

THE CLOWN MAN

By MAX SALTmarsh

The Characters
 Hugo Stern, handsome author, living on the French Riviera.
 Archie Lumsden, myself, his friend.
 René Geiss, master mind behind a murder plot.
 Otilie Wills, American heiress.

Chapter 26

Determined Young Woman

"It's the principle of the thing," Venner was saying shrilly. "I did my part—I put up the original capital, and Geiss and the lot of you agreed that I wasn't to be troubled further. What do I care if a few foreigners die suddenly? I've never met them, I don't know them. But here, without consulting me, you arrange to murder a harmless lad under my very nose! It's a wonder to me it wasn't the death of me, and as it is I'm feeling very far from well—"

"For that I am so sorry!" said Stahl, the hint of a sneer in his voice. "But to call the young man harmless—no, that is stupidity. Why do you think he came here, to your hotel, if not to spy on you? No, no, Monsieur Venner, he is not harmless! And for the rest of the argument, you supplied our capital, it is true, but I think you have been well repaid. A hundred per cent on the first outlay, and how much more since?"

"That's all right!" answered the old man testily. "I'm not complaining, but this lad's no spy. He's a nice lad, and I like him. His dad isn't going to bring us in any profit, and I'm not standing for it. You hear what I say, Stahl, and you go back and tell the same thing to Geiss."

"And tell this to Monsieur Geiss, and that to Monsieur Venner, and that to Baron Stahl, and this time the sneer in his voice was very marked. "And why, pray, can you not send for Monsieur Geiss himself to give him your orders? It is because you are afraid of him—because you do not care to face him. But now I will tell you something, Monsieur Venner. This is our last coup—we are all agreed on that—and nothing must stand in the way of its success, neither your back nor your profit. I would tell Geiss too if he were standing in front of me. I won't have it, and if you refuse to drop the thing, I'll take measures!"

"There was a sudden crash, as if a chair sharply overturned. It was obvious that the interview was breaking up, in more senses than one, and if I wanted to get clear away, I should have to shift rapidly. I clambered down from the table, made a hurried reconnaissance along the empty corridor, and slipped down to my own room, just as an opening door and the whir of the mounting lift told me that the Baron was taking his departure."

I watched him strut in his car, a fat, ludicrous, yellow baboon, and drive away, then slowly and thoughtfully I made my way out of the house and up the lane to where Hugo was waiting for me. "My young friend," said he, when I had told my story, "we'll have no more of this. After lunch I'll drive you back to the hotel. You'll pack up your traps, pay your bill, and come home with me."

"You forget," I put in mildly, "that my host has definitely decided against having me here, and what more can a guest ask? Besides, in the last twelve hours I've learned the devil of a lot—where Venner hangs out, his relations with the rest of the gang—and who knows what another day will produce. I tell you what, I added magnanimously, "I'll sleep another night there and rejoin you tomorrow."

Feeling Of Revulsion
 We drove on to the Carlton in a more peaceful frame of mind, but the sight that met our eyes as we strolled leisurely up the ramp, did nothing to do our sanity.

There was Otilie Wills, slim, gay and graceful, sitting at a small corner table. And the man who sat opposite her, his expressionless, pebble-like eyes fixed intently on her face, was René Geiss himself. I have never experienced a stronger feeling of revulsion than at the sight of the two together, but the effect on Hugo was even more remarkable. He swore aloud, while I saw the dusky color rising to his temples. Then, without a word, he began to push his way through the tables.

In two strides he was beside them. "Miss Wills," he said stiffly, "may I have a word with you—in private?" She looked up quickly. "Why, Mr. Stern!" said she. "Surely this is an early appearance? I thought famous authors never awoke till tea-time?"

"Hugo, my dear one," Geiss said, but his voice was less affectionate than his words. "I am always so glad to see you, but just now a little less glad than at other times. Miss Wills and I are having a small private business talk."

"Business?" Hugo caught him up sharply, but the girl broke in. "Why, yes!" she said. "Mr. Geiss has done me the honor to wish to make a sketch of me."

Hugo gripped the back of a chair, but before the explosion came, I spoke hastily. "I think that's a top-hole notion," I said heartily. "But as a matter of fact, Miss Wills, Mr. Stern has an urgent message for you, and I know Mr. Geiss will forgive us."

Otilie Wills stood up, slowly and with a hint of uncertainty. "Is it as important as all that?" I gripped her by the arm. "Woman," I whispered, "do you want to provoke a free fight in the most public place in Cannest?" and I led her firmly through the entrance to the bar.

She dropped into a chair and stared up coolly at the two of us. "Well," she demanded, ominously quiet, "and now may I hear your message and go back to my table?" "That is not your table," said Hugo, still more quietly. "And this is my message, Miss Wills, you will not sit to René Geiss for your portrait—neither will you hold any more conversations with him in future."

"And why not?" "Because," he retorted, "René Geiss, as you have already been told, is not safe or fit company for any girl, and Heaven knows we have enough to occupy our minds at the moment without trotting at the heels of rash and imprudent young women. Merciful heavens!" he added, in an uncontrollable burst of irritation. "How many times do you have to be told a thing before it enters your head? You were told that if you didn't keep out of this business, it might seriously endanger us all, and the first thing you do is to scrape acquaintance with your sister's murderer!"

She winced at that, and I saw the tears start to her eyes; but the voice in which she answered him was very far from tearful. "You're sure you've quite finished?" she asked. "Because I'd certainly like to make a remark or two. You say I scraped acquaintance with Mr. Geiss. That's not true. Baron Stahl introduced us, not half an hour back, and it's not my fault if he wants to do a picture of me. You know very well I'm doing it for a purpose. You say that if I don't keep out of this business, it may seriously endanger you all—but it seems to me that if I don't take a hand, it's my uncle's life that will be seriously endangered. You say this must be found out and that discovered, but what have you actually accomplished? Nothing! You're as far as ever from knowing when, where, and how they'll try to kill my uncle, and every day, every minute, the danger is a little nearer. It's five little days till the 30th. After that it'll be too late—he'll be dead, like poor Melanie. I tell you, Mr. Hugo Stern, you may be a wonderful author, and your sister and your friends may think you're the brightest thing that ever happened, but your best isn't good enough for me!"

'No Quarrel Of Ours'
 SHE broke off with an angry gasp that was almost a sob. Then suddenly she swung round on Hugo, black eyes blazing. "I know," she cried, "you're all set to tell me some more, and I'll take all you can give me—but first let me finish. You believe this man Geiss had my sister killed? You believe he's the head of the conspiracy to murder my uncle? Well, then, isn't he the one man who will surely know what plans have been made?"

Hugo got a grip on himself by now, though a quiver of the nostril told of fury held in check. "Miss Wills," he said. "I have always believed that no woman was capable of reasoned argument, and now I know it; but before we leave you, there are one or two observations that I should like to make. First, this is a quarrel of ours. The sudden death of an unknown American, as far as my friend and I are concerned, would certainly be no reason for us to endanger our own lives and liberty. Yet in spite of that we are doing what we can to help you protect your uncle. Only this morning a murderous attempt was made on my friend's life, while bathing. Only this morning, as I waited for him in the main road beside my car, Baron Stahl deliberately attempted to run me down."

"Heli!" I said, "you never told me that!" But before I could continue, the girl broke in. "I'm not ashamed," she said, very low. "I feel the lowest thing on earth, and yet—" She broke off suddenly. "Oh, there's Uncle!"

As I looked up, startled, I saw the tall, gray-clad figure of Virgote Wills himself standing in the entrance to the bar.

"Otilie!" he called, in a stentorian bellow. "Come out here this minute. I want you!" "I'll have to go," she said. The next instant we were standing before the old man.

He was a fine-looking old fellow, still muscular, in spite of his age. His gnarled face was both wise and kindly, and his eyes, surveying us shrewdly through round-lensed spectacles, were the eyes of a man who knew the world.

He listened to his niece's introduction with a noncommittal air, but as he looked us up and down, his expression softened. "Gentlemen," he said, "I am glad to make your acquaintance. I wish that I could ask you to join me in a drink, but our luncheon awaits us. Perhaps, if you are passing this way you would do me the honor tonight at six thirty?"

"Tomorrow," Otilie takes matters into her own hands.

and 46 schools more than the record established at the close of the fall term in 1937.

E. B. Lemon, registrar, said if the pace continued the number of students would reach 4400.

Deans and heads of departments announced more instructors would be necessary to handle the overflow classes.

Maine Governor Wins
 PORT FAIRFIELD, Me., Sept. 29.—(AP)—A four-pound margin potato-weight gave Ope Lewis O. Barrows of Maine victory today in his five-minute potato-picking duel with Gov. Elizabeth W. Clark of Idaho.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

BOTH PARENTS OF DEADLY KING COBRA SNAKES, India, BUILD NESTS FOR THEIR EGGS AND WATCH THEM UNTIL THEY HATCH!

MODERN MIDAS—HENRY MILLER, pioneer cattleman, RAN \$6 INTO \$50,000,000 IN 30 YEARS! (1850-80)
 AFTER COMING TO CALIFORNIA, MILLER ACQUIRED 1,000,000 ACRES OF LAND, 1,000,000 HEAD OF CATTLE AND TWO BANKS, WITH THEIR BRANCHES...

THE MODEL FOR THE FIRST T-RAIL FOR RAILROADS WAS WHITTLED FROM WOOD BY COLONEL JOHN STEVENS WHILE ON BOARD A SHIP! —Early 19th century—

HAL SCHUMACHER, New York Giants pitcher, WON A WORLD SERIES GAME THE SAME YEAR HE WAS AWARDED A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE FROM ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY, N.Y. (vs. Wash. Senators, Oct. 4, 1933)

King of Cattle
 Most of the stories of quick riches which poured out of the west during the gold rush days of the 1850's had to do with mining bonanzas. Singular among these was the story of Henry Miller, a German who made a fortune in cattle.

Strange as it seems, this man came to California in 1850 with only six dollars in his pocket, and 30 years later was owner of a cattle empire valued at \$50,000,000!

Henry Miller was Henry Kreiser when he landed in New York city in 1847. With a dollar less than he owned when he landed in San Francisco, Kreiser got a job in a butcher shop.

There he met a man named Henry Miller, who persuaded Kreiser to travel to California with him. At the last moment Miller was unable to go, so he sold Kreiser his ticket. Thinking he could not use it, unless his name were "Miller," Kreiser changed his name to Henry Miller.

After arriving in San Francisco, Miller went back into the meat business and made a nice profit with which he bought out the double "H" brand, cattle and rancho in the San Joaquin valley.

By 1880 Miller was owner of 1,000,000 acres of land in five states, over 1,000,000 head of cattle and two banks with their branches. His amazing success was due almost entirely to his sole efforts.

SAILORS RESCUED ON WATERY PERCH
 PETERSBURG, Alaska, Sept. 29.—(AP)—Clinging to a beacon in Wrangell Narrows several hours after the Ketchikan halibut schooner Tatoosh overturned early yesterday, Capt. Krist Martinsen, Seattle, and a crew of six were picked up by the halibuter Recovery and brought here. Some of the crew, clad only in underwear, were severely chilled.

Captain Martinsen said the Tatoosh, southbound with a cargo of 25,000 pounds, got off the course in heavy fog at about 3 a. m., and struck beacon No. 9. The swift tide jammed it against the beacon, finally overturning and sinking it.

The captain returned to the scene yesterday but could not see the boat. He said salvage would await word from the underwriters, although he did not believe the hull was stove in.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Double Menace!
 History Research Center PORTLAND, Sept. 29.—(AP)—Burt Brown Barker, vice-president of the University of Oregon, returned from Europe today loaded, as he put it, with material to make the school the research center for northwest historians.

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Me, Too!
 GEE, BEN, WHEN PROF. ADIT COMES BACK TOMORROW WHAT KIN YOU DO?
 I DON'T KNOW, RUSTY...
 WILL YA TELL HIM ABOUT DOC KILEY'S VITAMIN PILLS. THE SUNSHINE PELLETS? THAT'LL GIVE THE WHOLE WORKS AWAY, Y'KNOW, IF YOU DO...
 I'LL GO TO JAIL FIRST!
 GOD!
 BUT I DON'T WANT YOU AROUND WHEN HE COMES, RUSTY—I'VE GOT ANOTHER PLAN FOR YOU—
 NOTHIN' DOIN'! IF YOU'RE GOIN' TO JAIL, I AM, TOO!

THE NEBBS—Love Is Great
 HERE'S A LETTER FOR YOU, MR. NEBB—I HOPE IT'S THE ONE YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.
 THAT'S IT! I THINK, BECAUSE A FORTUNE TELLER TOLD ME I WAS GOING TO GET IT.
 DEAR STEVE AND SHE SAYS DOWN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LETTER YOUR LOVE AND RESPECT WILL ALWAYS BE A FINE AND LASTING MEMORY IN MY LIFE.
 I NEVER GOT ANYTHING IN MY LIFE THAT MADE ME SO HAPPY—AND SHE CALLS ME DEAR STEVE AND SHE'S NO DECEITFUL WOMAN EITHER!

INJUSTICE By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

WAKES UP FROM A BRIEF AFTER-NOON NAP
MOTHER COMES IN, GREETIS HER JOYOUSLY AND HOLDS OUT ARMS, TO BE PICKED UP
IS A LITTLE DASHED AND PUZZLED WHEN SHE MURMURS TO BE A GOOD BOY AND TAKE HIS NAP, AND TUCKS HIM UP AGAIN
DECIDES SHE'S JUST PLAYING A GAME AND ENTERS INTO THE SPIRIT OF IT
REALIZES AS SHE TUCKS HIM UP AGAIN, THAT SHE THINKS HE HASN'T HAD HIS NAP YET
SPENDS AN HOUR, AFTER SHE GOES OUT, REGISTERING HIS PROTEST AGAINST THE WORLD'S INJUSTICE

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WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE A SILVER DOLLAR OR A PAPER DOLLAR?
IMMATERIAL
I'M AMAZED ATCHA!
IF YA HAVE A PAPER DOLLAR YA ALWAYS KIN DOUBBLE IT!
LAUGHTER
'TIS I, DESPERATE AMBROSE, THE RADIO COMEDIAN

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By HAL FORREST

By EDWIN ALGER

By SOL HEPP

OSC. REGISTRANTS NOW TOTAL 4114

CORVALLIS, Sept. 29.—(AP)—A steady march of late comers to the registration office short enrollment at Oregon State college to an all-time record today.