BANNER SERIAL FICTION

She Painted Her Face

A story of love and intrigue . . . by **DORNFORD YATES**

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SYNOPSIS

Richard Exon, a poor young Englishman, befriends elderly Matthew Gering, who at his death, gives him a statement claiming he, Gering, is Rudolph Elbert Virgil, Count of Brief, of ancient Austrian nobility who was betrayed 20 years before by his twin brother, Ferdinand, whose sentence for forgery he himself served. Ferdinand appropriated his title, property and daughter. Before he dies, Gering tells Exon there is a family secret, known only to the head of the house, to be found in the great tower at Brief, by a doorway none can ever find. Exon inherits his uncle's fortune and sets out to right Gering's wrongs. En route he encounters Percy Elbert Virgil, son of the villainous Ferdinand and sees him in conference with Inskip, a diamond merchant. He engages a valet, Winter, who hates Percy and meets by chance at a garage, John Herrick, who is a linguist and who as a youth served as a page at Gering's wedding, and had visited Brief. Herrick, due eventually to fall into an inheritance, is at present unemployed and seeking pleasant work to while away a few months. Exon and Herrick establish headquarters at Brenda Revoke's farm at Raven, a few miles from Brief and make their plans. They find the castle almost inaccessible at first, but at the mouth of the entrance drive several days later, they see a closed car occupied by Percy Virgil.

CHAPTER II—Continued

—4—

We were now approaching the foothills among which the castle stood, but the drive was so serpentine and the trees by its sides were so thick that we could not see what was coming for more than some 50 paces beyond each bend. We, therefore, took the precaution of leaving the road for the bracken before we rounded a curve, to make sure the next reach was empty before we exposed ourselves. That we did so was just as well, for a quarter of a mile further on, I lifted my head from the bracken to see the closed car at rest in the midst of the way. One of its doors was open, and someone within was speaking with Percy Virgil, who seemed to be very angry and was pointing the way we had come.

Be sure I dropped like a stone, and Herrick, moving behind me, followed my lead.

The car then began to move backwards slowly enough.

Now the drive was not wide enough to allow any car to turn round, but a track ran out of the drive some six or seven paces from where we lay. By making use of this track, any chauffeur could turn any car, and I was ready to wager that here the car would be turned. Sure enough, in a moment or two, we saw the body swing backwards into the track. For all that, I should have been wrong, for the car did not stop until it was four or five paces clear of the drive, when the chauffeur applied his hand-brake and switched his engine off. The car had been parked.

As somebody opened a door, Percy Virgil strode out of the drive and into the track.

Here I will say once for all that throughout this tale I shall report in English such speech as was used. Much was, of course, said in German, but though, when I heard it, I did not know what it meant, Herrick translated it for me as soon as ever he could.

As he came to the car—

"Where's the wire?" snapped Virgil. "Or have you forgotten that?"

"It is here," said another man.

"And the change of clothes?"

"Also," said a woman's voice.

"All marked, as I said?"

"That is so."

"Then follow me," said Virgil, "and bring the wire."

Cautiously raising our heads, we saw the procession set out—first Virgil, then the man, then the woman, with a dog on a lead. The chauffeur brought up the rear. They passed behind the car and disappeared in the wood.

When Herrick explained what had passed, I put a hand to my head.

"What on earth does it mean?"

Herrick shrugged his shoulders.

"Unless," he said, "dear Percy is making a film . . ."

"Which is absurd," said I. "But so is everything else. And where does the dog come in?"

"Nothing comes in," said Herrick. "It's all preposterous. But I'm glad to have seen dear Percy—extremely glad."

Having seen and heard what we had, I was for following Virgil, to see what his business might be, but when I suggested this, Herrick raised his eyebrows and glanced at his watch.

"As you please," said he, "but it's now getting on for five, and the outdoor staff will be up and about by six. If we turn aside and start stalking Percy and Co.—and it means stalking, mark you: not whipping along a road—by the time we get back to our job, we may find that we've missed the tide."

This was sheer common sense, so I said no more.

Ten minutes perhaps had gone by when the drive curled between the foothills and then swung round to the left and began to climb. Almost at once the woods on its right fell away, and there was the castle before us, perhaps 300 yards off.

It made a lovely picture, lit by the rising sun, for its tower and its seven turrets stood out most bold and brilliant against the blue of the sky and these and every projection that caught the light were throwing shadows so vivid that the castle looked heraldic and might have been a blazon of black and gold. It was built of gray stone and must once have been a fortress of considerable strength, but windows had later been set in its massive walls and chimney-stacks had been added to make it a residence.

Herrick, I think, was more excited than I, for, now that he saw the castle as he had seen and known it when he was twelve years old, he began at once to remember the plan of the house: since this was all to the good, I let him be and myself began to survey the heights which we hoped to use.

Almost at once I remarked that on one of these, three firs were standing together to thrust a gray-green steeple into the sky: this, I was sure, could be seen from the farther side and so would make us a landmark for future use. The next thing I saw was a path which slanted up from the meadows into the woods, and when I had taken my glasses, I found that it led to an elegant belvedere, or open summer house. This looked unfrequented, and but for my glasses I could not have picked it out, for the trees which had been cut back had put forth new boughs. Because of the veil of foliage, nobody standing there could ever be seen from below, yet he could see as much as he wished by peering between the leaves. To reach this spot from above looked easy enough, for it hung a short 30 feet below the crest of the hill and the ground between was covered with beech and fir.

Cautiously Raising Our Heads, We Saw the Procession Set Out.

This was enough for me. My one idea was to make for the Rolls and then to go round by road and get to the belvedere as soon as ever I could. But Herrick, deep in memory, would not be moved.

"Why rush your fences?" he said. "We've plenty of time. I'm doing lovely work—I can even remember a picture that hung in the dining-room. That's the dining-room at the end. You can't see the stables from here—they're behind to the left. But what I'm on now is the tower. I think it rises from the courtyard—I'm almost sure. But I know that it had a door on the second floor. The courtyard's beyond that archway—not very big . . . You go on, if you like—I shan't be long."

I had a sudden idea.

"All right," I said. 'I'll go on. And on the way I'll see what Percy's up to."

"What could be better?" said Herrick. "But don't get involved. We're here to find out—not give battle. Don't forget that."

"I promise," said I. "Don't be long," and, with that, I was gone.

Retracing my steps, I did not use the drive, but moved by its side through the bracken beneath the trees. As I approached the track, I saw that the car was still there and had not been moved.

Now all I knew was that Virgil and his companions had passed up the track out of sight. How far they had gone or whether they had kept to the track, I had no idea, but since it seemed pretty clear that they would not be very far off, from now I took greater precautions against being seen. When I moved, I did so gently and went on my hands and knees, and whenever I rose to look around, I did so against a tree-trunk, as though, indeed, I were stalking some wary prey.

First of all, I took a good look at the car. This was roomy and powerful and something the worse for wear. Its number-plates had been oiled and were coated with dust. One of its doors was ajar, and within I could see an old suitcase, no doubt containing "the clothes." But that was all, and after a long look round, I went on my way.

It was nearly six o'clock, and I had been gone from Herrick a full half-hour when the track beside which I was moving came to an end. This to my dismay, for now I had nothing to go on, although, of course, the track might have led me wrong.

In vain I sought for a broken stem of bracken which might declare the trail which my friends had left: in vain I scanned the forest and strained my ears: but for the birds and the squirrels, I might have had the world to myself.

Flat against the trunk of an oak tree, I wiped the sweat from my face. Five paces ahead a ride had been cut through the woods: though this was thick with bracken, it gave me a pretty clear view to right and to left, but the flood stretched smooth and unbroken and I could see no sign of its having been crossed.

Loth to admit defeat, I tried to think what to do. To proceed was easy enough, but, for all I knew, with every step that I took I might be going away from the party I sought. Yet to stay where I was was useless. If only there had been a hillock to add a few feet to my height, I could have looked down upon the bracken and that point of view might have shown me the traces the others had left. But there was no hillock: the ground hereabouts was sloping, but nothing more.

Suddenly I thought of the oak tree and lifted my eyes . . .

If I could reach it, there was the place I desired. One of the mighty branches was stretching out over the ride—a branch twice as thick as my loins, some 20 feet up. If I were there, I could see for a quarter of a mile, while the leaves of the lesser boughs would save me from being seen.

After a long look about me, I leaped for a sturdy sucker and swung myself up. My branch was not easy to come to, because what handhold there was was so far between, and I must confess that, whilst I fought my way up, I could not help wondering how I should ever get down. However, I would not turn back, and after two or three minutes I flung a leg over the perch upon which I had set my heart.

I now had a very good view of the whole of the ride, which sloped, on the left, to the meadows southwest of the house, and rose, on the right, to a circus, whence three other rides ran out, as spokes from a hub. Across the ride two definite trails had been left—or, rather, one and a half. The first, which stretched right across, was 30 paces away, to the left of the oak; and the second, which stretched but half-way, as far to the left again. At the end of this second trail, full in the midst of the ride, the woman was sitting alone, with her back towards me.

To say that I felt bewildered means nothing at all. What on earth she was doing there, I could not conceive, and at last I made up my mind that she must be hiding from Virgil with whom she had had some fuss. Of him or the other two men, I could see no sign.

Now but for the sight of the woman, I should have at once descended and taken the other trail, but whilst I was still considering whether to follow this course, the woman got to her feet and stood perfectly still.

When I saw her do this, it came to me in a flash that, unless the woman was mad, she must be acting in concert with somebody else. And so she was. Before two minutes had passed, the chauffeur appeared.

He made his way straight to her side, when the woman handed him something and then hurried out of the ride and so out of my view.

Preparing to descend, I had turned about and was standing upon the branch with my hands on the trunk, when the scream of a dog in agony rent the ear. Half-turning again, I saw the chauffeur standing where I had seen him last, holding the dog at arm's length by the scruff of its neck and flogging the luckless creature with all his might.

I was just about to cry out when I heard a galloping horse coming down from the right, that is to say, from the circus from which the four rides ran out.

Because of the leaves before me, I could not see it go by, but an instant later a bay flashed into my view. On his back was a girl, and the two were going full tilt down the midst of the ride, and making straight for the chauffeur still thrashing the dog.

So for a second or less. Then the bay turned head over heels and the girl went flying beyond him, as though shot out of a gun.

I never saw such a fall in all my life, but before I had time to think, much less to descend, a man and a woman were rushing to where the girl lay. They were, of course, the two that came out of the car and they must have been standing directly in line with the bay when he came to the ground. And the chauffeur, too, was running as fast as he could.

The bay was up now and was moving off through the bracken with heaving flanks, but the girl lay crumpled up and perfectly still. To my surprise, instead of attending to her, the man and the woman between them lifted her up and began to stumble with her towards my oak. They passed directly beneath me, seeming to think of nothing but getting their burden along. Had this been the carcase of a dog, they could scarce have used it with less propriety. The girl was dead or senseless—I could not tell which: but, instead of supporting her head, they let this hang, and one of her legs was suffered to trail on the ground.

This was too much for me, and at once I began to go down; but, for all my indignation, I could not make haste, because, as I had feared, the descent was twice as stiff as the climb I had made.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Machinery Increases Production of Corn Twentyfold, Agricultural Bureau Reports

Machinery development, which has enabled man to use energy supplied by animals and tractors instead of his own muscles, makes it possible for the individual farmer, who a century ago could grow five acres of corn, to plant, cultivate and harvest 20 times as much today.

Recent investigations by the United States Department of Agriculture in co-operation with the Iowa Experiment station show that the modern farmer expends no more time or labor in producing 5,000 bushels of corn than did the farmer of 100 years ago in producing 250 bushels.

"Primitive cultural methods used by Indians were not a great deal different from those of today," says R. B. Gray, of the bureau of agricultural engineering. "The difference is in the tools that are used."

In 1855, Gray points out, the corn farmer used a walking plow, a single section or "A" harrow, and a shovel plow for marking off rows. He planted by hand, covered the seed with a hoe, cultivated with the same one-horse shovel plow, and harvested by hand. With this equipment he needed 33.6 hours of labor to grow one acre of corn.

Thirty years later the farmer had the two-bottom gang plow, the disk harrow, a two-row planter, a two-section harrow, a single-row cultivator, but still harvested by hand. With this equipment he was able to grow and harvest an acre of corn with 15.1 hours of labor.

With the all-machine age of 1930 the farmer had available a tractor, a two-bottom gang plow, seven-foot tandem disk, four-section harrow and pulverizer, two-row planter, and a two-row picker or harvester. This cut the man-labor hours to 6.9 per acre.

Further improvements in machinery within the past eight years—including four-row planters and cultivators and general purpose tractors—make it possible now to produce an acre of corn with five hours of labor, says Gray.

How Leaves Generate Heat

In hot, dry climates the friction of the leaves of trees rubbing against one another in a strong wind has generated sufficient heat, it is believed by some scientists, says Collier's Weekly, to have caused forest fires.

AND THAT WAS THAT

Jenkins was stout, with large, broad feet, and although several pairs of shoes were shown him he refused them.

"I must have square toes," he explained to the assistant.

The young man sighed wearily.

"But square toes are not stocked now, sir," he explained. "Pointed toes are fashionable this season."

Jenkins gave him an angry stare.

"That may be," he retorted, "but I happen to be wearing last season's feet."—Safe Driver.

Saving His Money

A man from Aberdeen was asked to join a newly formed anti-tipping society.

"We consider that tipping is a degrading custom and have formed a society to put a stop to it," explained the membership seeker.

"Ay, I'll join," said the mon from Aberdeen gladly.

"That's fine. The subscription is 25 cents a year."

"Och, in that case I'm thinking it'll be cheaper for me to tip!"—Stray Stories magazine.

HOW SHE MEASURES

"Hubby, dear, you don't know how much I love you."

"Well, how much? A hat or a fur coat?"

Truer Pose

A farmer, visiting his son at the university, took the boy downtown to have his photograph taken. The photographer suggested that the son stand with his hand on his father's shoulder.

"It would be more appropriate," remarked the father, "if he stood with his hand in my pocket."—Rural Progress.

Passing the Buck

The judge fixed the prisoner with a stern eye. "Is there any reason," he demanded, "why a sentence of five years at hard labor should not be imposed upon you?"

"Golly, your honor," protested the prisoner, "I don't know any. Ask my lawyer—that's what I'm paying him for."

Fixed Process

Dick—I say, Jim, what is the Order of the Bath?

Jim—Well, as I have experienced it—first the water's too hot; then it's too cold; then you're short of a towel; then you slip on the soap; and, finally, the telephone rings.—Des Moines Register.

And That's That

Teacher—Have you read the outline for today?

Johnny—No.

Teacher—Have you read the topics?

Johnny—No.

Teacher—What have you read?

Johnny—I have red hair.

By a Pole?

The brand-new doctor's assistant was retyping his records when she came to this . . . "shot in lumbar region."

"Lumbar region?" she pondered. Then—"Oh, yes!" and wrote down, "shot in the woods."—Washington Post.

SURE, SURE

Upholsterer — This handsome chair, madam, should be finished in morocco.

Mrs. Nurich—Gracious! Must it be sent that far?

Very Careful

Doctor—Have you taken every precaution to prevent spread of contagion in the family?

Rastus—Absolutely, doctah, we've even bought a sanitary cup and we all done drink from it.

It Would Be Tough

Mose—Ah sho' is glad Ah wasn't King Solomon.

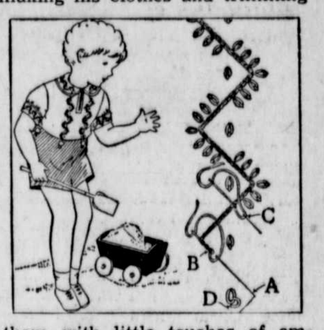
Rastus—Whaffer yo' has dat 'pinion?

Mose—Huh, huntin' up washin's foh one wife keeps me plenty busy.

A Bit of Embroidery For Small Son's Suit

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

"DEAR MRS. SPEARS: Those pages of embroidery stitches in your Book 2 have interested me greatly. I can never remember from time to time how to do even feather stitching. It is ingenious the way you show how to make each kind of stitch, and I turn to your book often. I have a small son now four and a half years old, and have always enjoyed making his clothes and trimming



them with little touches of embroidery. Do you think he is too old for this? B. H."

You still have a year or so if you keep the suits smart and boyish. I am sketching an embroidered trimming idea for you here. The thread should match the color of the trousers. Mark an outline for the embroidery with pencil as at A. Work over this with tiny chain stitches as at B; then make larger chain or loop stitches as at C and D.

Mrs. Spears' Sewing Book 2, Gifts, Novelties and Embroideries, contains 48 pages of step-by-step directions which have helped thousands of women. If your home is your hobby you will also want Book 1—SEWING, for the Home Decorator. Order by number, enclosing 25 cents for each book. If you order both, a crazy-quilt leaflet with 36 authentic patchwork stitches will be included free. Address Mrs. Spears, 210 S. Desplaines St., Chicago, Ill.

Chap Found Swankin' It Required Some Effort

Sir Cecil Fitch on his trip to Hollywood told the story of a chap who suddenly got rich somehow. One day a piano was delivered at his cottage. A neighbor said on seeing it arrive:

"You're fair swankin'. But you won't keep that long, mark me!"

The very next day the newly rich chap wheeled his piano out on a hand cart and started down the road.

"Ho, ho!" laughed the neighbor as he saw him. "I told you you wouldn't keep it long."

"Shut yer face, fool," said the other. "I'm off to take me first lesson."

OUT OF SORTS?
Here is Amazing Relief for Conditions Due to Sluggish Bowels
Nature's Remedy NR-TABLETS-NR
If you think all laxatives act alike, just try this all vegetable laxative. So mild, thorough, refreshing, invigorating. Dependable relief from sick headaches, bilious spells, tired feeling when associated with constipation.
Without Risk get a 25c box of NR from your druggist. Make the test—then if not delighted, return the box to us. We will refund the purchase price. That's fair. Get NR Tablets today.
NR TO-NIGHT TOMORROW ALRIGHT
ALWAYS CARRY TUMS QUICK RELIEF FOR ACID INDIGESTION

Love's Reflection

For love reflects the thing beloved.—Tennyson.

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