For the Love of a Lady

by Jeffery Farnol

SYNOPSIS: Sir Richard Guyfford faces almost certain death in an impending duel with Julian, his scoundrelly cousin. Beautiful Helen D'Arcy is concerned because it was her accusation of Richard—as a blackmailer of women—that led him to discover his cousin's use of Richard's name in dealings with certain love letters. Richard breaks a horse-whip on Julian, who then hurls out the challenge—a veritable death warrant from a cunning swordsman. To Helen and her aunt, the Duchess, come gossiping neighbors to regale them with tales of Richard's iniquitous character. Unexpectedly Richard enters the scene, welcomed by the Duchess—dear friend of his dead father and mother.

Chapter 7

A PLOT OF VILLAINS

THE Duchess fell back in her chair the better to stare up at Sir Richard, who stood looking down at her, his shapely mouth curled in sardonic smile. . . . Then the Duchess shook her head.

"I don't believe it—no, never of thee, Richard Guyfford!"

"Madame la Duchess, I—I am grateful!" said he, his speech and tone so altered that my lady Helen's grey eyes opened somewhat wider than usual.

"Howbeit, madam, all these letters were superscribed to Sir Richard Guyfford——"

"Och, me child, the villain used Dick's name."

A plot—to win the D'Arcy fortune—to force Helen into marriage.

"Then perhaps Sir Richard will tell us—who?"

"To what end, ma'm?" he retorted. "Since madam is assured that my father's son hath not stopped to such infamy—what matter?"

"Your jesting is out o'place, sir."

"Like myself, ma'm, so I'll be gone. . . . And here are Mistress Angela's letters." So saying, he thrust the somewhat bulky packet in Helen's white fingers.

"Richard," said the Duchess, "you will ever be an honoured guest. 'Is come again ye will—and soon!"

"No!" he answered slowly, "I—am a man— with a shadow. . . . Some six years ago I had a friend, but one night we quarreled bitterly, and would ha' fought there and then but were prevented . . . . That same night he was found—murdered within a few yards of my lodging. . . . I was suspected and shunned by all save two o' my friends. . . . Well, this was six years agone, but the shadow of suspicion dogs me yet. . . . Here, madam, is reason why I am indeed pariah and outcast, and must so remain until——" He ceased suddenly, and with a hurried gesture of farewell, turned and strode away.

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Doctor Samson stared at the restless head upon the pillow—these burning eyes, passion-distorted face.

"Mr. Julian, pray now compose yourself or——"

"Compose myself!" cried the sick man, wildly. "I could howl like a dog! He used me like a dog—and before the eyes of Brocklehurst and Despard!"

"Sir, calm yourself, or we shall have ye in raging fever——"

"Tush! Where's Tom Pitt; bid Tom Pitt to me."

So Doctor Samson shook his head and sighed his way downstairs while his patient stirred restlessly, muttered fierce imprecations, and stared up at the bed-canopy with brilliant, fevered eyes until, glancing round, he suddenly espied his man, Pitt, sleek, soft-moving, furtive-eyed, yet immensely capable.

"Where have you been, rogue?"

"This morning, sir, I rode to Lewes on your behalf; this afternoon I am devoting to your wardrobe, sir."

"Tell me, what of Brocklehurst—Despard, what do they?"

"My lord is, I believe, writing letters; the captain is abroad, sir."

"Ah, still dogging this heiress, is he, Tom?"

"I chanced to see them ride past together, sir, a while ago."

"And Brocklehurst belike penning an ode to her! Ask his lordship to step upstairs."

Tom Pitt bowed and was gone, softly as he had come. Brocklehurst entered swiftly, closed the door carefully, and turned towards the bed with a certain repressed eagerness, but meeting the invalid's keen eyes, shifted his glance and seemed to hesitate.

"Split me but you're ghastly as a specter!" said the Viscount at last.

"Ay, Will, I feel it! murmured Julian. "Yet I don't intend to die, Will, not even to please so loving a friend as thyself . . . Let us to business—how goes your wooing?"

"Excellent well, Julian give me but time to contrive the matter with due deliberation and she's mine, Julian, mine!"

"I wonder?" retorted the invalid. "Whence this sudden assurance, my lord? By all accounts she is no childish miss to blush at your lordly beck, or come simpering to your so masterful embrace."

"True enough, Julian—but," and here my lord took on an expression of unexpected, ruthless determination, "consider, Julian—a solitary house, an ardent wooer—a day and night and—final discovery! Such methods may bend the most stubborn of feminine wills—eh, Julian? As for 'the D'Arcy' she was all graciousness this morning. I begin to think Despard's scheme may prove unwanted."

"How? Despard's scheme?"

"Why, 'twas he suggested it."

"What, you mean this kidnapping, this lonely house? 'Tis a somewhat age-worn method, eh?"

The Viscount dropped into the chair.

"Well, what—what o' to-morrow, Julian—what o' your promise?"

Julian laughed gently and shook his head, while the Viscount, watched him. "It's to be 'no' again, is it?"

"Positively no, Will."

The Viscount's narrowed eyes drooped. "Every year you promise and every year——"

The Viscount's gaze crept along the bed-valance up and up to the small table standing at the invalid's elbow; then he crossed to the wide hearth where a dim fire burned.

"I was a fool!" cried he suddenly, "to sign the cursed thing!"

"Tut, tut!" murmured Julian, taking up a silver-mounted pistol from where it lay on the little table and glancing to the Viscount's back. Seeing the Viscount neither stirred nor spoke, Julian slipped the pistol under his pillow; said he: "Now, though all flesh perisheth, the written word endureth, it liveth on when the hand that penned it is dust. Now talking of our Despard, d' ye trust him so implicitly?"

"Trust him? Don't I hold him 'twixt my finger and thumb?"

"I wonder?" mused Julian, frowning up at the bedtester. "'Tis a dark, desperate, cool, determined creature is George Despard."

"Eh?" exclaimed his lordship, starting. "Thou'rt feverish, Julian."

"Ay, so leave me, Will."

But no sooner had the door closed upon his lordship than Julian took pen and paper and began to write with a certain feverish haste. When next he glanced up it was to see Tom Pitt within a yard of his bed.

"Ha, rogue—rogue!" he gasped, covering what he had written with quick hand. "Wilt creep on me, you dog; wilt spy?"

"No, sir, no, indeed, Mr. Julian; I'm here at my lordship's bidding."

"Then begone at mine, grub, and suffer none to trouble me—stay! Bid the captain to me so soon as he comes in."

Left alone, Julian finished his writing and, having read it over, glanced about his chamber, with eyes quick and eager, frowning the while as one at a loss. Suddenly he thrust hand beneath pillow and drew thence the silver-mounted pistol; then he rolled the paper cylinder-wise and thrust it into the pistol-barrel; which done, he hid the weapon under his pillow again.

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A dastardly plot to win an heiress' fortune! Tomorrow's chapter brings out more of their villainy.

ASHLAND BANKER BUYS V. V. MILLS INSURANCE OFFICE

ASHLAND, July 1.—(Special)—Victor V. Mills has sold his business, known as the Carter and Mills general insurance agency to E. R. Adamson, who was the former cashier of the Talent National bank. Mr. Mills is retiring from active business. Mr. Adamson, after the Talent bank was merged with the First National Bank of Ashland, was for a time employed with the First National bank here, and has a large business acquaintance throughout the valley.

This transfer concludes the business operations of the firm of Carter and Mills, which has existed for many years. The firm was first organized by D. R. Mills, grandfather of V. V. Mills, and H. R. Carter, father of E. V. Carter, who for many years carried on business in Iowa. The old firm name was used when Mr. Mills and Mr. E. V. Carter organized the present business of which Mr. Mills has just disposed and of which he was sole owner since purchasing the interest of Mr. Carter in 1920.

Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Young of Eugene, Oregon, were in Ashland on Wednesday and visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Galey, on Sherman street. Mr. and Mrs. Young are making a trip that will occupy two weeks and will include visits to the beach at Bandon and Crescent City, Oregon Caves, Klamath Falls, Crater Lake, Bend and various intervening points.

Louis Dodge and Harry Hosley left for Crater Lake lodge early Thursday afternoon where they will install window shades for the lodge.

Two new sign boards are being erected on the north side of the Claycomb Motor company's establishment by Foster-Kleiser company.

A large crowd was present in Lithia park on Thursday evening to hear the concert given by the orchestra, composed by the high school with various additions from the older musicians of the town and from the college students, who are at home for their vacations.

Mr. and Mrs. Perry Fuller of Florida are in Ashland visiting Mr. Fuller's parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Shaw.

Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Peterson and daughter of Los Angeles visited with J. B. Saunders on Wednesday on their way to Seattle.

TOURIST CROWDED OFF GREEN SPRINGS GRADE

Claiming that he was crowded off the Green Spring Mountain grade by a Southern Pacific stage Saturday afternoon, D. H. Butler, 60 of Oakland, is in the Ashland hospital badly cut and bruised, according to Charlie Talent, traffic officer who interviewed the man yesterday.

Driving a Ford touring car, on his way from Oakland to Klamath Falls, Mr. Butler's car was struck from the rear, and rolled over a 20-foot embankment, turning over several times on the way down. The top of his car was torn off and the windshield jarred loose, according to the officer.

BOEING BIRTHDAY FINDS EXPANSION IN BRIEF PERIOD

Boeing System, operators of the Chicago-San Francisco and Los Angeles-Seattle air mail, express and passenger routes, and the aerial postman for Medford, is receiving congratulations on its second birthday and for its record of having flown five and three-quarter million miles, or 230 times around the world, in 24 months. This say company officials, is the greatest mileage ever flown by one company in two years, in the history of air transportation.

In its flying, during the past 24 months, Boeing lines have transported approximately 1300 tons of mail, or more than 100 million letters, thousands of express shipments, and approximately 6,000 passengers on the transcontinental and Pacific coast routes. There have been only three casualties, or one for approximately each one and three-fourth million miles flown.

Two years ago the Boeing companies had never flown a mile in commercial air transport operations. In the spring of 1927 the government asked for bids for the carrying of air mail on the transcontinental route.

The Boeing Airplane company surveyed the situation, put in a bid and won the award. In 150 days the Boeing company had to design and build 25 mail-passenger planes, put them along the route, organize its flying, ground and traffic departments.

The next expansion of Boeing transport operations was acquisition of the Pacific Air Transport company, which operates the mail-express and passenger service between Los Angeles and Seattle. Thus, Boeing system became the operator of the two longest air lines in the United States. Some interesting facts on Boeing system operations, on its second birthday, are:

It carries 30 per cent of the total air mail of the United States.

There are always two Boeing mail planes in the air and often eight. Of the five and threefourth million miles flown in the first two years, approximately two and three fourth million miles was at night.

Boeing System planes now fly 10,000 miles a day, of which 4,600 miles is at night.

THE DESERT SONG SCREEN OPERETTA KING OF TALKIES

After seeing and hearing "The Desert Song," famous screen operetta and successor to the light opera of the same name, and by many said to be even better than the stage production, which was one of the most tuneful and popular musical plays or light operas of recent years, one finds difficulty in avoiding the use of superlatives, it is so full of charm, romance, color and action. The desert and incidental scenery is so magnificent that one is entranced.

Medford has heard and seen some of the latest leading film sound productions in recent weeks, each causing wonder as to what further miraculous advance the next big outstanding screen attraction will show, but The Desert Song, which began its local engagement at Hunt's Craterian theater yesterday, to be given afternoon and night daily until next Thursday, caused the audience to come away in the belief that the acme of screen sound plays had been reached.

Most persons forgot it was a moving picture entertainment until it was all over, having labored under the pleasing impression that they were attending a stage production of high merit.

Music lovers, admirers of the artistic, or just plain moving picture fans, cannot afford to miss seeing and hearing this first complete remarkably successful singing play, with its original all star cast and very large singing chorus.

The Desert Song seems to have everything—splendid solos, duets and choruses, with excellent enunciation and general tilting musical charm, in addition to a romantic love story, humor and varied entrancing scenery. There are French soldiers, tribesmen of the Morrocan desert in their picturesque garb; also harem scenes with another kind of pleasing scenery. Some of the desert scenes are superb. There are also seen many fine steeds, some said to be Arabian ones, on which the desert and mountain Riffs gallop and sing in chorus. Altogether the advance agent's stuff did not much exaggerate—in fact fell down in some places.

The cast of characters includes John Boles, the tenor lead, and Carlotta King, lyric soprano, in the leads; Jack Pratt, possessor of an exceptional bass voice, and the following supporting stars, some of whom have also appeared in musical stage plays: Otto Hoffman, Robert E. Guzman, Marie Wells, John Miljan, Del Elliott, Myrna Loy, Louise Fazenda, Johnny Arthur and Edward Martindel.

That well known pair of screen funsters, Louise Fazenda and Johnny Arthur, furnish the comedy.

The orchestra music all through matches up with the general goodness of the production.

R. A. K.

HILT YOUTHS CAUSE ARREST LOCAL MAN

Two bottles of beer, one of which had been half emptied, was the evidence by which three youths from Hilt, caused the pursuit and arrest of W. A. Higginbotham of Medford yesterday afternoon. Claiming that Mr. Higginbotham had thrown the bottles from his car while coming down the boulevard at Ashland on his way north, the Hilt men picked them up and brought them into the Ashland police station, where they reported that the Medford man was driving in a state of intoxication.

Charles Talent, traffic lieutenant phoned down to George Prescott, who met Mr. Higginbotham at Phoenix. In the meantime Mr. Talent came up from the rear.

That the Medford man was not intoxicated, was the statement made by both officers this morning. However, a charge was filed against him for having insufficient brakes. Officer Talent is investigating the liquor charge. The case will be heard in Judge Taylor's court tomorrow.

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46 MILLIONS TO TOUR COUNTRY THIS YEAR

According to the Oregon State Motor association, some 46,000,000 people will tour the United States in automobiles this year. These people will be from all sections of the country. They will be southerners traveling to the northern states—they will be easterners seeking their vacation land in the forests and parks of the far west. They will be the automobile mechanics of the northern states visiting the cotton fields and palm groves of his neighbors to the south.

Almost 50,000,000 people—more people than lived in France at the time of the French Revolution—roaming about the country in care-free vagabondage! Fifty million people vacationing, wandering across prairies and deserts, getting recreation in the open, widening their horizons and getting better acquainted with one another.

Sherwood.—Carlon school in district No. 73 to be enlarged.