

# THE CLOUDED MOON

By MAX SALTMARSH

## The Characters

Hugo Stern, handsome author, living on the French Riviera. Archie Lumsden, myself, Hugo's friend. Ben Geiss, a singularly unpleasant cartoonist.

Yesterday, the American detective, O'Donnell, is found murdered outside the casino.

## Chapter Six

### The Street of The Dragon

The black Hispano swung out on the sea-front. The lights of Cannes were blacked out; only round the curve of the Croisette an occasional window glowed.

"There's one thing I want to do before we turn 'n. Archie!" Hugo swung round on me and I reached out hurriedly to steady the steering-wheel. "Just now you were all worked up about that poor little devil's death, and I told you, in effect, not to worry about things that didn't concern you, but now a friend of mine has been bumped off and I'm seeing carmine. I'm so angry I'm afraid of myself — of what I may do or say, and yet, come what may, I've got to see Geiss tonight."

"Geiss?" I echoed, startled and slightly disturbed.

"Geiss," said he. "You can tell me I'm mad and I'll agree with you, but I'll swear to it that Geiss knows more of that girl's death than the local police will ever discover. She was scared of him; he was keeping a watchful eye on her, and it's ten to one that she had something on him—something he didn't want to come out."

"I'm with you so far," I said, "but how does O'Donnell come in to it?"

He was silent for a moment. "In this way," he said at last. "He was a private detective, and that was why I was guarded in my remarks about him to our fat friend. He may have been here on a job, and who am I to spoil his game? That girl was an American, too, or I'll eat my hat, and poor Pat, if our eyes don't deceive us, was shot down in pursuit of her murderer. I've a feeling it was to see her that he went to Palm Beach tonight."

"You mean," I answered slowly, "that she had been up to something in the States — something big enough to get her outside international law?"

"I mean," he retorted, "that a girl like that has the devil of a lot of opportunities. Who were those men she was running with? What's her job? We've got to find out. As like as not I'm talking moonshine," he finished wearily, "but there'll be no rest for me tonight until I've got Mr. Geiss the news and observed his reactions."

"Personally," I said, "I'd as soon expect a reaction from a booby constrictor when you offered it a tadpole, but there's no harm in trying."

### A Most Distinguished Goat

THERE was an interval of perhaps five minutes, and then down the pathway came Geiss himself, with a yellow-haired girl hanging on his arm. He was an even more exotic figure than he had been in the morning, for a Malay sarong, in a gorgeous gold and violet brocade, was wrapped about his thin middle, falling to his ankles, while above it he wore a soft silk shirt, byronically open at the throat, and a purple velvet smoking-jacket. And yet, in spite of it all he contrived to look distinguished. He might be like a goat, but it was, one felt, a goat of the most distinguished lineage.

"My dear friends," he said, "how I deplore that I cannot ask you into my poor abode, but I am, as I told you, entertaining a few friends."

"Geiss," Hugo said, and I was startled to hear how harsh his voice sounded, "I called to tell you something that may perhaps interest you. We went to Palm Beach tonight—"

He paused for a moment, and in that pause I could have sworn that I heard the other catch his breath. "You were there after all!" he said. "Our young friend here was eager to see his Eve—and I am very sure she was happy to see him!"

"No," said Hugo quietly. "She had no time to be glad or sorry. I don't think she had even time to see us. She was shot dead during the fashion show."

The cartoonist drew in his breath with a shocked sound.

"Is it possible?" he cried. "That poor child—what tragedy! What a despicable crime! I trust they have"

caught the miscreant who did it!" "Is to that," Hugo answered slowly. "I can't say. A man's body was discovered in the shrubbery outside, just as we were leaving, but the police don't know yet if his death was connected with the first crime."

The other looked at him, raising his eyebrows. "The police!" said he with a delicate irony. "What a hope! What do they ever discover but the clues that the criminal leaves for them to find! I fear very much that the death of our poor little Eve will be added to the long list of unsolved tragedies—What a subject for the pencil of a genius—poor victim of an unknown slayer!"

"At that my gorge rose. There was something so repulsive in his glowing interest that I could keep silence no longer."

"He won't remain unknown if I can help it. I'll find you a better subject than a dying girl, Monsieur Geiss! a murderer, waiting for the knife to drop!"

He turned slowly towards me, and for the second time that day I had the impression that I had sharply aroused his interest.

"So," he said gently, "you feel it so deeply then? But I forgot—you were already acquainted with the little Eve." For an instant he stared at me, with his pebble-like, expressionless eyes; then he laid a hand on my arm. "Believe me, my young friend, it is best to forget her. There are other women in the world."

"If I saw a dumb beast maltreated, I'd go gunning for the man who did it, and that's the way I feel about this business," I told him.

"A noble sentiment," said he softly, "but one that may lead you into strange paths, my young friend."

"The stranger the better," I retorted, but at this point Hugo broke in.

"There's another thing, Geiss," he said quietly, "that struck me as curious in view of your remarks this morning. Did you know that Eve was not a blonde? Her hair was dyed."

"The Dark Girl—Death!" AS FAR as I could see, the cartoonist never moved a muscle; but suddenly the yellow-haired girl, who had been leaning, half asleep, against his shoulder, leaped away, clutching at her arm.

I looked at her in amazement and saw that on the white skin of her elbow showed four angry red fingerprints.

"I'm sorry if I startled you," said Hugo mildly, but his eye was hard. The other gave his shrill, mirthless cackle. "You think, because I give five little pins, that you have frightened me? On the contrary, you must not imagine, because I said some foolish things this morning, that I am superstitious. I talked only to amuse you. Dark girls or fair—what difference. And besides," he added thoughtfully, "the girl is dead."

"I wouldn't bank on that," I answered gravely. The dead can stretch out a devilish long arm."

"He frowned. 'I think,' he retorted acerbically, 'that you try to frighten me, and I do not find it funny.' But at that Hugo spoke."

"My friend wasn't joking," Geiss, he said, and added, softly and under his breath, "we must all keep the old tryst with the Dark Girl."

The cartoonist turned on him like a tiger unchained. A moment he glared; then, with a swift step backward, he had slammed the gate in our faces.

"I don't care," she insisted obstinately. "Geiss is at the back of it all, and one of these days he'll be hanged."

After that there seemed nothing more to be said, and I was glad enough to follow Hugo's advice and turn in.

For the first couple of hours I tossed restlessly, and when at length I dropped off, I fell, right away into a sea of unquiet dreams, through which a voice as insistent as a sledge's hum kept whispering. They were names that it breathed: Eve the mannequin, O'Donnell the detective, Geiss the cartoonist, Verner the banker, Vladimir Rakovsky, Baron Stahl, Names, names, rising and falling in an uneasy cadence—names that had never heard of twelve hours back, but that I knew were linked by a devilish chain that I must somehow untangle."

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Monday: I acquire an assistant.

## Weather

Northern California: Fair tonight and Wednesday, slightly warmer in interior Wednesday; moderate to fresh northerly wind off the coast.

Oregon: Fair tonight and Wednesday, but cloudy northwest portion, somewhat warmer in east and interior of southwest portion Wednesday; gentle changeable wind off the coast becoming northwesterly.

A special phonograph record, which it is claimed will enable students of foreign languages to study simultaneously by eye and ear, has been invented in Japan.

## Sprague Sees Turn Against New Deal

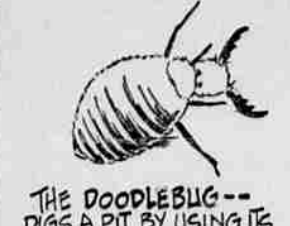
PORTLAND, Sept. 6.—(AP)—Disappointment over farm prices and opposition to the administration's agricultural program has turned many eastern Oregon Democrats against the new deal, Charles A. Sprague Republican nominee for governor, said upon his return from a state tour.

New York state's sour cherry crop is estimated at 23 per cent less than last year's crop. The apple crop, compared with 1937, is expected to be 35 per cent less.

## STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

**JAMES CRAIG WATSON--**  
American astronomer  
LEFT A FUND IN HIS WILL  
TO MAINTAIN A WATCH  
OVER 29 MINOR PLANETS  
HE HAD DISCOVERED SO  
THAT THEY MIGHT NEVER BE  
LOST AGAIN!—1870—



**THE DOODLEBUG--**  
DIGS A PIT BY USING ITS  
ABDOMEN AS A SHOVEL  
AND TOSSES THE DIRT  
OUT WITH ITS HEAD!

**SAND USED IN CONSTRUCTION**  
OF A HIGHWAY AT VIRGINIA BEACH, Virginia,  
WAS BROUGHT FROM PETERSBURG,  
100 MILES INLAND!



**LEG ROWERS OF BURMA!**  
NATIVES OF LAKE INLE, Burma,  
ROW THEIR BOATS STANDING UP--  
USING THEIR LEGS FOR  
PROPULSION!  
NO OTHER BOATMEN USE THIS METHOD

9-6-38 McNaught Syndicate, Inc.

**Leg Rowing.**  
Nowhere else in the world will be found the odd custom of leg rowing as practiced by Burmese natives of Lake Inle. Standing erect, they propel their long, narrow craft along the lake with powerful kicks of the leg. On special occasions, huge teak-wood dugouts, resembling exaggerated racing shells, are raced against each other with crews numbering as high as 46 men.

The trick of mastering this style of rowing seems to belong solely to the Lake Inle boatmen, who take advantage of the fact that the leg muscles are among the strongest of the body.

**Planet Watch.**  
One of the strangest wills ever filed was that of James Craig Watson, American astronomer, who left a fund of money to maintain a close watch over 29 minor planets he had discovered—so that they might never again be lost.

Formerly a University of Michigan professor, Watson received the Lalande medal for the discovery of six asteroids in a single year—1870.

**Optim Ship Sails.**  
PORTLAND, Ore., Sept. 5.—(AP)—Leaving a bond of \$33,000 posted with customs agents, the Philippine freighter Don Jose sailed yesterday for Seattle. Customs agents seized \$72,496 worth of smoking opium from the vessel and arrested three Filipino crew members last week.

**Cardinal Dies.**  
ROME, Sept. 6.—(AP)—Camillo Cardinal Laurenti, prefect of the sacred congregation of rites, died today of a heart attack. He was 78.

**Clam Digger Missing.**  
TILLAMOOK, Sept. 6.—(AP)—Barview coast guardsmen searched today for Charles Fryar, 52, of Silverton, who has been unreported since early Sunday when he left for a Tillamook bay clam digging trip.

**Second Crop.**  
SHAMOKINON, Pa., Sept. 6.—(AP)—John H. Rhoads is reaping a double harvest from an apple tree in his orchard. The tree blossomed a second time, he said, just as a first crop was ripening. He expects to gather the second crop by late fall.

**Average Income.**  
PORTLAND, Sept. 6.—(AP)—A report by the national resources committee established the average income of Oregon families at \$1775 compared with the national average of \$1662 for the 1935-36 period.

**Model Plane.**  
FOR LIMITED TIME ONLY! SEND A SCENT STAMPED ENVELOPE, LARGE ENVELOPE TO HAL FORREST, 1215 1/2 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y.

## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Eggs First!



YOU'RE A FRIEND OF TAILSPIN'S AUNT YA?

YOU BET I AM, MISTER! WHY?

GOT ANY MORE O' THEM JUMBO EGGS, BEN?

ALL YOU WANT, MR. SEXTON, BUT—

—BEFORE STOCKING THEM FOR RUSTY AND ME, I FIGURE WE'D BETTER BUILD UP A DEMAND FOR THEM—

WE'LL SAMPLE EVERY HOME IN THIS TOWN AND TELL FOLKS YOU'RE CARRYING THEM—THEN THEY'LL KNOW WHERE TO GET THEM REGULARLY—

THAT'S REAL SENSE, BOY! NOW, HOW ABOUT CHICKENS, TOO?

LEAVE THAT TO RUSTY AND ME! THEY'LL COME LATER—WE'LL PUT OVER THE EGGS FIRST!

By EDWIN ALGER

## THE NEBBS—Winning Him Over?



STEVE, YOU'RE A GREAT GUY—IF YOU'RE TRYING TO IMPRESS ME YOU'VE DONE A GOOD JOB

SAMMY, FROM WHERE I'M SITTING, I DON'T HAVE TO IMPRESS ANYBODY—I COULD SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE MAKING FACES AT FOLKS

WHAT'S YOUR HONEST OPINION OF ME, STEVE?

YOU'RE FRESHER THAN THE EGGS A FARMER KEEPS FOR HIS FAMILY

BUT YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING IT TAKES TO BE A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MAN—I'VE GOT A FINE SPOT FOR YOU IN MY DIAMOND BUSINESS IF YOU'D LET ME TRAIN YOU FOR IT

YOUR PROPOSITION SOUNDS INTERESTING, STEVE—HOW MUCH MORE EDUCATION MUST I SUFFER BEFORE YOU START TO TRAIN?

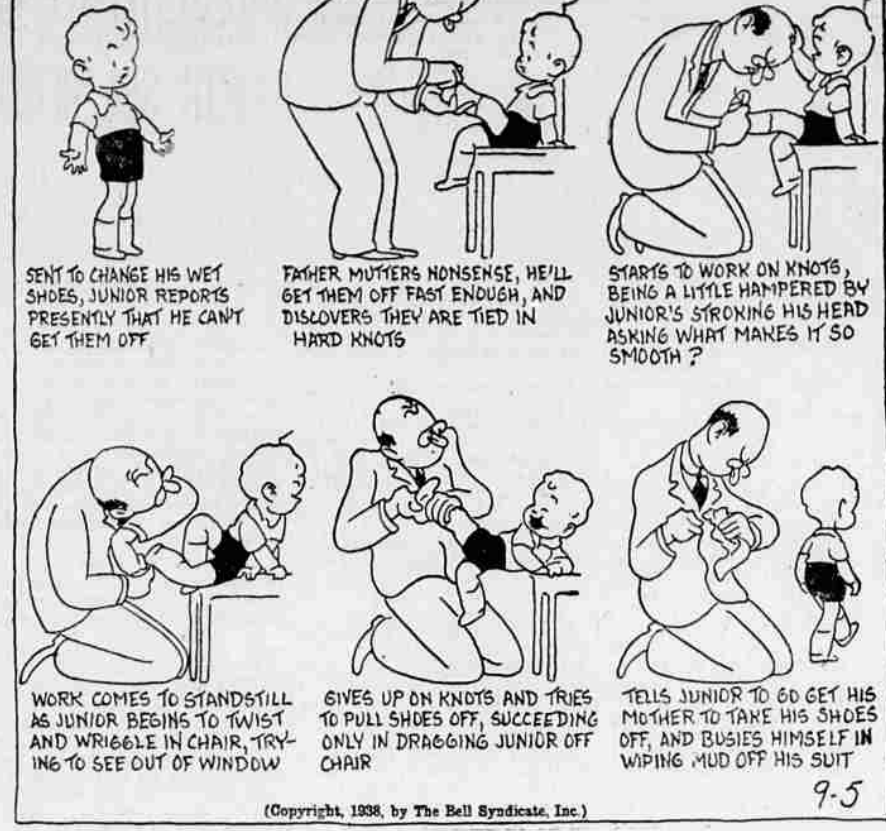
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W.A. CARLSON

## SHOE REMOVER

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



SENT TO CHANGE HIS WET SHOES, JUNIOR REPORTS PRESENTLY THAT HE CAN'T GET THEM OFF

FATHER MUTTERS NONSENSE, HE'LL GET THEM OFF FAST ENOUGH, AND DISCOVERS THEY ARE TIED IN HARD KNOTS

STARTS TO WORK ON KNOTS, BEING A LITTLE HAMPERED BY JUNIOR'S STROKING HIS HEAD ASKING WHAT MAKES IT SO SMOOTH?

WORK COMES TO STANDSTILL AS JUNIOR BEGINS TO TWIST AND WRIGGLE IN CHAIR, TRYING TO SEE OUT OF WINDOW

GIVES UP ON KNOTS AND TRIES TO PULL SHOES OFF, SUCCEEDING ONLY IN DRAGGING JUNIOR OFF CHAIR

TELLS JUNIOR TO GO GET HIS MOTHER TO TAKE HIS SHOES OFF, AND BUSIES HIMSELF IN WIPING MUD OFF HIS SUIT

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## S'MATTER PO!

By C M PAYNE



S'MATTER?

SNAKE!

IN THA GARDEN?

IT NEARLY BITE ME!

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By HAL FORREST

By EDWIN ALGER

By SOL HESS