

FALLEN AMONG THIEVES

A SERIAL STORY BY ARTHUR APPLIN

(Continued From Last Sunday.)

Clio stopped him with a smile. "My dear boy, don't begin to apologize. You know I'm interested in every phase of your life. And romance—doesn't often come across it. I'll help you, of course. I think you're only going to make yourself miserable, but that's your own affair. What do you want me to do?"

"First of all, keep your eyes on Mimosa while I'm away. Baron Estine is your friend, I know. You mustn't tell him the truth about Mimosa, but you can prevent Varies forcing her into a marriage. And now I want you to go to Mimosa's room and see what happened to her."

"With all my heart. Do you want to come with me?"

"No, no, and together they went upstairs."

Clio knocked twice, the second time receiving a feeble reply. She entered; Stopford stood just outside.

Mimosa had not risen from her bed. She was sitting upright, rubbing her eyes as if just awakened from a heavy sleep. The windows were closed, the curtains drawn. Clio pulled up the blind and opened the window.

Stopford was not looking at Mimosa. He was staring into the fireplace, where pieces of a broken tumbler were lying. Presently the draught from the window caused the door to shut in his face.

He waited as patiently as he could until Clio reappeared.

"Don't look so scared, she's all right. It's quite clear to me, now, that she either takes drugs or is drugged. It's a pretty problem you've found, Mr. Stopford. And it's a dangerous game you're playing. Come upstairs, and let's talk it over."

Stopford nodded. "Go back into the room; you'll find some portions of a broken tumbler lying in the fireplace. Pick them up and give them to me."

Clio de Fontaine obeyed. Stopford wrapped them up carefully in his handkerchief. At the bottom of a portion of the tumbler there were traces of a thick, sticky liquid.

"Before we talk, I think I'll take these round to a chemist and have the liquid analysed," he said.

Clio nodded. "I'll wait for you on the terrace."

CHAPTER IX.

On his way to the town—the long street which ran just below the mountain railway in the direction of Cap St. Martin—Stopford met Smith. The latter was strolling round the gardens between the Metropole and the street. He was examining the flowers and shrubs as if he were a botanist rather than a sailor.

Stopford would have avoided him at that moment, but Smith saw and but-tressed him.

"Quite an interesting collection of flora here. I wonder who's responsible. He caught sight of the handkerchief Stopford was carrying. Some of the liquid from the broken glass had oozed thru the linen. "Had an accident?" he asked laconically.

"Yes—no," Stopford gave a nervous laugh. "I warned you I myself."

had no manners. Why didn't you tell me to go to the devil?"

"I did once," Stopford replied. Again his saving sense of humor came to the rescue. "And you didn't go."

Smith shrugged his shoulders. "My dear sir, we all take return trips there for dinner tonight, at half-past seven. As a matter of fact, I was just strolling up into the town to make a few purchases for the dinner-party. Thought of asking your help. I've forgotten what women like to eat."

"There's only one woman coming?"

Stopford began to fear lest Varies was taking Mimosa.

"It's always only one woman. But again, don't let me keep you. I'll buy some roses and some peaches, and leave the rest to my cook."

"Come with me," Stopford said, after a moment's hesitation. "I'm going to look for an analytical chemist."

"An analytical chemist?"

Smith jumped at the word, and gave another glance at Stopford's handkerchief, which he carried as an English workman carries his dinner. "I know something of chemistry. Analysis always interests me. I used to analyse everything—that's why I'm an optimist."

They reached the top of the garden. Stopford laid his hand on Smith's arm, then drew him to a seat sheltered by a clump of palm-trees. A huge cactus spread its branches on either side of the pathway; a miniature stream bubbled down the moss and fern-encrusted rocks.

The two sat quite a long time without speaking. Smith was never in a hurry. He took a pouch from his pocket and rolled some vile-looking black tobacco into a cigarette.

"Look here, I've told you so much. I may as well tell you everything," Stopford blurted out. "Mademoiselle de Fontaine knows now; it's not quite dark, especially as I'm merely making board your yacht. I'm going to make my escape without saying good night. I want you to keep Mr. Varies there as long as you can."

"While you talk to his wife. I realize all that."

"Mimosa is not his wife; Varies is merely the girl's uncle."

Smith inhaled his tobacco as if it were the rarest Turkish. "So, Mimosa is the girl of whom you spoke? Then I'm right in presuming Mr. Varies is a thief—and she's not entirely free from suspicion? Very interesting. When I first saw you with her on the promontory at Monaco I was attracted. I'm not sure I haven't fallen in love with her myself. But I thought she was married, so, naturally speaking, I closed the watertight compartments of passion. There's no reason why I shouldn't open them now, eh?"

Stopford did not reply at once. He was not quite sure whether Captain Smith was serious or not.

"I don't care what you do if you'll help me save her from Varies and Baron Estine—the man you know as Oscar Sorral. He has asked her to marry him. Varies will sell her."

"Yes—no," Stopford gave a nervous laugh. "I warned you I myself."

Stopford briefly outlined his suspicions. He told Smith that he had incontrovertible proof Mimosa was a thief; moreover, that she had stolen from a woman who befriended her. Yet, in spite of this, he refused to believe her guilty.

"She doesn't remember anything that has passed, scarcely anything she has done in the past," Smith said. "She's no more than an instrument, on which he plays whatever tune he fancies. It's almost unthinkable—for if she's so absolutely in his power she may, unknowingly, have been forced to commit nameless horrors and crimes."

Stopford waited for Smith to speak. But he merely rolled and lit another cigarette.

"An interesting case," Smith said, without the least trace of emotion or surprise. "Possibly to you it sounds extraordinary. I've met that sort of thing before in the east."

"It can't be hypnotism—"

Smith dismissed the idea with a wave of his hand. "Varies could not hypnotize a fly. The girl is either weak intellect or else Varies has discovered a drug which by constant use deadens the brain, atrophies the intellect. I know such a drug; for a time its action is harmless enough; it merely induces a kind of mental coma: the brain sleeps, the body remains active. When the effect of the drug wears off the patient has absolutely no recollection of what was said or done while she was under its influence. In time, of course, the effect is disastrous, the subject loses all sense of right and wrong, has no will of her own. The brain will atrophy. The end is insanity and suicide."

Smith spoke calmly and coldly. Stopford rose to his feet; the portions of broken tumbler tied up in his handkerchief rattled together.

"Good God! If we are to save her, there's not a moment to be lost."

"Like all young men, you jump at conclusions."

"You say you know the drug?"

Sitting down, Stopford began to unknit the handkerchief.

"There is such a drug. I came across it once, had a chance of testing it, and watching the effects. The natives of Guinea discovered it. I believe certain tribes in Northern India use it. Most of the Fakirs know the secret."

Stopford gave Captain Smith the largest portion of the broken tumbler. A few drops of liquid still rested at the bottom of the glass, the sides were stained with it. He told him the events of the previous night, and the discovery of the broken tumbler in the fireplace of Mimosa's room in the morning.

Smith held the glass up to the light, smelt it; dipped his finger into the liquid, and tasted it. Then he handed it back to Stopford, and he closing his eyes, remained deep in thought for upwards of a minute.

Stopford waited, watching him impatiently.

"I wonder how and where the black-guard discovered it."

"Then you think—"

"I'm almost certain. Come along, we'll find a chemist. If I'm right, I don't think he'll be able to tell you much. You'll have to go warily, my friend. I suppose you have some vague notion of denouncing Mr. Varies. You say you've only proof that he received stolen goods. As this drug is practically unknown in England, its use is not forbidden. How are you going to prove he used it? How are you going to prove the effect it causes? English magistrates are all right, but they're not over-burdened with intelligence! And a British jury—"

"We must get Mimosa out of his power. That's all I want; that's all I care for."

"Baron Estine will do that if he marries her."

"If he marries her—yes. But what sort of husband would he make? What sort of life would she lead? Do you think Varies would leave her alone?"

Smith shook his head. "Probably not, while she had any money. And then, these jewels she says she has stolen? The theft is bound to be discovered, sooner or later. You didn't tell me the name of the woman to whom they belonged; her friend, I think, you said. Do you think she has any suspicion?"

"They were walking thru the town now. They halted outside a chemist's shop."

"Perhaps she knows more than I think," Stopford said. "I discovered yesterday that she is acquainted with Varies; she has written to him here, in Monte Carlo."

Smith's blue eyes opened widely for a moment. "Ah! I wish I knew her name."

Stopford looked at him. "Mary Lady Hetherington."

The blue eyes closed completely. He began to run his fingers thoughtfully thru his beard; "Mary Lady Hetherington! He repeated the name once or twice; the tone of his voice never changed. "And you know her name is quite familiar to me."

"Yes, I know her."

There was a long silence. Smith pushed open the door of the shop outside which they stood.

"I'm engaged to be married to her," Stopford said.

Smith swung round sharply. The two men stood face to face, Smith's long lean figure towered above Stopford.

"I thought you were a gentleman," he growled, raspingly.

Stopford boldly met the gaze of the cold, steel-blue eyes. "Surely it doesn't matter to you what I am, Captain Smith. Dismiss me from your thoughts altogether; think only of this unfortunate girl. You said she interested you. You can help me save her. She's worth saving. I do love her—enough to give her up and go away. But I'm not going now without taking her from Varies. Tomorrow morning I return to London, in order to see Lady Hetherington. My future conduct depends upon what I learn from her. I've told you she has been communicating with Varies. I have suspicions which I would rather not tell even you. I shall return to

Monte Carlo as soon as possible, and I'll tell you everything. Meanwhile—"

"Meanwhile we're attracting attention. Let us go in here and leave your broken tumbler and a guinea with Monsieur the chemist."

Ten minutes later the two men were walking down arm in arm towards the Hotel Metropole. Captain Smith had persuaded Stopford to catch the night express to London, and on his arrival there to tell Lady Hetherington everything, and demand a like confidence from her.

And Stopford had agreed to go.

The guests were assembled on board Captain Smith's yacht; Clio asked her name. He said it was The Wild Duck. In the centre of the polished oak table, in the saloon, the largest silver bowl had been filled with red roses; the other silver bowls contained peaches and grapes. The saloon was entirely lighted by candles from eight silver candelsticks. Save for knives and forks and old-fashioned cut-glass, the table was bare of decorations.

The candle-light gave an atmosphere of mystery.

Clio was quick to realize the exquisite taste displayed. She looked at the great skins surrounding the sides of the saloon, and she smiled thoughtfully.

"So I am really the first woman to get foot on your boat, Captain Smith. I feel sorry—you shouldn't have broken the spell."

"Perhaps you will cast another spell; perhaps, I hope, you'll bring her luck." They were walking thru the town now. They halted outside a chemist's shop.

"Perhaps she knows more than I think," Stopford said. "I discovered yesterday that she is acquainted with Varies; she has written to him here, in Monte Carlo."

fiddle, and a baritone voice; rough, yet warm and musical. Silence fell on the little group under the awning. Varies yawned and now and then glanced inland, towards the shore and the casino gleaming white among the dark green trees.

"You're a magician, Captain Smith," Clio whispered, leaning towards him when the song was over. She stole a red rose, and standing behind his chair, pinned it in the button-hole of his old blue coat. He watched her out of his cold blue eyes.

"Why do you say that? Do simple things surprise you so? Yet there's no rickety lute; merely an old boat and flowers and a sailor singing on the bridge—the sea and the stars."

Clio repeated his words, standing behind his chair. "So few of us can find or if we find can keep, the simple things of life—a bunch of flowers, an old boat, and some one singing beneath the stars."

She sighed. Glancing at her, Stopford remembered the first impression she had given him. A very woman, with her soul hidden beneath the French gown and the fashionable harness and trappings of the woman of the world. She looked really beautiful now—spiritually beautiful as well as physically beautiful.

"I envy you, you lucky man." "What would I not give now to be able to throw aside these silly clothes, and to sail away with you in an old blue coat and patched, white duck trousers?"

Smith laughed a little brutally. "These pearls you wear would buy my coat and trousers, my boat, and everything it contains—except perhaps the crew. It might even buy me, as your captain—on conditions."

"And what would the conditions be?" Obviously Clio was serious, while Captain Smith was only laughing at her.

"That you should never go up on the bridge," he replied, "and always give your orders thru your servants."

Clio tried to send a warning glance at Clio. He was leaning over the rails now, looking down into the sea. Stopford tried to send a warning glance at Clio. He did not want to alarm Varies or arouse his suspicions.

"May I look at those wonderful pearls a moment?" Smith asked, "in case you're tempted to accept my bargain!"

Clio handed them to him. He examined, and gave them back.

"Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, quite," Smith replied.

"Then the bargain is made," Clio said. "You keep the pearls and I take The Wild Duck; just as she stands, with everything she contains. You are to remain on board, as captain. As for the crew, you must make the best bargain with them that you can!"

Captain Smith rose, with a laugh. "You had better wait until tomorrow before the bargain is sealed. What about a little game of cards, eh, Mr. Varies?"

The latter instantly grew interested. A move was made for the saloon, Clio and Varies leading the way. Stopford remained behind a moment with Smith.

"You won't forget," he whispered. "I'm catching the night train, as I

promised. I may or may not see Mimosa before I go. Keep your eye on Varies; don't let him out of your sight. And ask Mademoiselle de Fontaine to take care of Mimosa. Varies may strike some disreputable bargain with Sorral, or he may bolt, taking his niece with him. You'll be prepared, won't you?"

Smith nodded. "Even in calm weather a sailor is ready for storms. My sails are torn, but they'll hold the breeze. And The Wild Duck will be coiled tomorrow morning."

"You're not thinking of leaving?" Stopford asked anxiously.

Smith laughed as he descended the companion. "I'm not thinking of anything. As I told you, I can't afford to go, and I can't afford to stay. I made a few thousand francs at the tables, but before I can go back to the only life worth living I must make a million. Hurry, or you'll miss your train. And don't forget my advice—tell Lady Hetherington everything, even your suspicions. Tell her you don't love her, but are prepared to keep your promise to her."

He gripped Stopford's hands a moment, then disappeared.

Stopford dropped down into the boat waiting for him alongside The Wild Duck. As soon as he reaches the shore he called a cab and drove straight to the Metropole. To his surprise, he found Mimosa sitting in the lounge.

She greeted him with a smile. "You see I've remembered for once in my life."

She was looking ill; dark rings beneath her eyes, her cheeks were very pale, her fair, boyish hair hung limp and straight.

Stopford ordered coffee and a liqueur brandy. He lit a cigarette and offered one to Mimosa. To his surprise, she took it.

"I've got nerves tonight. I almost wish I didn't remember. I feel something like Rip Van Winkle—he slept for a hundred years, didn't he?—I believe I must have slept for a hundred hours. Tell me what you want to see me about, because I've quite forgotten that. The sleeping or waking, I've never stopped telling myself that I promised to see you tonight. And I know it was about something very important."

"It was a matter of life and death."

Stopford shook his head. He felt it was cowardly to torture her at that moment. There was not time to tell her everything, and if he only told her part he would probably leave her terrified, a prey to hideous fears and emotions.

His faith in her had quite returned now. He knew she was not acting. He had never acted. He knew whatever she had done that was wrong, had been done without her knowledge or consent. Her brain had been drugged, her soul sent to sleep, leaving her body free to perform any vile task which Varies chose to set it.

Captain Smith was right. Stopford determined to tell Lady Hetherington everything when he reached London. . . . When she knew, he wondered what she would do.

"To Be Continued Next Sunday."

THE SUNDAY WORLD'S FREE MUSIC LESSONS--NO. 2

D	B	F	D	B
E	C	A	A	V
E	B	G	E	

Key of E Minor relative of G Major

GROVE'S MUSIC SIMPLIFIER. SECOND LESSON. THIRD LESSON NEXT SUNDAY

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The second lesson in these simple instructions for the piano or organ takes up the key of G and its corresponding key of E minor. It is proposed to give all of the fundamental chords used in musical composition. There will be ten more lessons before this 12 weeks' course in music is completed. The pupil is expected to learn these chords, so they can be played almost intuitively. This means diligent PRACTICE. When this lesson has been mastered the student will be fully qualified to take up the study of the third lesson, which will appear next week.

INSTRUCTIONS—Fold the paper across the page half way between the two charts and place one of the charts at right angles to the keyboard of your piano or organ so that the small white letter D at the bottom of the chart is directly over the key D on the keyboard. The other spaces on the chart will then be over the white keys and the black spaces over the black keys. Each series of letters on top, middle and lower section represents a chord. When playing these chords begin at the top section and play the white letter first with the left hand, it being the bass, and afterwards the black letters on the same space simultaneously with the right hand, making the harmony desired. Then play the letters in the middle space in the same manner, followed by those on the bottom space, return to the top space, forming a complement of chords.

Turn the folded paper from right to left and use the other chart which will then appear right side up in the same way. The small white letter D at bottom of chart with a dash above it, is only to indicate position, and should not be played. During the week preceding the next lesson the chords shown here should be played over and over again until you memorize them and can play them without the charts. Then you will be ready for the next lesson.

Memorize the letters also, so that instinctively hereafter you will recall what letters or keys make up the various chords. A knowledge of the chords of keys in which music is composed is the foundation stone for future skill in reading music fluently.

The black letters are played with the right hand and the white letters at the left are the bass, and are played with the left hand. Every triad in black letters is marked 1, 3, 5. Always read triads 1, 3, 5, no matter what position. Triad 1 3 5 G—marked—third position, 5, the highest; always read it so. 2 5 1 G C first position, 1, the highest; read 1 3 5 1 3 5 second position, 3, the highest, read 1 3 5 G and so with every triad major or minor.

Key of G One Sharp every F made Sharp

C	G	B	D	G
		C	E	G
		D	F	