

# YU'AN HEE SEE LAUGHS

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WNU Service

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## SYNOPSIS

Matt Kearney, young American living in London, says good-by to his sister Eileen, on board the Wallaroo. The ship is conveying £2,000,000 in gold to Australia. On his way home Kearney meets Inspector Dawson Haig, of Scotland Yard, very much in love with Eileen. Haig is on the trail of opium, which he is convinced is concealed in Jo Lung's warehouse. Called to other duty, Haig delegates Kearney, with Detective Norwich to visit the place and find out what he can. While in the warehouse Kearney picks up and carries away a notebook, which he turns over to Haig. Yu'an Hee See, leader of a band of international thieves, is at Jo Lung's. Discovering the loss of his notebook, he sends two of his followers after Norwich and Kearney, one of whom he realizes must have picked it up. Haig is puzzled over cryptic notes in the book, referring to the Wallaroo. Soon after leaving Kearney Norwich is murdered, but Kearney is not overtaken. While Haig is poring over the book, a monstrous creature enters, seizes it, and escapes.

## CHAPTER III—Continued

"For the considerable sum of two thousand pounds in cash," he added savagely. "Which cash, when I challenged him, the Greek produced from the safe. Infernally clever. Damnably, poisonously clever. I'm skirting the edge of this case, Kearney. I'm a thousand miles from the heart of it."

"Personally," Kearney confessed. "I'm very uneasy about those entries in the memo book."

"Not half so uneasy as I am," said Dawson Haig. "Something you have told me tonight has given me a clew . . . perhaps too late! That squealing laughter, that King Rat! Any doubt I ever had about his real identity, you have settled! I know now whom I have to deal with."

"I'm afraid I don't follow."

"You remember I went to Singapore a year back? I was following a clew which I hoped would lead to the breaking up of a big drug ring—and I knew (note this point) that Jo Lung was one of the group. They dealt in stolen property (and other merchandise as well). Guess where that clew led?"

Kearney shook his head.

"To the villa, or rather, palace at Johore Bahru, of the Marquis Yu'an Hee See—ex-admiral of China!"

"But you don't mean that he—"

"I mean," Haig went on quickly "that he declined to see me. A highly burnished secretary informed me that his excellency had left Singapore two days before. He was full of regrets. Of course, I had no alternative but to pretend to believe the liar. And as I left the place I heard some one laughing! Yes! I couldn't credit it at first any more than you could! Then I remembered something."

"The marquis had been shot in the throat just prior to the break-up of that old regime under which he held his commission as admiral of the fleet! His vocal chords were affected. The incredible laughter I heard was the laughter of Yu'an Hee See!"

"You mean that—"

"I mean that Yu'an Hee See is Big Chiet—King Rat! And he was at Jo Lung's tonight. It was his memo book that you picked up. You have heard how it was recovered!"

"But what happened—in Singapore?"

Dawson Haig finished his drink and shrugged his shoulders.

"On my way back to Johore Bahru," Haig replied. "I was ingeniously lured into a Chinese 'bath of feathers'—that's all!"

"Bath of feathers!"

"Exactly, Kearney! It's too late to go into details. Incidentally, though, I got out again . . . and there was no possible connection

between this dastardly attempt and my call on the marquis! I failed, old man—failed miserably. My name with the chief was mud. Yet, you see, I was on the right track. Yu'an Hee See was in Limehouse tonight. Yu'an Hee See directed the murder of poor Norwich! I know, now—because you heard him laughing."

"Good G—d! Haig! an idea . . . he may be sailing on the Wallaroo!" Dawson Haig nodded—and grinned. "I hadn't overlooked that possibility. Detective Sergeant Durham sails in the Wallaroo as far as Marseilles."

"I'm glad of that," said Kearney. Haig stared at him hard, and: "Most blandly," he said, "the Greek gentleman at Jo Lung's referred to their establishment in Stamboul, tonight. He was safe. There's about as much chance of getting justice in Stamboul as of finding a gold mine in Shoreditch. But the Stamboul branch, as well as that in Limehouse, doesn't deal exclusively in stolen goods, or even drugs. The marquis is interested in a third industry—possibly based upon Stamboul but probably not. Yu'an Hee See is the biggest slave trader in the east!"

Eileen, a light sleeper, was awakened by the revolutions of the screw of the Wallaroo. She jumped out of bed and peeped out across a deserted deck. That dreary panorama of the Lower Thames was slipping by, a drab and desolate picture.

She watched for a while, then closed the shutters and turned up the light. The panic of waking alone in that gray morning had left her. As she sat there smoking and reflecting upon a hundred and one things, but chiefly upon the problem of whether she should write to Dawson Haig, as she had said she would do, or whether she should wait to see if there was a letter from him at Marseilles, she became aware of something. . . .

Some one—some one who had a regular, heavy tread—was pacing the deck on which her stateroom opened. As he passed and repassed, she experienced a rising curiosity respecting his identity.

No doubt a fellow passenger, unreasonably awakened, as she had been, and who, despairing of further sleep, had gone out for a walk. Presently she heard his returning footsteps approaching from the after end. She turned off the light, pushed the shutter aside and peeped out.

She saw the promenader—a big man in a double-breasted blue overcoat; a man who wore a bowler hat, and who glanced aside with what seemed like definite curiosity as he passed her door.

There was nothing in the least degree alarming about him, except that he seemed to be interested in her cabin. Eileen reclosed the shutter and turned in. And Detective Sergeant Durham, noting that her light had gone out again, passed along B deck to another cabin which interested him. Opening a heavy door he stepped into a cross alleyway, then turned left into another running forward and aft.

## CHAPTER IV

SOME passengers on the night cross-channel steamer from Boulogne noticed a gray motor cruiser which passed them in a dead calm sea about halfway across. Her extraordinary turn of speed excited their curiosity.

They must have been even more intrigued could they have witnessed the arrival of this mysterious craft off the French coast.

Stealing through the haze of a gray and cheerless dawn, the mys-

tery boat edged in, point by point, in the direction of Boulogne.

Stern on to the flat beach it lay, showing no lights, its propellers turning lazily. Presently a boat came out from a shadowy inlet. Two rowers labored at the oars, and very shortly drew alongside.

Those five small square cases which had come from Limehouse were transferred from the motor cruiser to the boat. Orange Blossom then stepped gingerly into the little craft, supported by Yu'an Hee See, who followed her. Finally came Jo Lung. As the boat swung away:

"You will receive your orders tomorrow," said Yu'an Hee See rapidly in Chinese.

A yellow face surmounted by a woolen cap peered down from the deck of the cruiser, and:

"I hear, my lord," the man replied, and disappeared.

The two rowers bent to their oars. Some distance up the little creek a landing stage projected, and beyond might be seen the roof of a wooden hut. At this landing stage the party disembarked.

Yu'an Hee See stood staring out through the open doorway of the hut until the men had carried in all five boxes. A board was quickly pried up. Its removal enabled a larger section of the floor, a concealed trap, to be lifted. Rough wooden steps led down into darkness. The Chinaman watched the boxes being stowed in their hidden cellar. When the work was completed and all traces of this hiding place concealed again:

"Come," he said to the woman, "we have no time to delay."

Perhaps half a mile away, guarded by a clump of funeral trees, a small farm might be seen. The woman was ill-shod for the journey, and clung to her companion's arm, silent and fretful. Jo Lung walked behind.

They crossed a weed-grown courtyard. Jo Lung unlocked the door of a broken-down barn.

There, a visio of blue enamel and gleaming silver plate, appeared a large French touring car. Jo Lung disappeared into the gloomy shadows of the barn, while the others made themselves comfortable in the car. When Jo Lung returned, he wore a blue and white uniform with a smart, peaked cap.

"Paris," said Yu'an Hee See—"straight to headquarters."

"The fact remains," said Dawson Haig, "there isn't a scrap of evidence to connect the establishment of our friend Jo Lung with the murder! If we could have produced the notebook—it might have proved to be a hanging matter for somebody. But, legally, it's valueless as evidence."

Dawson Haig lighted a cigarette. "That it contained valuable clues is proved by the steps taken to recover it. But these clues, or what you and I can remember of them, frankly convey very little. In the next place, I certainly had a glimpse—a horrifying glimpse—in your rooms, of the murderer of Norwich. But, as you have pointed out, my description might be that of anything from a ghost to a wild animal!"

Kearney laughed. "That's true enough," he admitted.

"In short, the establishment of Jo Lung with valuable property stolen from all over the world, with its so-called burglar alarms, and other novel features, must carry on as usual entirely undisturbed by Scotland Yard!"

He looked up, his keen blue eyes gleaming savagely across the little table.

"In spite of the fact that one of the most dangerous criminals in the world used the place as his London

base, and that some hired killer of his murdered one of the best men in my department only two nights ago! Not to add that a consignment of drugs, which may have been worth several thousand pounds, was lying about there under our very noses—but, you may take my word for it, is there no longer!"

"That horrible laughter I heard would certainly point to the fact that Yu'an Hee See in person was at Jo Lung's on Friday night."

"I'm almost certain," Haig snapped, "he was on the dock when the crates were removed from the Wallaroo! He was the fur-coated man who slipped through the gates just before I spoke to you! He drove straight to Joe Lung's!"

He sighed, knocking ash from his cigarette.

"The remote possibility that he may himself be joining the ship at Marseilles, I have dealt with, as you know. Durham is on board. But his first message was admittedly not encouraging. It merely con-



"Nothing Ever Does Happen Here," Replied M. Ballon.

sisted of the words "Nothing to report." I take this to mean that there is nothing suspicious about the occupants of the cabins mentioned in those mysterious notes—"

"One of which is Eileen's!"

"I know," Haig groaned, "and I can't get that fact out of my mind. I have checked the curious entry relating to 'Suleiman Bey's.' Paris notified us this morning that there is a certain restaurant of that name near the Moulin Galette. I'm going across this afternoon."

The Restaurant Suleiman Bey, adjoining the Place Pigalle, seemed to be a quiet little place, with sleepy, curtained windows and a glimpse, when the door was open, of a narrow counter where Turkish coffee might be purchased by weight. Beyond was a curtained door.

The night was wet, and patrons were few, but presently two men entered. The one who led, a gaunt, pale-faced fellow, had something of the appearance of the traditional artist, notably a shock of graying dark hair, a small mustache, and a straggly beard.

He was accompanied by a man who might have passed for an American tourist. He was buttoned up in a white waterproof, and keen blue eyes were visible through the lenses of tortoise-shell-rimmed spectacles.

Apparently the artistic gentleman knew the place well, for he nodded to a stout lady who stood behind the counter, raised the curtain in the opening beyond, and the two entered a long, rectangular room. A little stair at the further end led up to a curtained doorway.

Only six customers were present: four of these around a table near

the staircase, two upon the settee. The new arrivals ordered coffee.

The two men seated on the settee were of a different type. One, a slight, dark-faced fellow, might have been a Portuguese. He constantly glanced with uneasy curiosity in the direction of the stairway. The other was a thickset, debauched-looking man of fifty-odd, smoking a dirty old briar pipe, who stared straight before him at the opposite wall. He might have been Dutch or German, although, as a matter of fact, he was Scotch.

"Nothing seems to be happening," said Dawson Haig.

"Nothing ever does happen here," replied M. Ballon, of the Surete. "Plots are made and perhaps carried out, but as they are never carried out in Paris—he shrugged—"what do we care?"

The big Scot drew one gnarled hand out of his pocket and banged it on the table before him. The Arab waiter shuffled across from some hiding place.

"Brandy!"

The Arab retired, but almost immediately returned. And as he set more cognac before the customer, he dropped a green slip upon the table.

Instantly the big man grabbed it, drank his brandy at a gulp, and crossed to the stairs. He mounted, unsteadily, drew the curtain aside, and disappeared. . . .

"Hello!" said Dawson Haig. "Something has happened. Did you notice?"

"Yes." His companion nodded. "But it is, I think, as I have said. There are other rooms here; no doubt some company of fools is meeting in one of them, to discuss the overthrow of the present Russian misgovernment, or something of that kind. Our brandy-swilling friend has been summoned to join them."

"Possibly," the other murmured. "But I should have liked a glimpse of that green slip."

Even as he spoke the Portuguese clapped his hands, ordering the waiter to bring cigarettes. And when this order was executed—a green slip accompanied the little blue-wrapped packet!

The customer visibly started at sight of it, stood up, a small, lithe figure, and started up the stairs as the other had done.

"H'm!" said Dawson Haig. "A second chance missed. I would give a year's pay, M. Ballon, to be present at this meeting you speak of."

The meeting to which Dawson Haig referred, was taking place in a large room two floors above. A singular company was assembled.

A case of champagne had been opened in the center of the floor. Upon a big, marble-topped table were bottles of whisky, brandy gin, absinthe and even arak. Boxes of excellent cigars lay upon many of the smaller tables placed before the settees. The air was gray, almost unbreathable, with tobacco smoke.

As the big man entered, pipe in hand, and stood, swaying and looking about him with bleared eyes wild yells of greeting went up. The newcomer seemed bemused by his riotous reception. One could almost watch the slow workings of that fuddled brain. Then, evidently having discovered the person he was seeking, he picked his way to a narrow settee between two curtained windows, on which one lounged in supercilious isolation.

This was a sprucely groomed Egyptian, his sleek black hair growing very low upon his cheek bones. With his chin clean-shaven, olive-face and very white teeth he was a languorously handsome figure.

"Hello, Macfles," he said, greeting the newcomer in English which he spoke with facility but a slight accent. "You are late. You are one other are last to report."

"I had h—l's work an a—" was his reply. "I hadna a bean. I've h—l bite nor sup since yesterday morn'ng and I walked here from Calais

(TO BE CONTINUED)