around the room and reassured himself there were no tattlers present. Then he chanced to look out of the front window.

"But wait just a minute," he said. "See those two fellows out there?" Izzy turned and saw his two agents, marking time. "They're prohibition agents. I can spot 'em as far as I can see 'em. Wait until they walk on by and I'll serve you."

Izzy waited. Presently his two men sauntered on. The bartender appeared with the drink.

"They can't fool me," the bartender remarked, with the air of one who knows his ropes. "You may think it's foolish, but you've got to play safe these days."

A moment later he was arrested and in custody of the two sure-enough dry agents who had been summoned by their squad chief, who, to proceed with another point in the study of the redoubtable Izzy, had the liquid evidence in his pocket.

As remarked earlier, whisky and Izzy don't agree. One might be led to believe that the dry agent's life is just one drink after another; and with some it probably is—but not with Izzy. He doesn't like it in the first place, but, what is more important, an offender can't be punished on consumed evidence. The liquor must be produced in court. And the prohibition agent who tried to carry a glass of whisky from the scene of the raid to the courtroom might spill it, or more likely be mobbed. The resourceful Izzy devised a short cut, and, for all I know, may have applied for a patent. It's almost worth it.

In the upper left hand of his coat, we are informed, Izzy has installed a neat plumbing system, arranged as follows:

The pocket is made into a funnel, lined with material durable enough to withstand the liquid fire attributes of the worst "hooch." Inside the coat, into which the funnel feeds, is built a flask. The rest is simple. When Izzy orders—and gets—a drink, his right arm comes up as all right arms do in similar circumstances, as if to convey the thimble of ambrosia to parted lips, but the arc is suddenly broken at an altitude very near the collar button by a downward tangent to the breast-pocket, into which is tossed the liquid and through which it trickles via the funnel into the container within. Izzy has practised this until he can fool many bartenders into really thinking the liquor was honestly and normally consumed.

Izzy's pocket drainage system and Izzy's disingenuous facial expression are perhaps the only two constant features of his equipment and make-up. In all other respects he is never the same man twice. It is a wonder his wife and four children over in Brooklyn know him when he comes home at night, for, even tho he leaves home in the togs required for the morning's assignment, there is no assurance he will return in the same attire.

Once he and his pal, Moe Smith, became hostlers for a few days. They had a tip about a certain stable. There was a still in the back of it, they were told. The two forlorn-looking stablemen, as horsy as the thorough Izzy could make them, applied for jobs. There was nothing just then, but there might be later. They hung around. They dropt in from day to day, got acquainted with the boss and gradually nosed their way about. They found the still before they got their jobs.

And just to show his range, Izzy one evening walked into the Yorkville Casino with a trombone under his arm. The false-front shirt, Ascot tie and other infallible markings of the orchestra musician were upon him. He could play the trombone, too, just as on a similar occasion in Brooklyn he utilized a violin to win over the restaurant management. A good fellow, in each instance the charm of his music brought proffers of drinks, which he accepted, and then displayed his gratitude by distributing summonses.

Another day found him pushing a fruit-cart in the Bronx. His equipment was real. There was nothing stagy about it. The soft felt hat, the bandanna, the corduroy trousers, all blended with the rickety two-wheeled vehicle to convince the two score saloonkeepers upon whom he called in one day that he was the genuine fruit peddler. As so marked with other selling ruses of Izzy's, his fruit was good and the price was cheap—not too cheap, because that would excite suspicion. The exceptional bargains he offered in his rounds of the combination saloon and lunch counter places made him welcome and at the opportune moment in each transaction the request for a return favor was made. In each case where it was granted there was an arrest.

Izzy can drive a truck as well as he can guide a push cart. And trucks bear a definite relation to bootlegging. The average truck

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driver knows enough about the illicit liquor trade to hang many men. Ergo, Izzy mastered trucking and on occasions too numerous to recount he has in his capacity as chauffeur driven many a load of his unsuspecting employer's booze straight to a Government warehouse. And not only the immediate load, but all the rest of the supply from which it came. The avenues for learning the liquor traffic's routes are limitless for the truck driver, and the evidence gained on any one such sally is sufficient to last an agent of Einstein's caliber many a day.

During the strike of milk wagon drivers Izzy went into East Yorkville. In the excitement he was accepted without question as one of the strikers. Around the starting places of the milk routes were numerous saloons which catered to the drivers, and the strike period found them flourishing. So one day Izzy and some of his new-found friends walked into a bar.

"We're celebrating the expected victory of the strike," Izzy told the man back of the bar. "Give us some ginger ale."

"A fine way to celebrate," replied the bartender, only mildly interested. But he brightened. "You fellows have all the milk now, why don't you try some good old milk punches? You get the milk and—well, you know what I mean."

The milk was produced. The punches, real ones, were served. The place was "pinched."

Izzy speaks Hungarian, Polish and German as well as he does English. He is at home with almost any one, whether on the water front, on the East Side, or with laborers in any part of the city or State. Only recently a vast lumber camp area in northern New York near the Vermont border was cleaned of bootleggers largely by virtue of his ability to mingle with and make friends of all classes and nationalities of the workers. Izzy's best rôle, however, seems to be that of salesman. As a salesman, we are assured:

No one can compete with him, for his prices are low, which is the open sesame to the "hootch hatch." As a cigar salesman selling smokes at \$35 a thousand that he said were worth nearer \$2,000 a thousand—and were worth enough more than he asked for them to serve as bait—he and his playmate Moe brought word to a series of up-State hotels. Getting friendly with the cigar clerks and in some instances through the clerks with the hotel managers, the business of learning the hotel's and even the town's liquor secrets was only a matter of a hint. Worthy and fair-priced salesmen that they were, there was no reason why they shouldn't be shown a little courtesy and hospitality. Then the clean-up.

As a pickle salesman, Izzy trapt many a saloon owner and grocer who thought the drummer's reasonable prices warranted a return favor. In one instance Izzy's low pickle prices prompted the trusting grocer to offer him a drink of his best Scotch, also at a price correspondingly reduced—and the grocer at once suffered the consequences.

"Can I have a pen and ink?" Izzy asked. "My friend wants to write me a check for my car out there that I just sold him."

Indeed he could. The check was filled in and handed over.

"Well, brother," remarked Izzy to his companion, "I wish I could send you on your way with my car—I mean your car—with something better than beer. She's a good car and if it wasn't for bum business in the shop I'd never sell it at that price——"

The talk ran along, but the emphasis on the meagerness of beer had not been without its effect. They looked like "safe" customers. Would they like something better than beer? Would they?

To make a long story short, that trick worked in about six places before Izzy and Moe decided word of it might have become unnecessarily noised about.

Street-car conducting seems remote from bootlegging, yet the tip that saloons near certain car barns were doing rush business took Izzy there. He appeared bright and early one morning dressed in all the regalia of a B. R. T. employee. He entered a saloon and laid a \$5 bill on the bar.

"Can you give me a lot of change for this?" he asked. "I need it for my run."

The bartender also had use for small change.

"Why don't you buy a drink?" he asked. "That's the way to get change."

Izzy ordered a glass of beer.

"Why don't you take a good drink?"

Izzy ordered whisky. He got \$4.25 in change. The bartender got arrested.

Izzy doesn't crowd his victim. He doesn't beg for a drink.

Once on an out-of-town assignment, given on the basis of complaints against a certain general storekeeper, Einstein arrived on the scene with a full line of teapots. The merchant knew his business and when Einstein quoted his prices, a purchase at a considerable saving was made. The storekeeper ordered 500 teapots, worth at wholesale about \$1,000, for \$750. Gratitude—Drink—Arrest.

Izzy's chief once handed him what the chief thought might prove a tough job. Complaints had come in from an up-State town concerning a flood of home-made liquor. There was no clue as to its source, tho the local investigation had convinced the complainants there that the stuff was not being shipped in. Izzy is not addicted to such fiction-detective expressions as

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Izzy is not addicted to such fiction-detective expressions as "simple," but his actions are as much to the point. He went to the town. He looked around. cursory examination revealed nothing. He went to the station agent. No booze shipped in there or he would know it. Izzy asked for a record of freight received. He found several entries concerned with raisins. He took the name. In an hour he had arrested a farmer living just outside the town and had confiscated an enormous still.

Izzy and Moe once became prosperous looking farmers and for a few days went to the places of farmers near Bethel and Monticello against whom complaints had been made. There they represented themselves as men looking for property to buy. The places were not for sale, but the upshot of the agricultural and kindred conversations they struck up was the seizure of numerous stills.

One day early in their career as a team Izzy and Moe alighted from an auto in front of a saloon in upper Broadway. They sauntered in and walked to the back end of the bar near the proprietor's desk.

"We don't sell whisky," was the sharp reply.

"All right, give us beer," was Izzy's conciliatory reply.

They got their beer and they had no sooner consumed it than they were told they might have whisky—the inheritance of the meek.

"It takes a little finesse," Izzy admitted, in recounting the incidents of his exciting year or more of prohibition work. "The main thing, it seems to me, is that you have to be natural. The hardest thing an agent has to do is to really act as if he wanted and needed a drink. That doesn't mean you can walk in with the stock excuse of a toothache. They've got stung on that story so many times a man could roll over and die of it on the saloon floor and never get a drop.

"But maybe I'd better not tell you exactly how it's done—it's dangerous information these days."



**THE LATTER END OF BARRELS AND BARRELS
OF RANKLY ILLEGAL LIQUID.**



Izzy Einstein (left) shares a toast with Moe Smith.