

THE CLOUDED MOON

By MAX SALTmarsh

The Characters
Hugo Stern, handsome author, living on the French Riviera.
Archie Lumsden, myself, Hugo's friend.
Rene Geiss, cartoonist and murderer de luxe.
Ottile Wills, beautiful American heiress.

Yesterday: Disregarding Hugo's warning, Ottile poses for Geiss. We go after her.

Chapter 26
First Fetters Of Love

"GET up!" Hugo said harshly. "You're coming back with us at once. Your uncle is waiting for you."

"Uncle!" she said, on a different note. "Goodness! Is he getting fretful too? Well, in that case, I'd better be going. Mr. Geiss," she said, "I fancy we'll have to call it a day. It's been a lovely party, and I'd certainly like to come again."

As she spoke, she flashed a mocking, impish look at Hugo, and I heard him swear under his breath. I could not blame him, for that girl, when she set her mind to it, could have irritated an archangel; and yet she was such a lovely sight as she stood silhouetted against the dark hangings that I, for one, felt my rage fading away.

The cartoonist looked from one to the other of us, livid with fury. "Yes," he said slowly. "You will come again, and you are quite right—there will be no interruption." He took a step nearer, staring at her intently with his papaya eyes. "Strange," he said, "never before have I used a model that so inspired me. Yet I have never studied you before." He drew a hand across his eyes. "It is like a remembered dream," he added, half to himself.

The girl caught her breath. "I guess it must have been a dream," she said uncertainly, and as she spoke Hugo picked up the thick white woolen wrap that lay on the dais, and threw it across her shoulders.

"That's enough," he said harshly. "Come along out of this."

He led her through the door and down the passage. As we reached the hall there came a sudden interruption. Cassandra Chubb leaned from her chair by the door and rushed at us, emitting a stifled squeak of fury mixed with relief.

"Well!" she said. "Ottile Wills, of all the ways to act!" "Don't, Chubby!" said the girl. "Don't you start scolding. I've got plenty of that coming from other quarters!" She gave a half-allegre, half-mischievous glance at Hugo. "You're mad with me, aren't you?" she added, naively questioning him.

Hugo moved impatiently. "To be angry with anyone," he said, "presupposes a certain regard or respect. This last effort of yours so completely passes the bounds of reason that all I can feel is a profound pity for the people who are obliged to look after you."

"My, my!" said she. "On the pavement Ottile turned, but her subdued expression all meekness. 'Shall I go straight home,' she asked, 'or shall I tell you what I found out? Once we get together with Uncle, there'll be no more private talking.'"

"I hope," Hugo said icily, "that your news will be worth the trouble and anxiety your visit has caused."

She looked up at him quickly, mutinous yet apprehensive, then drew a deep breath and folded her hands. "Well," she said, "first and foremost, he's asked me to visit a thing called the braderie—it's a sort of fair and they hold it next Sunday. He asked wouldn't I bring my uncle along, and I said he couldn't walk, because of a lame foot, but that didn't seem to worry Mr. Geiss. All he was concerned about was that I should be there."

"The Decoy Duck" "THAT'S simple," I said. "He gets you planted somewhere as the decoy duck, and sends an urgent call to your uncle. What did you say?"

She grinned impishly. "I acted the bashful maiden," she said. "Didn't know if I could go out with him alone, but let him see I'd love to. That's how it stands at the moment. Second," she checked off an item on her fingers, "a friend of his has a yacht which is expected in the harbor tomorrow. She's a seagoing boat, and the friend may shortly take a long cruise in her. He's invited me for a sail in her on Saturday afternoon."

"I whistled. 'That's interesting. I presume she belongs to either Stahl or Rakovsky, but what's she there for?'" "In case their plans miscarry," said Hugo. His manner was still stiff and formal, but I could see a glint of interest in his eye. "If the yacht is registered under a foreign flag, it would be an admirable way of getting away in a hurry."

The girl nodded slowly. "I guessed that," she agreed. "But why, unless the man's a lunatic, did he tell me about her?" "Because, my dear," said I, "in

the first place, he doesn't know that you—or we, for that matter—guess a thing about the plot. He doesn't know who your sister was, or O'Donnell either, and he thinks he's being very clever. Probably if you finally refuse to go to the braderie with him, he'll have a shot at holding you on board the yacht until your uncle's disposed of."

She gave me a quick, understanding smile. "That's how I'd figured it out myself. Well, that was all I heard, for he spent a lot of time being gallant, and the rest in finding out how I'd met Mr. Stern in the first place and in warning me to keep away from him. It appears," she added, turning solemn eyes on Hugo, "that you're a terrible philanderer."

He flushed. "At least," he retorted, "you were able to deny that from your own experience. Archie, you can see Miss Wills back to her hotel and meet me later by the car." And with a stiff little bow he turned on his heel and marched off.

She stood for a moment watching his broad, blue-shirted back disappearing along the pavement. "There's gratitude for you!" she commented bitterly. Then, suddenly she laughed and, linking her arm in mine, drew me away in the opposite direction. "Tell me," she said confidentially, "when he's mad like that, how long does he take to get over it?"

"Sometimes an hour," I told her, "sometimes a month, and sometimes never."

She heaved a short sigh. "I guess it'll be never in my case," she hazarded, and then, with an upward jerk of the chin. "Oh, well, who cares? Archie—you don't mind if I call you Archie, do you? Somehow I always think of you that way, though I couldn't even call Mr. Stern Hugo. Not even!" she finished with considerable emphasis.

"It's not so hard as you'd think," I assured her. "What is it you want to know?" "I just wondered if he'd ever been in love. Somehow he doesn't strike one as having any nymur emotions."

I looked at her thoughtfully, and a sudden, surprising possibility struck me. "Oh, well," said I, "Hugo's a hard nut for any woman to crack. There's a lot of stand-back, keep-your-distance, about him, but you can't wonder at it. With his reputation as a writer and his looks, most women he meets seem to fall for him."

"Poor mutts!" said she viciously, and the conversation came to an abrupt close.

Queer, Tingling Excitement

I DELIVERED over a silent and I thoughtful young woman to the care of Virgo Wills. Hugo was waiting for me in the Hispano's driving-seat, and as I settled myself beside him, I looked at him curiously.

I had by now a shrewd idea that Ottile Wills's interest in him was not entirely disinterested. I was waiting for me in the Hispano's driving-seat, and as I settled myself beside him, I looked at him curiously.

He obeyed in grim silence, and as I strolled down the lane and crossed the gravel sweep to the vestibule, I found myself chuckling. If peace and an ordered routine were what he demanded from life, he was certainly not getting them at the moment.

The long hall was empty, cool and shadowed, and a lilac dusk veiled the terrace beyond, but as my footsteps echoed on the marble flagstones, the big dog rose from beneath the eaves, slowly wagging his tail, and the servant Amédée appeared from the corridor.

"Monsieur, he said anxiously, 'the patron has awaited you since noon! He wishes to speak with you as soon as you return.'"

"With pleasure," said I, and on that he conducted me up in the lift to his master's apartments.

It was a strange little room in which I found myself as I opened the door, in answer to a fretful 'come in!' If the creator of the room had wished to reproduce, say, a small smoking-room in a well-to-do London residence, he couldn't have done better, but it would have belonged to a Londoner of twenty years back.

The small, frail form of Mr. Verner was propped on a long couch drawn before the window.

"Come over here!" he said impatiently. "Sit ye down and help yourself to a drink. What have you been up to, I should like to know, gadding about all day while I was waiting to have a talk with you, and a most important talk too!"

"(Copyright, 1938, Max Saltmarsh.) Tomorrow: A warning.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



THE BOY COMMANDER! SAMUEL SMEDLEY-- Connecticut naval prodigy, BEFORE HE WAS 21 CAPTURED MORE SHIPS AND PRIZES THAN ANY OTHER OFFICER OR PRIVATEER DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR! IN 3 YEARS AS COMMANDER OF THE BRIG, 'DEFENSE,' HE TOOK 13 SHIPS, 600 MEN AND \$500,000 IN CARGOES! (1776-'78)



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BABE ADAMS-- Pittsburgh pitcher WON 3 WORLD SERIES GAMES AND LOST NONE-- IN HIS FIRST YEAR WITH THE MAJOR LEAGUES! -1909-

The Young Commander Had Samuel Smedley, Connecticut youth, been an older man during the American revolution, his career as a naval commander would have been no less brilliant. As he was, Smedley was only 21 years old when he finished a three-year cruise as commander of the 62-foot brig, Defense, in 1778, after capturing more ships and greater prizes than any other officer or privateer during the entire period of the war. Young Smedley captured for the colonies 13 ships, 600 men, and prize cargoes amounting to the amazing

total of \$500,000—and was himself twice captured by the British! A lieutenant at the age of 15, Smedley was appointed captain of the Defense when Captain Seth Harding retired because of illness. Harding recommended Smedley's promotion. The 62-foot brig had a beam of 23 feet and an 11-foot hold. She mounted 16 six-pounders, 24 swivels, 100 muskets, 50 pistols, 51 cutlasses, 11 blunderbuss "murriners" and two boarding grappling hooks. During the years 1776-1778 the Defense cruised the Atlantic from Newfoundland to the West Indies, taking

would only try to convince the voters that he was the candidate who would bring efficient government. So far, Hess also has conducted the same sort of campaign. There have been no signs yet of a bitter campaign between any two candidates, but the fight has just begun. Earnest mud-slinging in the primary campaign didn't start until a week before election. The battle so far has centered about the initiative measure which would outlaw jurisdictional labor disputes, prevent picketing except

where a dispute between employer and employe exists, and prohibit interference in the marketing of farm products. The death of Ben Osborne, state A.P.L. head who was conducting a vigorous state-wide campaign against the measure when he died, was a severe blow to the labor forces who contended the bill would make unions powerless. This contention is denied by the Associated Farmers, its sponsors. Use Mail Tribune Want Ads

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AND THE MERCURY IS 'STEPPIN' AT 400 M.P.H.!

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THE NEBBS—Happy Day



9-29

By SOL HESS

SPRAGUE PROMISE TO RETAIN MERIT CHEERS WORKERS

SALISBURY, Oct. 1.—(AP)—Appointee state officials involved more easily today after Charles A. Sprague, Republican gubernatorial candidate, opened his campaign with a promise that he would not fire efficient appointees merely for political reasons if he were elected. Naturally, these appointees are not

assured of keeping their jobs until their terms expire because they have received no such assurance from Henry I. Hess, Democratic nominee. Those who felt most relieved were heads of the highway, state police, liquor control, fish, game and industrial accident departments. Sprague mentioned each of these agencies in his address in Portland Tuesday night. Sprague will have support in his campaign to abolish the spoils system. The Oregon State Bar association, meeting in Salem today, will consider a proposed constitutional amendment to prevent a governor from firing an appointee except for cause. Sprague's opening address was free of accusations that Republican standard bearer having said before that he would sling no mud and