

# THE CLOUDED MOON

By MAX SALTmarsh

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

Yesterday: From a waitress in the Bar Alacian we secure Eve's address. Today: From a dark man whose right index finger was missing.

## Chapter 11 The Beautiful American

HUGO started in pursuit of Geiss's red car at a breakneck speed. He was a magnificent driver but a trifle too reckless for my liking at the best of times, and the pace he was setting would normally have made my blood run cold. But now I found myself yelling at him to go faster.

The road was heading out into the country. Soon it seemed that we were running onto a cape, for I could see blue water on either hand, and as we climbed, Hugo slackened speed a trifle.

"Now which will it be?" he soliloquized. "The note, that of Eden Roc? I hate to damp your expectations, but it's more than likely we're about to surprise a simple rendezvous with a pretty lady."

"Baron Stahl is staying at the hotel," I reminded him, but he shook his head.

"No, no. The man's devilish clever, and he won't take unnecessary chances. From now on it's Geiss and I. He's a scoundrel, but they must be strangers yet," as the old song says.

As he spoke he pulled in under the lee of a rough wall and I climbed out after him. We were on the crown of the cape. To the left a closed gate and an imposing driveway led to a vast building that I guessed to be the hotel.

"Well, well," said Hugo, strolling across to her. "Our friend has been driving hard, to judge by the dust he's collected." He drew an exploring finger across her bonnet.

"I had leaned over his shoulder to have a look myself, and now I slid a hand gently down the side of the cushion. Even into Italy and back," I added, fishing out a small, blue-gray packet of cigarettes.

He nodded, momentarily preoccupied. "Italy it must have been, but not one of the coast towns. Geiss has a pretty taste in tobacco, and he wouldn't buy these if there was anything more exotic to be had. But where did he go, and whom did he see when he got there? I'd give a lot for a heart-to-heart talk with our gentleman."

"You won't get it," I retorted. "The minute I set eyes on that bird, I'm going to crown him."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," he answered tartly. "You'll have the goodness to remember that more than your simple pleasures are involved. Express a mild surprise at his faulty memory, if you must, but leave the rest to me."

As he spoke, he was leading the way down the winding path and into the little building and descended a kind of ladder to a long, narrow, green-walled room with a well-stocked cart at one end.

### A Pretty Sight

THE place was built on the brink of a little cliff that fell sheer from the windows to where, far below, the sapphire sea surged and bubbled round jagged black rocks. From a door beyond the bar a flight of steps led down to the water's edge, and there were terraces leveled from the rocky pinacles crowded with sun-bathers on gaudy orange mattresses.

There was one in particular who attracted my attention, a short, paunchy, dark-skinned fellow whose costume consisted solely of abbreviated green bathing-trunks. He watched him for a moment, then he turned and glanced upwards at the windowed terrace and I saw that it was Baron Stahl.

"Well," said Hugo at my elbow, "what do you think of the playboys of Europe? There are more millionaires to the square inch in this bar than anywhere else in the world."

I jerked my thumb towards the window. "The only one that interests me," I said, "is displaying his unbecoming person on the rocks down there. But where's his partner in crime?"

"There he is," Hugo replied. I followed the direction of his pointing finger and saw the man we were looking for, squatting, solitary, on a pinnacle of rock overhanging a small jade-green pool, strangely like a morose and brooding bird of prey.

"What's he up to?" I pondered. "And what do we do now?"

Hugo grinned. "One answer does for both questions. We wait here till we find out." He broke off sharply. "Hello," said he on another note. "Here's a pretty sight."

A small speed-boat had come into view, swooping down in a graceful arc towards a jetty on the right, and in its wake, skimming on a pair of water-skis and straight and beautiful as some statue of Praxiteles, came a girl in a white bathing-suit, her arms outflung to control the guide-rope from the boat. The boat drifted casually alongside the jetty, and she climbed up shore. And then she looked up and I got the shock of my life.

She was staring straight up at the open windows where we stood, as if she were looking for someone, and for an instant I had a clear view of her face, with the wide, dark eyes, the delicate tip-tipped nose, and the warm, red mouth.

I gasped, feeling as if I had taken a punch in the wind. "Hugo, she's the living image of—"

Ottillie Willis

HE TROD on my foot, accurately and a good deal harder than was necessary. "Of someone who isn't living," he finished for me. "Take a rest in your tongue, can't you? We mustn't speak that name here, and what's a casual like-ness?" But I noticed that his eyes never left the girl's face and he was white under the sun-tan.

She had left the jetty now, and an elderly woman in the black uniform of a lady's-maid was waddling her in a thick white woolen wrap, when suddenly, from just under our window, sounded a voice like an angry foghorn. "Ottillie!" it bawled. "Will you come here this minute? You'll catch your death of cold!"

I looked down, straight on to a head covered with a shock of iron-gray hair, set on a pair of broad shoulders. The voice had definitely emanated from the head, and as I watched, its owner emphasized his point by thumping violently on the "rubber-tipped walking-stick."

The girl waved back at him, laughing; then with a leisurely grace that was very pretty to see, she strolled towards him, wrapping her white robe more closely about her.

"Why, Uncle!" she said, in a deep, husky voice that carried clearly to my ears. "It isn't as cold as all that!"

A man had come up and was standing behind her, a stocky, swarthy man in green bathing-trunks. High up as we were, I could see the uncouth mat of black hair on his chest and the obsequious smile on his fat little face.

"Baron!" she said, and all the laughter had gone from her voice. "How did you get here so soon? It's only ten days since we said goodbye in New York!"

The short man bowed from where his waist should have been. "It is so simple," he explained, but on a lower key, so that I had to lean out and strain my ears to catch his words. "I say goodbye to you in New York, and five minutes later I get a cable calling me to Paris on business. You cross in one fast ship—I in another. I transact my business and say to myself I like a little holiday. I come here and have the sun, rising fortune to meet with you again!"

"Most surprising," she said dryly, "considering that my uncle told you himself where we were going." She drew her robe closer still. "I believe I am cold after all," she informed her relative. "I'll meet you in the bar." And in a flash she was gone, running towards the foot of the stairs.

I looked at Hugo. "He followed them here!" I said under my breath, and received his foot with still greater force on my instep.

"What your mouth wants is adhesive tape!" he said bitterly. "Come over and have a drink."

The crowd at the bar had thinned and we found a vacant place at the counter. "Tell me, Charles," said Hugo, as the barman set a couple of White Ladies before us, "who's the old gentleman in black down below there?"

"The man's face lit up. "That one, Mr. Stern?" said he. "The old American gentleman? Why, that is Mr. Willis. And the young lady is his niece, Miss Ottillie Willis. Very pretty, eh?"

Hugo whistled softly. "You mean Virgo Willis?" he asked, and when the man nodded, "That's the devilish interesting. That's Virgo Willis, the American banker. As rich as Croesus, but much more human."

I fumbled for his foot on the bar-rail and made satisfactory contact with it. "What your mouth needs," I retorted, with a beautiful feeling of being all square at the turn, "is an oversize bath-towel stuffed into it. Can't you see she's here?"

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Tomorrow: A voice from the dead.

## FATHER IS KILLED IN SPEEDING HOSPITAL

THE DALLES, Ore., Sept. 12—(AP)—Crashing into the rear of a truck as he was rushing his injured daughter to a doctor at The Dalles, Leo Rose, 33, Mosier laborer, was fatally injured Sunday.

The girl, Irma, 13, ran a screw driver into one eyeball while at play. Rose apparently lost control of his car on a curve four miles west of here.

The girl suffered cuts and bruises in the crash.

## UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT DUE FOR BIG INCREASE

EUGENE, Sept. 12—(AP)—Dr. Donald M. Erb said today that with applications from new students expected to increase by 10 per cent over that at the same time last year, a substantial increase in enrollment at the University of Oregon is assured.

## PHEASANT PAYS VISIT THROUGH FRONT WINDOW

ALBANY, Sept. 12—(AP)—When Mr. and Mrs. Steve Benedict returned home from a state fair they found glass from a shattered window scattered about their living room, feathers from a pheasant scattered about and a reading lamp broken.

The Benedicts came to the conclusion that a pheasant had flown through the window, but could not find the pheasant.

WINDOW GLASS—We sell window glass and will replace your broken windows reasonably. Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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**HELEN RUNO OF HOLLYWOOD WENT TO FINLAND TO BREAK INTO THE MOVIES! SHE HAS STARRED IN 5 FINNISH FILMS!**

**TWO HOME RUNS WITH THE BASES LOADED-- WERE HIT IN THE SAME HALF-INNING BY PARKER AND CONNERS, Shreveport, La., BATSMEN...**

(Vs. Houston, Texas League, July 10, 1938)

9-12-38

**DUNN GETS CONTRACT ON S. P. RELOCATION**  
WASHINGTON, Sept. 12—(AP)—A \$173,320 contract was awarded to Clifford A. Dunn, Klamath Falls, Ore., for construction of abutments, pedestals and piers of the Sacramento river bridge, first crossing, in the Southern Pacific railroad relocation resulting from development of the Central valley project in California.

**STATE FAIR ATTENDANCE EXCEEDS PREVIOUS YEAR**  
SALEM, Sept. 12—(AP)—Large crowds Sunday on the final day of the annual state fair shot the week's attendance to about 110,000. Leo Spitzbart, assistant manager, revealed today.

**TAILSPIN TOMMY—From One Danger Into Another!**



**BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Developments!**



**THE NEBBES—It Just Couldn't Happen**



# OVERNIGHT PARKING

BY GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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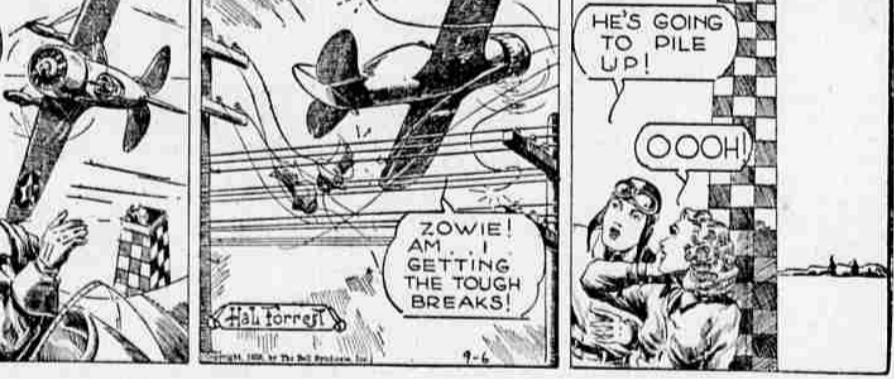
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By G. M. PAYNE



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# By HAL FORREST



By EDWIN ALGER



By SOL HESS

