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At the Mouth of the Treacherous Pit
STORY OF LOVE, INTRIGUE AND REVENGE

CHAPTER VI

Their eyes met. Some vague idea of her meaning came to him, and with it came a certain shrinking from her, in spite of her beauty, and a feeling of dislike to her that he had never known before. He rose from his seat by the window, and looked round uneasily.

"I have not seen madame to-day. Is she well?" he asked.

"Yes, quite well, but overcome with grief; she has received some dreadful political news from France. She never forgets France; nor do I. Some day I shall go back to it, and the remembrance I shall take with me will be of the cold hearts and icy nature of Englishmen," said Lola, slowly; and with those words she left him.

The days passed on; the old Squire was happy and content. He was now to all intents and purposes a rich man. Lord Rhyworth had settled on him such a sum of money as would enable him to live in luxury and comfort at White Cliffe; and, when the old man died, it was all to revert to his daughter. Dolores never forgot the day when her lover came, with all the papers and deeds needed to this end in his hand, and asked to see her. She always obeyed even his least wish; so she went at once to him. There were no excuses, no coquettish delays to enhance the value of her presence.

That morning she thought he looked rather grave and anxious. She asked if he was troubled; and he said "No," but that he had something very serious to say to her. She sat down to listen.

"You must know, Dolores," he said, "that, whenever the heads of our house have married, it has been their custom to bring presents of costly jewels to the bride. Darling, I would give you jewels worthy of a queen's acceptance—even then they would not be good enough for you—but in their place I bring you these papers, and my wedding-present to you is this sum of money that I have settled on your father. It will make him rich for life, and at his death it will come all to you. Take them in your hands, Dolores, and you yourself shall give them to him."



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She thanked him in simple, kindly words; but he was not content.

"I want something in return, Dolores. Do you know what it is?"

"No," she replied. She smiled to think how little she could give him.

"I want something you have never given before; and to make it of any value you must give it to me of your own free will. I want a kiss, Dolores—only one. Will you give it to me?"

She was silent for awhile, and the fair, young face grew very pale. Then she slowly took the papers in her hand and held up her face to kiss him. It was done so innocently, so solemnly, that he was somewhat awed.

"Now," she said, "I will never give one though to any other man."

"I am sure you will not, my darling," cried the delighted squire. "I do not know why I should be blessed with the love of such a pure and faithful heart. I have more to say, Dolores. Though I buy you with no jewels, still you will have finer diamonds and rubies than almost any other lady in the land. The Rhyworth diamonds are considered as the as any in Europe. You will look like a queen in them."

The girl clasped the papers in her hands more tightly.

"I would sooner have these," she said, "better than all the jewels in the world."

She went to the Squire with the papers. Lord Rhyworth would not accompany her, although she asked him to do so.

"No," he said. "It is your present to your father, and you shall give it to him alone."

CHAPTER VII

To the end of her life she remembered that scene. It was late in the afternoon when she sought the Squire in his study, and the sunlight from the western sky fell full upon his white hair as he lay asleep. Her entrance aroused him. He uttered her name, but in a tone so peculiar that she could not tell whether he had murmured it in his dream to some dead Dolores, who lived perhaps only in his memory, or to herself.

The girl went up to him with the papers in her hands. How was it that such strange thoughts and fancies haunted her? She could almost have believed that, in letters of blood on the papers, she traced the words, "The price of my life." She knelt down by the Squire's side.

"I have brought you riches, peace, freedom from care, happiness, and I hope length of days to enjoy it all." She never forgot his emotion when he held the papers in his hands, while he blessed her and thanked her and praised her as few fathers have ever praised a child. She thought that after all she had done well.

After that, Lord Rhyworth began to hurry on the day for the wedding. Why should they wait? He was his own master, he had no friends to consult; and, if the Squire did not object, who else should?

"I have waited long enough for a wife, Dolores," he said; "and now that I have a most beautiful one promised to me, why should I delay? Come and make my home bright for me."

She had no reasonable excuse to defer the wedding, nor did she seek for any; so the day for the ceremony was settled.

"Who will be your bridesmaids,

Dolores?" asked Lord Rhyworth one day, when they were discussing the wedding.

She looked up at him in wondering surprise.

"Bridesmaids!" she repeated. "I have forgotten all about them."

He seized her hand, and almost crushed it in his passionate clasp.

"It is because you are so happy Dolores, that you have forgotten these details," he asked fiercely.

The clear, sweet eyes looked calmly at him.

"I am quite content," she replied. "You must have bridesmaids," he went on, more composedly. "Why not ask that beautiful French girl—your friend, is she not—Miss de Ferras and the Misses Fielden. There are three of them, and with Miss de Ferras you will have four."

"I suppose," she said, "it is de rigueur, but I would much rather be married without them."

He looked at her in consternation. "I have been to many weddings," he replied, "and I have always thought, Dolores, that after the bride the most important persons were the bridesmaids."

She laughed a low, sweet laugh that dispelled his fears.

"I hope, my dear," he said, "that, although you are marrying a man so much older than yourself, you will be as much interested in your wedding as other girls are. We must have it all in proper order—a superb wedding dress, magnificent jewels, and a bevy of fair bridesmaids. I shall give to each of them a present worthy of the occasion."

She saw that he was a little troubled.

Lord Rhyworth was delighted with the explanation.

"I have been thinking very seriously," he said, "about whom I shall ask to be 'best man.' You see, Dolores, our wedding will be quite a county affair. I have thought of asking Sir Karl Allanmore. I like him better than any one else. What do you think?"

She was silent for some time. She was asking her own heart if she had strength enough to bear this; and the answer was "No." She meant to be a good and true wife to the generous, noble-hearted man at her side—true to him in thought, in word, and in deed; she would rather that this other man were not near when she uttered the vows she meant to keep.

"Would it not be better," she said, "at last, in a clear, cold voice, to ask one of your own relatives? After all, Sir Karl has nothing to do with us."

"Perhaps you are right," he replied—"at least, if you prefer it, your wish shall be law."

"I should prefer it," she said.



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"Ask one of your cousins from Aldershot. You told me you had two stationed there."

He was delighted with the interest she showed, and agreed most heartily to her proposal. That evening the letters were written, first to the Misses Fielden, and then to Miss de Ferras. It so happened that Lola received hers on the same morning that Sir Karl rode over to see madame on business. He heard her laugh as she opened the letter and read its contents.

"What do you think I have here?" she said. "A pressing invitation to be chief bridesmaid at Dolores' wedding? Are you going, Sir Karl? What curious turns in life fate gives us," she went on, watching the handsome face as she spoke. "I am getting knowledge fast. When I come back from Germany I thought I should be sure to marry first, and I used to picture half the girl in the neighborhood, weeping tears of envy at my good fortune. But how—"

He was amused in spite of himself. "But now?" he repeated. "What is the difference between then and now?"

(To be continued.)

Rotary International

TORONTO, June 18.—(A.P.)—Two hundred and eighty-one new Rotary Clubs were organized during the past year of which 211 were in the United States, Canada and Newfoundland, 37 in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, 1 in Cuba and 22 in other sections of the world, Dr. Crawford C. McCullough, Extension Committee Chairman, told the Rotarians in convention here.

Of this number all but 19 have been formally selected to membership in Rotary International and the selection of the remaining 19 is merely a matter of form. The Rotary ros-

ter by continents, according to Dr. McCullough's statement, is North America, United States, Canada, Newfoundland, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, and Bermuda; Central America: Panama and Isthmian Canal Zone; South America: Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Peru and Chile; Europe: England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Norway; Africa, Union of South Africa; Asia: India, China, Japan and Philippine Islands; Australasia, Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania.

Surveys have been made in Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Sweden, which, it is believed, will result in the formation of Rotary Clubs in those countries within a few months. The establishment of Rotary districts in France, Italy, Holland, the Scandinavian countries and in New Zealand is being given consideration for the better administration of the clubs that are now well established in those places. Rotary meetings are now being conducted in eight languages in different parts of the world and the number of Clubs using Spanish and French has grown to such proportions that one section of the Secretary's office of Rotary International carries on a large part of its corresponding in those languages.



THE LIVING DEAD.



VALT MASON

I wept and mourned for Sun Yat Sen; "No man can take his place," I said; "he was the best of men, a credit to the race. And now they say he's hooped the loops, there is a vacant chair, and in a million human coops men wall and rend their hair. So now I'll mourn in proper shape this great man who is gone; I'll tie my whiskers up in crepe, strew ashes on my lawn. I'll let the whole world know, by Jones, that when a great man dies there is one gent who wails and groans, and has two weeping eyes." The neighbors said, "Oh, dry those tears. Let sorrow cease to sizz; we all are billed for shrouds and biers, and Sun Yat Sen drew his." But mourning is a job I like, I love to wring my hands, and walk, dejected, up the pike, with crepe in heavy bands. I like to wear the sort of wretch the undertakers sell, and beat my breast and gnash my teeth, and toll the passing bell. And I was having quite a time when telegrams were sped, which brought the news from China's clime that Sun Yat wasn't dead. It was a low down trick to play, to fake a death like this, and make me put my crepe away, and spoil my tearwet bliss. When next I mourn for Sun Yat Sen, or any other guy, I'll want the word of honest men who swear they saw him die.

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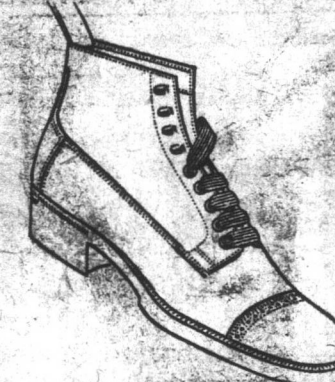
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