

# of the Mask

By HAROLD MAC GRATH

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\*\*\*\*\* have added principessa-princess. The

gondoller will give you any title you

desire if you are willing enough to pay

The Piazza San Marco, or St. Mark.

is the mecca of those in search of beauty. Here they may lay the sacred car-

pet, kneel and worship. There is none

other to compare with this mighty square, with its enchanting splendor,

its haunting romance, its brilliant if

There were several thousand people

in the square tonight, mostly travelers.

The band was playing selections from Audran's whimsical "La Mascotte." The tables of the many cafes were

filled, and bundreds walked to and fro

under the bright areades or stopped to

The two women saw no vacant ta-bles at Florian's, but presently they

espied the other derelicts - O'Mally,

Smith and Worth-who managed to

Through her veil their former prima donna studied them carefully, with a

doubted was Worth. Somehow he annoyed her. She could not explain, yet

still the sense of annoyance was always

"Gentlemen," she said during a lull,

"I have a plan to propose to you all."
"If it will get us back to old Broad-

let us have it at once," said

"Well, then, I propose to wait no

longer for letters from home. My plan

gaze into the shop windows.

find two extra chairs.

there.

pathetic history.

(Continued.) .. SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I-Jack Hilliard, wealthy New York clubman, hears a mysterious voice singing in the night under his window.

II-He inserts an advertisement in a personal ecolumn 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 en-

VIII and IX-Hilliard and Meryhew arrive in Italy and later dine with Mrs. Stanford, an American Society woman, who tells Hilliard considerable about the mysterious wowith whom he is in love. She is now posing as an opera singer in Kitty Killigrew's opera company.

"There! This is better."

"It is always better when you are with me," said Kitty.

For years Kitty had fought her bat-

tles alone, independent and resource-ful, and yet here she was leaning upon the strong will of this remarkable wo man, and gratefully too.
"Now, my dear Kitty, we'll just en

joy ourselves tonight, and on our return I shall lay a plan before you, and tomorrow you may submit it to the

'I accept it at once without knowing

what it is."
"What a beautiful palace!" Kitty cried presently, pointing to a house not far from the house of Petrarch. The moon poured broadly upon it. The gondola posts stood like sleeping senti-nels, and the tide murmured over the

seeing Kitty's gesture, Pompeo, swung the gondola diagonally acros

"No, no, Pompeo!" La Signorina spoke in Italian. "I have told you never to go near that house without express orders. Straight ahead." "Who lives there?" asked Kitty.
"Nobody," answered La Signorina,

ble lights!" The old palace interests me more

than the gondolas," declared Kitty. But La Signorina was not to be trapped. From the Grand canal they came out

into the great canal of San Marco, the beginning of the lagoon.

"La Signorina"— began Kitty. "There! I have warned you twice. The third time I shall be angry. "Hilds, then. But I am afraid when-ever I call you that. You do not belong

"And what makes you think that?" There was a smile behind the vell

I do not know unless it is that you are at home everywhere, in the Campo, in the hotels, in the theater or the palace. Now, I am at home only in the theater, in places which are unreal and artificial. You are a great actress a great singer, and yet, as O'Mally would say, you don't belong." Kitty had forgotten what she had started out

La Signorina laughed. "Pouf! You have been reading too many novels. To the molo, Pompeo."

At the molo, the great quay of Venice, they disembarked. The whilom prima donna dropped 50 centesimi into rompeo's paim, and he bowed to the very gunwale of the boat.

'Grazie, nobilita." "What does he say?" asked Kitty.

"He says 'Thanks, nobility.' If I nights with that on my person. Keep had given him a penny it would have it. We'll trust you anywhere the side been thanks only. For a lira he would

of jail. I'm you're a brick, all the same." And that was as near familiar-She turned to Smith, but he put out a hand in violent protest; then to She put the ring away. It was her

thother's. She never would smile scornfully in secret at these men "Timn': you," she said quietly. "If I

lose your money we will all go to Florence. I have another plan, but that will keep till this one under hand

proves a fallure." O'Mally beckoned to a waiter. "Tom," warned Smith.

"You let me alone," replied O'Mally.
'A quart of Astl won't burt anybody." Early the next morning she and Kitty departed for Monte Carlo in quest of fortune. Fortune was there, waiting, out in a guise wholly unexpected.

(To be continued.)

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"Nobody," answered La Signorina, is simple. They say that a gambler al-"though once it was the palace of a great warrior. How picturesque the propose that each of you will spare what money you can, and Kitts and I will go to Monte Carlo and take

one plunge at the tables."
"Monte Carlo!" O'Mally brought down his fist resoundingly. "That's a good idea. If you should break the bank think of the advertisement when you go back to New York."
"Be still," said Worth.

"Dash it, business is business, and without publicity there isn't any business." O'Mally was hurt.

"Mr. O'Mally is right," said La Signo-"It would be a good advertiserina. ment. But your combined opinion is what I want."

The three men looked at one another thoughtfully, then drew out their wallets, thin and worn. They made up a purse of exactly \$150, not at all a propitious sum. But, such as it was, O'Maily passed it across the table. This utter confidence in her touched La Signorina's heart. She turned aside for a moment and fumbled with the hidden chain about her neck. She placed her hand on the table and opened it. O'Mally gasped. An emerald-a glorious green emerald-lay in the paim of her hand.

"I shall give this to you, Mr. O'Mally," said the owner, "till I return. It is very dear to me, but that must not stand in the way."
"Ye gods!" cried O'Mally in dismay.

"Put it away. I shouldn't sleep o' nights with that on my person. Keep



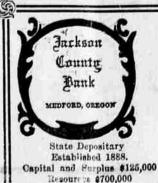
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