

THE CLOUDED MOON

By MAX SALTMARSH

The Characters

Hugo Stern, handsome author, living on the French Riviera. Archie Lumsden, myself, his friend. Otilie Wills, beautiful American actress.

Yesterday, the dog Lulu saves Virgote Wills' life by killing his master's murderer. There is still no sign of Otilie.

Chapter 42

Kidnapped!

WE lunched, which is to say that Dunning and I gulped down some mouthfuls of food while Hugo sat, refusing everything. Then Dunning suggested inquiring at the various gas stations on the roads out of town, to hear if they had seen the yellow car pass, and though it was a forlorn hope, any action was better than nothing, so for a couple of hours we scoured the dusty countryside, all to no purpose. The Esterels were still burning bravely, but for the moment such a small event as a conflagration held no interest for me, and finally, just as dusk was falling, we pulled up again on the main square.

Across the crowded promenade pulling up outside the Grand Hotel, was a shabby Renault with dust thick upon it. A stocky, middle-aged man, descended from it and started to climb the steps of the hotel, but before he had reached the door, I was across the promenade and gripping him by the shoulder.

"Fleuriot!" I said. "You're a sight for sore eyes, and his face lighted at sight of me. 'Tiens!' he answered warmly. There is a small matter of a wager to be settled between us, a wager connected with the word 'Amourie'. You were right, my friend," he added, tapping me in a friendly way on the shoulder, "but I could wish you had been a trifle more explicit, for you see, when I got there, the bird had flown!"

I stared at him stupidly. "What bird?" I echoed, and he shook his head, gently reproving.

"Do not pretend you did not know. The chasseur, of course! I guessed, naturally, that the word must be a street name in one of the older towns, and I made a lucky decision in trying Amourie, but it took me some little time to locate the street, for it is now renamed. I discovered it at last, however!" he finished triumphantly. "And more, I found the house itself, the former dwelling of the armorer who gave it its name. So I added to myself certain of the local police, and between us we broke down the door."

"Gosh!" I said wistfully. "I wish I'd been there!"

"And I, too," he assented politely. "With your weight, you had needed three policemen at the least, but I digress! The ground floor was empty, but I ascended to the first story, even to that upper room where the old printing-press stands." He paused, nodding his head solemnly. There it stood, the whole equipment for that interesting little astrological magazine. We had received inquiries at the Surete about this strange publication, notably from the Dunning Agency of New York."

"I know all about that I made em. I'm Dunning," said the big man hollowly.

"But now I found proof positive that Monsieur René Geiss was the author—notes, proof-corrections, unfinished sketches, what you like. You know this, Monsieur Lumsden!" he added accusingly.

"Help!"

"We guessed it," I corrected him, "but we hadn't a shred of proof. Go on, man, go on!"

"Hiding in an attic under the eaves, I discovered a woman, a Negro, who said she was in charge of the house."

"Fatma," I said as she paused, and he flashed me a swift, reproachful look. "You see, you know all, Monsieur Lumsden. This Fatma I questioned, and she told me what I suspected. The chasseur had indeed sheltered there for two days, but that very morning he had left, for where do you think? For no less a place than the villa of a certain Monsieur Vladimir Rakovsky in Italy!"

"And you believed her?" said Hugo.

The other shrugged expressively. "I believed her, yes, for I had no reason to do otherwise, and her story was circumstantial. Also, I had other things to go on, as you shall hear. So to Monsieur Rakovsky I went, but when I arrived, it was to find he had been on what you call a wild-duck hunt. Our friend was not there—he never had been there, and Monsieur Rakovsky was a very indignant man at the mere suggestion that he might have been there! So back to Cannes I came, like a game-dog who has lost the game!"

"Too bad!" I said mechanically, for there was something in his manner that told he still had a surprise or two tucked away up his sleeve. "Look here, Fleuriot, I added, "this other evidence that convinced you you were on the right trail—what was it?"

"Ah!" said he, on a long-drawn sigh, and his eyes, sharply intelligent, searched each of our faces in turn. "It was such a little thing,

a mere scrap of... cealed under the printing-press, and yet, to me, it said a great deal! And with that he fumbled in his pocket and drew out a crumpled sheet of soiled paper, presenting it with a flourish for our inspection.

I took it, unfolding it dazedly while Hugo and Dunning craned their heads over my shoulder to read, and there I saw, scrawled in red chalk, in crude capitals an inch high, the words: "They are taking me to Italy. Help! Otilie Wills!"

"And she wasn't there?" said Dunning, in a queer, hoarse voice. The man from Marseille gave him a sharp, quizzical look. "It is correct, then, that Miss Wills has disappeared?" he demanded, and at the others hopeless gesture of assent, he nodded slowly. "So? The girl will answer you. Not was Miss Wills not there, mon ami, but she had never been there—if by 'there' you mean the villa of Monsieur Rakovsky. She has not been taken into Italy, and I tell you this with my hand on my heart, for two hours of my precious time I had already heard, as I have told you of the inquiries made by Monsieur Dunning here and others as to the authorship of Le Grimoire astrologique inquiries which we had not, unfortunately, been able to answer. I knew that a plot against the life of Monsieur Virgote Wills was suspected, but I tell you frankly that I thought the idea fantastic, and neither we of the Surete nor the local police were unduly disturbed when Monsieur Wills and his niece arrived here. When, however, I saw this note, I realized that the idea of the young lady's abduction was not as fantastic as it might otherwise have appeared, and I realized too that Monsieur René Geiss was in some way implicated."

"West, Not East!"

HE paused to sip appreciatively from his glass. "It is not so hard to be wise after the event!" he admitted with a wry little smile. "But me, I felt a spiritual indignation at the knowledge that was suddenly heaped upon my plate, for, from the fact that the chasseur had been hiding in that house, I deduced that there was a connection between this Wills affair and the murder of Monsieur Venner, and more, that you, Monsieur Lumsden, had in your possession of this information for some time, but had not thought fit to inform me!"

I shifted uneasily. "Let's not go into that now," I suggested. "You'll find I had good enough reasons when the time comes to spoil them."

He waved his hand magnanimously. "I've heard of the regrettable attempt on Monsieur Wills' life and the not so regrettable fate of the assassin. Now I see that the disappearance of Miss Wills is a very serious matter. You believe, do you not, that Monsieur Geiss has abducted her? My friends, you shall tell me all you know, and then we must act, and act quickly."

"This will be news to the lot of you," Hugo said. "Whether Otilie has been abducted or not, one thing is certain. She didn't write this letter! First, it's printed in lipstick."

Fleuriot grinned. "The classic method for ladies in distress who have no pen!"

"Just so," assented Hugo dryly. "But I think you will admit that ladies are not in the habit of carrying an assortment of lipsticks around with them. I happen to know that Miss Wills uses what I believe is known as carmine whereas this letter, you will note is printed with an orange stick."

Fleuriot rapped out an oath and sprang to his feet. "You are sure of this, Monsieur Stern?" he demanded sharply.

Hugo swung round on me. "Archie, you saw that Negro on the other night—what shade of lipstick would you say she used?"

I cast my mind back to that bizarre scene under the night sky. "Orange it was!" I admitted, and he gave a short, triumphant laugh.

"You see? It was the Negroess who wrote this letter, and the Negroess who wrote this letter, and the Negroess who wrote it under dictation with the sole object of making us believe that Otilie had been in Antibes and was being carried even farther east into Italy!" He broke off, studying our faces. "Gentlemen," he finished, "there's only one possible explanation for that maneuver—Otilie never was in Antibes, and if we want to find her, we must look, not east, but west."

Fleuriot struck his forehead. "West, that includes the whole of France!"

"Steady on, man!" said I. "That car of Geiss's should be easy to trace, and if Otilie's gone with him unwillingly he couldn't well shift her into a train."

"The car!" he echoed. "The car! I am! If the car is on the road it shall be found! And he ran like a two-year-old to the private telephone in the manager's office.

(Copyright 1938, Max Saltmarsh)

Monday: On the trail.

dorsed all Democratic candidates for state and federal offices with one exception and called on President Roosevelt to run for a third term in the absence of another "progressive" Democratic leader.

Alex Barry, candidate for the short term to the U. S. senate, was the only Republican endorsed.

PAINT IS DONATED FOR JACKSONVILLE CLUB

JACKSONVILLE, Oct. 18.—(Sp.)—Thanks to generous donors, the old Methodist church has received two coats of white paint, the work being done by Walter Anderson, the firms, each of which donated one gallon of paint, were: Pittsburgh Paint Co., Fick Hardware, Big Pines Lumber Co., Lampert, Hubbard Bros., Fortner, Lumber Co., Medford Lumber Co., Hansen Hardware, Montgomery Place, KGO, KEX, KGA, Al Johnson, Ward, Eckerson Paint company, and the Woods Lumber Co., Townsfolk, as well as countless others to whom the church is a shrine, greatly appreciate these gifts.

On the Radio Chains

Where to Find Them on the Dial

- KEX, Portland, 1180; KFI, 640 Los Angeles; KUA, 1470 Spokane; KGO, 790 San Francisco; KUW, 620 Portland; KJH, 970 Seattle; KNA, 1050 Los Angeles; KOA, 830 Denver; KOIN, 950 Portland; KOMO, 920 Seattle; KPO, 680 San Francisco; KNL, 1130; Salt Lake.
- 5:00—Viennese Echoes, KPO, KGW, KFI, Ross and Grant, KNX, Drama, KSL, News, KGO; Sibouettes in Blue, KEX, KGA; Dick Tracy, KGA.
- 5:30—Carson, Organist, KPO, KGW, Forster, KGA; News, KJR.
- 6:30—McCall's Screen Scoops, KNX, KSL, KOIN; King's Orch., KPO, KGW; Brown's Orch., KGO, KGA, KEX.
- 10:00—Reporter, KPO, KGW, KFI; Pianist, KSL; Plantation Party, KGO, KEX, KGA; News, KNX.

- 7:00—Ennis' Orch., KPO, KGW, KFI; Drama, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Jambores, KEX, KJR.
- 7:30—Jimmy Fidler, KPO, KFI, KGW; Borch songs, KNX; Knight Orch., KGO, KEX.
- 7:45—State of the Nation, KGO, KEX; Organist, KPO, KGW; American Viewpoints, KNX, KOIN.
- 8:00—Amos and Andy, KPO, KGW, KFI; Allston's Orch., KNX; Dance Orch., KJR; Dance Hour, KGO; News, KGA.
- 8:15—Vocal Varieties, KPO, KFI, KGW; liston's Orch., KSL, KOIN; Dance Orch., KGA.
- 8:30—Johnny Presents, KPO, KFI, KGW; Novak's Orch., KGA; Drama, KNX, KOIN.
- 9:00—Al Johnson, KNX, KOIN; Good Morning Tonight, KPO, KGW; Dance Orch., KGA; News, KJR.
- 9:30—McCall's Screen Scoops, KNX, KSL, KOIN; King's Orch., KPO, KGW; Brown's Orch., KGO, KGA, KEX.
- 10:00—Reporter, KPO, KGW, KFI; Pianist, KSL; Plantation Party, KGO, KEX, KGA; News, KNX.

- 10:30—Fields' Orch., KGO, KEX; Sudy's Orch., KPO, KGW, KFI.
- 11:00—Winston's Orch., KPO, KFI, KGW; Organist, KJR, KGA; World on Parade, KGO; Sallee's Orch., KNX, KSL.
- 8:00—World on Parade, KGO; Shield Revue, KJR; Contrasts, KPO, KFI; Chiquito and Orch., KNX, KOIN.
- 5:15—Sons of the Lone Star, KGO, KEX; Howie Wing, KNX, KOIN; Stories of Life, KPO.
- 5:30—Hobby Lobby, KPO, KFI, KGW; Organist, KNX, KOIN.
- 6:00—Rainbow's End, KNX, KOIN; Carson, organist, KFI, KGW; Exposition Backstage, KPO.
- 6:30—Star Theater, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Festival of Music, KGO, KEX; Martin's Music, KGO; Interviews, KPO; News, KJR.

- 7:00—Kyer's Dance, KPO, KGW, KFI; Magnolia Blossoms, KGO, KEX.
- 7:30—Minstrel Show, KGO, KGA; McWilliams, KNX, KSL, KOIN.
- 8:00—Amos and Andy, KPO, KGW, KFI; World on Parade, KGO; Balse's Orch., KNX, News, KGA.
- 8:15—Human Side of the News, KPO, KFI, KGW; Lum and Abner, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Dance Orch., KGO, KEX.
- 8:30—Whiteman's Orch., KNX, KSL, KOIN; Dorsey's Orch., KPO, KFI, KGW; Morgan's Orch., KGO, KEX.
- 9:00—Town Hall, KPO, KFI, KGW; Gang Busters, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Clinton's Orch., KGO, KGA.
- 9:30—Osborne's Orch., KGO, KGA, KEX; Weems' Orch., KNX; News, KSL.
- 10:00—Organist, KSL; Reporter,

- KPO, KGW, KFI; Martin's Orch., KGO, KEX; News, KNX.
- 10:30—King's Orch., KPO, KGW, KFI; Winston's Orch., KGO, KEX.
- 11:00—Winston's Orch., KPO, KFI, KGW; King's Orch., KNX, KSL, KOIN; Organist, KGA; World on Parade, KGO.

ANTIOCH COMMUNITY TO CLEAN CEMETERY

BEAGLE, Oct. 18.—(Sp.)—Antioch community has set aside Friday, October 21, for clean-up day in the Antioch cemetery. There will be an all day meeting with a basket lunch at noon. An invitation is extended to those interested who live out side the community. Hot coffee will be served to help with the lunch.

S'MATTER POP

By O M PAYNE



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Oh, Happy Day!

By HAL FORREST



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Oh, Yeah?

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—The Blue Bird

By BOI FRES



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PHYSICIANS LIST BETTER HOSPITALS

The American College of Surgeons today announced its 21st annual list of hospitals which it has fully and provisionally approved.

"The hospital which conforms to all the requirements is one in which the patient can place the utmost implicit confidence," said a release from the college. "That factor is in itself an important first step toward recovery."

A high general health average is one of the greatest assets a community can have," the college release concluded. "Good hospitals help to maintain it. Let's support them."

COMMONWEALTH BACKS BOURBON CANDIDATES

PORTLAND, Oct. 18.—(Sp.)—The Oregon Commonwealth Federation at its annual convention Sunday was