

# The Trey O'Hearts

By Louis Joseph Vance

## REAL ESTATE

Real estate transfers filed with the county recorder Thursday are as follows:

Christian L. Vonderhake et ux. to Ralph E. Emmons et ux. lots 5 and 6, block 97, Oak Grove; \$1600.

Ralph E. Emmons et ux. to Mary Emma, lots 5 and 6, block 97, Oak Grove; \$1.

H. E. Noble et ux. to Maureen M. Lee, tract of land in section 23, township 34 south, range 5 east of Willamette meridian; \$1400.

O. S. Ford et ux. to Alice M. Andrews et vir, tract of land near Canby; \$1.

L. W. Mulvey to Maude C. Shephard and Ira E. Roark, 2.13 acres in section 30, township 1 north, range 3 east of Willamette meridian; \$124.

Thomas Lewis et ux. to Clackamas county, tract of land in the Isaac Farr donation land claim; \$1.

A. Vester et ux. to Ed. C. Allen, lots 17 and 20, Fairmont; \$1250.

Joseph P. Woodie et ux. to Sarah Anna Backett, tract of land in section 2, township 3 south, range 4 east of Willamette meridian; \$1250.

Real estate transfers filed with the county recorder Friday are as follows:

Conrad Berner et ux. to Arthur Berner, 23 acres in sections 2, 3, 23 and 24, township 1 north, range 2 east of Willamette meridian; \$10.

Suburban Orchard Co. to Christina Berntsen, lot 10, Estelle Orchard; \$450.

Edward C. Eiekemeyer et ux. to Jay C. Farley, lot 4, block 14, Minthorn addition to Portland; \$10.

D. W. Franklin et ux. to J. H. Hattler, 40 acres in section 24, township 5 north, range 1 east of Willamette meridian; \$2500.

Real estate transfers filed with the county recorder Saturday are as follows:

Security Savings & Trust Co. to Victor A. Johnson, lot 10, block 4, Carthawk; \$10.

N. N. Stanley to Lloyd E. Bigelow, lot 19, and part of lot 20, block 9, Gregory addition to Molalla; \$10.

C. W. Gay et ux. to Geo. Brookman, tract of land in township 1 south, range 2 east of Willamette meridian; \$10.

Geo. Brookman et ux. to H. J. Anclate et ux., 23.63 acres in section 23, township 1 north, range 2 east of Willamette meridian; \$10.

Harriet Spulak to R. A. Wilkerson, tract of land in section 33, township 3 south, range 1 east of Willamette meridian; \$250.

Frank H. Schultz et ux. to Elmer H. Schultz, tract of land in section 2, township 5 south, range 1 east of Willamette meridian; \$1.

Eileen Ruth Rothwood et al. to W. J. Hester, lots 3 and 4, block 12, Ardenwald; \$800.

Elenor Lacey et ux. to L. F. Ring, 492 acres in section 15, township 4 south, range 4 east of Willamette meridian; \$600.

Thomas Rees Davies et ux. to Fred Mueller et ux., 40 acres in section 23, township 2 south, range 2 east of Willamette meridian; \$1.

Real estate transfers filed for record with the county recorder Monday are as follows:

Joe Dunn et ux. to George W. Beers, 16 acres in section 3, township 2 south, range 1 east of Willamette meridian; \$10.

George Beers et ux. to Joseph Dunn, west 1/2, southwest 1/4, northeast 1/4, section 3, township 2 south, range 1 east of Willamette meridian; \$10.

Rachel A. Edgar to H. K. Magnus, 40 acres in section 25, township 1 south, range 4 east of Willamette meridian; \$10.

Fred F. Hurrell et ux. to Thomas Moore et ux., lots 6, 7 and 8, block 4, South Oregon City; \$550.

John D. Carson et ux. to Luella Clay Carson, tract 1, Lewis Little Homes; \$10.

Realty transfers filed with County Recorder Dredman Tuesday are as follows:

Guy Alenworth et ux. to Walter Long, tract of land in section 25, township 5 south, range 1 west of Willamette meridian; \$350.

Otto Meinig to Wm. Harrison Brendrich et ux., lots 1, 2, 13 and 14, block 2, Otto Meinig's addition to Sandy; \$1.

Alma C. Brownell et ux. to S. A. Davis, lot 6, block 15, Gladstone; \$200.

John A. Kulis et ux. to John H. Brodick, 1.60 acres in the George Crow donation land claim; \$10.

Oscar L. Clyde et ux. to Rodger O. Woodward, tract of land in the Hiram A. Straight donation land claim; \$100.

Nils O. Engholm et ux. to Frederick Hill et ux., 34.48 acres in township 1 south, range 2 east of Willamette meridian; \$10.

Realty transfers filed with County Recorder Dredman Wednesday are as follows:

Christina W. Litza to Gustav U. Litza, tract of land in section 17, township 2 south, range 4 east of Willamette meridian; \$1.

James N. Davis to G. H. Litza, tract of land in section 17, township 2 south, range 4 east of Willamette meridian; \$500.

W. E. Birdsall et ux. to Perry O. Stacey et ux., 44.40 acres township 3 south, range 2 east of Willamette meridian; \$10.

W. H. Lucke et ux. to Henry G. Zeber, lots 4 and 5, block 4, Barlow; \$10.

P. S. Kenney et ux. to J. J. Kenney, lot 13, Multnomah Acres; \$750.

H. F. Noble et ux. to P. S. Kenney, lot 13, Multnomah Acres; \$1250.

### CHAPTER XLIII.

#### Camp-for-the-Night.

"Well, gent!" the driver observed cheerfully, withdrawing head and hands from long and intimate communion with the stubborn genius beneath the hood. "I reckon you-all may'st well make up your minds to christen this hynch salubrious spot Camp-for-the-Night. You won't be gone no farther—not just 't present. Pulling this old wagon through them desert sands back yonder has just naturally broke the heart of that engine!"

"What, precisely, is the trouble?" Alan Law inquired, rousing from anxious preoccupation.

"Plumb bust 'all to hell," the chauffeur explained tersely.

"Nothing could be fairer, more exact and comprehensive than that," Tom Barcus commented.

Law nodded a head too weary to respond to the other's humor. His worried eyes reviewed the scene of the breakdown.

"What's to be done?" Mr. Law wondered aloud.

"Take it calm," the affable chauffeur advised. "Frettin' won't get you-all nothin'. If it was me, I'd call it a day, make a fire, get them cushions out of the crah, and get some rest. You can't do nothin' till I get back, anyway, and that won't be much before sunup."

"Where are you going?" Barcus demanded.

"Walkin', friend; just walkin'—"

"What for?"

"To fetch help—leastways, onless you've got some kick comin' and 'ud ruther stop hynch permanent."

He turned off and bustled himself with preparations against his journey.

"It's simply things like this make me believe this isn't, after all, nothing more nor less than a long-drawn-out nightmare," Barcus observed pensively.

But Mr. Law was no more attending; he had turned away and was just then standing by the running-board of the motor car and civilly explaining to Miss Judith Trine the purpose of the chauffeur's expedition.

Discovery of this circumstance worked a deep wrinkle between the brows as well as into the humor of Mr. Barcus.

Here, he promised himself, was a situation to titillate the Comic Muse itself. He pointed out in turn the several component parts: the motor car derelict in the hollow of those awful and silent hills—for all the world like a mouse petrified with fright at finding itself in the midst of a herd of elephants; in the car, that aged monomaniac, Mr. Seneca Trine, author of all their woes and misadventures, gnashing his teeth in impotent rage to find himself in close juxtaposition to and helpless to injure the man for whose life he lusted with an insatiate passion; the latter standing outside the car, in polite conversation with Mr. Trine's mutinous Judith—talking to her in the friendliest fashion imaginable, precisely as if she had not

glanced back at him with the reflection of that infernal which smoldered in his evil bosom.

But one was silenced, the other gushed, all in a twinkling. His daughter turned on him in a flash of imperial rage.

Barcus caught snatches of the woman's tirade.

"Be silent!" he heard her say. "Be silent, do you hear? Don't ever speak to me again unless you want me to replace that car. I say, don't speak to me! . . . I am finished with you once and for all; never again shall you pervert my nature to your damnable purposes—never again shall word or wish of yours drive me to lift my hand against a man who has never done you the least harm, though your persecution of him would have acquitted him of a charge of manslaughter in any court—on grounds of self-defense! . . . Understand me!" she raged. "I'm through. Henceforth I go my way, and you yours . . ."

Her voice broke. She clenched her hands into two tight fists with the effort of self-control, and lifted a written face to the moonlight.

"God help us both!" she cried.

CHAPTER XLIV.

#### As in a Glass, Darkly.

Thoughtfully Mr. Barcus returned his attention to the lovers.

If the evidence of his senses did not mislead him, he was witnessing their first difference of opinion. It was not an argument acute enough to deserve the name of quarrel; but undoubtedly the two were at odds upon some question—Rose insisted, Alan reluctant.

The last gave way in the end, shrugged, returned to the car.

"I'm going back up the trail," he announced, and hesitated oddly.

"Feeling the need of some little exercise, no doubt," Barcus suggested.

"Rose thinks it's dangerous to stop here," Alan began to explain, ignoring the interruption.

"Miss Rose is right—oh, Miss Judith!" Barcus interpolated.

Judith nodded darkly.

"So I'm going to see if I can't burrow from the prospector back there, Rose says he has some—doesn't know how many—"

"Three will be enough," Judith interposed. "I mean, don't get one for me, I'm stopping here."

"But—Alan started to protest. She gave him pause with a weary gesture.

"Please! It's no good arguing, Mr. Law: I've made up my mind; I can be most helpful here, by my father's side," she asserted, and nodded at Trine with a significant smile that maddened him. "He needs me—and no harm can come to me; I'm pretty well able to take care of myself!"

At this the innocent bystander breathed an unheeded but fervent little prayer of thanksgiving, whose spirit he doubted not was shared by Alan.

For it stuck in the memory of Barcus that their friend, the prospector (whose shack had sheltered Rose and Barcus after their transit of the desert and prior to the man-made avalanche, which had afforded this temporary immunity from pursuit) had mentioned in the hearing of Rose the fact that his string of burros was limited to three.

This, then, must have been the nub of the lovers' quarrel: Rose's insistence that Judith be left behind, Alan's reluctance to consent to this lest he convict himself of the charge of rank ingratitude, remembering the great service his erstwhile antagonist had done him.

If only Judith might not find cause to change her mind!

substantially in seeming, with another rope, breast-high, to serve as a hand-rail.

Alan tested the bridge cautiously, it bore him. He returned, helped Rose to cross, and with her nose safely landed on the other side, took his life in his hands and, aided by a Barcus unaffectedly afflicted with qualms, somehow or other (neither of them knew precisely how) persuaded the burros to cross.

After that, though the way grew more broad and easy and even showed symptoms of a decline, they had not enough strength left to sustain through another hour.

And what they thought good fortune, opportunely at this pass, brought them to a clearing dotted with the buildings of an abandoned copper mine. Not a soul was in evidence there, but the rude structures offered shelter for best as well as man.

Rarely had they made Rose as comfortable as might be upon the rough plank flooring of one of the sheds and tethered the burros out of sight, when Alan collapsed as if drugged, while Barcus, who had elected himself to keep the first watch and purposed doing it in a sitting position, with his back against the doorjamb, felt sleep overcoming him like a dense, dark cloud.

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CHAPTER XLV.

#### The Bowels of the Earth.

Awaking before Mr. Barcus in a fashion sufficiently sharp and startling to render him indifferent to the beneficial effects of some eight hours of dreamless slumber.

He discovered himself lying flat on his face, with somebody's inconsiderate, heavy hand purposely grinding the said face into the aged and splintery planks of the shed flooring. At the

same time other hands were busy binding his own together by the wrists and lashing the same to the small of his back by means of a cord passed around his middle, while his natural if somewhat spasmodic efforts to kick were sadly hampered by the fact that his ankles had already been secured by means of half a dozen half-hitches and a square knot.

His hands attended to, his head was released. Promptly he lifted it and essayed to yell; an effort rendered abortive by the gag that was thrust between his teeth the instant his jaws opened.

Then he heard a laugh, a cold, mirthless chuckle.

Now the blood of Thomas Barcus ran cold (or he thought it did; which amounts to much the same thing). For if his senses had played fair, the laugh he had heard was the laugh of Mr. Marroprat, head-devil in the service of Seneca Trine.

He twisted his head to one side and glancing along the floor, saw nothing but the wall. Twisted the other way, at the cost of a splinter in his nose, the effort was repaid by the discovery of Rose Trine in a plight like his own—wrists and ankles bound, gagged into the bargain—the width of the shed between them.

But of Alan Law, no sign. . . .

The heart of Mr. Barcus checked momentarily; he shut his eyes and shivered in an uncontrollable seizure of dread.

Then, tormented beyond endurance by the fears he suffered for the safety of his friend, he began to wriggle and squirm like a crippled snake, painfully itching his way across the floor toward Rose—with what design, heaven alone knows! Dimly his mental vision comprehended the bare possibility of his being able, with his fast-numbing fingers, to work loose the knots at Rose's wrists; but deep in his heart he knew this to be nothing but forlorn hope. . . .

With infinite pains he had contrived to bridge the distance by half, or possibly not quite so much, when a dark body put the sunlight of the open doorway into temporary eclipse. Another followed it. Boots clumped heavily on the flooring. The laugh sounded again, apparently in ironic appreciation of Mr. Barcus' efforts. Two pairs of hands seized him, one by the neck and the other by the

wedging and blocking it with timbers. These ceased—and the silence was broken by Alan's voice.

"Barcus!"

The latter grunted soulfully by way of answer; he could do no more.

"I've worked my gag loose," Alan pursued in a hurried whisper, "but my hands are tied behind my back. Are yours? Grunt once for 'yes.'"

Dutifully Barcus grunted a solitary grunt.

"Then roll over on your face and give me a chance to work them free that way, given time . . ."

"Time!" was the mirthless thought of Barcus. "Haven't we got all eternity?"

For all that, he wasted no time whatever in obeying Alan's suggestion—then lay for upward of ten minutes with his face in the mold of the tunnel while Alan chewed and spat and chewed and spat and chewed again at the ropes round the wrists of his friend.

If it were in truth no more than ten minutes it seemed upward of an hour before the dross grew slack and Barcus with an effort that cost him much of the skin on one wrist worried a hand free, then loosed the other, removed and spat out his gag, and set hastily about freeing his friend. That took but a few instants—little more than was needed to rid Rose of her bonds.

That much accomplished, a pause of profound consternation followed. The darkness was absolute in the tunnel, Jimmy having taken the candle away with him; and his silence was rendered uncanny by the sobs and murmurs of the lovers, that sounded somehow fearfully remote and inhuman to Barcus—who had turned immediately to the bulkhead and was, without the slightest hope, groping about its joints and crevices in search of some way of forcing it.

"Barcus—old man!"

"Have you any idea?"

"Devil a one!"

A pause.

"Did you notice what that black guard had fixed up?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why—at the bottom of the shaft—I got only a glimpse coming in—the door of the powder room was open, and I saw a fuse set to the top of a keg of blasting powder . . ."

"What's the good of that? We're fast enough as it is!"

"Simply to make assurance doubly sure by causing a cave-in."

"I seem to remember hearing of reading, some place, that tunnels have two ends. If that's true, the far end of this ought to be about the safest place when that explosion happens—If it ever does."

"Something in that!"

"Got any matches?" Barcus inquired, as Alan hurriedly helped Rose to her feet.

"Never one."

"Nor I. We'll have to feel our way along. Let me lead, if I step over the brink of a pit or anything, I'll try to yell and warn you in time."

Alan caught his friend's hand in passing and pressed it warmly—a carcass eloquent of his gratitude to Barcus for taking their peril lightly, or pretending to, for the sakes of Rose.

A ticklish business, that—groping their way through blackness so opaque that it seemed as palpable as a pool of ink. And haste was indicated; they stumbled on with what caution was possible against pitfalls—a gingerly scramble. Then an elbow in the tunnel—sensed rather than felt or seen—cut them off from direct communication with the bulkhead, and at the same time opened up a shaft of daylight, striking down through that pitchy darkness like a column of fine gold.

Cries of joy, amazement, incredulity choking in their throats, they stumbled forward, gained the spot immediately below the shaft, looked upward, dazzled, to see blue sky like a coin of heaven's minting far above them, at the end of a long and almost perpendicular tunnel, wide enough to permit the passage of a man's body, and lined with wooden ladders.

The end of the lowermost ladder hung within easy reach from the floor of the tunnel.

But even as Alan lifted his hands to grasp the bottom rung the opening at the top of the shaft was temporarily obscured.

Thrilled with apprehension, he hesitated; Marroprat was up there, he little doubted; hardly like that one to overlook the ladder-shaft in preparing the tunnel to be a living tomb.

"What is it?" Rose demanded at his elbow, in a shaken whisper.

"Nothing," he lied instantly, and seizing the bottom rung swung himself up. "But wait for me till I signal the coast's clear," he warned before committing himself finally to the ascent.

Marroprat or no Marroprat at the top, there was nothing for him to do but to grasp the nettle danger with a steady hand, unflinching. Even though he were shot dead on emerging from the shaft it were better than to die down there, like a rat in a trap . . .

He had climbed not more than half a dozen rungs when a voice hailed from above:

"Law—Oh, Mister Law, I say—don't come up—here's a present for you."

Pausing without answer, he looked up. A few drops of water splattered his face, like heavy rain. Almost immediately the blue sky was permanently eclipsed; a heavy cascade of water, almost a solid column, shot down the shaft with terrific force.

Half-drowned and wholly dazed, he felt himself picked up and dragged away from the waterfall.

Then, as his senses cleared, he comprehended the fact that the tunnel was already filling; that where they stood it was already ankle deep; while the water continued to fall without hint of letup.

CHAPTER XLVI.

#### Flood and Fire.

Screaming to make himself heard above the roar of the deluge, Barcus yammered in Alan's ear:

"That devil! He's found the reservoir—opened the sluiceways—turned it into that shaft! We're done for!"

Alan had no argument with which to gainsay him. Silently getting on his feet, he groped for Rose in the darkness, momentarily becoming more dense as the fall of water shut out the light, and drew her away with him, up the slight incline that led back to the bulkhead.

The hour that followed lived ever in his memory as an hour in hell. No ray of hope lightened its impenetrable blackness. He could say nothing to comfort the girl; bravely though she strove to keep up her heart, time and again she shook in his arms like a mad thing, when panic dread caught her by the neck as a terrier catches a rat.

To die there, in the darkness, like so many noxious animals trapped in a well!

The water mounted rapidly. Within five minutes it drove them back to the elbow in the tunnel; within ten it lapped their ankles as they lingered there, doubting which was the greater peril, to advance or to stand fast and let the flooding tide snuff out the fires of life. To return to the neighborhood of the bulkhead was to court the death indicated by the fuse and the keg of blasting powder.

Of a sudden the thought crossed Alan's mind that Marroprat had arranged the latter solely to keep them away from the bulkhead. Now that he thought of it, he felt certain that the powder room had been deliberately disclosed to him by Jimmy.

Probably, then, the keg and fuse were but stage properties—or possibly

Whether or no, was death in no form preferable to the other?

He was decidedly of the opinion that it were better to be extinguished once and for all, in the space of a second, annihilated by an explosion, than to die thus lingeringly.

On this consideration, he drew Rose with him back to the bulkhead.

When they had been some fifteen minutes beside the bulkhead, the water mounted the head of a slight rise perhaps ten feet behind them, and poured down in ever deeper volumes to back up against the barrier.

It was waist deep, however, before they retreated to the head of that rise.

Half an hour later it was waist deep there, on the highest spot in the tunnel.

In fifteen minutes more it had reached their elbows. And they stood with head against the roof of the tunnel.

Holding Rose close to him, Alan kissed her lips, that were as cold as death.

Then, fumbling under water, he found the hand of the man at his side. The water lapped his lips like a blind hand . . .

In the tunnel that branched off from the main shaft, beyond the bulkhead, some thirty minutes before this juncture, a candle had guttered in its stick,

left carelessly thrust into the wall by Marroprat's lieutenant, and guttering, had dropped a flaming wick into a little heap of bone-dry debris. This last damped, licked hungrily at the timbering that upheld the falls of the tunnel. The timbering caught fire without delay. In a space of time incredibly brief the flames were spreading right and left, the tunnel was a vault of blistering fury.

As Alan said his last mute farewell to Rose and Barcus, the fire spread out in the bottom of the shaft and invaded the powder room.

Alan had guessed aright at Marroprat's design; the keg of blasting powder was less than an eighth full; its explosion could not possibly have effected the cave-in Alan had at first feared.

But what Marroprat had overlooked was the proximity to the keg of some several sticks of dynamite, masked by a film of earth that had fallen from the crumbling walls.

When the blazing fuse dropped sparks into the blasting powder this last exploded right, willingly and the dynamite took its cue without the least delay.

The resultant detonation was terrific. The bulkhead was crushed in like an eggshell barrier. Part of the walls fell in, but the tunnels and shaft remained intact. The released flood streamed out and spread swiftly to the farthest recesses of the burning tunnel. Dense clouds of steam filled that place of terror as the fires were extinguished.

Swept with the stream as it poured out of the tunnel, Alan contrived throughout to retain his hold round the waist of Rose. Barcus shot past him unseen in the darkness. It was not until Alan had contrived to catch an unburned timber and stay himself and his almost witless burden beneath the mouth of the shaft that he discovered Barcus alive, if almost unrecognizable in his mask of mold and soot, battling back toward the shaft against the kneedeep tide.

Half-blinded and stiffed as he was by the reek of steam and powder fumes, Alan struggled with himself until his wits were passably clear.

Immediately before him dangled the hoisting bucket and rope.

Surrendering the care of Rose to Barcus, Alan climbed into the bucket and stared upward, examining the walls of the shaft for a way to the top.

There was none other than the most difficult; gaps too great to be bridged by climbing showed in the wooden ladders.

The one feasible route was via the rope. And there was nobody at the top to work the winches—and Alan hoped the would be nobody to oppose him.

He addressed himself to the task without murmuring—stayed himself upon the rope, wound it round one leg, and began that heart-breaking climb.

How he accomplished it he never knew. That it must be accomplished was his one, all-absorbing thought. And somehow, by some almost superhuman effort, it was eventually accomplished.

He arrived at the top of the shaft far too exhausted to show surprise when, falling in half-fainting condition within two feet of the brink, he saw Judith Trine running like mad across the clearing.

But without her aid he would not have been able to work winches and lift Rose and Barcus.

(To be continued.)

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If only Judith might not find cause to change her mind!

He set himself sedulously to divert Judith with the magic of his conversational powers—an offering indifferently received. He was still blithely gossiping when Judith flung away to her sister's side.

The ensuing quarrel seemed but the more portentous in view of the restraint imposed upon themselves by both parties thereto.

He believed, however, that a crisis impended when the tinkle of mule-bells sounded down the canyon road; and at this he threw discretion to the winds and ran toward the two with hands upheld in mock horror and a manner of humorous protest.

"Ladies, ladies!" he pleaded, "I beg of you both, let dogs delight to bark and bite—"

He got no farther: Judith's ears were as quick as his own; she, too, had caught the sound of bells behind the base of the hill. And of a sudden, without another word, she turned and flung away into the heavy thickets of undergrowth that masked all the canyon, to either side of the wagon-trail. In a twinkling she had lost herself to view in their labyrinthine shadow.

The remainder of that business was transacted rapidly enough. There were no preparations to be made; once Alan had