

THE SPRINGFIELD NEWS

by Edison Marshall Illustrations by PAUL FREHM

Pierce advises him to keep his eyes the same way. wide open while there. On the way in a train Dr. Long is attracted by a train," he told me in his correct but of a certain large species of owl-a natural in the man. But by some girl, who later faints. Dr. Long treats hesitant English, as he helped me in- night-hunter that is often found in our Satanic contriving of fate and cirher, and looking into her bag, is as- to Southley's great touring car. ounded to find a loaded revolver. Now read on-

CHAPTER II.

I heard the conductor shout behind me. I turned from her, even as her eyes were upon me. It was my station; and I did not stop to realize the screaming folly of leaving the train.

Men who have thrown away the wrong card in the biggest poker hand of their lives might have some inkling of the way I felt. For three minutes I stood fuming, watching the vanishing end of the train. It soon swept out of sight.

"Is this Dr. Long?" spoke a voice behind me.

The voice was deferential; yet it had neither the tone nor the rhythm of our Florida colored men. I think that I expected to turn and see a white servitor-one of those grayhaired English butlers of an old and incomparable school. It was a low voice, with a rather perculiar purring quality. And so I was surprised to see tre dusky face that looked into mine. It wasn't black, yet quite dark enough to be that of a mulatto. But in a glance I knew that the man had no African blood whatever.

The shape of his features was distinctly Aryan. He had a straight. finely chiseled nose that was almost classical, thin lips and rather high cheek-bones. He wore the snow-white turban of a Mussulman. But most of all I noticed his eyes. They were the eyes of a mystic, very black, and astoundingly deep. They gave no key to his thoughts, but suggested the somber mysticism of the East. Of course he was one of Southley's servants, and a native of Hindustan.

"Yes, I'm Long," I told him.

"I come from Southley Downs, sahib-and the car is waiting," he went on in his strange, purring voice. The great, black eyes fascinated me.

He took my bag and led the way to the car. I am not usually particularly observant of casual acquaintances; but I found myself studying the dark, a bell jingled in the hall. For an inwas a quality in his carriage that was particularly absorbing. I couldn't quite him. They talked together an instant, was the somewhat stealthy way with which he placed his feet, a sinuousness and a grace that one might expect in a dancer. I couldn't hear his footfall on the gravel; and I fell to conjecturing what a successful hunter he would be in the Western moun-200 much

"The other must have missed the

lighted hall, I saw that the months smothered gasp of dismay. had changed him. The sight of his fine, old face in the soft candle-light with the nerves of these occupants in the eyes of certain great beasts of was, I think, the first real shock of of Southley Downs. Evidently the prey in the black depths. my stay at Southley Downs.

hind him.

Joe come?"

I didn't hear the answer, for I turned to shake hands with a tall, straight youth that was Southley's in spite of her embarrassment. son. He was about twenty-one, evtdently an undergraduate at college.

'My son, Ernest," the old man told me. He tried to straighten up. "Already taller than his father."

We walked into the great drawing room; and there two other men arose to greet us.

"Mr. Hayward," my host explained. "And another Mr. Hayward, his son." It was wholly possible that his voice changed slightly when he in-

troduced these two. But, of course, it was to be expected. An instant before he had just introduced his son, evidently the joy and pride of his life. But now it seemed to me that the voice had an alien tone-a strain and a nervousness that was not readily explained. I bowed over the older man's hand.

He was a huge creature-six feet tall and more than a little obese, and perhaps sixty-five years of age. He was closely shaven, and his white hair was clipped close. He had rather peculiar, piercing gray eyes, a firm mouth, and he had the look of overstant the Hindu's face showed in the

WHAT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE- tains. It usually takes years of prac- shivered out of the darkness-seem- rug, evidently cleaning a soiled place Dr. Long, out fishing with Alexan- tice to learn to stalk. He seemed to ingly just below the veranda. It was on the carpet. And even in that awkder Pierce, a detective, tells of his know how intuitively. The man walk- a plaintive, haunting cry, but except ward position he seemed to move with projected trip to Southerly Downs, ed just like a cat. He placed his feet to a naturalist not worth a moment's a strange, feline grace, a lithe sinuousthought. I had been enough in the ness beyond all words.

wilderness to recognize it as the cry I did not forget that this was Florida marshes. Those on the cumstance, the candle light had found Southley himself met me on the veranda with me must have heard the a reflection in his eyes. I am a coldgreat veranda. The shadows were same sound dozens of times. But blooded, self-disciplined man, and it heavy there, and his face just a white four of them started in their chairs, was not just imagination, not just blur. But when we went into the and one of the four uttered a half- delusion or moon-madness that revealed to me a strange greenish

Something was radically wrong glare, not unlike the light to be seen

swamp air had got into them and He greeted me with the finest hos- left its poison. The elderly Southley pitality. He couldn't live in a had evidently not heard the sound, lowed his departure. Southern manor house and do any At least, he gave no sign. His son, other thing. It's in the air and the the nerves of whose handsome body atmosphere, as all men know who should have been of steel, gave a have visited the South. It is a tradi- scarcely perceptible start. Both of tion, too. The voice itself was rather the Haywards turned with a nervous just Ahmad Das." wavering and shrill, rather more aged jerk, and the elder said something than I had remembered it. Then he that sounded like an oath under his turned to the impassive Oriental be- breath. Josephine had been the most glare from his candle." affected of all; and when I looked at "Ahmad Das," he asked, "didn't her again I saw that lingering, haunt some of the great, downstairs rooms

ing sorrow in her dark eyes. She uttered a little, nervous laugh -a sound that was joyously musical

"Did you ever encounter just this atmosphere before?" she asked me.

"All it needs is a ghost," I told her. "If you can present a ghost it's going to be the biggest week of my life."

"It's here already."

"You don't mean it!"

"The newest, most novel ghost in

the world!" She said it lightly; and I kept my Ghost stories aren't meant to be beeyes on her. Then we heard the lieved." elder Hayward grunting from the chair.

Josephine," he muttered. "I've heard laughed at, even if it isn't to be be-

"Then take him into the library, Joe," her father suggested. "I do want a tradition of this house since my him to hear it-and since it bores father came, forty years ago. And Mr. Hayward, you'd better not tell it, it isn't nice-at all. It's just that here. I want him to see the house, Southley Downs needs a doctor-even

Josephine and L went through the long hall, and into the library. There were other candles here, and the man," she said. "It isn't the ghost of shadows were long and unwavering. a lovely girl who died for a sweet-I beld a chair for her, and took one heart-or even a little child." layself.

"Of course I know you," she said it can't bear to think of their sleep

my father then, and leaped through the window and escaped into the marshes.

"When morning came all the negroes and my father and the Hindu tracked the tiger down-and finally killed him in the thickets. And when they got back Ahmad Das was born. On the very day, and the same hour, (Continued on Page 6)

RELIEF FROM CURSE

OF CONSTIPATION A Battle Creek physician, says, "Constipation is responsible for more misery than any other cause."

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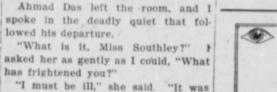
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"I know-and that wild light in his

eyes was natural. It was just the She smiled at me, took me through of the manor house. The place was almost Georgian. There were many little alcoves-the best of hidingplaces-and long corridors and indefinite flights of stairs. I was amazed at the size of it.

"It's these marshes, I think-the tra- I exclaimed. "You forgot, Miss South-"And what traditions it must have!" ley. You were going to tell me about the ghost."

She paused and looked at me. "I've decided I hadn't better." "I'm so sorry . It would give an

added zest to this visit-' "But you wouldn't believe it-" "And you wouldn't want me to!

"But this story is a little different, Dr. Long. It has one or two rather "Oh, don't tell that silly story again, troublesome points-and it isn't to be lieved. I hope you'll be able to laugh -but I'm afraid you won't. It's been more than I do."

> "And maybe I'm the one it needs." "Our ghost isn't the ghost of a "I'm glad it isn't a little child. I





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once. and the old man was beside me again by the tme I had turned to the younger Hayward.

was a man possibly my own He age. He also was in the newest of dinner garb. He had a rather large. dark face-perhaps a trifle severe and forbidding. There was a dull light that might have been ambition and might have been a thousand other things in his eyes.

"I've heard Southley speak of you." the younger man told me. "I am Vilas Hayward. It may help you to keep us straight to know my given name.' "I think that is Joe now."

Then we all stood up. The whole world faded-the glittering table, the watchful faces of the men, the dark body of the Hindu servant-and left. only the slender form at the threshold of the door.

"She's been on a visit to the shore, and she was carried past her station -like the little stupid that she is." I heard Southley saying from far away. "I had to send for her in the car. Josephine-come up and meet my friend, Doctor Long. Long-my-daughter, Miss Southley."

The girl at the doorway was the same girl I had carried in my arms that afternoon; and she had not yet removed the intriguing little hat from the fine, brown hair.

"I hope you don't mind candleexcellent meal. "We have a private lighting plant, but it's seriously out of order. We're sending for parts."

"I prefer candles, and I'd have 'em if I had enough servants to keep them trimmed," I replied. "It's the most restful light on earth."

alder Hayward grunted Then in his place.

"I fall over the house with 'em." he said. "I like bright lights, and lots of 'em. And the worst of it is the plant broke three days after I came Spite work, I think."

I looked at him, expecting to find him in jest. There are men that joke like that sometimes. But his face gave no sign. And I was to learn before the night was done that such remarks were quite to be expected from the elder Hayward.

A long, tremendous call suddenly

"I'm glad of that. I was sure you had forgotten." all."

I was watching with immeasurable her face, every shadow in her eyes, the delicious rising and falling of the color in her cheeks. She was in the water freezes, the life utterly died in ago; and he brought a tiger-cub with her face.

that men call life was sparkling in two servants, too-a Hindu man and her eyes and dancing in her smile. my mother's ayah. Both these two Her color was at its height, and I servants are dead. Although you was drinking it like wine. In the would hardly guess it, Ahmad Das was next it was wholly gone. Probably born after they came to this plantamy first impression was that her color was fading.

She was watching something just over my shoulder. Her gaze was al. gentle as a collie. But one night most trance-like. The light went out of her eyes, and they widened, too. And a no less perceptible change came in the set of her lips.

Very slowly I turned. I don't know what I expected to see. But I were even more dangerous than they certainly expected nothing as commonplace as I saw. Her eyes were unquestionably the brute's intention fixed on the form of Ahmad Das, the to carry her off-and maybe you servant, who was doing some house. know sometching about tigers. hold task at the other end of the "They say that they will play for

For an-instant I also followed his -just as a cat plays with a mouse,

ing so uneasy that they would walk." "Our ghost-isn't a human being at

I couldn't laught into her earnest delight every change of expression in face. I didn't feel like laughing. "It isn't very cheerful, is it, doctor?" she went on. "And it is rather embarrassing to sit here and tell you things middle of a sentence, and all things I know you can't possibly believe. My else were forgotten. Then, slowly as father came from India forty years

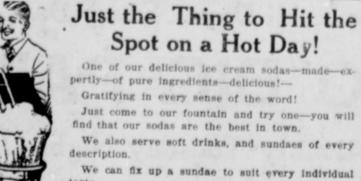
him, - It was a pet-a tawny little There is no other word. In a creature that played and romped and moment, the witchery and mystery pulled at the curtains. He brought tion.

"The cub grew into a beautiful, tawny, full-grown tiger, seemingly as when the wind blew it seemed to go mad. It attacked the Hindu woman, and she was badly torn before my father drove the creature off. In the condition that she was, her wounds

otherwise would have been. It was

literally hours with their human prey

motions with a senseless fascination. with the most terrible cruelty that light," Southley apologized during the He was on his hands and feet on the can be imagined. The beast attacked

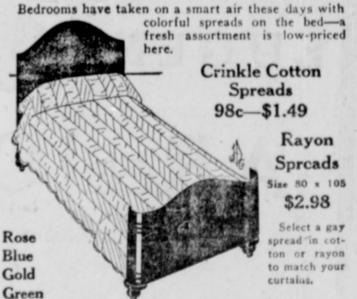


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