# The Lure of the Mask

By HAROLD MAC GRATH

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(CONTINUEDIFROM LAST WEEK) CHAPTER XIII.

MANY NAPOLEONS. ERRIHEW sighed with perfect content. The pretty woman sitting opposite smiled smiled back abstractedly, as a man play."
sometimes will when his mind tries to "You gather in comprehensively a thought urging." and a picture which are totally different. Before him in seat little lustrous stacks stood 7,000 francs in gold, 350 effigies of "Napoleon the Little"-7,000 francs, \$1,400, more than half the find out," answered Hillard. sum of his letter of credit!

them on the second dozen. The ball rolled into No. 23. He leaned back again with a second sigh, and the pret ty woman smiled a second smile, and the wooden rake pushed the beautiful gold over to him. He was playing a system, one bet in every three turns of the wheel in stakes of \$40 and \$80. To be sure, he lost now and then, but the next play he doubled and retrieved. Oh, the American Comic Opera company should be well taken care of! Two more bets and then he would pocket his winnings and go. He laid 40 francs on No. 26 and 400 on black, leaned upon his elbows and studied the pretty woman, who smiled. If she spoke English-he scribbled the question on a scrap of paper and pushed it across the table, blushing a little as he did so. She read it, or at least she tried to read it, and shook her head with the air of one deeply puzzled. He sighed again, reflecting that there might have been a pleasant adventure had he only understood French.

Twenty-six, black and even! Merrihew slid back his chair and rose. He swept up the gold by the handful and poured it into his pockets, casually and unconcernedly, as if this was an everyday affair and of minor importance. But as a matter of fact his heart was beating fast, and there was a wild desire in his throat to yell with delight. Eighteen hundred dollars, 9,000 francs! A merry music they made in his pockets-jingle, jingle, jingle! And then he saw Hillard com-ing across the hall. Instantly he forced the joy from his face and eyes and dropped his chin in his collar. He became in that moment the picture of desolation.

"Is it all over?" asked Hillard grave-"All over!" monotonously.

"Come over to the cafe, then. I've something important to tell you." "Found them?" with rousing interest. "I shall tell you only when we get

out of this place. Come." Hillard put out a friendly hand. shake the dust of this place in the

morning." "Oh, for a vacant lot and a good old touching his side pockets.

whooper-up! Feel!" cried Merrihew, "What is it?" asked Hillard.

"What is it? It is 450 napoleons!" "What?" sharply, even doubtfully. "That's what! Eighteen hundred dollars! My system will have no

funeral tonight." He caught Hillard by the sleeve and fairly ran him over to the cafe. "Nearly two thousand:" murmured Hillard. "Well, of all the luck!"

"It does seem too good to be true. I say, what's the matter with your cravat?"

Hillard looked down at the futtering end and reknotted it carelessly. "I saw Kitty tonight." he said.

To Merrihew it seemed that all the clatter about him had died away suddenly. He breathed deeply. "Where is "I'll explain what has happened."

Merribew listened eagerly "And why did you bother about the Italian?" he interrupted. "Why didn't you hold on to Kitty?"

"I confess it was stupid of me, but the gentleman with the scar was an unknown quantity. Besides, why should Kitty run away from me of all persons? And why, when I spoke to them in the casino, did they ignore me completely?

"It's your confounded prima donna. She's at the bottom of all this, take

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what you advertise bears out your close. "I have wrought harm to no Achille took the short cut through the advertisement.

ately wrong. Persons do not wear masks and hide in this manner just for a lark. Why didn't you knock him

"I wanted to, but it wasn't the psya man down when he practically sur-

stand. To see you was to know that in love with less excuse than this." I was round somewhere. She ran What shall we do?"

"Start the hunt again or give it up me, Kitty." entirely. There are some villages between here and Nice. It must be in board the car for Nice. If you hadn't to write a letter." been gambling, if you had been sensible and stayed with me"-

"Come, now, that won't wash. You at him tenderly, and he know very well that you urged me to exchange for his gold when Hillard

"You would have played without any "And who is this Italian anyhow?"

asked Merrihew. "And why did he run after your prima donna?" "That is precisely what I wish to

"I'm afraid that Kitty has fallen He counted off ten coins and placed among a bad lot. I'll wager it is



He swept up the gold by the handful.

some anarchist business. They are always plotting the assassination of kings over here, and this mysterious woman is just the sort to rope in a confiding girl like Kitty. One thing, if I come across our friend with the

"You will wisely cross to the opposite side of the street. To find out what this tangle is it is not necessary to jump head first into it."

"A bad lot." "That may be, but no anarchists, my

Hillard was a bit sore at heart. That phrase recurred and recurred: "A lady? Grace of Mary, that is droll!" "I am sorry, boy. I wanted you to The shadow of disillusion crept into Merrihew. "Bosh! There's something win something. Cheer up! We'll his bright dream and clouded it—to you haven't told me about that makes build so beautiful a castle and to see it tumble at a word! The Italian had spoken with a contempt based on more

than suspicion. "Kitty doesn't wish to meet us," light out for Venice in the morning. I'm not going to be made a fool of for the best woman alive."

In the meantime the lamps in the casino had been extinguished. In the barbor the yachts stood out white and spectral. The tram for Nice shricked down the incline toward the promontory. At the foot of the road which winds up to the palaces the car was signaled, and two women boarded. Both were veiled. They maintained a singular silence. At Villefranche they got out. The women stopped before the gates of a villa and rang the porter's bell. Once in the room above, the silence between the two women came to an end.

"Safe! I am so tired. What a night!" the elder of the two women sighed. "What a night truly! I should like to know what it has all been about, To run through dark streets and alleys, to hide for hours, as if I were a thief

or a fugitive from justice, is neither to

my taste nor to my liking."

"Kitty," she began sadly, "in this world no one trusts us wholly. We must know why. Loyalty must have reasons; chivalry must have facts. You have vowed your love and loyalty a hundred times, and still when a great crisis confronts me you question, you grow angry, you complain, because my reasons are unknown to you. It was blind terror which made me run. I counted not the consequences. I shall tell you why I am lonely, why the world, bright to you, is dark. I am proud, but I shall bend my pride." With a quick movement she lifted her

head high, and her eyes burned into Kitty's very beart. "I am"-"Stop! No, no! I forbid you!" Kitty put her hands over her ears. She might gain the secret, but she knew that she would lose the heart of the woman it concerned. "I am wrong, wrong. I have promised to follow you loyally, without question. I will keep that promise. I am only angry because you would not let me speak to Mr. Hillard. He is very handsome," Kitty added thoughtfully. "He is

strong too." "Strong and cruel as a tiger. How I hate him! But thank you, Kitty; their trunks, which they had picked thank you. Sooner or later, if we stay together, I must tell you. The confi-dence will do me good." Kitty ap-

my word for it. Something's desper- one. But on my side they will tell you | Ruga di San Giovanni and the Rio d that I have been terribly wronged. and all I wish is to be left alone, alone. It was cruel of me to forbid you to speak to Mr. Hillard. But I wish him to recollect me pleasantly, chological moment. You can't knock as a whimsical being who came into his life one night and vanished out of his face.

it in two hours.' "You're too particular. But what's "But supposing the memory cuts the matter with Kitty? I don't under-deeply," ventured Kitty. "Men fall

"Nonsense!" La Signorina opened away from me as well as from you. the window to air the room. She lingered, musing. "You are very good to

"I can't help being good to you, you strange, lovely woman, for your sake that direction. They were about to as well as for mine. Now I am going La Signorina still lingered by th

window Merrihew was pocketing currency in

passed an open letter to him: My Dear Mr. Hillard—Do not seek us. It will be useless. If Mr. Merrihew is with you, tell him that some day I will explain away the mystery. But this please make plain to him—if he insists upon searching for me he will only double my unhampioness. my unhappiness.

KITTY KILLIGREW. Merrihew soberly tucked the letter away. "I knew it," he said simply "She is in some trouble or other, so tangle, and fears to drag us into it. Who left a letter here this morning?"

he asked of the concierge. "A small boy from Villefranche."
"Just my luck," said Merrihew. "I said that it would be of no use to hunt in the smaller towns. Well, we had better take the luggage back to the rooms. I am going to Ville-

"You will be wasting time. After what happened last night I am certain they will be gone. Let us respect their plans, hard as it may seem to you." "But you?"

"Oh, don't bother about me. I have relegated my little romance to the garret of no account things, at least for the present," said Hillard, with ap enigmatical smile. "Make up your mind-we have only twenty minutes." "Oh, divine afflatus! And you lay down the chase so readily as this?" Merrihew was scornfully indignant.

"I would travel the breadth of the continent were I sure of meeting this woman. But she has become a will-o'the-wisp, and I am too old and like comfort too well to pursue impossibil-

"But why did she leave you that mask?" demanded Merrihew. "She must have meant something by that." "True, but for the life of me I can't figure out what."

"But I don't like the idea of leaving Kitty this way without a final effort to rescue ber from the clutches of this fascinating adventuress." "I admit nothing, my boy, save that

the keenness of the chase is gone. As for Kitty, she's a worldly little woman and can take good care of herself. Her letter should be sufficient." "But it isn't. A woman's 'don't' of-ten means 'do.' If Kitty really expects

me to search for her and I do not she will never believe in me again." "Perhaps your knowledge of women

more extensive than mine," said Hillard. But this flattery did not appeal to

This was a shrewd guess, but Hil-

lard had his reasons for not letting his friend see how close he had shot. "A lady? Grace of Mary, that is droll!" Merrihew bitterly observed. So we'll He could not cast this out of his



Hillard cepied a beggar leaning over the parapet.

thought. He floated between this phrase and Mrs. Sandford's frank defense of her girlhood friend. "Time flies," he warned.

It to be?" "We'll go on to Venice. It would be folly for me to continue the hunt alone.

At 7 that evening they stepped out of the station in Venice-the blue twilight of Venice that curves down from the hollow heavens, softening a bit of ugliness here, accentuating a bit of loveliness there. Here Merrihew found one of his dreams come true, and his first vision of the Grand canal, with its gendolas and barges and queer little bobtailed skiffs, was never to leave him. Hillard hunted for his old gondoller, but could not find him. So he chose one Achille, No. 154. With up at Genoa, and small luggage in the hotel barge they had the gondola all to themselves.

'Advertising brings success" - if proached, and La Signorina drew her Instead of following the Grand canal

Sau Polo.

Out into the Grand canal again. As they swept under the last bridge before coming out into the hotel district Hillard espied a beggar leaning over the parapet. The moonlight shone full in

"Stop!" cried Hillard to Achille. The beggar took to his heels, and when Hillard stepped out of the gondola the beggar had disappeared. "Who was it?" asked Merrihew indifferently.

[TO BE CONTINUED] OREGON SHORT LINE

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No.	3.	Soo-Spokane-Portland	6:45	49
No.	11.	Pacific Express	3:20	P. M.
No.	7.	Portland Special	5:45	146
Tr	nin	No. 11 makes all stops betw	een	Hood
		nd Portland.		

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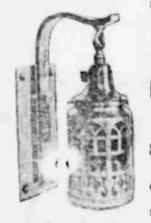
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