BANNER SERIAL FICTION

She Painted Her Face

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

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CHAPTER XII—Continued

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The Duchess continued:

"You bear a very good name. And I'm sure you are proud of it. Parish remembers Usage—which was your home. His sister was your mother's maid, and when your mother died she stayed on till the house was sold. It should not have been sold, of course: but your father was killed in action, and, as you know, things went wrong. Very well. Now I, too, bear a good name. My family name is Saying: and, though you and I know better, the Almanach de Gotha will tell you that it is royal. And if you will change your name—it's easy enough, by deed-poll—and will call yourself Saying-Exon from this time on, I think you may very well marry the Countess of Brief. Apart from anything else, it is, as the three of us know, most right and proper that she should bear my name: and in view of all that has happened, it is most right and proper that she should take it from you. But the principal thing is this—that I am very fond of you, Richard, and should derive infinite pleasure from the thought that you and your sons were to bear my name, for I know you will do it honor and I find it hard to believe that, with such a mother to bear them, your sons will prove unworthy to hand it down."

She hesitated there and put a hand to her eyes. Then she went slowly on.

"The workings of Fate are very wonderful. Saying is my own name. When I was married, I took my husband's title, but not his name. And because the name is royal, his sons by me would have borne it . . . But, you see, I have had no children . . . And when I come to die, the name will die, too . . . unless you—you care to humor . . . a sentimental old fool . . ."

What I said I cannot remember, because my heart was too full: but I know I was down on my knees and her hands were in mine, as I tried my best to thank her for doing to me what only a king can do.

Then she kissed me on either cheek and told me to ring for wine, "for we must have a drink," she said, "to celebrate this occasion. You seem to like the idea, and, as good John Herrick would say, it suits me down to the socks. The thought of that name going out has given me sleepless nights. But now . . . all's very well, for if you and Elizabeth Virgil aren't fit to fly my flag, then my eye is dim and my natural force abated. And that I refuse to believe, for I never wore glasses yet and, though I take it easy, I'm still as strong as a horse."

When the wine was brought, she pledged me and wished me luck, and I tried again to thank her and drank her health. Then she picked up a sheet of paper and put it into my hand.

"Your cake," she said simply. "You can have it now—and can eat it, as soon as you've changed your name."

A marriage has been arranged and will shortly take place between Richard Saying-Exon, late of Usage in Wiltshire and now of Tracery in Austria, and Elizabeth Virgil, Countess of Brief.

I lifted my head, to stare at the Duchess of Whelp.

" 'Now of Tracery,' madam?"

"That's what it says," said Old Harry. "You can cut it out, if you like. But I understand you're short of a residence, and it would give me great pleasure, if you were to make this your home."

After lunch I left for Raven, where I was to stay for three nights, after which I was to return—with the Countess of Brief and Herrick, to settle future arrangements and, generally, "chew the cud." But, before I went, Old Harry made me promise that I would drive straight to Raven and would not visit Brief until the following day.

"You owe John Herrick something. He's been a good friend to you, and he mustn't feel left."

In view of all that had happened, I could not protest: but I could not help thinking that Herrick could hardly "feel left" if I paid my lady a visit before returning to Raven to spend the evening with him. Still, if Old Harry was willful, I owed her caprice so much that if she had seen fit to direct that the Countess and I should not meet for another ten days, I must have honored her precept without a word.

So I took my leave and entered the Rolls once more and, driving leisurely, came to Raven at six.

As we stole between the two chestnuts and on to the apron beyond, I saw that Brenda was standing at the foot of the steps. She must have seen the car coming, along the road of approach.

I brought the Rolls to her side and put out my hand.

"Well, Brenda" I said, "how are you? You see, I've come back."

She took my hand in both hers.

"I am so glad to see you," she said. "Your room is all ready, of course. Mr. Herrick is not back yet. He goes to Brief every day and I doubt if he will be here for another half hour. I think you will sit in the meadows, until he comes."

"You're perfectly right," said I, and got out of the car. "But, first, I must have a drink. Will you go and draw me some beer, while I'm washing my hands?"

Brenda hesitated. Then—

"You—you won't have a bath, will you? I mean, the water's not hot."

In some surprise—

"I'd like one before dinner," I said. "But why mustn't I have one now?"

"It would take too long," said Brenda. "The meadows are now at their best, but the sun is low."

With that, she was gone.

I turned to my faithful man.

"Glad to be back, Winter?"

He smiled all over his face.

"This is the place for me, sir. Them 'igh an' mighty 'ouses is all very well in their way, but the country seems frightened of them. The woods and the meadows seem shy. But here they'll come right up—an' eat out of your hand."

"I Think You May Very Well Marry the Countess of Brief."

"You've said it," said I. "And take it easy tonight. Wash the Rolls tomorrow."

"I'd rather do her tonight, sir. It won't take me very long, an' when you come to think, she deserves the best."

And that was another true saying.

"Do as you like," said I, and walked into the house.

I do not know what made me do it, but when I had washed my hands I strolled across the landing and entered the pleasant bedroom I knew was mine.

For a moment I stood looking round. Then I moved to the open windows, commanding the friendly meadows and the sheltering woods beyond.

The scene was as rare as lovely, for the sun was going down and the pleasant Georgic was flooded with amber light. All things were throwing shadows as clean and as black as print, slashing the turf with sable and making the vivid green more vivid still. On every side the tapestry of woodland was shot with gold, the stream was afire with splendor . . . and sitting beside its water was Elizabeth, Countess of Brief.

Her beautiful head was bare and her eyes were fixed upon the treetops as though she were expecting the heaven above to open and make her rich: but for me the heaven had opened . . . and I seemed to be regarding some idyll that did not belong to earth, but had been sung by Shakespeare to please the gods.

So I looked upon my fortune.

Then I went down to the meadows, to see the light in her eyes.

Nearly an hour went by before Herrick arrived—for which I was very thankful, because his car was to take Elizabeth back.

As we heard the drone of his engine—

"Oh dear," said the Countess of Brief. "Now that I've got you back, I don't want to let you go. But you won't go mad again, will you? Remember that the Duchess of Whelp has set her heart on this match, and that, after all that she's done, you can't let her down."

With a sudden movement, I picked her up in my arms.

"Shall I tell you something?" I said.

"Yes, please."

A warm arm slid round my neck.

"Today I came back to my dream: and as long as my dream will have me, I shall never leave it again. I must go to London later, if only to change my name. But I will not go, unless you go with me. Take what companion you like. Take half a dozen women—to shut Propriety's mouth. Kick your heels, while I'm doing my business. Only, be there . . . You see, you are my dream. A week ago I rendered you unto Caesar—and tore my heart. And now Caesar has given you back—has given me back my dream. Well, that's all right: but the wound in my heart will reopen if ever I leave you again. And that, I tell you frankly, I cannot face. When I left you, I knew very well I was leaving my life behind. But not until I was gone did I know what it meant to be dead—a dead man having his being amid a workaday world."

For two or three moments she held my head against hers. Then she let it go and turned to look into my eyes.

"My blessed," she breathed, "I'm so thankful I mean so much. You see, I've given you all. I've no more to give. Heart and soul and body—you hold them in your strong hands. They're not mine any more. They're . . . at your disposal, Richard. And if ever you ceased to care, the body would wither, for the heart and the soul would die."

I would have answered her, but the words would not come, for I could think of nothing but the look in her glorious eyes. I cannot tell what exquisite language they spoke, but I understood their saying better than any words. I had that day been ennobled by the Duchess of Whelp; but now I was exalted in spirit, and a spring seemed to break within me for joy that Elizabeth Virgil had come to love me so well.

Then she smiled, and I kissed her mouth and set her down on her feet.

"Shall I tell you something?" she said.

"Yes, please."

"When we got the telephone-message to say that you had been stopped and were going to come back, I—I burst into tears."

"My sweet!"

"It was natural enough. But listen. Old Harry called me a fool—and then burst into tears herself. We turned to John for comfort—John who had been our mainstay and simply kept us going for 31 hours . . . and John was standing there, with the tears running down his cheeks. So you see, my darling, I'm not—peculiar. There's something about Richard Exon that gets us all under the ribs."

Which was, of course, absurd, for else I should not have suffered in Red Lead Lane.

Four hours had gone by, and I was sitting, smoking, with Herrick, under the stars.

Raven was fast asleep: only our sitting-room casements were framing two squares of light: the Rolls was within her coach-house: Winter had gone to his rest.

"I suppose it's all true," said Herrick: "but I must confess there are moments when I wonder if I've been translated before my time. I mean, a month ago I was not only down but out. The immediate future was hideous. Pawn-shop, doss-house and gutter were staring me in the face, and I didn't like the look in their eyes—you see, I'd met them before . . . And now I'm ruling a castle, with 50 servants hanging upon my lips. Compared with me, Elizabeth doesn't count. I'm a sort of Lord Protector, appointed by the Duchess of Whelp. And when that's done, I'm due at Tracery. I have been desired by Old Harry to take her estate in hand. 'Put my house in order,' she said. 'You're just the man to do it, and it's time it was done. If my agent's right, that'll just about carry you home. He gives your uncle six months . . .' So you see, my gay crusader, you've made my fortune, too—to say nothing at all of the fact that I've never enjoyed myself as I have in the last three weeks.

"Three weeks and one day—no more. Yet their burden has been so brilliant that, though I've seen quite a lot, the rest of my life beside them seems strangely dull. And that's not really strange, for never before have I entered the Middle Ages and tasted their mighty fare. Talk about food for the gods . . .

"Our first view of Brief, gray against green in the sunshine, as we stood on the bridge that trembled before the Vials of Wrath: Percy Virgil, afraid to writhe, whilst I drew his description from life for the eager police: Elizabeth here at Raven — Rosalind, Viola, Beatrice, rolled into one, with the secret of all the ages snared in her glorious eyes: the dead king, sunk in his stall, staring before him as he had stared before him, day and night, for almost 500 years: dinner for four at Tracery—gold and silver and scarlet and powdered hair, Elizabeth worshipful and the Duchess of Whelp's most excellent majesty: Percy Virgil confronted with Winter . . . 'the Count' of Brief at bay, and the awful uncertainty flaming in Bertram's eyes: and then, one evening at five, the stammer of a telephone-bell and Old Harry's voice rock-steady and very clear . . . 'Is that you, Henderson? Yes? . . . "Stopped and returning tomorrow." I'm much obliged.' . . .

"And you can add to that list—some very monstrous moments . . . Elsa's laugh in the staircase-turret . . . the darkness of Palfrey's court . . . the shock of that icy water . . . the straws you caught at to save your tottering life . . . and then Lord Ferdinand Virgil, broken and craven and cringing to be permitted to bury himself alive—I shall never get over that as long as I live. You're a blasted lion in sheep's clothing, and that's the truth. You sit there, as meek as mild and apparently dumb with admiration for Old Harry's efforts and mine to kick at the gates, and the next day, before we're up, you walk bung into the fortress and kill the giant. Then you put on the sheep's skin again . . . When I think that you came into breakfast straight from the field—and merely begged my pardon for being late . . ."

As though overcome with emotion, he threw himself back in his chair and covered his eyes.

"I'm sorry," I said. "It seemed better—"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Race of Monkey-Men With Tails Found To Inhabit a Wild District in Papua

Is man descended from monkeys? Scientists say "yes" but have still to prove it. They are still searching for the "missing link." They are looking for it among old bones, says a writer in Pearson's London Weekly.

But all the time it may be that the "missing link" is alive and kicking. In fact, the missing link may not be an old bone but a live monkey-man—and not merely one but a whole tribe of them.

A race of men with tails is reported to inhabit a wild district in Papua, and evidence of their existence has been given by a native from the Fly River area, according to the annual report of the lieutenant-governor of Papua, Sir Hubert Murray.

The native was emphatic that tailed men were to be found somewhere to the east of the Kemp Welch. He was pressed to give more details, and said he was confident that at least one of these persons had a tail. When asked why he was so positive, he replied: "Because I ate him."

Several years ago, Sir Hubert Murray recalls, he met a much-traveled man who claimed to have met a tribe of tailed men along the Fly river.

They lived in houses raised on piles, and in the floors of the dwellings holes were cut for each person through which his tail hung when he sat or lay down.

On one occasion, this man said, he crept along the house, gently tied a knot in each tail, and then raised the alarm that a hostile force was approaching. The tailed men sprang to their feet, but the knots caught in the holes and they were flung to the ground.

It was, the man added, a joke that could only be played once.

Chesapeake Bay Laboratory

The Chesapeake Bay Biological laboratory is on Solomons island, Md. It is sponsored by the University of Maryland in co-operation with Goucher college, Washington college, Johns Hopkins university, Western Maryland college, the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the Maryland conservation department. As a study and research center it offers a comprehensive survey of the biota of the marine, brackish and freshwater areas of the Chesapeake region.

Patterns — Sewing Circle

YOU'LL feel cool, and look smart, as well as much slimmer, in 1773, a soft afternoon dress with full, graceful sleeves, a paneled skirt, and shirred bodice that fits beautifully over the bust. In chiffon, georgette, or voile, it will be lovely for luncheons and afternoon parties.

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You can really make a whole summer wardrobe for your tot from this one easy design, 1766. It includes, you see, a bonnet, a pinafore and a play suit that little folks can wear happily and comfortably on the hottest day. Make them of calico, seersucker, gingham or linen, and trim them with rows of ricrac braid.

The Patterns.

1773 is designed for sizes 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50 and 52. Size 38 requires 4⅝ yards of 39 inch material with short sleeves. 4⅞ yards with long sleeves.

1766 is designed for sizes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 years. Size 2 requires 3⅝ yards of 35 inch material. 13⅝ yards of ricrac braid to trim.

Send your order to The Sewing Circle pattern Dept., 247 W. Forty-third street, New York, N. Y. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each.

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

QUICK QUOTES

Sentinel Features

CITIZENS' RESPONSIBILITY

"THE difficult task of retrenchment in government expenditures cannot be accomplished without the active interest, encouragement and support of the citizens of this country. If economies are to be employed by this government—if expenditures are to be reduced—it will be because such a sentiment has been created back home and the demands made upon the Congress for such a policy."—*U. S. Senator Pat Harrison.*

ASK ME ANOTHER?

A Quiz With Answers Offering Information on Various Subjects

The Questions

1. When a gun is fired, do you see the flash or hear the report first?
2. What is the difference between an immigrant and an emigrant?
3. Where are the Plains of Abraham?
4. What is a prestidigitator?
5. Define equilibrium with one word.
6. Who was Mollie Pitcher?
7. Where does ambergris, used largely in perfume, come from?
8. Who built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon?
9. Has a robot umpire been invented?
10. What is German silver?

The Answers

1. The flash. Light travels faster than sound.
2. An immigrant enters a place, and an emigrant leaves a place.
3. Quebec.
4. A juggler or magician.
5. Balance.
6. The wife of a Revolutionary soldier, who took her husband's place at a cannon in the Battle of Monmouth after he had been killed.
7. Ambergris comes from the spermaceti whale.
8. King Nebuchadnezzar.
9. An electrically operated robot umpire has been invented and patented by John Oram of Dallas, Texas.
10. An alloy of copper, zinc and nickel.

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