

Storm Music

By **Dornford Yates**

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CHAPTER XI—Continued

In a flash I had fired and had drawn his fire, for, before I could think, a bullet had flicked the sleeve of my pistol-arm.

This showed me, once for all, that so far as snap shots were concerned, I stood no chance whatever against such a man. As I whipped to one side, I made up my mind that I must not fire again until I knew for certain that my bullet was going to kill. In a word, if I was to win, I must come to close quarters with Pharaoh, if not to grips.

I had now come back to the table, and an instant later I was crouching beneath the archway, with my pistol on the carpet before me and my empty hands outstretched upon either side. I had not long to wait.

When I did not return his fire, I fancy the man was uncertain whether or not I was dead. He, therefore, sought the spot from which I had fired and, finding nobody there, turned and came to the table exactly as I had done.

And exactly as I had done, he began to edge his way round it. . . . The slack of his trousers brushed my hand.

In a flash I had him by the ankles and, ripping his feet from beneath him, had brought him down on his side. Then I snatched up my pistol, thrust it into his stomach and pressed the trigger—in vain.

The magazine was empty. Slowly to the last, Rush had never troubled to replenish his clip.

Pharaoh had fallen to his right and so on his pistol-arm. While this was taking his weight, he could not aim, and though in a flash he had flung his weight to the left, in that instant my fingers had caught the wrist of his pistol-hand. For a moment he fought for his freedom; then he let himself fall on his back; but now my wits were working and before it could reach his pocket, I had held of his other wrist.

And in that instant the room was flooded with light. . . .

For a moment I thought that someone had entered the chamber. And then I guessed that Pharaoh had turned the switches when first he came into the room, that the switchboard itself might report the repair of the damage which he had done.

So for the first time that night I saw my enemy's face.

I think he must have known that I was his assailant, but the sight of me seemed to send him out of his mind. He fought no more as a serpent, but like the madman he looked, his face convulsed with passion and his eyes starting out of his head.

At last, to my relief, the tempest blew itself out, and he lay back, spent and panting, to take his rest; but, before I could think of moving, he had lifted his head once more and was staring into my eyes.

I looked back, grimly enough.

He did not struggle; he simply gazed upon me, as though he would brand my image upon his memory. Then the fellow spat in my face.

So a madman made a madman.

If he resisted, I know not, but I used him as a lay figure from that time on.

I dashed his hand on the massive plinth of the table, to break his wrist, and when his pistol had fallen I brought his hands together and got to my knees. And then I was clear of the table and had jerked him up to his feet.

I let his broken wrist go, whipped out his second pistol and pitched it across the room.

Then I seized his throat with both hands, turned him back to the table, bent him across its corner and broke his back on the oak.

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Sitting on the bench by the fireplace, I wiped my face and my hands on Helena's black silk scarf. This had been wrung and creased, and I had no doubt that Pharaoh had used it to gag her, before he had carried her off.

Now that the business was over, I found it hard to believe. I looked at my watch.

The time was twenty minutes past twelve. Not an hour had gone by since Pharaoh had "talked" from the ramparts and Dewdrop had read his message to Rush and Bugle and me. And now they were all four dead, but I was alive.

The reflection brought me up to my feet.

Alive, if you please; but I was shut in a chamber from which I could see no way out. . . .

For twenty minutes I sought that secret door. I shouted and beat upon the woodwork, using Helena's name—all in vain.

Helena was locked in the turret—my hand in my pocket fingered her master key; which I had taken from

Rush, but the turret, no doubt, had embrasures, and she would be found and released so soon as she could make herself heard. She had, of course, heard the firing, but if the thieves were fighting what did that matter to her? Let Pharaoh revenge her escape upon Bugle and Rush; or seek to blast his way out of the secret room. (Here perhaps I should say that though Helena heard the firing, the sound was so muffled that she could not be sure what it was, while, so thick were the walls of York, that nobody else in the castle heard it at all.)

Now when Helena's release was effected and Geoffrey and the warden were found, the three would take counsel together upon her report. The position would be considered—but not for long.

The thing was clear. To open the room would be madness. The council would surely decide that Pharaoh and his companions must be left to die where they were.

Something dazedly I surveyed my surroundings.

No windows, no doors. How did one get out of chambers that had neither windows nor doors?

It was then that I thought of the fireplace.

A grate must have a chimney; and if the chimney was wide. . . .

I must have climbed forty feet when my hand encountered a ridge and I

felt a current of air. And then I came to a fireplace.

As I crawled out of that fireplace, I knew where I was. I had come to Helena's bedroom.

Roughly I washed the filth from my head and my hands, but though I did what I could to wipe the soot from my shoes, I very soon saw that until I could change my clothing, I should not be fit to move in a furnished room. And what clothes I had were at Plumage. . . .

At once to get to the farm became my burning desire.

Before I did so, I must set Helena free. That was simple enough. I had her master key, and there was her private stair to bring me down to the hall. And yet I dreaded the duty. I did not want to see her—at least, not now. I dreaded the explanations which I should be forced to give. I did not want her to know that I had been there, in that room; that I had seen Pharaoh break her, that I had heard her purchase my safety for ten thousand pounds a year.

I heard the whine of a dog and then the scratch of claws on the door that led to the ramparts. In a moment I had it open, and there to my joy was Sabre.

I afterwards learned that, perceiving the bustle above him, the dog had declared, by barking, that he was down in the moat. His rescue was effected.

The great dog seemed pleased to see me, but none too pleased to see that I was alone.

"Come and find her, Sabre," I said.

The Alsatian started and stared. Then he bounded towards me, put his great paws on my shoulders and licked my face.

One minute later we stood in the little hall.

With the master key in my hand, I turned to the turret door. For a moment I hesitated. Then I took a deep breath, fitted the key to the lock and pushed open the oak.

Helena was not to be seen. Neither, for that matter, was Sabre. He had gone to join his mistress at the head of the turret stair.

I was wondering whether to follow or whether to wait where I was, when I suddenly saw that my duty to the lady was done.

The appearance of Sabre would show her that she was released. The way to her bedroom was open, and she had no need of escort, because the terror was laid.

With trembling fingers, I whipped the key from the lock of the turret door. Then I opened the door which gave to the winding staircase, passed through and locked it behind me with all dispatch. Five minutes later I crossed the moat by the footbridge and entered the tunnel which would bring me into the woods. . . .

As I walked to Plumage, I remembered those terrible moments—how in her pride she had flung my puny efforts in Pharaoh's face and how in her fear and trembling she had sought to buy my safety by committing a breach of trust. No queen could have done more for the king she loved.



My Pistol on the Carpet Before Me.

Although I had come to regard with increasing apprehension the opening of Helena's eyes—to the truth, of course, that it was I and not Bugle that had stood in the secret chamber and had listened to all she said—it had never occurred to me that, if only I held my tongue, neither she nor anyone else need ever suspect that I had entered the castle that Friday night. Yet before my cousin had spoken a dozen words, I saw that, if I was careful, my secret would keep itself.

He found me finishing breakfast in his room at The Hoopling Hook.

"Well, you have missed something," he said. "Let that be your punishment for deceiving three simple souls. Not that I blame you—this time. My lady had no right to treat you like that. I told her as much in the coupe. But she wouldn't listen to me. But that's by the way. You've missed—in a way we've all of us missed—the most astounding show that ever was seen. Lady Helena saw a good bit—more than enough, I'm afraid." He threw himself into a chair. "Upon my soul, I don't know where to begin."

"What do you know?" I said.

"I feel sure," said my cousin, "that you will be glad to hear that your failure to arrive at the castle knocked the three of us flat. We couldn't assimilate the fact that simple, honest John Spencer had laid himself out to deceive us—and done it so devilish well. You certainly got your own back. Lady Helena was wild. 'I'd never have believed it of him,' she raged."

"Well, now that she was safe in the castle, I was only too glad of an excuse to get out, and so I announced that Barley and I would seek you without delay. She insisted that we should take Sabre and gave the dog his orders before we left. It's right you should know that she was extremely worried."

My cousin paused, to frown on his finger-tips.

"I hope, in the merciful course of time, to forget the way we employed the next two hours. We used Sabre exactly according to the instructions on the box. Should the dog display emotion, release him at once. Remain exactly where you were when he left you, until he returns. Then take hold of his collar and he will lead you to John."

I began to shake with laughter.

"Quite so," said Geoffrey. "Quite so. After about an hour the dog displayed emotion and was released. After another hour Barley and I displayed much more emotion and withdrew to survey the mouth of the entrance drive. . . .

"We hadn't been there ten minutes when we heard the Carriotta coming—coming from the castle all out. By the use of our torches we stopped her, to find that she was manned by a flying squad. Watchmen, porters, grooms—all of them armed to the teeth. They were going to compass York, traveling east; and the coupe was coming after, to travel west. The Countess Helena had been kidnaped. York was plunged into darkness and my lady was gone. Let down in a sheet from the ramparts. Her handkerchief had been found on the drawbridge and Sabre had been found in the moat."

I felt that it was time to say something.

"But how," I began. . . .

"Don't interrupt," said my cousin. "Listen to me. Well, I let the Carriotta go, deciding that Barley and I would do better on foot. I sent him east and ran west—yes, ran, with my heart in my mouth. The idea was to find the Rolls. . . . If the Rolls had not gone. . . . I found her at a quarter to one, up a little track—and very near cried with relief. You see, that meant that my lady was yet in the park."

"I rushed off and stopped the coupe, which was lapping for the twentieth time, told the chauffeur to go on patrolling, but to send me reinforcements and tell everybody he met. Then I went back to lay my ambush. I soon had plenty of men and I did the job well. Pharaoh simply hadn't an earthly. Though he didn't know it, that track had become the scaffold on which he and his little friends were going to die."

"At a quarter to two a wallah comes peeling with a message—we very nearly killed him, of course. But by the time he'd said his piece he was nearer death than before. The Countess Helena's compliments, and will Mr. Bohun come back to the castle at once."

My cousin covered his face.

"I don't think I've ever felt such a blasted fool. But blast it!"

"Well, I took the Rolls and drove back—to hear Lady Helena's tale."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

what Irvin S. Cobb thinks about:

Styles in Hair Tints.

SANTA MONICA, CALIF.— There's more news concerning the mummified remains of that lovely Egyptian princess they found the other day—that she who died nearly 5,000 years ago and yet was still so beautifully preserved. Too bad that old recipe of the Pharaoh family was lost. They did make such good preserves.

The latest word is that the little lady's hair was dyed a henna color. Either that's news or something has stimulated a sudden change in Hollywood fashions. Just a little while ago, about every other potential movie queen you saw was going in for the platinum effect; and only too frequently, alas, the effect was that of a new tin roof on a vacant attic.

Now, by the great gods, the stylish ones are going red, reddish or redder. Today, within half a mile, I counted ten redheads, and not a white horse in sight, to prove the ancient saying.



Irvin S. Cobb

Waning Presidential Booms.

WHAT with cyclones and floods down south, the daily press somehow failed to record among our spring casualties the untimely end of the Governor Talmadge boom. Poor little thing, it passed away at its home in Atlanta, Ga., just as it was learning, in prattling accents, to lip "pa-pa."

Still the shock did not catch some of us unawares. We had a feeling it wasn't going to live. The second summer is so frequently fatal to those incubator babies.

For instance, you take the Ham Fish boom. Or of you didn't take it, somebody certainly did, because it hasn't been seen, or even heard of for months and months.

Gridiron Club Dinners.

EXCEPT the obligatory column, nothing could be sadder than the newspaper account of a gridiron club dinner. Yet gridiron club dinners aim to be satirically amusing and frequently are.

Turning them out must be a tremendous hard job, because they deal with the national political scene, and any producer of farces will tell you you can't burlesque a burlesque. In other words, you can't be very funny on a subject which already is so much funnier than anything you can think of—and that's what the fellows at Washington are up against.

This business of trying to be comic is a serious business anyway, especially since all comedy is predicated on distress. A fat man falling down makes us laugh because he suffers both in spirit and flesh. But if he is a pallbearer, say, at a funeral and falls down on his own high hat and maybe breaks up the services—well, now then, you've got something that's really funny.

A definition of comedy could be: Tragedy standing on its head with its pants torn.

Self-Chosen Landon Aids.

GOVERNOR LANDON must feel awfully fractional, not to say badly scattered, what with being levied on by so many comparative strangers all at once. Every day or two, with an altruism rare in this selfish age, some gallant volunteer elects himself by acclamation as the governor's eastern manager or his western manager, or his northwestern manager or his southwestern manager or something. It makes no difference that he never heard of these parties before; up to six months ago, they've never heard of him either.

He's like a previously neglected orphan child who suddenly comes into prospects and finds everybody in town trying to adopt him. Maybe a better simile would be that of a lone Thanksgiving turkey at a tableful of hungry boarders, with this one snatching the drumstick and that one grabbing the second joint—and Mr. W. R. Hearst clinging, with a grip of iron, to the wishbone.

Folly of Parole System.

THE perpetrators of the kidnaping case of a few months ago up in the state of Washington were both chronic offenders who, despite their records, had been paroled.

The fiend who recently committed the most hideous child murder that California has known in years was a convict out on parole. The degenerate who has just confessed to murdering that poor defenseless gentlewoman in New York the other day was—yes, you've guessed it—he was a convict on parole.

And all over the Union the work of turning loose criminals who have not completed their terms of punishment, indeed, in some cases hardly have begun them, goes merrily on.

IRVIN S. COBB

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Forest of Arden

Englishmen say that Shakespeare's romantic forest in "As You Like It" is the Forest of Arden in Warwickshire, which fits his description. Belgians claim it is the Forest of the Ardennes. Either may be right, for both forests are romantic and lovely.

Print or Plain, Just So It's Linen

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



WEAR linen in the morning, at noonday, during the afternoon hours, and when "the shades of night are falling fast," then wear linen formally. This spring and summer is destined to go down in history as a banner linen season.

The beauty about modern linens is that through ingenious processing they are being made practically crush resistant.

The glory of this season's monotone linens is their remarkably handsome colorings. For the tailored jacket suit and sports and travel costumes, emphasis is on plain, firm, medium weight linens in such deep rich tones as Dubonnet and oxblood reds, dark blue, navy, also skipper blue, Biarritz green, the voguish spice brown, popular violet shades and other equally as attractive colors. Shrimp pink and coral hues are especially noted. As to white and natural tones they will lead in the summer parade.

Prints, perhaps, provide even more exciting news. Printed linens are making a bid for the formal as well as the daytime hours. Imagine an exquisitely sheer handkerchief linen (sheers in linen are latest word) in rust, brown and white done in an authentic paisley patterning. It is linens like this that are providing new thrills in the way of media for smart evening gowns.

If your fancy happens to run to modernistic florals in vivid colorings, we suggest that you select for your next party dress one of the very new gorgeous printed linens carried out in daring orange red and green on a navy background. Speaking generally in regard to printed linens, whether for day or evening wear, a liking is ex-

pressed for widely spaced bouquet arrangements, for bizarre peasant patternings, also motifs of Chinese character as well as mystic far-east figures and hieroglyphics. Scroll designs that meander in linework all over the background are particularly good style.

The illustration demonstrates how smartly and effectively monotone linens combine with linen prints. To the left you see the suit, a new Creed model, as it looks with the jacket worn. This stunning ensemble is made of a dark green canvas type of linen for the classically tailored jacket and skirt, using crisp white linen for the blouse patterned in a green and tangerine linework crossbar print design. The linen is the finest possible quality, coming as it does from Moygashel, Ireland, noted for its beautiful high grade linens. Observe the slight fullness at top of jacket sleeve, giving the new broadened shoulder line. The skirt has a single knife pleat at its left front to give necessary fullness.

Removing the jacket of the suit, there comes to view, as pictured in the foreground, the smart chanel print Moygashel linen blouse. Its tangerine and green tones complement the monotone of the linen suit most pleasingly. The waistline of the blouse is slightly fitted. Two outstanding style details are the short puffed sleeves and the fact that instead of buttoning it is laced up the front, tiny cord lacing in and out through hand-embroidered eyelets.

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JEWELRY FOR EVERY HOUR IN THE DAY

Jewelry for every hour in the day is now in vogue.

Collecting precious, real jewelry has become the fad of ladies of fashion. Women who already own fine collections of jewels are having them re-set. Now that gold settings are again smart, many colored stones enhanced by this treatment are being remodeled.

The suit is the perfect setting for a fine fob watch—a beautiful wrist watch, or a brooch or a clip watch. Brooches, worn at the neck of the new frilly blouses are smart and if they support a fine and distinguished jewel, they give tone and elegance to the street tailor.

Pearls are worn with all types of blouses. Pearl earrings are rapidly gaining in popularity.

No jewel or decoration of any kind is as uniformly becoming and flattering to the wearer as pearls.

SMART FOR SPORTS



The divided skirt costume is recognized as eminently practical for active sports wear. This simply cut dress is tailored to perfection of quality-kind linen imported from Moygashel, the finest flax producing section of the north of Ireland. It buttons up under the collar like a pinafore, with buttons running down under the arm. Its divided skirt means all the action you want on the golf links or tennis court.

Fluffy Bow at Neck Gives Ingenue Air to Wearer

A new trick of the moment is to fasten a fluffy bow made of dozens of layers of pleated net, with a little nosogay of spring flowers in the middle, at the neckline of your new spring print. You'd be surprised at the gay ingenuite air it gives you.

Or you may choose one of the new "lace paper dolly" collar and cuff sets, to give a last minute air to that long-suffering black crepe daytime dress.

The new neckwear is shown in all the accessory colors of the moment, such as violet, tulip pink, rust, London tan, mimosa and, of course, white.

Sports Perfume

In time to scent your spring tweeds, knitteds and your smartest riding habit appropriately and glamorously comes a new sports perfume created by one of the greatest French couturiers. It's named after one of the choicest kinds of leather, yet it is delicate and unmistakably feminine too.

New Shades

Spring's top ranking colors include imperial blue, aurora, Formosa blue, spinner's red, the zionia shades, pe-tunia and Devon green.