BANNER SERIAL FICTION

She Painted Her Face

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

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CHAPTER VII

—14—

The festival held that evening in Tracery's Medici Room was one of such intimate splendor of matter and mind that, though I subscribed to it, when first I awoke the next morning, I wondered if it was not a dream.

I sat between two Old Masters—on the left the Duchess of Whelp and the right of the Countess of Brief. Each glowed with the sterling quality of a forgotten age. Lost arts made up their being. Sheer beauty lived with kindness: sheer brilliance beamed with good will. And each admiring the other was thus exalted. Their natural royalty was duly served. Powdered footmen in scarlet livery stood behind every chair: gold plate winked upon the table: the choicest fare was perfectly presented.

And there I will leave an event which neither Herrick nor I will ever forget, for that evening we two hobnobbed with the stuff that queens were made of in olden days.

That Herrick found instant favor, I need not say. Indeed, Old Harry and he were as good as a play, for, as I have said before, his address was beyond compare, and I think that each of them whetted the other's wit.

When dinner was done, Herrick and I were left with orders to "join the ladies" in ten minutes' time: and when that had gone, we were led to a glorious salon, whose Sixteenth-century tapestries filled the eye.

Though the evening was warm, a fire of logs had been lighted upon the hearth: before this the Duchess was resting upon a mighty chaise longue, and Elizabeth was standing beside a jamb of the fireplace, one of her beautiful hands on the chiseled stone, regarding the leisurely flicker that hovered above a hillock of rose-gray ash.

As the door closed behind us—

"I have ordered your car," said Old Harry, "for half past ten. That gives us just half an hour, which should be enough. I've one or two things to say, and I'll say them first.

"I think we all know where we are and where we shall be next Tuesday at five o'clock. On no account try to conceal that we have already met. That way madness lies. We have all met here tonight—for the very first time. Let no one be ill at ease. Except for Richard Exon, I don't think anyone will."

"Oh, madam," protested Herrick.

"Don't interrupt," said Old Harry. "Besides, you'd be at ease with a gaggle of Elders discussing the wrath to come."

I very near laughed and Elizabeth covered her mouth.

"If you feel uneasy, Richard, always remember at once that though Brief is doing the honors, you are Elizabeth's guest. And that, I think, should bring your confidence back. You will take your man, Winter, with you, and I shall take three servants to look after me. One will be Parish—that excellent English page whom you have already seen. Should need arise, we can communicate through them, with all convenience. Tell the police that you have been invited to Brief, as you understand, to meet me. That will set you above all suspicion, such is this snobbish world.

"One thing more.

"As luck will have it, Elizabeth's mother's jewels were held by the firm of goldsmiths whom I have always employed. Bauble and Levity—you probably know the name. She has, therefore, written to them to say that by my advice she will have the gems reset and desiring them to be ready with new designs against her coming to London in six weeks' time. That letter will send the ball flying: and since she gave this address, the reply will come to this house and will go on to Brief by hand, in my private bag.

"And now can anyone think of anything else? Because, if they can, let us have it—for better or worse. We shan't see each other again until we strut on to the stage."

There was a little silence.

"Very good," said Old Harry, "And now I want to see Mr. Herrick alone. Take your leave of me, Richard, and then make the best of the terrace, until Mr. Herrick appears. Elizabeth will go with you."

I stepped to her side.

"Madam," I said, "I have much to thank you for."

"I don't know about that. Never mind. I've much enjoyed your visit—and that's a thing I can say to very few guests."

"Thank you, madam." I put her hand to my lips. "I hope you're not very tired."

"Tired be damned," said Old Harry. "I never felt so fit in my life."

"Till Tuesday, madam."

The Duchess smiled and nodded, and I followed Elizabeth out of the handsome chamber and, presently, into the air.

Elizabeth led the way to the head of the steps.

"It's all your doing," she said.

"Which is absurd," said I. "She's mad about you."

"My dear, you gave her the lead. I had a claim upon her. How could she fail me, when you, upon whom I had none, had done so much?"

I shook my head.

"You must thank yourself," I said. "I saw you—and that was enough. And as with me, so with her. The king's ring got you inside: but, once you were in—well, supposing you'd asked for the moon, she might have told you off, but when she was through, she'd have sent for a pair of steps."

Elizabeth laughed. Then she slid her arm through mine.

"I wish I was going with you. I've been so happy at Raven: and if this morning I'd dreamed that I shouldn't come back, I—I wouldn't have gone. It may have been out of order, but I know I'd jump at the chance to do it again. I've . . . much enjoyed . . . my 'week-end with a couple of men.' "

"They'll miss you terribly, Elizabeth."

"Sit in the meadow tomorrow—I'll think of you there. Close to the stream—by yourself: between lunch and tea. And, if I can, I'll sit here—at the head of the steps. Oh, and please be very careful and always go armed. Remember, he knows where you are, and the woods about Raven are thick."

"I promise," I said. "And on Tuesday . . ."

"On Tuesday I'll see you again. And on Wednesday we'll ride before breakfast — that's natural enough. Besides, it'll be my job to entertain you as a guest."

"I'll never be easy," I said, "when you're out of my sight. Here I know that you're safe: but at Brief . . ." I drew in my breath. "Can you trust your maid? I think she should sleep in your suite."

"Perhaps you're right. I'll see what Old Harry says."

"I'd be easier, Elizabeth. You see, by day I can always be within call. But by night I can't. And if you want me to sleep—well, you'll do as I ask."

My lady lifted her head to the lambent sky.

"You don't look back," she said, "do you—when you've put your hand to the plow? You're not going to rest till—till you've carried me out of the wood?"

"Men don't lay down their honors before their time."

"And then?"

"They lay them down," I said slowly: "and go their way."

There was a little silence.

"What way shall you go, Richard?"

I drew myself up.

"I don't know. Perhaps John Herrick will help me. We might do something together, until Lord Naseby dies. But I'll always be at your service. You'll only have to call me. I'll always come."

"Why do you say that, Richard?"

"Because you have made me your servant—for as long as I live."

"I don't want you to be my servant."

I laughed at that.

"Then you shouldn't have your eyes, or your mouth, or your beautiful ways. You shouldn't move as you do, or throw a smile over your shoulder, or push back your hair from your temples with one of your lovely hands. And you shouldn't have your nature—which makes a man want to pay tribute with all his heart."

"And what does he get—in return?"

"He's paid in advance," said I. "That very question shows that you don't understand. To have to do with you is to run into debt—your debt. And at once one's instinct is to do what little one can to pay you back."

Elizabeth raised her eyebrows.

"I'm afraid you're an idealist, Richard. And that's a mistake, my dear. Red Lead Lane should have shown you . . . But then the complete idealist never learns. If it makes you happy to set me up in a niche, why then you must have your way. I'll smile upon you from there. And sometimes, when you're not looking, I might climb down and be a good-looking girl, with the usual human passions, a weakness for animals and a definite love of dress." She plucked at her frock. "Can there any good thing come out of Salzburg? My dear, you wait. If you like the look of me now, you'll get up and walk at Brief."

"There spoke Old Harry," said I: "but not Elizabeth."

She whipped her arm out of mine and started aside.

"What ever d'you mean?"

I set my hands on her shoulders and turned her round.

"That you are a work of nature and she is a work of art. And you cannot play on her piano, and she cannot play on your pipe. I think you only did it to—to make me alter my focus and see that you're not the nonsuch I think you are. But it only upsets me, my lady, and doesn't do any good. I know you've got failings—you must have, because you're of flesh and blood: but you're rather exceptional—'The heaven such grace did lend her, That she might admired be.' Well, you must let me admire you in my own way."

"All right," said Elizabeth, meekly. "But don't bring me garlands, Richard. I couldn't bear that."

"You wicked girl. You—"

"That's better. And there's John coming. Say good-by nicely. Quick."

She had put up her beautiful mouth, and I had stooped and kissed it before I knew where I was.

It was half-past one in the morning before we once more approached Raven, and, remembering Old Harry's words, I found myself thanking God that Elizabeth was not with us and would not have to run such a gauntlet again. Thus thinking upon the matter, I presently grew quite sure that we were to be attacked, and, since I was driving, I made Herrick take my pistol, because, for once in a way, he had left his behind, on the bed, he said.

Our alarms were without foundation.

We were not fired upon, and Raven was fast asleep. And since we were very tired, we shared a bottle of beer and stumbled upstairs.

I had put on my pajamas, when Herrick opened my door.

"What d'you make of this?" he said. "The fire-arm has gone."

"Gone?" said I, staring.

"Gone," said Herrick. "As I told you just now, I left it out on the bed. Well, the bed's been made: so, of course, it had to be moved. But it's not in the room."

"It must be," said I. "You've missed it."

"Come and see," said Herrick. and led the way.

For full five minutes we sought it, and sought it in vain.

At length—

"Brenda must have it," said I. "The thing's not here."

"I don't think that's likely," said Herrick, "in view of what Winter said. And yet I can hardly believe that Percy Elbert the Good would steal it away. And tell me another thing. Why do these crises arise, when one is so drunk with sleep that one can hardly stand up?"

With that, he sank heavily down on the foot of his bed.

As he did so, a deafening explosion made me jump out of my skin, and, in one most frantic convulsion, Herrick leapt upward and outward, as though propelled by some spring.

"My God," said I, and ripped the quilt from the bed.

Twelve inches from the foot of the bedstead, a broad-arrow ruck in the blanket declared that below the blanket something had moved.

I turned to Herrick.

"Are you all right?"

His hands clapped fast to his seat—

"Well, I'm still the same shape," said Herrick, "if that's what you mean: but you can't sit down on a land-mine and be as good as you were."

Someone was running on the landing.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"What D'you Make of This?" He Said. "The Fire-Arm Has Gone."

Hippocrates Was Right on the Theory Of Going to Bed for Treatment of Cold

After 2,400 years of preoccupation with the common cold, the medical profession, as represented by the technicians of the Stillman infirmary at Harvard university, has decided that the best treatment for this universal malady is to go to bed. As this was the treatment favored by hippocrates, the results of all the scientific experiments which have been conducted since it was first promulgated can be represented by a single zero, comments a St. Louis Dispatch editorial writer.

In the circumstances, afflicted humanity would be acting reasonably if it classified the cold as one of the inescapable phenomena of life and behaved accordingly. After all, though a bed is not the universal refuge it once was, it is not a bad place. Even when the concurrent dreams are troubled, they are no worse than the realities with which the conscious mind has to grapple.

Unfortunately, no such easy escape is possible to a civilization which has placed its faith in science. Though the heavens fall and every sinus cavity in Christendom be under attack from within and without, we will stick to the perpendicular and await the next draft from the laboratory. Brown mixtures, blue mixtures and green mixtures may have failed us; radiology, colored lights, massages, intravenous injections, overfeeding, underfeeding and steam baths may have touched everything but the right spot, but we are still hopeful. Some day the right chemical affinities will find each other and a sovereign remedy will arise from the test tube, like one of the benevolent genii.

Meanwhile, though we sniffle and explode every time there is a change in the weather, we remain loyal to our gods.

Balloon Escapes Over Channel

Breaking its moorings in Manston, England, a captive balloon vanished, trailing 10,000 feet of cable. It eluded a Royal Air force plane ordered to shoot it down, drifted across the English channel and brought down high tension wires in Audriucq, France. This plunged Calais, Boulogne, St. Omer, Bethune and many other French towns in darkness. The Audriucq post office was set on fire, but the balloon was not affected by its encounter with hundreds of thousands of volts.

OFFERING THE PROOF

The Woodhull Dispatch tells of a real estate man who was showing a prospective tenant a house, and the would-be renter said: "You say that this house has been occupied all along, but most of the windows are broken. How does that happen?"

Said the real estate man: "Well, you see, my partner is very enthusiastic, and every time he shows a customer he insists on proving to him that it is only a stone's throw from the railroad station."

Very Good

A lady entered a trolley, and a gentleman promptly got up and offered her his seat.

"You're a jewel," said the lady, gratefully.

"No, miss," replied the gentleman, gallantly, "I'm a jeweler; for haven't I just set the jewel?"

The Choice Is Yours

Bill—A man can always console himself for most anything but getting somebody's old hat after a big dinner.

Gus—How about a top-coat, an umbrella, or maybe a wife.—Florida Times-Union.

COURT PROCEDURE

"There isn't a woman in the room."

"Just before you came in the judge said that on account of the nature of the case, all women under twenty-five would have to retire."

Till We Meet Again

The Irishman had been having great argument, and meant to finish off his opponent once and for all.

"The sooner I never see your face again," he said, "the better it will be for both of us when we meet."—Houston Post.

Might Have Been Worse

Father—Aren't you glad now that you prayed for a baby sister?

Small Son (after viewing his twin sisters)—Yes, Pop, and aren't you glad I quit when I did?

The Little Fixer

Warren—Did you sew a button on my coat, Jennie May?

Jennie May—No, honey bunch. I couldn't find the button and so I sewed up the buttonhole.

The Right Road

School Teacher—Where do all bad little boys go who do not put their pennies in the missionary box?

Small Boy—Please, Miss, to the pictures.

Not Bad Now

Angry Dad—Why, hang it, girl, that fellow earns only $20 a week.

Pleading Daughter — Yes, but, Dad, the weeks will pass so quickly because we're fond of one another.

Too Much Education

Waitress Lulu — Don't you like your college pudding, sir?

Kickbush — No, I'm afraid not. There seems to be an egg in it that ought to have been expelled.

Strife Ended

"I hear that the ten-year fight between Kelly and Murphy is ended. Did they bury the hatchet?"

"No. They buried Murphy."—Telephone Topics.

Smart Girl

Bobby—Notice how Jane's voice fills the auditorium?

Betty—Yes. Let's go now and make room for it.

WHY NOT?

"When he was asked all those questions his manner suddenly grew flat."

"Well, wasn't he being pressed for a reply?"

Good Strategy

Mr. Smith—Daughter, I'm sorry to tell you that you'll never see that young man of yours here again.

His daughter—Oh, I shall scream! Tell me what has happened to him!

Mr. Smith—Nothing. I've just lent him $10.

An Undertaking

Father to future son-in-law—Are you prepared to support a family?

Son-in-law—Yes.

Father—Now, be careful. There's 10 of us.—Minneapolis Journal.

CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

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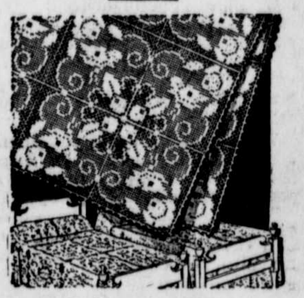

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How Women in Their 40's Can Attract Men

Here's good advice for a woman during her change (usually from 38 to 52), who fears she'll lose her appeal to men, who worries about hot flashes, loss of pep, dizzy spells, upset nerves and moody spells.

Get more fresh air, 8 hrs. sleep and if you need a good general system tonic take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made *especially for women*. It helps Nature build up physical resistance, thus helps give more vivacity to enjoy life and assist calming jittery nerves and disturbing symptoms that often accompany change of life. WELL WORTH TRYING!

BILL-OF-FARE

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