

THE FOURTH DEGREE
XXXXX

5 Sat
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FILE-1A

At the far end of the station platform, a lantern waved. The engineer pulled his head and shoulders back in through the cab window, released his air and grasped the throttle. The owl train, with its load of more-or-less sleeping passengers, rattled across the switches of the San Diego yards, bound for Los Angeles 125 miles away.

Among the passengers was Detective William Doty, heading for Los Angeles on a police matter which today would be called ". . . purely routine, ma'am." Also among the passengers was a slight, elderly man with ^{gold} ~~steel~~-rimmed spectacles and a ^{scraggly} ~~frustrated~~ moustache. He might have been a book-keeper or a country doctor or a small-time businessman. You never can tell about those mild, negative-looking chaps. But had Doty been blessed with second sight, could he have foretold the events of the next few hours, he would have collared that meek-looking little man, then and there. As it was, in blissful ignorance, the detective curled up and tried to get to sleep as the train jolted northward. It was 2:45 a.m. of Saturday, July 5, 1913.

Lights clicked off ^{around} ~~by~~ the now deserted station, which joined in the common stillness of the sleeping city. But it was a warm night, and not everyone was sleeping soundly. Specifically, 20-year-old Della Blanchard was sleeping lightly, if at all -- and it's ~~an~~ a good thing that she was. Otherwise she might not have seen, in time, a flickering light, a tiny flame which crept up the insulation of a wire, past her window of the mid-town Leland Hotel. She leapt from her bed, caught up a robe and ran to the room of her sister ^{her} and brother-in-law, Fred Saunders, the proprietor of the hotel. While Saunders, still groggy with sleep, was calling the fire department, the two

