

The Red Mirage

A Story of the French Legion in Algiers

By I. A. R. WYLIE

SYNOPSIS.

—8—

Sylvia Omney, her lover, Richard Farquhar, finds himself in love with Captain Arnaud of the Foreign Legion. In Captain Sower's room, Farquhar forces Sower to have Preston's I. O. U.'s returned to him. Farquhar is helped to his rooms by Gabrielle Smith. Sower demands an apology. Refused, he forces Farquhar to resign his commission in return for possession of Farquhar's father's written confession that he had married Sower's father. Gabrielle saves Farquhar from suicide. To shield Arnaud, Sylvia's fiance, Farquhar professes to have stolen war plans and tells the real culprit why he did so. As Richard Nameless he joins the Foreign Legion and sees Sylvia, now Mme. Arnaud, meet Colonel Destinn. Farquhar meets Sylvia and Gabrielle, and learns from Corporal Goetz of the colonel's cruelty. Arnaud becomes a drunkard and opium smoker. Sylvia becomes friendly with Colonel Destinn. Arnaud becomes jealous of Farquhar.

Do you think it is possible for a young woman who has made her big "mistake" in a love affair to return once more to the fold of decorous society? If she proves sincere in her return, will that society protect her good reputation if it learns her secret?

CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

Outside in the quiet street her husband awaited them with the carriage. He saluted gravely, assisted them into their places, and in silence they drove rapidly through the awaking town. A second carriage, traveling at a more deliberate pace, blocked the narrow avenue, and they pulled up sharply beneath an overhanging lantern. There was a subdued rattle of arms. Arnaud leaned forward.

"Ah, it's you, Goetz! One man is sufficient here. Have you anyone you can trust?"

"Stand forward—No. 4005!"

There was a brief silence. Arnaud rested his chin in his hand and stared down at the man drawn up stiffly before him. The other hand lay clenched on his knee, and the knuckles stood out white.

"You heard—No. 4005? You will keep guard alone here."

"Yes."

"It is well. Drive on."

Again the soft clash of steel. Arnaud dropped back in his corner. The light fell on his face for a moment, and Gabrielle Smith saw that he was smiling watchfully at the woman beside her. Sylvia had not moved. She had not even glanced in his direction or at the man to whom he had spoken. Her lips were still parted in the childish expression of wondering anticipation, and her eyes glistened. Arnaud laughed and turned away from her.

A moment later they passed out of the somber shadows into the light, from the unfathomable eastern bush into the babble and movement of the West. Instinctively Gabrielle glanced back for a moment. It was as though she had been lifted suddenly out of a black, mysterious sea on to a fairy island, and that against the haze of light she could hear the waves beating in sullen threatening disappointment. When she turned again she found that Sylvia had already vanished into the crowd, and that she was alone with Arnaud. He glanced down at her. Over his pale features there passed a shadow of pity and annoyance.

"I am afraid my wife is not always very considerate," he said apologetically. "You scarcely know any of these people."

"I know one or two," she answered. "In any case I like to look on. You are not to bother about me. I can take care of myself."

"Yes, you can take care of yourself." He nodded moodily. "There are not many of us who can do that much, Miss Smith. We pretend that we hold the reins, but it is the devil who drives."

"Yes," she admitted, "our particular devil."

"Do you know that? How do you know?"

"Perhaps I have been into the ditch myself, Captain Arnaud. Perhaps—and then she looked him full into the face—"perhaps tonight has taught me," and then, before he could answer she turned from him and passed out resolutely on to the veranda.

He did not follow her beyond the first step. A man in civilian dress had come out of a flowered alcove, and as he saw his face Arnaud drew back with white lips. The stranger appeared not to notice him. He limped out on the veranda, his uneven step curiously noiseless.

Gabrielle Smith stood with her hands

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resting on the balustrade, her face lifted to the sky, already silvered with the first blush of the rising moon. All was quiet. The band had ceased playing; the voices behind them had sunk to a vague murmur.

"Gabrielle," the man said, scarcely above his breath, and then louder, with note of impulsive interrogation, "Gabrielle?"

She turned and looked at him, and neither spoke. Whatever surprise or consternation there had been in her face had vanished. Her eyes met his baggard, bewildered appeal steadily and sadly. Then she made a slight gesture—a gesture which seemed to indicate an immeasurable distance—and passed down the steps into the darkness.

No. 4005 shouldered his rifle and resumed the monotonous tramp backward and forward across the narrow entrance to the grove. He moved rapidly and from time to time glanced about him with the straining vigilance of a man who suspects his loneliness.

Southward lay open country, a silver stretch broken by a dark ridge of sand-hills and a clump of high palms rising in majestic solitude from the hidden green of their oasis. To the north Sidi-Bel-Abbes, beneath the magic moonlight a white-walled city of enchantments, dreamed while her minarets kept ceaseless watch over the distant desert.

Richard Farquhar listened; he heard subdued laughter and then the soft fall of a woman's feet. For all the haunting realization of danger he did not turn. He had not been conscious of hope, but hope, wild and unreasoning, sprang out of nothing and drummed the mad blood into his ears.

"Mr. Farquhar!"

He turned, and the butt end of his rifle jarred against the stones. She stood a few paces from him in a narrow clearing where the moonlight fell upon her, and he saw every feature of the small face, every phase of her expression changing from a curious mockery to grave concern. He bit his teeth together.

"Why did you come?" he asked. "Was it really for the pleasure of my society?"

"I knew that you were in some danger tonight, Mr. Farquhar."

Her face was turned away now. When she spoke, after a moment's silence, her voice had deepened with an unknown emotion.

"Mr. Farquhar," she said, "it was a woman's loving fear for you which brought me here."

"Thank you," he said simply.

He turned away from her. The momentary weakness was over. The gaunt features under the military cap were composed and resolute. Close at hand was movement, the crunching of the sandy soil under a sharp quick tread, and instinctively his hand slipped to his bayonet.

"I ask you to go now," he said in an imperative undertone. "You have done what you could. It was brave and good of you, but to remain is sheer folly. I am practically unarmed. We

aren't trusted with cartridges, and if anything happens—"

"I choose to be foolish," she interrupted coolly.

He made a movement of protest and appeal, but it was already too late. A shadow loosened itself from the darkness and came out into the clearing. Farquhar's rifle sank to the ground. The moon was at her zenith. In the brilliant yet deceptive light the newcomer loomed out gigantic, supernatural.

"A sentry on duty?" he said ironically, looking from one to the other. "A pleasant relaxation from discipline, by my faith. Your number and regiment sir?"

"4005, of the First, my colonel."

"One of my own particular heroes. We have already met, I fancy. Report yourself tomorrow to your captain. For the present perhaps you will condone to resume your duties. Mademoiselle?"

"Yes—I understand," she assented slowly.

"In ten minutes I shall have returned," she answered.

"One thing more. I do not wish anyone to know of my presence here. It would cause comment. The matter is between Madame Arnaud and myself. You understand?"

"Yes—I understand," she assented slowly.

At a bend in the avenue she glanced back for a moment, searching the darkness. Colonel Destinn's somberly clad figure was hidden in the black outlines of the trees, but beyond, clean cut against the silvery plain, she saw Richard Farquhar's upright watchful figure. Half satisfied, she hurried on.

As she reached the Villa Bernotto, the waltz came to a languorous end, and a few couples in search of fresh air drifted out on to the veranda. Sylvia Arnaud, with her hand resting lightly on the arm of a young lieutenant, stood at the top of the steps, her head thrown back a little so that the soft reflection from the overhanging lantern flooded down upon her face and the beautiful white neck.

Gabrielle touched her on the elbow and she started. "Oh, it's you, Miss Smith! I thought—What is it?"

"Colonel Destinn is in the grove," was the quiet answer. "He wishes to speak with you. Will you come?"

"Yes, wait!" She turned carelessly to her companion. "You will excuse me, won't you? My husband has sent for me."

A minute later she stood at Gabrielle Smith's side at the entrance of the grove. She had completely changed. The coquettish light-heartedness was gone, leaving her excited and a little breathless. She glanced uneasily about her.

"I believe you are shocked," she said hurriedly. "I had to say it was my husband. And I promised Colonel Destinn. It is about Desire—and his promotion—a surprise."

Suddenly, with a little choking exclamation, she stopped and clung to her companion's arm. "Miss Smith—what is that—don't you see—there in the light?"

Instinctively Gabrielle threw off the terrified hand. She had recognized Arnaud. He stood in a bright patch which the moon threw between two great palms on to the sandy avenue. His back was toward her, his head bent, the stoop of his shoulders, the whole attitude unmistakable. She heard the faint click of a lock being slipped back, and then he turned and looked behind him. In that second his features were as visible as when lime-light is turned on to the face of a consummate actor. Capt. Desire Arnaud crossed the avenue and disappeared like a shadow in the darker shadows of the trees.

Sylvia shuddered and then laughed unsteadily.

"How stupid of me! I was really frightened. But I did not want him to see us. It would have been hard to explain, and he has been so strange and excitable lately."

She went on alone, walking in the center of the grove where the light was strongest and humming softly to herself, like a confident child whose momentary fear is passed and forgotten. Colonel Destinn heard her coming. He was still seated where Gabrielle had left him, smoking tranquilly, and the dull glow of his cigarette lighted up an enigmatical composure. Neither pleasure nor triumph had their place in those set features, but something else—the suggestion of an incalculable force under the heel of an incalculable will.

When Sylvia actually knows that her husband is preparing to shoot an innocent man from ambush, why doesn't she give warning or alarm? Does she enjoy tragedy?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Gabrielle glanced at him and saw that he was in undress, and that his uniform was stained with dust.

"Colonel Destinn," she said slowly. "the man you have just punished for speaking to me is my one friend. We brushed shoulders, as it were, months ago, when three flights of stairs separated us—materially and socially. Now by chance we have met again on the same level. Birds of a feather, you know, Colonel Destinn. I too, am something of a scalawag, and the only virtue of the species is a certain loyalty to their kind. I am here to keep guard."

"Keep guard?" he echoed, half puzzled, half amused.

"He has an enemy."

"And you are here as a sort of deus ex machina? Name of heaven, a friend of metal! Give me the name of this evilly intentioned person?"

"That I cannot do, Colonel Destinn. But I will make a bargain with you. If you will forget tonight's delinquencies and will take my place until I return, I will go on your errand. Otherwise I stay here."

He was silent a moment, his hand at his mustache; then he looked at her with a curious smile.

"You are an unusual little woman, mademoiselle." He seated himself on the root of the tree, and drawing out his watch held it to the light. "I give you ten minutes," he added.

"In ten minutes I shall have returned," she answered.

"One thing more. I do not wish anyone to know of my presence here. It would cause comment. The matter is between Madame Arnaud and myself. You understand?"

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FERNS ARE GOOD TO EAT,
SAY UNIVERSITY JAPANESE

Considered Great Delicacy by Nipponese, Who Eat Puget Sound Plant Like Asparagus.

University of Washington.—The common fern or brake that grows in the Puget Sound country is good to eat, according to University of Washington Japanese students. Several Japanese families have been gathering the stems of the plant on the campus recently. They are boiled and eaten like "fuki," the Nipponese rhubarb, or the American asparagus.

To take out the acid taste of the fern, the stems are boiled in water, to which ashes are added. When nearly cooked the water and ashes are poured off. Clean boiling water is then poured on and the cooking is called "warabi" and is considered a great delicacy. Warabi may be eaten at once or it may be dried and stored away for winter use. When mixed with oysters it is called "shoyu," which means oyster sauce. The food can be mixed with most meats, shellfish and vegetables.

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Mabel—When he first began to call he used to talk about the books I like to read.

Maude—And now.

Mabel—Now he talks about the things he likes to eat—Life.

YOUNG WOMEN MAY AVOID PAIN</h