BANNER SERIAL FICTION

She Painted Her Face

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

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CHAPTER XI—Continued

—23—

As the door closed, Lord Ferdinand spoke again.

"Will—will he go to London with you?"

I shook my head.

"He'll take me to Innsbruck this evening, spend the night there and be back tomorrow at noon."

"I see."

He said no more, but I saw him pick up a pencil, as though to write. Then he seemed to remember my presence and laid the pencil down.

Winter re-entered the room.

As he gave the case into my hand—

"I shall want you again," I said; "so wait within call."

"Very good, sir."

As he left the chamber, I held a paper up.

"The statement," I said. "A copy of the first of the statements your brother made. The second does not concern you, because it only deals with the secret of Brief."

The man half-rose from his chair, but I bade him sit still. Then I stepped to his side and laid the paper before him, for him to read . . .

I am glad to record that in the next three minutes that black-hearted parricide paid a part of his debt.

As he read, I saw him writhing, and the sweat fell down from his forehead, to blur the ink.

It was a frightful indictment.

Twice, while he read, he dropped his head to the table and cried aloud, and when he had done, he fairly burst into tears and laid his head down on his arm and sobbed like a child.

I drew the statement from under his sprawling arm. Then I picked up a pen and wrote . . .

When I had done, I called Winter.

"Fetch Mr. Parish," I said.

Lord Ferdinand started up, lifting a visage that made even Winter blench.

"Parish? Her Grace's page? What has he—"

"To witness your signature. I shall witness it, and so will my man. But Parish is independent, and—"

"No, no. I never consented to any such thing."

"As you please," said I, and folded the statement up. "Turn out the car, Winter. I want to be at Gabble within the hour."

"Very good, sir," said Winter, and turned.

"No, no. Not that," cried the other, and savaged his thumb.

"Parish or Gabble," said I. "It's for you to choose."

After a frightful struggle—

"To witness my signature only. You'll cover the statement up?"

"Yes."

"Very . . . well."

I turned again to Winter.

"Fetch Mr. Parish," I said . . .

Whilst we waited, he got to his feet and went to a glass and generally did what he could to pull himself into some shape, and I looked out the window, with folded arms.

Five minutes later, the thing was over and done.

The damning indorsement is lying before me now.

"I have read this statement through from beginning to end, and I hereby confess that all that it says is true.

"FERDINAND ELBERT VIRGIL
"for 22 years supposed to be Count of Brief
"Signed of his own free will
On the twenty-second July, 1936
In the presence of us:
Richard Exon
Samuel Parish
George Winter."

As Winter laid down his pen—

"That's all," I said, "thank you." Parish inclined his head and turned to the door. "You can take my dispatch-case, Winter, and—pack my things. We leave for Innsbruck together at four o'clock."

"Very good, sir," said Winter, obediently.

I blotted the precious indorsement and folded the statement up. Then I put it into my pocket and faced the man I had bluffed.

"You've done your part," I said, "and I shall do mine." As one who is listening intently, he kept his eyes upon mine and greeted every phrase with a nod of his head. "I will recommend that you be allowed to disappear—to go, to change your name, and never come back. As I've told you, I don't think they'll do it"—a hand went up to his mouth—"the punishment doesn't matter: it's a question of righting a wrong. And that is why I think they'll insist that the case must proceed. But I shall know on Friday: and on Sunday I shall be back."

As I opened the door, I looked back—to see his outstretched hand whip back to his side. As though I had noticed nothing, I left the room.

I have no doubt at all, that before the door had closed, he had picked the timetable up.

As I took my way to the tower, I laid my plans.

I had to leave Brief at four—no question of that; for, though we had the game won, it was highly desirable that "the Count" should take the departure which he had planned. If he fled, to avoid arrest—as, at present, he intended to do—he would indeed disappear for good and all, and would never more be heard of, because he could not take such a risk: but if he had reason to think that he had been bluffed, though now we could force his hand, he would stand upon the order of his going and would certainly be a nuisance for as long as he happened to live.

And so "the plain-clothes man" must "leave for London" at four.

And there I stood still in my tracks, for all of a sudden I saw that here was my chance to do what sooner or later I had to do—that is to say, to walk out of my lady's life.

As I saw it, I think I aged, for while my whole being revolted from the plunge ten times as awful as that into Palfrey's well, I knew in my heart that I must take it, because such a chance would never occur again.

I glanced at my watch. The time was a quarter to ten. Once my decision was taken, I could have wished that the time was a quarter to four . . .

I had already determined that no one must know what had happened till after "the Count" had fled: and now I perceived that all that I had to do was to leave a note for the Duchess, to be delivered as soon as my victim was gone.

I entered my room, to find Winter, suit-case in hand.

"Leave the packing for the moment," I said. "I'll tell you when to begin. I want you to send off a wire."

I sat down and wrote it out—addressed to myself.

"Turn out the Rolls and take this to Gabble at once. And on the way back you might get rid of that suit."

Old Harry looked round.

"And now . . ." she said—grimly enough.

Luncheon was over and coffee had been served in her suite. For the first time for 15 hours, Elizabeth, Herrick and I were alone with the Duchess of Whelp.

She was plainly out of humor, and I had an uneasy feeling that she knew more than I was prepared to tell.

She demanded "And why does my host keep his room? If he's ill, he's breaking a record: for never before has indisposition denied me the courtesy due to my state." She slapped the arm of her chair. "The enemy has retired. I'm not at all deceived, for this is a fight to the death—but I want to know what he is doing and when and where he is going to reappear."

"Cherchez la femme," said Herrick. "What of the maid?"

Old Harry looked at my lady.

"You heard what he said," she declared. "Why the devil don't you tell us the truth?"

Elizabeth glanced at the door.

"That's quite all right. Godolphin is standing outside and she knows no English at all."

My lady took a deep breath.

"Last night an attempt was made to put me to death. My maid admitted my cousin into my suite. Richard came to my help—and walked into a trap. But by his wit and his courage he saved us both . . . That is why my cousin and Elsa have disappeared."

Herrick's face was a study, but the Duchess of Whelp merely nodded and then picked up her cup and drank what coffee was left. As she set it down—

"That's more like it," she said. "I mean, that is credible. I knew your life was in danger, yet what could I do—except trust in Richard Exon? She turned upon me. "Did you liquidate him? Or did your better judgment impel you to spare his life?"

"Madam," said I, "he is dead."

"Well done," said Old Harry. "Well done. But you shouldn't drop shirts about, when a lady lets you out of her bedroom at half past three."

Elizabeth started and clapped a hand to her mouth.

"Madam," I said, "I see you've received a note."

"Yes," said the Duchess, "I did. And I'll make you a present of this—I dismissed its contents at once, as being untrue. But when I heard that Elizabeth's maid was gone—well, I knew there was something behind them and hoped for the best. And now what about you? I understand you had a note? Why didn't you, er, act upon it?"

"Madam," said I, "I preferred to hope for the best."

The piercing gray eyes held mine.

"Did you indeed? Now I should have gone to see the writer . . . at once."

I knew that Parish had told her as much as he knew.

"Madam, forgive me. With great respect—I've a delicate hand to play."

"How long shall you wait?"

"Till tomorrow morning, madam. No longer than that."

Craft is not my strong point, and the effort I had made that morning seemed to have tired my brain. Then again, though success seemed certain, "the Count" was still in his seat, and I was forever fearing that something or other would happen to make him change the decision to which I was sure he had come. Above all, my own decision to disappear hung, like some loathsome monster, upon my neck, insisting upon my attention and gleefully indicating the several lovely features of the paradise I was to lose. Had I been cross-examined, or even been asked to relate what had happened the night before, I should, I believe, have burst out and disgraced myself, for the present was so overwhelming and the future so very bleak that to deal with the past was like going into training when you are condemned to death.

And there the maid Godolphin came in with my telegram.

Crawley's case fixed for Friday. He counts upon you.
Forsyth.

"My goodness," I said, and got to my feet.

Elizabeth stifled a cry, but the Duchess sat perfectly still. As for Herrick . . .

"I must go to London," I said. "I must leave for Innsbruck at once—at least, as soon as I've packed. I must catch the evening train."

Elizabeth let out a cry.

"Richard!"

"My dear, I've no choice. Six weeks ago the servant I had before Winter was charged with theft. I had always found him honest and I said that I'd swear as much whenever he stood his trial. And his case has been fixed for Friday . . . I can't let him down. But I can be back on Sunday." I turned to the Duchess of Whelp. "Will you excuse me, madam? I must make certain arrangements. I shall ask you to see me again before I leave."

"You are excused, Richard Exon."

I bowed and went.

Whilst Winter packed, I wrote the best letter I could.

Madam,

By the time that you read this letter, I am very nearly sure that "the Count" will have disappeared. Whether he has or has not, you will know the best use to make of these documents. I told him that he would be arrested unless he made himself scarce and that Virgil had "disappeared" under fear of being charged with the theft of Elizabeth's jewels. Elsa is "wanted" for forgery: when she knew that I'd found that out, she may have thought it better to find a new place. I think that's all. I'm rather worried about the servant who saw me drop my shirt. Perhaps you could straighten that out, for you can do what you will with the servants of Brief. Of course I'm not coming back. It's better so. I mean, there's no more to be done, and as I can neither "glaze her" nor "rope myself off," it wouldn't be fair to her to make matters worse than I have.

Madam, I have so much to thank you for.

Your obedient, affectionate servant,
Richard Exon.

With this I enclosed two documents.

One was the statement, indorsed by Lord Ferdinand, and the other the death certificate of Matthew Gering.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

And There I Stood Still in My Tracks.

Important Time to Exercise Is When Man Is Busy; Recreation Necessary

The most important time of all for the busy man to take recreative exercise is when he has no time for it, declares Dr. Dudley B. Reed in an article entitled "Exercise," which appears in Hygeia, the Health magazine.

"If he is so driven by this and that that he doesn't have a minute for such unnecessary fol-de-rol it is almost essential that he take the time if he wishes his next day's and his next week's work to be efficient," says the author.

The man who has plenty of time for recreation has no great need of it. What he probably needs is a little work. That would be the real change for him. It is the busy man, not the idler, who secures change and relaxation in this way. If there are differences in the pressure of work on him he may omit his recreation when his work is light, but he must put it in when work is heavy.

A most desirable time for this type of recreation is when the potential exerciser is nervously tired. Many a man, at the close of a particularly trying day, feels too tired to do anything but throw himself down on a couch and wait for the night.

Bt if his weariness is from nervous work, many a man has found that physical recreation removes his fatigue and makes a new man of him for the evening. This will not be the case if the fatigue is muscular.

For most persons occupied with a profession or business the best time of the day for recreation is late afternoon, finishing the activity preferably an hour before dinner. Particularly is this a good time if there is to be work of an intellectual character in the evening.

In spite of the fad some years ago of taking calisthenic exercises immediately after rising, that is not a good time, since the vitality as shown by such things as body temperature and blood pressure is at a low ebb then.

Urged Ohio River-Erie Canal

Even before the passage of the Ordinance of 1787, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson proposed that the Ohio river and Lake Erie be connected by artificial streams or canals.

ADVENTUROUS AMERICANS

By

Elmo Scott Watson

The Worst 'Bad Man'

THE life of Alexander Harvey, one of the worst "bad men" of the fur trading days of more than a century ago, was just one murder after another. That isn't the kind of career to glorify, but there is no denying that if you can get away with it, there is adventure in it.

His first murder was in 1840 at Fort McKenzie when he shot a mild-mannered employee after first making him kneel down before him. He reported that a Blackfoot Indian did the killing and no one had the courage to contradict him.

Later that year, while traveling to Fort Union, he quarreled with his companion and shot him through the head. While at the fort, he was bitterly hated, especially by a Spaniard, Isodoro. In the presence of a group of people including the commander of the fort, he killed Isodoro and then challenged those present to do something about it. None would dare.

Back at Fort McKenzie a short while later, the commander was ordered away and a friend of Harvey's was left in charge. The two of them admitted a group of Indians to the fort and then discharged a cannon into the crowd as they were coming in the gate. Three Indians were killed and three wounded, including a chief. Harvey killed the wounded chief with his knife and scalped him.

Although Harvey was responsible for many other murders, all of them brutal, and although he was thoroughly hated, he was never punished for a single one of them. But there were so many plotting his death that he had to spend his last years skulking in the Missouri river bottoms.

* * *

Colorado's Mystery Man

IN THE early sixties an intellectual gentleman with strong bearded features arrived at Georgetown, Colo., and immediately became a celebrity of the local mountain country. He called himself Commodore Stephen Decatur and since there had been two previous Stephen Decaturs in American history, both of whom were commodores, his identity was looked upon with suspicion.

Georgetown residents soon found that the commodore seemed to get a great deal of fun out of living. He got along well with everyone, especially the ladies. He was the town's greatest booster, an advocate of good roads and the development of mines.

He became associate editor of the Georgetown Miner, local paper, in 1869, and thenceforth increased his popularity. He was a flowery writer and a first-rate drinker. At odd moments, also, he would rattle off Indian language—that of the Sioux, Omaha, Ponca or Pottawatomie. Because of his ability to speak with them, he was delegated the task of settling all disputes with the Indians.

In 1876 he was appointed Colorado's commissioner to the Philadelphia exposition and he was cock of the walk there, too. He was so entertaining that he was followed by crowds wherever he went.

But he was recognized at the exposition as Stephen Decatur Bross, brother of the lieutenant-governor of Illinois. He had disappeared from Illinois and deserted his wife and children. The publicity of his discovery in Philadelphia ruined his popularity in Colorado and he had to retire to obscurity.

* * *

Venturesome Historian

FRANCIS PARKMAN, the famous American historian, born in Boston in 1823 and educated at Harvard, underwent terrific hardships to gather material for his books. One of the most famous of these was his history of the Oregon trail. In order to get a thorough understanding of the people and country he was to describe, he lived among the Sioux.

Some historians have said he was "entertained" by the Indians, but "tortured" might be a better word. The Oglala Sioux were the fiercest savages of their day. As Parkman's hosts they would tell him stories of how they killed their enemies by holding them down in huge fires with poles until they burned to death.

Once, while being "entertained" by the Sioux, the eldest squaw came in, grabbed a small dog by the hind leg and took it to the entrance of the lodge. There she hit it on the head several times with a rock until it was dead. Then she swung it back and forth in the fire until all the hair was burned off. Next she cut it up into small pieces and dropped them into a pot that was stewing above the fire.

A dog feast was the greatest treat a Sioux could offer a guest and Parkman forced himself to eat it.

The hardships he underwent brought him ill health from which he suffered for the rest of his life. Yet, besides writing many famous historical books, he became overseer of Harvard in 1868, professor of horticulture in 1869 and from 1875 to 1888 he was a Harvard fellow.

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