

THE LITTLE MAKER

BY E. PHILIP COLEHEM
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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

The story opens in a hospital in Paris, where a girl, Lucille Randall, is dying from a brain tumor. A friend, Mademoiselle Izet, is with her, and she wishes to bring to her bedside Eugene Esterman, who has deserted his victim, Miss Christopher, because of her husband's infidelity.

Chapter II introduces Alphonse M. Caraby, M. P., and his wife in their home in Greenwich Square, London. Both are ambitious and Caraby might be a cabinet minister, were it not for his wife's constant interference. He is a friend of the late Mr. Caraby, who was a prominent figure in the French Revolution. He is now a member of the French Chamber of Deputies.

Chapter III introduces a young man, Mademoiselle Izet, who is a friend of the late Mr. Caraby. She is a young woman of great beauty and intelligence, and she is now a member of the French Chamber of Deputies.

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Mademoiselle Izet held out her hand and led him into the room by her side. "The wishes of," she murmured softly. "He has no few nights here, one must do as he desires."

The little party returned to their table in the corner. Mademoiselle Izet, her coming seemed to revive the conversation, more animated in the conversation. Albert walked with a sprightly step. Then Julien, in his passage down the room, received a distinct shock. He stopped short.

"Kendricks, by Jove!" he exclaimed. "Kendricks, sitting alone at a small table, with a bottle of champagne in front of him and a huge cigar in his mouth, seemed his hand perfectly. Then he glanced at his friend's companion, frowned for a moment, and gazed fixedly at Herr Freudenberg."

"Julien, by all that's lucky," he called out. "And I haven't been in Paris four hours! I called at your hotel and they told me you were out. Sit down."

"I am not alone," Julien began to explain.

Herr Freudenberg turned round. "You must present your friend," he declared. "He must join us."

Julien hesitated for a moment.

"Kendricks," he said, "this is my friend, Herr Freudenberg."

The two men shook hands. Kendricks as yet had scarcely taken his eyes off Herr Freudenberg's face.

"I am glad to meet you, sir," he remarked. "It is odd, but your face seems familiar to me."

Herr Freudenberg leaned over the table. "My friend, Mr. Kendricks," he said, "you are, I believe, a newspaper man, and you should know the world. When you see a face that is familiar to you in Paris, and in this Paris, it goes well that you forget that familiarity, eh?"

"It is sound," he agreed. "I will join you with pleasure."

"Mademoiselle," Herr Freudenberg continued, "permit me to introduce my friend, Mr. Kendricks. Mr. Kendricks—Mademoiselle Izet. We will now begin, if it is your pleasure, to spend the evening. There is room in our corner, Mr. Kendricks. Come here, and presently Mademoiselle Izet will sing to you, mademoiselle with the yellow hair will dance the orchestra. This is Paris and we are young. Ah, my friends, it comes to us but seldom to live like this!"

They all sat down together. Herr Freudenberg gave reckless orders for more wine. The chef d'orchestre was at his elbow, Albert hovered in the background. Kendricks leaned over and whispered in his friend's ear.

"Julien, who is your friend?"

"A manufacturer of toys from Leipzig," Julien answered grimly.

"The toys that giants play with?"

Kendricks muttered. "I have never forgotten a face in my life."

Julien advised him quickly. "This is not a night for memories. I have lived with the ghosts of them long enough."

Their party became larger. The little dancing girl came to drink wine with them and remained to listen to Herr Freudenberg. A friend of Mademoiselle Izet—a tall, fair girl in a blue satin gown—detached herself from her friends and joined them. Herr Freudenberg, with his arm resting lightly around Mademoiselle Izet's waist, talked joyously and incessantly. It was not until some one lifted the blind and discovered that the sun was shining that they spoke of a move. Then, as the waiters came hurrying up with their coats and wraps, Herr Freudenberg lifted his glass.

"One last toast!" he cried. "Dear Mademoiselle, my friends, all of you—to the sun which calls us to work, to the moon which calls us to pleasure, to the love that crowns our hearts!"

He raised his companion's hand to his lips and drew her arm through his.

"Come," he cried, "to the streets! We will take our coffee from the stall of Madame Huber."

had been a single disquieted thought in his mind. He moved through this world—the little Paris world—with one idea only. He got behind the scenes. He comes here secretly, drops hints here and there as a private person, lets himself be considered a partisan of Parisians. All the time he listens and he drops his cunning words of poison into her works. What are his ambitions? Do you know, Julien?

"Do you?" Julien asked.

"It seems to me that I have some ideas," Kendricks answered. "This is your hotel, isn't it?"

"Are you going to stay here?"

"I stay at a little hotel in the Rue de Valenciennes. I stay there because it is full of the wildest set of foreigners you ever knew. This morning we breakfast together."

"Come and see me when you will," Julien invited. "I will come to you; set to breakfast, though—I am engaged."

"To Herr Freudenberg?" Kendricks asked quickly.

"To the lady whom your little friend, the manufacturer, sent me to visit," Julien replied. "I stay there because it is full of the wildest set of foreigners you ever knew. This morning we breakfast together."

"I will tell you nothing about her this morning," Kendricks said. "I will tell you a doubt, to take lunch with you for yourself."

"Do you think I may breakfast with her safely?" Julien inquired.

"Heaven knows—I don't!" Kendricks replied. "No man is safe with such a woman as Madame Christopher. But let it go. We dine together tonight. I'll tell you some news then. I'm going to enroll a platoon of campaign. There's work for you, if you like it; nothing formulated as yet, but it's coming—perhaps hope—who knows?"

"The sun rose higher in the heavens, the mists light faded from the sky. Morning had arrived in earnest and Paris settled herself down to the commencement of another day. Julien, for the first time since he had left England, was absent five minutes after his head had touched the pillow. Herr Freudenberg, on the contrary, made no attempt at all to retire. In the sitting room of his apartments in the Boulevard Malesherbes he sat in his dressing-gown, carefully studying some letters which had arrived by the night mail. Opposite to him was a secretary; by his side Esterman, who appeared to be there for the purpose of making a report.

"Not a document," Esterman was saying. "Not a line of writing of any sort in his trunk, his bureau, or anywhere about his room."

Herr Freudenberg nodded thoughtfully.

"But these Englishmen are the devil to deal with!" he said. "The luncheon is ordered today in the private room at the Hotel de Ville."

"Everything has been attended to," Esterman replied.

Herr Freudenberg was thoughtful for several moments. Then, with a wave of his hand, he dismissed Esterman.

"You, too, can go, Fritz," he said to his secretary. "You have had a long night's work."

"You yourself, Excellency, should sleep for a while," his secretary advised.

Herr Freudenberg shook his head. "Sleep," he declared, "is a waste of time. I need no sleep. As you go, you can tell my servant to prepare a warm bath. I will rest then for an hour and see in the Champs Elysees."

The secretary withdrew and Herr Freudenberg was alone. He picked up a crumpled rose that lay upon the table and twirled it for a moment or two in his fingers. The action seemed to be wholly unconscious. His eyes were set in a fixed stare, his thoughts were busy weaving out his plans for the day. It was not until he was summoned to his bath that he rose and glanced at the withered flower. Then he smiled.

"Poor little Marguerite!" he murmured. "What a pity!"

He touched the rose with his lips, abandoned his first intention, which seemed to have been to throw it into the fireplace, and put it back carefully upon the table, side by side with an odd, white glove.

"Queer little record of the froth of life," he said softly to himself. "One soiled evening glove, a faded rose, a woman's tears—they pass. What can one do—we poor others who have to drive the wheels of life?"

He sighed, brushed his high shoulders, and passed out.

CHAPTER XV.
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.
VERY soon after midnight on the same morning, Herr Carl Freudenberg was the host at a small luncheon party given in a private room of the most famous restaurant in the city of Paris. The guests were a model of correctness, his eyes were clear, his manner blithe, almost joyous. There was no possible indication in his appearance of his misstep of the night before. He was a general courtier, Monsieur Decheles sat at his right hand; Monsieur Felix Brant at his left; Monsieur Pellemann opposite to him. The three men had arrived in an unobtrusive way and had entered the restaurant in the privacy of a but that they were guests of some distinction was obvious from their reception by the manager himself.

The luncheon was worthy of the great reputation of the place. It was swiftly and well served. With the coffee and liqueurs the waiters withdrew. Herr Freudenberg, with a smile, rose up and tried the door. Then he returned to his place, lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair.

"My dear friends," he announced, "now we can talk."

Monsieur Pellemann smiled.

"Yes," he admitted, "we can talk. In this excellent bistro, Monsieur Carl Freudenberg, I drink your very good health. Long may these little visits of mine to the city of Paris be yours."

Herr Freudenberg smiled his thanks. "Monsieur Pellemann," he said, "and you, too, my dear friends, let me assure you that there is nothing in the world which I enjoy so much as these brief visits of mine to your delightful capital. I think of the pressure and cares of office. I let myself go, and on these occasions, as you know, I speak to you not in the language of diplomacy, but as good friends who meet together to enjoy an hour or two of one another's company. It is because we are men of letters that we are so much in sympathy with one another, and we speak true words with one another."

"It is a pleasure which we all share," he declared. "It is more agreeable, without a doubt, to take lunch with Monsieur Carl Freudenberg, and to speak openly, than to exchange unadvised interviews, with the excellent gentleman to whose good offices are intrusted the destinies of Herr Freudenberg's great nation."

"Monsieur," Herr Freudenberg said, "today shall be no exception. Today I speak to you, perhaps more openly than ever before. Today I perhaps risk much more than I should speak the things which are in my heart."

Monsieur Felix Brant took a cigarette from the box by his elbow, but he felt for it only. His eyes never left the face of his host. Of the three men, he was the least in sympathy with the state of affairs to which Herr Freudenberg had alluded so cheerfully. He watched the man at the head of the table all the time as though every energy of which he was possessed was devoted to the task of reading underneath that smile the most important secret of his heart.

"Gentlemen," Herr Freudenberg continued, "there have been many misapprehensions between your country and mine. Ten years ago we seemed indeed on the highroad to friendship. It was a time when the one fatal mistake of our country made the other fatal mistake of your country. Great Britain, isolated, left behind in the race for power, a weakened and decaying nation, having searched the world over for allies, held out the enormous hand of friendship to us. What evil genius, what impostor, what statesman that day? When the history of these times comes to be written, it is in my firm belief that it will be then acknowledged that the genius of the man who reigned over Great Britain at that time was alone responsible for the commencement of what has become a veritable alliance."

Herr Freudenberg paused.

"There is no doubt," Monsieur Decheles asserted, calmly, "that the influence of the late King of England, among the people of France, has appealed somehow to their imaginations, a great monarch who was also a bon viveur, who had lived his days in Paris as the others."

Herr Freudenberg nodded thoughtfully.

"He is dead," he said, "and history will write him down as a great king. Do you know that it is one of my theories that morals have nothing to do with government? I doubt whether a more successful monarch has ever reigned than that unfortunate country than the one we speak of. So sagacious was he that he even saw the beginning of the end, he saw the things that must come when he looked across the North sea; and standing all the ties which should have allied him with Germany, he hated our people and he hated our country with a prophetic hatred. But we gossip a little, gentlemen. Let me proceed. I want you to realize that the policy of Germany for the last five years has been directed toward securing the friendship of your country. I want you to realize that but for the continual interference of Great Britain you would even now be a far more favored nation with us than you are today. Germany has nothing in Morocco. Germany's first and greatest wish is for a rich and prosperous France. 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