

THE CLOUDED MOON

By MAX SALTSMARSH

The Characters
Hugo Stern, handsome author, living on the French Riviera.
Archie Lumsden, miserly, Hugo's friend.
René Geiss, a singularly unpleasant cartoonist.

Yesterday, Geiss tells the magistrate that I knew Eue Monet. Jean-François says I'll be arrested for her murder, shortly.

Chapter 10

The Lucky Penny

I WATCHED the thin brown legs of Jean-François disappear up the quay and turned to Hugo. "Well," I said, "and what do you think of that?"

"Archie," he said, "Geiss means mischief, and, as I told you, he's a friend of the judge d'instruction, besides being a local celebrity. If it's a case of his word against yours, his wins every time, and it seems to me that from now on our investigating will be not so much inspired by a righteous desire to see justice done as by the primary instinct of self-preservation."

He had started up the stair, and as I dropped into the seat beside him he added: "What I can't understand is why Geiss should have got so vicious all of a sudden. Granted that he's frightened him last night, that's still no reason for lying. It looks as if he was deliberately trying to throw suspicion on you."

I reflected, "The one bright spot," said at last, "that this is our first definite proof that he's concerned in the business. He believed we wouldn't be at Palm Beach last night and would only hear of the killing casually and by chance, and it must have been the device of a shock for him to learn that we not only had been present, but were material witnesses in the case. He must have regretted bitterly that he'd ever so much as admitted that he knew the girl, let alone given us a line about her past. His only course now, as far as I can see, is to deny he ever said what he did say, and pass the buck to me. I don't blame him for it," I added magnanimously, "but I'll take full and complete care he doesn't get away with it!"

We were running along the Croisette by now and I asked him where he was heading.

"The Bar Alsacien," he told me, and I whistled.

"What fish do you expect to land in that stream?"

"I don't know," he answered somberly. "But it's definitely worth trying."

The little cafe was almost deserted. The tables under the yellow awning were empty, and by common consent we seated ourselves at the one where the girl Eve Monet had sat the day before.

"Which of us is going to do the investigating here?" asked Hugo. "Toss you for it?" I suggested, but he shook his head, eyeing thoughtfully the blonde waitress approaching from the dim recesses of the interior. "We are of widely differing types, you and I," he remarked, "and as the post says, one woman's meat is another's indigestion. Whichever of us the lady's fancy lights on will be the one to put the few artless questions."

We gave our order to the waitress, a decorative damsel enough, and as she turned to go, she paused for a moment to look at me, and cast a slightly languishing glance at me.

"Monsieur would not care to try our flut mignon after the ice cream?" she inquired.

"Monsieur has a passion for flut mignon," said Hugo quickly, a prompting eye on me.

I groaned inwardly, but as she placed the snowy slices of melon on their beds of chopped ice before us I endeavored to play up. "This cafe has a wonderful position," I remarked, as ingratiatingly as I could. "Here, in the fashion center of Cannes, you must see many strange and interesting things in the course of the day."

A Shadow

SHE shrugged expressively. "Monsieur, Cannes is full of strange and interesting things!"

"Indeed, yes," said I. "Take last night, for example, at the casino. That tragic affair—and the poor girl who ate her lunch so calmly and peacefully here, twelve short hours before she died."

She gave a violent start at that, and her face, under its amber powder, grew perceptibly paler. "Monsieur knows that?" she asked, almost in a whisper.

"Surely!" I retorted. "I saw her sitting here myself."

"Tell us, mademoiselle, how did she look this girl? Was she unconsciously afraid, with the shadow of death already dark upon her? Did she speak to anyone?"

She hesitated for a moment, then bent lower still. "Monsieur," she said rapidly, "that poor girl, she sat here, speaking to no one, staring out towards the sea, and twice I must ask her if the food was at fault, for she did not eat. At length she had finished and called for her bill. I brought it and she took up her bag to pay, but as she did so, a shadow fell across her! The shadow," she went on slowly, "of a man. He stood there for a moment on the pavement, lighting a cigarette and staring

down at her, and she, the poor one, she gazed up at him and there was fear in her face. Then he moved on, and as he did so, she gave a little moan and dropped her bag, so that the contents were scattered on the pavement. As I stooped to help her collect them, I heard her whisper in English: 'I have lost!' but when I asked her what was missing, she answered: 'nothing—all the contents were there. She asked for pen and paper, and for a minute she sat writing, fast—fast! Then she paid her bill and went away, and I did not see her again.'

"And the man?" I asked quickly. "Did you see his face?"

She shrugged. "Assuredly, but it was a face like any other, dark, clean-shaven, not handsome. He was of middle age, of medium height, and broad-shouldered. Not remarkable. Only this I saw as he lit the cigarette—the index finger of the right hand was missing from the first joint."

I thanked her and asked for the bill, for I could see Hugo was getting restive. "And there was nothing else?" I asked, trying to live up to my country's reputation for generosity when it came to the tip. "No other little thing that you saw, mademoiselle?"

She beamed down at me as she pocketed the greasy notes. "But yes," she agreed. "There is one thing more. After the poor girl had gone I saw, lying under the table—this!" and she drew something small and brown from the pocket of her minute apron and held it out for inspection on the palm of her hand.

Souvenir

WE bent our heads eagerly over it, but as I saw and recognized it for what it was, I was conscious of an acute disappointment. It was an American one-cent piece, with nothing remarkable about it, as far as I could see, except a small, square hole drilled neatly right through the head of the Red Indian.

The waitress looked at me, hesitating. "You would like it?" she asked. "For a souvenir?" and then she suddenly shook her head. "No, I will give you no souvenir that has belonged to another woman. I give it instead to your friend, and to you I say only: Au revoir!"

Hugo took it, drew out his wallet, and placed it carefully in an inner pocket. From the same receptacle he extracted a gold sovereign and handed it to the girl with a little bow and a smile in thanks for your gift, but do not, I beg of you, mention it to anyone. The police might hear and demand its return, and it would distress me more than I can say to give it up."

"Mentioning the gentleman with the missing first finger?" I suggested, but he shook his head.

"No, my son. It would be rather a tall order to examine the right hands of all swarthy, dark men around here. I don't expect much from that as a clue, but I do feel that the other small piece of the puzzle has dropped into place. Eve Monet saw the man who, ten chances to one, was afterwards her murderer, and she said: 'I've lost!' She guessed what was coming to her and that whatever game she was playing was in the adversary's hands."

He broke off and sighed sharply. "Poor little devil!" he said. "I must have cost her something to walk out on that runaway last night, wondering just what was watching her from the audience and now we've got her lucky one-cent piece. Some day, with luck, we may know who gave it to her and why she kept it so carefully."

I agreed with him, but as we swung into the route of the Italian frontier, I reflected that it would need a considerable amount of luck to lead us to that information.

Hugo dispatched a cable from Ventimille, which arrived and to the point. "P. O'D. stopped a packet Cannes last night," he wrote. "My telephone, Cannes nine-six-seven-two Hugo." "And what," he added, complacently, printing the address laboriously in block capitals, "should the transatlantic wires humming pretty soon."

We stayed long enough to absorb another pint of beer and took the homeward road. On the outward run we had stopped at a half-dozen gasoline stations, and on the side café to ask for news of the passing of Geiss's car, but always without result, and by now I had given up all hope of finding her; but suddenly, as Hugo pulled into the curb to allow a laden bus to pass us, I saw a long scarlet car emerge from a side-turning, cross the head of the square, and vanish again up a crowded street.

"Hugo," I said, gripping him by the arm, "that was a Delage and it was red."

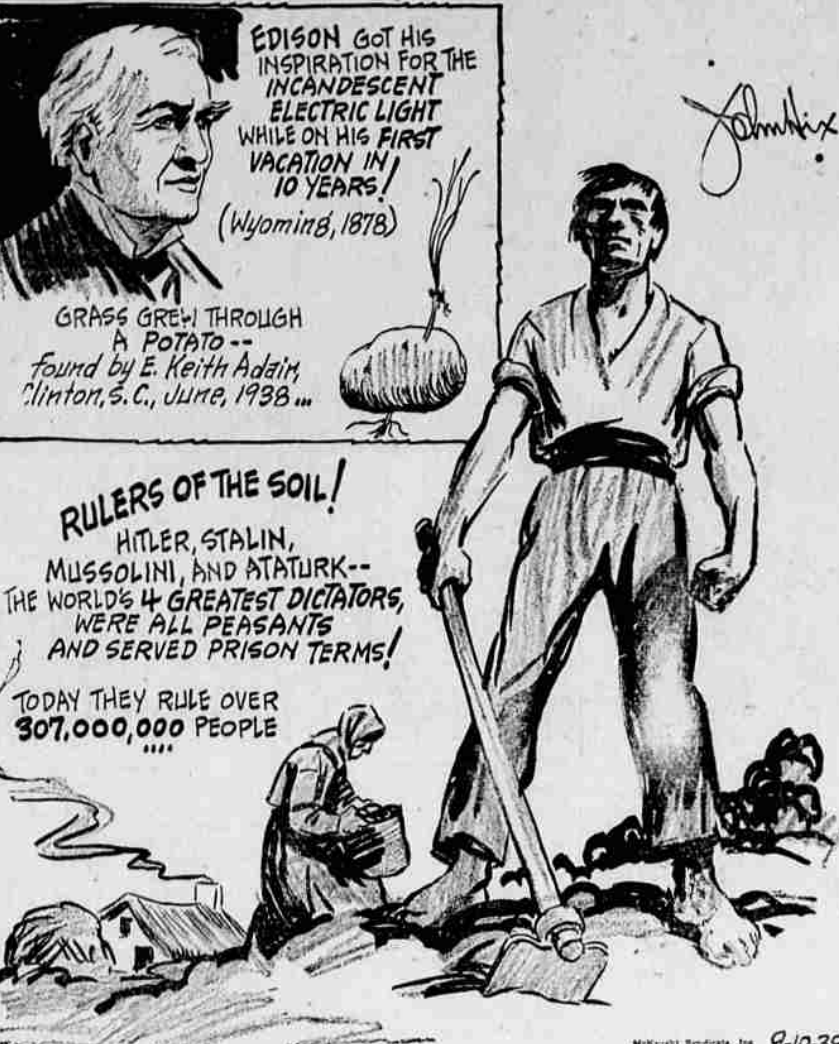
"Furthermore," said he, bringing the Hispano's nose round in a sweeping curve that nearly wiped out a placid handful of citizens gossiping away their Sabbath leisure in the middle of the square. "It was Geiss himself at the wheel."

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Tomorrow: On the trail of Geiss

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



Rulers of the Soil

Four men, each the son of peasants and with prison records behind them, today rule over more than 307,000,000 of the world's mortals.

Adolph Hitler was born Alois Schickelgruber, son of a poor peasant serving girl and a cobbler on the Austro-German frontier. Hitler left home at 13 with little schooling, and in 1914 joined the German army. He landed in jail for a year after the failure of the Munich Putsch. On January 28, 1933, two days after the fall of Chancellor von Schleicher's government, Hitler became chancellor. Today he rules 72,000,000 people.

He was trapped in the locomotive cab, Albert Newstrand, 21, St. Paul, was crushed and died in a St. Paul hospital several hours later.

The wreck was caused by a wash-out, result of a torrential rain.

Scores Bigamy Laws.

SAN FRANCISCO. -- (UP) -- Because of so many cases of bigamy

Benito Mussolini was born at Predappio, Italy, the son of a peasant blacksmith and a schoolteacher. He benefited more than Hitler, Ataturk, or Stalin from the advantages of education.

Mussolini became an ardent Marxist Socialist and once, ironically, was jailed for five months for opposing an Italian invasion of Africa. All in all, he served 11 prison terms. Appointed premier of Italy by the king in 1922, he now rules over 32 million mortals.

Stalin was born the son of a village cobbler in Georgia, Transcaucasia. Expelled at 19 from a theological seminary for his radical affili-

lations, for some 20 years thereafter he was in and out of prison, actually perpetrating five escapes from exile. Today, as general secretary of U.S.S.R.'s communist party, he is dictator over more than 165 million people.

Kamal Ataturk, president of Turkey, whose office is comparable in power to those of the other dictators, was born of a poor farmer in Albania. He served time in the Red prison for revolutionary activities. In 1923 Ataturk was elected president of Turkey, was reelected in 1927, 1931 and 1935. Today he rules over more than 16 million people.

Monday: Nine states smaller than Rhode Island.

Tables Turned Perfectly.

SAN FRANCISCO. -- (UP) -- Edward Collins, 27, feels that he has more than paid his debt to society. On the day he was released from San Quentin prison, where he had served a term for robbery with firearms, he was held up in this city and robbed of his trousers and \$28 in cash by two gunmen.

resulting from marriages before divorce decrees become final, bigamy as a crime, just doesn't seem to count any more, according to Superior Judge E. P. Morgan, who had such a case before him. "No one seems to be arrested any more for bigamy," he said. "I've called attention to several similar instances before, but nothing came of it."

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—What Happened?



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Take It Or—



THE NEBBES—The Worm Turns



SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

(Copyright, 1938, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



3 MATTER POI

By C M PAYNE



By HAL FORREST



By EDWIN ALGER



By SOL HESS



SECOND HOP YARD VISITED BY BLAZE

SALEM, Sept. 10. (AP)—The second disastrous hop ranch fire to visit the Clear Lake district in two days struck at the T. A. Livesley Lakebrook ranch about 4 o'clock this morning and destroyed the 10-kiln dryer.

Efforts of nearly 100 employees and outsiders saved other buildings. The dryers were appraised at \$10,000, but in the fire also went five fans, heating equipment, 2,044 pounds of hops and about 200 cords of wood. Between 700 and 800 bales of hops in

cooling warehouses nearby were not damaged.

A similar fire at about the same time yesterday morning destroyed a 10-kiln dryer and all adjacent hop buildings on the A. M. Jernan ranch about a mile from the Livesley ranch. There is talk about possible incendiaries, but Mr. Livesley said today no one was under suspicion and the fires may have been coincidental.

2 KILLED AS WASHOUT WRECKS CRACK TRAIN

HUDSON, Wis., Sept. 10. (AP)—The Chicago and North Western railway's Victory Limited, passenger and mail train, westbound from Chicago, to Minneapolis and St. Paul, was wrecked in a washout today causing the death of two persons.

Engineer August Hucker, Minneapolis