

THE PRINCE OF PALESTINE

BY LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

PICTURES BY A. WEILL

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SYNOPSIS.

"Mad" Dan Mattland, on reaching his New York bachelor club, met an attractive young woman at the door. Mattland, O'Hagan assured him no one had been within that day. Dan discovered a woman's finger print in dust on his desk, along with a letter from his attorney. Mattland dined with Bannerman, his attorney. Dan set out for Greenfield, to get his family jewels. During his walk to the country, he met the attractive young woman in gray, whom he had seen leaving his bachelor's club. Her auto had broken down. He fixed it by a ruse also "lost" him. Mattland, on reaching home, surprised lady in gray, cracking rum safe containing his gems. She, apparently, took him for a well-known crook, Daniel Anstey. Mattland, however, opened his safe, took therefrom the jewels, and gave them to her, thus forming a plan nearly in crisis. The real Dan Anstey, sought by police of the world, appeared on the same mission. Mattland overcame him.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

"You doubted me, after all!" she commented, a trifle bitterly. "I—no! You misunderstand me. Believe me, I—"

"Ah, don't protest. What does it make or mar, whether or not you trusted me? . . . You have," she added, quietly, "the jewels safe enough, I suppose?"

He stopped short, agast. "I! The jewels!"

"I slipped them in your coat pocket before—"

Instantly her hand was free, Mattland ramming both his own into the side pockets of his top coat. "They're safe!"

She smiled uncertainly.

"We have no time," said she. "Can you drive—?"



"We Have No Time," Said She. "Can You Drive—?"

They were standing by the side of her car, which had been cunningly hidden in the gloom beneath a spreading tree on the further side of the road. Mattland, crestfallen, offered his hand; the tips of her fingers touched his palm lightly as she jumped in. He hesitated at the step.

"You wish me to?"

She laughed lightly. "Most assuredly. You may assure yourself that I shan't try to elude you again—"

"I would I might be sure of that," he said, studying his voice and seeking her eyes.

"Procrastination won't make it any more assured."

He stepped up and settled himself in the driver's seat, grasping throttle and steering wheel; the great machine thrilled to his touch like a living thing, then began slowly to back out into the road. For an instant it seemed to hang impatient on dead center, then shot out like a bound unleashed, ventura-terre—Brooklyn miles away over the hood.

It seemed but a minute ere they were thundering over the Myantria bridge. A little further on Mattland slowed down and, jumping out, lighted the lamps. In the seat again—no words had passed—he threw in the high-speed clutch, and the world flung behind them, roaring. Thereafter, breathless, stunned by the frenzy of speed, perforce silent, they bored on through the night, crashing along deserted highways.

In the east a band of pallid light lifted up out of the night, and the horizon took shape against it, stark and black. Slowly, stealthily, the formless dawn dusk spread over the sleeping world; to dead center, light-splintered stars reeled and died, and houses, fields, and thoroughfares lay a glimmer with ghostly twilight as the ear tore headlong through the grim, unlovely, silent hinterland of Long Island City.

The gates of the ferry-house were inexorably shut against them when at last Mattland brought the big machine to a tremulous and panting halt, like that of an overdriven thoroughbred. And though they perforce endured a wait of fully fifteen minutes, neither found worth saying; or else the words were worth it to clothe their thoughts were denied them. The girls seemed very weary, and sat with head drooping and hands clasped idly in her lap. To Mattland's hesitant query as to her comfort she returned a monosyllabic reassurance. He did not again venture to disturb her; on his own part he was conscious of a clogging sense of exhaustion, of a drawn and haggard feeling about the eyes and temples; and knew that he was keeping awake automatically, his being already a daze.

The fresh wind off the sullen river served in some measure to revive them, once the gates were opened and the car had taken place on the ferry-boat's forward extreme. Day was now full upon the world; above a horizon belted with bright magenta, the cloudless sky was soft turquoise and sapphire; and abruptly, while the big unwieldy boat surged across the narrow ribbon of green water, the sun shot up with a shout and turned to an evanescent dream of fairy-land the gaunt, rock-ribbed profile of Manhattan island, bulking above them in tier upon tier of monstrous buildings.

On the Manhattan side, in deference to the girl's low-spoken wish Mattland ran the machine up to Second avenue, turned north, and brought it to a stop by the curb, a little north of Thirty-fifth street.

"And now whither?" he inquired, hands somewhat impatiently ready upon the driving and steering gear.

The girl smiled faintly through her veil. "You have been most kind," she told him in a tired voice. "Thank you—from my heart, Mr. Anstey," and made a move as if to relieve him of his charge.

"Is that all?" he demanded, blankly.

"Can I say more?"

"I am to go no further with you?" Sick with disappointment, he rose and dodged to the sidewalk—anticipating her affirmative answer.

"If you would please me," said the girl, "you won't insist."

"I don't," he returned, ruefully.

"But are you quite sure that you're all right no—"

"Quite, thank you, dear Mr. Anstey!"

With a pretty gesture of conquering impulse she swept her veil aside, and the warm rose-glow of the new-born day tinted her young cheeks with color. And her eyes were as stars, bright with a mist of emotion, brimming with gratitude—and something else. He could not say what; but one thing he knew, and that was that she was worn with excitement and fatigue, near to the point of breaking down.

"You're tired," he insisted, solicitously. "Can't you let me—"

"I am tired," she admitted, wistfully, voice subdued, yet rich and vibrant.

"No, please. Please let me go. Don't ask me any more questions—now."

"I've done nothing—"

"Nothing but to be more kind than I can say!"

"And you're not going to back out of our partnership?"

"Oh!—And now the color in her cheeks was warmer than that of the dawn had lent them. "No. . . . I shan't back out." And she smiled.

"And if I call a meeting of the board of management of Anstey and Wentworth, Limited, you will promise to attend?"

"Yes—"

"Will it be too early if I call one for to-day?"

"Why—"

"Say at two o'clock this afternoon, at Eugene's. You know the place?"

"I have lunched there—"

"Then you shall again to-day. You won't disappoint me?"

"I will be there. I . . . I shall be glad to come. Now—please!"

"You've promised. Don't forget."

He stepped back and stood in a sort of dreamy daze, while, with one final wonderful smile at parting, the girl assumed control of the machine and swung it out from the curb. Mattland watched it forge slowly up the avenue and vanish round the Thirty-sixth street corner; then turned his face southward, sighing with weariness and discontent.

At Thirty-fourth street a policeman, lounging beneath the corrugated iron awning of a corner saloon, faced about with a low whistle, to stare after him. Mattland experienced a chill sense of criminal guilt; he was painfully conscious of those two shrewd eyes, boring gimlet-like into his back, overlooking no detail of the wreck of his evening clothes. Involuntarily he glanced down at his legs, and they moved mechanically beneath the edge of his overcoat like twin animated columns of mud and dust, openly advertising his misadventures. He felt in his soul that they shrieked aloud, that they would presently succeed in dining all the town awake, so that the startled populace would come to the windows to stare in wonder as he passed by. And inwardly he groaned and quaked.

As for the policeman, after some reluctant hesitation, he overcame the inherent indisposition to exertion that affects his kind, and, swinging his stick, stalked after Mattland.

Happily (and with heartfelt thanksgiving) the young man chanced upon a somnolent and bedraggled hack, at rest in the stenciled shadows of the Third avenue elevated structure. Its pilot was snoring lustily the sleep of the belated, on the box. With some difficulty he was awakened, and Mattland dodged into the musty, dusty body of the vehicle grateful to escape the unjudicious stare of the guardian of the peace, who in another moment would have overtaken him and, doubtless, subjected him to embarrassing inspection.

As the ancient four-wheeler rattled noisily over the cobbles, some of the shows were taken down their shutters,

the surface cars were beginning to run with increasing frequency, and the sidewalks were becoming sparsely populated. Familiar as the sights were, they were yet somehow strangely unreal to the young man. In a night the face of the world had changed for him; its features loomed weirdly blurred and contorted through the mystical gray-gold atmosphere of the land of Romance, wherein he really lived and moved and had his being.

The blatant day was altogether preposterous; to-day was a dream, something nightmarish; last night he had been awake, last night for the first time in twenty-odd years of existence he had lived.

He slipped unthinkingly one hand into his coat pocket, seeking instinctively his cigarette case; and his fingers brushed the coarse-grained surface of a canvas bag. He jumped as if electrified. He had managed altogether to forget them, yet in his keeping were the jewels, Mattland heirlooms—the swag and booty, the loot and plunder of the night's adventure. And he smiled happily to think that his interest in them was 50 per cent. depreciated in 24 hours; now he owned only half.

Suddenly he sat up, with happy eyes and a glowing face. She had trusted him!

CHAPTER V. Incognito.

At noon, precisely, Mattland stirred between the sheets for the first time since he had thrown himself into his bed—stirred, and, confused by what-ever alarm had awakened him, yawned stuporously, and sat up, rubbing cneched fists in his eyes to clear them of sleep's cobwebs. Then he bent forward, clasping his knees, smiled broadly, replaced the smile with a thoughtful frown, and in such wise contemplated the foot of the bed for several minutes—his first conscious impression, that he had something delightful to look forward to yielding to a vague recollection of a prolonged thrill tinnabulation—as if the telephone bell in the front room had been ringing for some time.

But he waited in vain for a repetition of the sound, and eventually concluded that he had been mistaken; it had been an echo from his dreams, most likely. Besides, who should call him up? Not two people knew that he was in town; not even O'Hagan was aware that he had returned to his rooms that morning.

He gaped again, stretching wide his arms, sat up on the edge of the bed, and heard the clock strike 12.

Noon and . . . He had an engagement at two! He brightened at the memory and, jumping up, pressed an electric call button on the wall. By the time he had padded barefoot to the bathroom and turned on the cold-water tap, O'Hagan's knock summoned him to the hall door.

"Back again, O'Hagan; and in a despatch, I'll want you to shave me and send some telegrams, please. Must be off by 1:30. You may get out my gray-striped flannels—here he paused, calculating his costume with careful discrimination—and a black-striped negligee shirt; gray socks; russet low shoes; black and white neck tie—broad wings. You know where to find them all?"

"Shure yiss, sor."

O'Hagan showed no evidence of surprise; the eccentricities of Mr. Mattland could not move him, who was inured to them through long association and observation. He moved away to execute his instructions, quietly efficient. By the time Mattland had finished splashing and gazing in the bathtub everything was ready for the ceremony of dressing.

In other words, 20 minutes later Mattland, bathed, shaved, but still in dressing gown and slippers, was seated at his desk, a cup of black coffee steaming at his elbow, a number of yellow telegraph blanks before him, a pen poised between his fingers. It was in his mind to send a wire to Cressy, apologizing for his desertion of the night just gone, and announcing his intention to rejoin the party from which the motor trip to New York had been as planned but a temporary defection, in time for dinner that same evening. He nibbled the end of the penholder, selecting phrases, then looked up at the attentive O'Hagan.

"Bring me a New Haven time table, please," he beckoned.

The door bell interrupted his words, clamoring shrilly.

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He put down the pen, swallowed his coffee, and lit a cigarette, listening to the murmurs at the hall door. An instant later, O'Hagan returned, bearing a slip of white pasteboard he deposited on the desk before Mattland.

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"A gentleman, sor, be th' lookee as him an' th' way he talks."

"Well . . . Devil take the man! Show him in."

"Very good, sor."

Mattland swung around in his desk chair, his back to the window, expression politely curious, as his caller entered the room, pausing, hat in hand, just across the threshold.

He proved to be a man apparently of middle age, of height approximating Mattland's; his shoulders were slightly rounded as if from habitual bending over a desk, his pose mild and deferential. By his eyeglasses and peering look, he was near-sighted; by his dress, a gentleman of taste and judgment as well as of means to gratify both. A certain jaunty and summery touch in his attire suggested a person of leisure who had just run down from his country place for a day in town.

His voice, when he spoke, did nothing to dispel the illusion.

"Mr. Mattland?" he opened the conversation briskly. "I trust I do not intrude? I shall be brief as possible, if you will favor me with a private interview."

Mattland remarked a voice well modulated and a good choice of words. He rose courteously.

"I should be pleased to do so," he suggested, "if you could advance any reason for such a request."

Mr. Smith smiled discreetly, fumbling in his side pocket. A second slip of cardboard appeared between his fingers as he stepped over toward Mattland.

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Takes Romance From Tears

Weapon of the Heroine Coolly Analyzed by French Chemist.

One does not care to have one's tears analyzed like a patent food or medicine, and to associate them with chemical substances, but we are nothing if not practical nowadays, and every shred of romance, poetry and sentiment is remorselessly wrenched from us for scientific purposes.

A French journal devoted to matters of this kind has been telling us, not only of what tears are composed, but exactly the effect that is produced on brain and body when we shed them.

So henceforth when we read that the heroine's beautiful eyes were suffused with tears, that "in a moment she was weeping passionately on his shoulder," we shall know that by a kind of shower-bath arrangement a mixture of albuminoid, water and chemical substances was let loose at the back of her skull, thus dulling the nerve centers, and really giving her relief.

However, it does not sound romantic, and mere man is likely to imagine that the fair one is really suffering doubly when all this happens—Gentle woman.

Siletz Settlers Win.

Washington, March 6.—President Taft shortly before noon today signed Representative Hawley's bill granting relief to certain settlers on the same bill that received a pocket veto a year ago.

The bill only confirms those entries made for the exclusive use and benefit of the entrants, which have been actually improved and have not been sold or contracted to be sold by entrants.

King To Be "Kids" Host.

London—King George will entertain 10,000 children in London, according to announcement, at a coronation fête to be held in Crystal Palace, June 30

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"I should be pleased to do so," he suggested, "if you could advance any reason for such a request."

Mr. Smith smiled discreetly, fumbling in his side pocket. A second slip of cardboard appeared between his fingers as he stepped over toward Mattland.

"If I had not feared it might deprive me of this interview, I should have sent in my business card at once," he said. "Permit me."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

He gaped again, stretching wide his arms, sat up on the edge of the bed, and heard the clock strike 12.

Noon and . . . He had an engagement at two! He brightened at the memory and, jumping up, pressed an electric call button on the wall. By the time he had padded barefoot to the bathroom and turned on the cold-water tap, O'Hagan's knock summoned him to the hall door.

"Back again, O'Hagan; and in a despatch, I'll want you to shave me and send some telegrams, please. Must be off by 1:30. You may get out my gray-striped flannels—here he paused, calculating his costume with careful discrimination—and a black-striped negligee shirt; gray socks; russet low shoes; black and white neck tie—broad wings. You know where to find them all?"

"Shure yiss, sor."

O'Hagan showed no evidence of surprise; the eccentricities of Mr. Mattland could not move him, who was inured to them through long association and observation. He moved away to execute his instructions, quietly efficient. By the time Mattland had finished splashing and gazing in the bathtub everything was ready for the ceremony of dressing.

In other words, 20 minutes later Mattland, bathed, shaved, but still in dressing gown and slippers, was seated at his desk, a cup of black coffee steaming at his elbow, a number of yellow telegraph blanks before him, a pen poised between his fingers. It was in his mind to send a wire to Cressy, apologizing for his desertion of the night just gone, and announcing his intention to rejoin the party from which the motor trip to New York had been as planned but a temporary defection, in time for dinner that same evening. He nibbled the end of the penholder, selecting phrases, then looked up at the attentive O'Hagan.

"Bring me a New Haven time table, please," he beckoned.

The door bell interrupted his words, clamoring shrilly.

"What the deuce?" he demanded. "Who can that be? Answer it, will you, O'Hagan?"

He put down the pen, swallowed his coffee, and lit a cigarette, listening to the murmurs at the hall door. An instant later, O'Hagan returned, bearing a slip of white pasteboard he deposited on the desk before Mattland.

"James Burleson Smith," Mattland read aloud from the faultlessly engraved card. "I don't know him. What does he want?"

"Wouldn't say, sor; seemed surprised when I told him ye were in, sir," said he, glad to hear it—business pressin', says he."

"Smith? But I never heard the name before. What does he look like?"

"A gentleman, sor, be th' lookee as him an' th' way he talks."

"Well . . . Devil take the man! Show him in."

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