

THE DESPERATE LOVER

BY E. D. Phillips
Oppenheim

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE:

Palermo is the scene. There an exile, Leonardo di Marioni, has come for love of Adrienne Cartuccio, who spurns him. He meets an Englishman, Lord St. Maurice, who falls in love with Adrienne on sight. Leonardo sobs his sister Margarita, who tells him his love for Adrienne is hopeless. But he pleads with her to arrange an accidental meeting, to say farewell, between Adrienne and him.

She consents. That night the Englishman is informed of an attempt being made to carry off Signorina Cartuccio and Margarita, who are walking, by bigrands employed by a rejected suitor, on a lonely road. He rushes to the scene, and proves able to rescue the ladies.

Inflamed by the failure of his scheme, Leonardo see Margarita who shows him she knows that he was instigator of the attempted attack. The Englishman now sees Adrienne often. The Englishman sitting in the hotel, finds a dagger at his feet. Looking up, he sees the Sicilian and scents trouble.

Leonardo and the Englishman quarrel. The Englishman at first refused to accept a challenge to duel, then when the Italian slaps him consents. The two men face each other ready to fight to the death.

Margarita stops the duel by coming just in the nick of time to save the Englishman from his fate, with two officers who arrest the exile Leonardo. Leonardo vows vengeance. After 25 years in jail he is again at his hotel, an old, broken man with only memories left to him.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY—

For through all his apathy he was conscious of a great sickening disappointment, something gone out of his life, which had helped him, day by day, through all that weary imprisonment. Dear to his heart had grown that hope of standing one day before the masters of his Order, and claiming, as his rightful due, vengeance upon those whose word had sent him into captivity. Dear to his memory and treasured among his thoughts had grown that hope. In his prison house he had grown narrower; other thoughts and purposes had faded away. That one only remained, growing stronger and stronger day by day, until it had seized hold of his whole being. He lived only through it and with it. Now he had gone to Signor Bartolozzi, only to find that the Order had given up its old purposes and principles—had become a mere social club.

Given some soul-absorbing purpose, some cherished end, however dimly seen through the mists of futurity, and a man may preserve his reason through the longest captivity; while, day by day, his narrowing life contracts till all conscience, all hope, all sentiment, become the slaves of that one passionate desire. Day by day, it looms larger before him; day by day all doubts concerning it grows weaker, and the justice of it becomes clearer and more unquestioned. Right and wrong, justice and injustice, according to other men's standards, have no power over it in his own thoughts. His moral sense slumbers. So deeply had it become grafted in his life, that he no more questions its right to exist than he does the presence of the limbs upon his body. As surely as the night follows day, so surely does his whole being gravitate toward the accomplishment of his desire. It is a part of what is left in his life, and if it is smitten, his life is smitten. They are a once sympathetic and identical, so closely entwined that to sever them is death to both.

Thus it was with Count Marioni, and thus it was that, day by day, he sat in his sitting-room slowly pining to death. Rude feet had trampled upon the desire of his life, and the wound was open and bleeding. Only a little while longer and he would have turned upon his side with a sigh, and yielded up his last breath; and, so far as his numbed faculties could have conceived a thought, death would have seemed very pleasant to him. He was dying of loneliness, of disappointment and despair.

The people at the hotel had made several attempts to rouse him, but in vain. He answered no questions, and in his quiet way resented intrusion. He paid whatever was demanded, and he gave no trouble. The manager, who knew his history from a short cutting in a newspaper which had chronicled his arrival in London, was at his wits' end to know how to save him. He had once endeavored to reason gently with his eccentric visitor, but he had been bidden quietly to leave the room. On his endeavoring to make one more appeal, the Count had risen quietly and pointed to the door.

"I only wish to be left in peace," he said with a touch of dignity in his sad, cold manner. "If you cannot do that I will go away to another hotel. Choose!"

The manager had bowed and withdrawn in silence. But he was a kind-hearted man, and he was still troubled about the matter. Day by day the Count was growing weaker; before long he would doubtless die from sheer distaste of living as much as from any actual disease. Something ought to be done toward communicating with his friends, if he had any. With a certain amount of reluctance, the manager, as a last resource, penned the following advertisement and sent it to the principal London papers:

"If there are any friends or relatives still alive of Count Leonardo di Marioni, who has recently been set free by the Italian Government after a long term of imprisonment, they are requested to communicate, personally, if possible, with the manager of the Hotel Continental, where the Count is now lying dangerously ill."

The great room in which the Count Marioni was sitting was almost in darkness, for the afternoon was dull and foggy, and the curtains were partially closed. There was no lamp lit, and the only light came from the brightly-burning fire near which the Count was sitting in an armchair ludicrously too large for his frail body. The flames fell upon his white, worn face, with its deep branding lines, and gleamed in his great sad eyes, so bright and dry that they seemed like mirrors for the firelight. His hair and short unkempt beard were as white as snow, matching even the unnatural pallor of his skin, and his black frock coat was buttoned across a chest which would have been narrow for a consumptive boy. He did, indeed, look on the threshold of death.

He had not turned his head at the opening and closing of the door, but presently another sound broke the silence. It was a woman's sob, and as he slowly turned his head, a tall, graceful figure moved forward out of the shadows, and he heard his name softly murmured.

"Leonardo!"

His hand went up to his forehead. Was it a dream; or was he indeed back once more in the days of his youth, back among the pine woods which topped his castle, walking side by side with her whose presence seemed to make the long summer days one sweet dream of light? The familiar odor of violets and wild hyacinths seemed to fill the room. The fog-bound city, with its ceaseless roar, existed for him no longer. The sun of his own dear country warmed his heart, and the sea wind blew in his eager face. And she was there—his queen—the great desire of his weary life. All his pulses leaped with the joy of her presence. Five-and-twenty years of lonely misery were blotted out. Ah! memory is a wonderful magician!

"Leonardo! Will you not speak to me?"

Again that voice! Where was he now! Face to face with her on the sands of Palermo, deceived, betrayed, given over to the enemies of his country, and by her—the woman for whom his passionate love had been his sole crime. Listen! The air is full of that cry of threatened vengeance. Hark how the echoes ring back from the cliffs. "By the sun, and the sky, and the sea, and the earth, I swear that, as they continue unchanged and unchanging, so shall my hate for you remain!" Darkness—a prison cell. Year by year, year by year, darkness, solitude, misery! See the black hair turn gray, the strength of manhood wasting away, the eye growing dim, the body weak. Year by year, year by year, it goes on. What was that scratched on the whitewashed walls? What was the cry which rang back from the towering cliff? "Hate unchanging and unchanged!" The same—ever the same.

"Leonardo, have you no word for me?"

He rose slowly from his chair, and fixed his eyes upon her.

Before their fire she shrank back, appalled. Was it a storm about to burst upon her? No! The words were slow and few.

"You have dared to come—here; dared to come and look upon your handiwork! Away! Out of my sight! You have seen me. Go!"

Tears blinded her eyes. The sight of him was horrible to her. She forgot, in her great pity, that justice had been upon her side. She sank upon her knees before him on the velvet pile carpet.

"Leonardo, for the love of God, forgive me!" she sobbed. "Oh! it is painful to see you thus and to know the burden of hate which you carry in your heart. Forgive me! Forgive us both!"

He stooped down until his ghastly face nearly touched hers.

"Curse you!" he muttered hoarsely. "You dare to look at me, and ask for forgiveness. Never! never! Every morning and night I curse you. I curse you when my mother taught me to pray. I live for nothing else. If I had the strength I would strangle you where you stand. Hell's curses and mine ring in your ears and sit in your heart day by day, and night by night! Away with you! Away away!"

She was a brave woman, but she fled from the room like a hunted animal, and passed out of the hotel with never a look to the right or to the left.

Count Marioni sat in his old attitude, brooding over the fire from the depths of his armchair, with a sad, vacant look in his dull eyes. At first he took no notice of the opening of the door, but as a light, smooth footstep crossed the floor toward him and hesitated at his side, he glanced wearily up. In a moment his whole expression was changed. He was like a number and torpid figure suddenly galvanized into acute life.

He passed his hand swiftly across his eyes, and his thin fingers grasped the sides of his chair with nervous force. Ah! he must be dreaming again! It was one of the faces of the past, tempting and mocking him! Yet, no! she stood there; surely she stood there. Mother of God! Was this madness come at last?

"Margarita!" he cried, stretching out his hands toward her. "Margarita!"

It was no dream, then, nor was it madness. It was truth. There were loving, clinging arms around his neck, a passionate, weeping face pressed close against his. Hot tears, her tears were trickling down his hollow cheeks, kindling his stagnant blood by their warmth, and thawing the apathetic chill whose icy hand had lain so heavy upon him. A sob escaped him. His eager, trembling fingers pushed back the clustering hair from her temples. He peered wonderingly into her face. It must be a vision; it would surely fade away, and leave him once more in the outer darkness. Five-and-twenty years had passed! She had been like this then! A sense of bewilderment crept in upon him.

"Margarita!" he exclaimed feebly. "I do not understand! You are Margarita; you have her hair, her eyes, her mouth! And yet, of course, it cannot be. Ah, no! it cannot be!"

"You are thinking of my mother," she cried softly. "She loved you so much. I am like her, am I not?"

"Married! Margarita married! Ah, of course! I had forgotten. And you are her child. My sister's child. Ah, five-and-twenty years is a long time."

"It is a shameful, cruel time," she cried passionately. "My mother used to tell me of it, when I was a little girl, and her voice would shake with anger and pity. Francesca, too, would talk to me about you. I prayed for you every evening when I was little, that they might soon set you free again. Oh, it was cruel!"

She threw her arms around his neck, and he rested his head upon her shoulder. It was like an elixir of life for him.

"And your mother, Margarita?" he asked fearfully.

"She is dead," was the reply. "Ah! Margarita dead! She was so like you, child. Dead! Five-and-twenty years is a weary while. Dead!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

BIRD HOUSE CONTEST DATE IS ADVANCED

The final date for the bird house contest for Springfield boy scouts, which is being conducted by John Ketels, local druggist, has been extended from May 1 to June 1. Mr. Ketels announced yesterday. The dead line was advanced because of the small number of houses completed

at present. The contest is open to all members of Troops 11 and 12. For the best bird house entered, Mr. Ketels offers the prize of a boy scout axe, for the second a boy scout knife, and for the third, a boy scout first aid kit. To the troop whose members capture at least two of the prizes, Ketels will award a grand prize of a framed picture of the official boy scout.

Kennett at Coos Bay—G. W. Kennett spent last week-end on a business trip to the Coos Bay district.

FOR RENT—Furnished Apartments for Rent at Hotel Elite. M. 29

FOR RENT—A Five Room house with bath, double garage and nice garden already planted for \$16.00. Enquire at Elite Hotel. M. 29

CALL FOR WARRANTS
Notice is hereby given that School District No. 19, in Springfield, Lane County, Oregon, will pay at the office of the Clerk of said district all warrants issued prior to November 10, 1928, to and including No. 139. Interest ceases after May 4, 1929.
WM. G. HUGHES,
Clerk District 19.



New Spring Millinery

JUST ARRIVED

Our large stock of beautiful spring hats, which we had ordered before our Close out Sale started here, have arrived. We want to close out these hats and save expense of shipping them to our other stores.

WE ARE OFFERING

EVERY HAT \$1.00 OFF Regular Price
IN STOCK

Kafoury Bros.



For Healty Delight Eat Plenty of Quality

ICE CREAM

Good for Children and Grown Ups Too

- Serve it for Dessert
- Serve it with fresh fruit
- Serve it often

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Fares cut 60% May 10

Roundtrip tickets for 60% of the regular one way fare—Good in Pullmans. This means that if the one way fare is \$10 you will be able to make the roundtrip for \$6.00. In effect between any two points on Southern Pacific's Pacific Lines. Minimum roundtrip fare 50 cents. On sale Friday, May 10. Trip must be started that day. Return limit midnight, Tuesday, May 14.

The "Last Spike" will never be driven

—Southern Pacific still building with the West

The 60th anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike, May 10, Southern Pacific's Golden Jubilee, finds this western railroad still building. Weaponed with crude tools, courage and vision, the early pioneer had hand-carved a way to the new West. With the vision of the pioneer, the West has carried on, and with it, step by step, Southern Pacific has built.

In the last five years Southern Pacific has built more new line than any other railroad in the United States.

In fifteen years Southern Pacific



has built 1481 miles of new line at a cost of 88 million dollars. Of this, 40 million dollars has been spent in Northern California and Oregon.

Through the barrier of the mighty Cascades it has created a new north and south railway. It has double-tracked its OVERLAND ROUTE line over the Sierra. A new main line has been built through Arizona. From Wendell, California, to Lakeview, Oregon, has been broad-gauged.

Now Southern Pacific is completing a short line transcontinental railway through Southern Oregon and Northern California. The Cascade line of the SHASTA ROUTE



and the OVERLAND ROUTE will be connected.

From less than 700 miles in 1869 to 16,520 miles today is but one way of recording Southern Pacific's 60 years of work.

Behind this cold fact of miles built is the epic story of the development of the West. A story of progress indelibly written in the traditions of the West.

Southern Pacific

TUNE IN Southern Pacific's Golden Jubilee Program, featuring **Reinold Werrenath**. Stations KPO, KGO, KFI, KGW, MAY 10 KOMO, KHQ, KSL. A prize of \$100 to the boy or girl, 13 9:30 to 10:30 p.m. or under, who sends in the best written report of the program.

SPECIAL VALUES

Bedroom Suites

\$46, \$49, \$69

FOR COMPLETE 3-PIECE SETS

Enamel Finishes or Walnut

WETHERBEE - POWERS
Willamette at Seventh