

The Lure of the Mask

By HAROLD MAC GRATH



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(Continued.)
SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—Jack Hilliard, a wealthy New York clubman, hears a mysterious voice singing in the night under his window.
II—He inserts an advertisement in a personal column to find the singer. He receives a reply.
III, IV, V, and VI—He visits the mysterious singer, but she wears a mask. He falls desperately in love with her, but he has not seen her face. The unknown woman gives her name as Mme. Angot, which is assumed. They have dinner. She refuses to see him again.
VII—Hilliard and Dan Merryhew decide to go to Italy. Merryhew loves Kitty Killigrew, a comic opera singer, who has gone to Italy. Hilliard receives a black mask in an envelope.
VIII and IX—Hilliard and Merryhew arrive in Italy and later dine with Mrs. Stanford, an American Society woman, who tells Hilliard considerable about the mysterious woman with whom he is in love. She is now posing as an opera singer in Kitty Killigrew's opera company.

CHAPTER X.
CARABINIERI.

"SIGNORI," began Hilliard calmly, "before you act will you not do me the honor to explain this visit?"
"It is not he," said one of the carabinieri. "It is the master, and not the servant. This is Signor Hilliard, is it not?" he continued, addressing himself to Hilliard. "The signor has a servant by the name of Giovanni?"
"Yes. And what has he done to warrant this visit?"
"It is a matter of seven years," answered the spokesman. "Your servant attempted to kill an officer in Rome. Luigi here, who was then interested in the case in Rome, thought he recognized Giovanni in the street today. Inquiries led us here."
"At any rate, it looks as though Giovanni had been forewarned of your visit," answered Hilliard. "And may I ask what is the name of the officer Giovanni attempted to kill?"
"It is not necessary that you should know."
Hilliard accepted the rebuke with becoming grace.
"And now, signor," with the utmost courtesy, "permit us to apologize for this intrusion. We shall wait in the hall, and if we find Giovanni we shall gladly notify you of the event."
"Hello! What's this?" exclaimed Hilliard, going to the table when the officers had gone. It was a note addressed to him:
My Kind Master—The carabinieri are after me. But rest easy. I was not born to rot in a dungeon. I am going north. As for my clothes, send them to Giacomo, the baker, who lives on the road to El Deserta. He will understand. May the Holy Mother guard you should we never meet again!
Hilliard passed the note to Merryhew.
"That's too bad. I've taken a great fancy to him. It seems that the peasant has no chance on this side of the water. His child a painted dancer in Paris and a price on his own head! It's hard luck. And the fellow who caused all this trouble goes free."
"He always goes free, Dan, here or elsewhere."
"Why, we'd have lynched him in America."
"That's possible. We are such an impulsive race," ironically. "Yes, no doubt we'd have lynched him, and these foreigners would have added another ounce of fact to their belief that we are still barbarians."
"I hadn't thought of that," Merryhew admitted.
Merryhew became impatient.
"Now out with it. Where and how did you learn that Kitty is in Venice?" Hilliard told him briefly.
"And so they are all in Venice, broke? By George, here's our chance—everlasting gratitude and all that! We'll sail 'em out and ship 'em home! How is that for a bright idea?"
"Let me see," said Hilliard practically. "There are five of them—five hundred for tickets and doubtless five hundred more for unpaid hotel bills. It would never do, Dan, unless we wish to go home with them."
"But I haven't touched my letter of credit yet. I could get along on two

thousand."
"Not with the brand of cigars you are smoking, 30 cents each."
"No; we can't ball them out, but we can ease up their bills till money comes from home. Not one of them by this time will have a watch. O'Mally will remain sober from dire necessity. Poor Kitty Killigrew! All the wonderful shops and not a stiver in her pockets!"
Merryhew paced the floor for some time, his head full of impossible schemes. He stopped in the middle of the room with an abruptness which pertended something.
"I have it. Instead of going directly to Venice, we'll change the route and go to Monte Carlo. I'll risk my four hundred, and if I win!"
"Then the announcement cards, a house wedding and pictures in the New York papers. Dan, you are impossible. You have gambled enough to know that when you are careless of results you win, but never when you need the cash. But it is Monte Carlo if you say so. Two or three days there will cure you of your beautiful dream. After all," with a second thought, "it's a good cause, and it might be just your luck to win. The masquerading lady! Monte Carlo it is."
Merryhew danced a jig. Hilliard stepped to the mirror and bowed profoundly. The jig ceased.
"Madame, permit me, a comparative stranger, to offer you passage money home. We won it at Monte Carlo. It is yours. Polite enough," mused Hilliard, "but hanged if it sounds proper."
"To the deuce with propriety!" cried Merryhew buoyantly. "We'll start tomorrow!"
From her window Kitty looked down on the Campo, which lay patched with black shadows and moonshine. How still at night was this fairy city in the sea! There were no horses clattering over the stone pavements, no trains, no omnibuses. The stillness which was of peace lay over all things. And some of this had entered Kitty's heart.
But for one thing the hour would have been perfect. Kitty, ordinarily brave and cheerful, was very lonesome and homesick. The dismal failure of it all! She had danced, sung, spoken her lines the very best she knew how, and none had noticed or encouraged her. It was a bitter cup after all the success at home. If only she could take it philosophically like La Signorina!
And there were so many things she could not understand. Why should La Signorina always go veiled? Where did she disappear so mysteriously in the daytime? And those sapphires and diamonds and emeralds? Why live here with such a fortune hanging round her neck?
"Kitty?" The voice came from the doorway. Kitty was startled for a moment, but it was only La Signorina. Kitty furtively wiped her eyes.
"I am over here by the window. The moon was so bright I did not light the lamp."
La Signorina moved with light step to the window, bent and caught Kitty's face between her hands and turned it firmly toward the moon.
"You have been crying, cara!"
"I am very lonely," said Kitty.
"You poor little homeless bird!" La Signorina seized Kitty impulsively in her arms. "If I were not"—She hesitated.
"If you were not?"
"If I were not poor, but rich instead, I'd take you to one of the fashionable hotels. You are out of place here in this rambling old ruin."
"Not half so much as you are," Kitty replied.
"I am never out of place. I can live comfortably in the fields with the peasants, in cities in extravagant hotels. My mind is always at one height. Where the body is does not matter much."
There was a subtle hauteur in the voice. It subdued Kitty's inquisitiveness.
"Sometimes," said Kitty, drying the final tear—"sometimes I am afraid of you."
"And wisely. I am often afraid of myself. I always do the first thing that enters my head, and generally it is the wrong thing. Never mind. The old woman here will trust us for some weeks yet." She leaned from the window and called, "Pomp-o-o!"
From the canal the gondolier answered.
"Now then!" said the woman to the girl.
Kitty threw a heavy shawl over her head and shoulders, while the other



A good stroke sent the gondola up the canal, wound about her face the now familiar dark gray veil, and the two went down into the Campo to the landing.

Pompeo threw away his cigarette and doffed his hat. He offered his elbow to steady the women as they boarded, and once they were seated a good stroke sent the gondola up the canal. Under bridges they passed. They glided by little restaurants where Venetians in olden days talked liberty for themselves and death to the Austrians, and at length they came out upon the Grand canal where the Rialto curves its ancient blocks of marble.

(To be continued.)

Circuit Court News.

State of Oregon vs. Norval Walworth; defendant found guilty of manslaughter and recommended to mercy of court, and Monday, October 25, set as time to pass sentence.

Williametta Sharp vs. William D. Sharp; divorce; decree by default.
Myrtle Painter vs. Albert Painter; divorce; decree by default.
A. W. Sturgis vs. R. W. Gray; action to recover money; judgment by default.

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