

BANNER SERIAL FICTION

She Painted Her Face

A story of love and intrigue . . . by **DORNFORD YATES**

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WNU Service

SYNOPSIS

Richard Exon, a poor young Englishman, befriends elderly Matthew Gering, who at his death, gives him a statement claiming he, Gering, is Rudolf Elbert Virgil, Count of Brief, of ancient Austrian nobility who was betrayed 20 years before by his twin brother, Ferdinand, whose sentence for forgery he himself served. Ferdinand appropriated his title, property and daughter. Before he dies, Gering tells Exon there is a family secret, known only to the head of the house, to be found in the great tower at Brief, by a doorway none can ever find. Exon inherits his uncle's fortune and sets out to right Gering's wrongs. En route he encounters Percy Elbert Virgil, son of the villainous Ferdinand and sees him in conference with Inskip, a diamond merchant. He engages a valet, Winter, who hates Percy and meets by chance at a garage, John Herrick, who is a linguist and who as a youth served as a page at Gering's wedding, and had visited Brief. Herrick agrees to aid Exon. They establish headquarters at Brenda Revoke's farm at Raven, a few miles from Brief and make their plans. They find the castle almost inaccessible. They see a closed car occupied by Percy Virgil, a chauffeur and a woman. Hearing a dog scream, they see the chauffeur flinging it, just as a horse with a girl astride bounds along the path and is felled by a strung wire. The girl, unconscious, is picked up carefully by the chauffeur and woman, who then run away, after dropping her. Exon rescues the girl and carries her to his waiting car. He identifies the girl as Elizabeth, daughter of the disowned Gering, tells her of her cousin's plot to abduct her and takes her to Raven, where he tells her the story of her father and promises to go the limit to help her right her father's wrongs. Incredulous at first, Elizabeth gradually wins faith in her benefactor. Percy Virgil brings the police to Raven, announcing that two strangers are being sought for the kidnaping of Elizabeth.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

The sergeant swallowed, and Virgil put in his car. "You may be strangers," he said, "but that doesn't put you above the law of the land." "Nor, I trust," said Herrick, "beyond the traditional courtesy of its inhabitants. What is your rank in the police?" Virgil flushed. "I am not in the police," he said. "Then why," said Herrick, "did you presume to address me?" "My name is—" "I have no desire," said Herrick, "to hear your name." He returned to the police. "You were saying that the matter was serious . . ."

He had been turned to stone. Then a shiver ran through him, and a hand went up to his mouth. But the police had no eyes for him. The two were staring at Herrick as though they would read his soul. "At what times," said the sergeant, "did you enter and leave the estate?" "We entered at four and we left about half past six."

There was an electric silence. Then— "I am bound to inform you," said the sergeant, "that what you have just admitted makes your position most grave. The outrage was committed this morning at six o'clock."

"Perhaps," said Herrick, "it was not committed by us."

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders. "I shall have to—" "I think it is clear," said Virgil, "that this gentleman is telling the truth." The two police stared upon him as though he were out of his mind. "I mean, if he were guilty, he would scarcely have made an

admission which put the rope round his neck."

As soon as he could speak—"But, sir," cried the sergeant, "a rope round the neck is harmless, unless it is tight. If every rogue was believed because he told such truths as could do him no harm—" "These gentlemen," said Virgil, "have not the appearance of rogues. It only remains for you to beg their pardon and make a fresh cast. Good God, man, when time is so precious, do you propose to waste it in prying into two strangers' private affairs?"

With a manifest effort, the sergeant controlled his voice. "Sir," he said, "if you do not wish to wait, you must leave us here. I have a sow by the ear, and until I know it's the wrong one, I will not let go." With that, he returned to Herrick. "You have said too much or too little. You were at Brief this morning from four until half past six. Kindly relate what you did there—from first to last."

"With very great pleasure," said Herrick, folding his arms. "We left our car at the mouth of the northern drive—after instructing our chauffeur, first, to seek some petrol, and then to wait in a wood a little way off. You will understand that we did not wish to be seen."

"Is your chauffeur here?" said the sergeant. "He is. If you would like to see him—"

"Proceed, if you please."

"Before we had walked very far, we heard a car coming behind us, using the drive. At once we lay down in the bracken until it had passed."

His face like a mask, Virgil took out his case and selected a cigarette: but I saw a bead of sweat fall on the gold.

"It was not your car?" said the sergeant, plainly impressed.

Producing a notebook, his fellow made ready to write.

"It was not our car," said Herrick. "Others were abroad this morning . . . within the confines of Brief."

"Describe this car, if you please."

"It was closed and its blinds were drawn: its number-plate was obscured—I imagine, with oil and dust."

The sergeant turned to his fellow, pencil in hand.

"Have you got that down?"

The other nodded and Herrick resumed his tale, relating how the car had been met and had then been backed down the drive and up the track.

"There three people got out, and the man who had met them came up."

"Would you know them again, sir?"

"I should."

As the answer went down, I saw Virgil wipe his face.

"One of the three," said Herrick, "was a woman. She had a dog on a lead."

"A dog?" cried the police, together.

"A long-haired, black-and-white dog: a mongrel, about that size."

Struggling with his emotion—"Sir," cried the sergeant, "I beg that you will forgive me if I have seemed something short. I have to do my duty, and your interest in Brief seemed strange. But now I know that you are telling the truth. The dog you describe was found at large in the park."

Respectfully thanking Herrick and handing him back our map, the sergeant begged that he would describe "the delinquents who so providentially saw"—and Herrick complied with a gusto which did his heart good.

His picture of Percy Virgil was actually taken from life. Lazily surveying his victim, he drew a merciless portrait of that unprincipled man: and I find it hard to believe

wire—except a man who had planned to employ it that way?"

"Come, come, sir," said the sergeant. "You said yourself just now that these gentlemen—"

"I have changed my mind," spat Virgil, "as you have changed yours."

"I have just remembered," said Herrick, "that one of the men was called Max. Not the leader—the burly man, who got out of the car. The leader was sharp with him, as, indeed, with them all. I think that, if you could find them, they might give the leader away."

"And the name of the leader?" sneered Virgil. "Quite sure you didn't hear that?"

Herrick raised his eyebrows, before he returned to the police.

"You would not believe me," he said, "if I told you the leader's name. And so I prefer that you should apply to Max. But I'll tell you what I will do. I'll write it down for you, and I'll seal it up. And when Max has opened his mouth, you may break the seal. Thus I shall corroborate him, and he will corroborate me."

"Sir," cried the sergeant, "I beseech you to tell it us now."

"I will write it down," said Herrick. "Or, better still, Mr. Exon shall write it down. You will observe that I have not mentioned the name: yet he will go off and write it—which goes to show that he knows it as well as I."

With that, he turned to me and asked me to do as he said . . .

When I returned to the drive, Virgil was back in his car, beside himself with passion and shouting down the sergeant who seemed very much surprised.

"And if you choose," he concluded, "to take your cue from a couple of lying hounds who, if you had done your duty, would now be under arrest, you can take it alone."

With that he started his engine, let in his clutch and swung the car violently round. With storming gears, it squirted between the chestnuts and on to the road of approach.

The police stared after the fellow with open mouths: then they turned to see Herrick with a hand to his chin.

"I gather," he said, "that you find his behavior strange."

"I can't understand it," said the sergeant. "Ten minutes ago—"

"Quite so," said Herrick. "In fact, ten minutes ago he did his very best to get you away—because, when he heard the hour at which we had entered the park, he did not wish you to hear what I might have to tell."

He took the envelope from me and held it out. "You may open that now, if you please, and read the name of the leader whom Max will betray. After that, you shall have some tea, and then, we'll drive you to Gable to take what action you please."

The sergeant ripped the envelope open, and he and his fellow together peered at the sheet.

Percy Elbert Virgil I thought they would never look up.

When at last they did, they seemed dazed; and Herrick called for Brenda and told her to give them some tea.

It was strange to sit down to supper later on with Lady Elizabeth taking the head of the board, but she seemed so glad to be with us and fell so naturally into the ways we kept that, for my part, I soon forgot how she came to be there and began to accept a relation which seemed too fair to be true.

Enough is as good as a feast, and after supper that evening we spoke of the past and present, but left the future alone.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



That Evening We Spoke of the Past and Present.

admission which put the rope round his neck."

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that a rogue was ever so trounced.

Virgil's tormenter then repeated the horribly damning words which Virgil had said to his creatures before he had entered the wood, and when the sergeant seemed puzzled about the use of "the wire," suggested that it might have been used to trip a galloping horse.

Protesting their gratitude, the sergeant requested our names, and while Herrick was writing these down, turned and exhorted Virgil to enter and start the car.

"If you'll take us to Gable, sir, I can get on to Innsbruck from there, and in less than two hours from now every police station in Austria will be alive with orders to search for the people we want."

"Splendid," said Virgil, somehow. He turned to Herrick and bowed.

"Please believe that I shall not forget today . . . and that I am a man who invariably pays his debts."

"Is that a threat?" said Herrick. I saw the police open their eyes, and Virgil in desperation let himself go.

"It's a warning," he snarled. "I do not believe your tale of the numberless car. That you saw a dog this morning proves nothing at all—except that you were at hand when the outrage was done. And who would think of so using a coil of

wire—except a man who had planned to employ it that way?"

"Come, come, sir," said the sergeant. "You said yourself just now that these gentlemen—"

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The House Dress.

Notice how very practical and comfortable this dress is, with every detail you want for working freedom and slim lines. Darts make the waistline slim and neat, but not tight. The armholes are ample, the sleeves very short, and slashed for greater freedom. The skirt has sufficient, unhampering fullness at the hem. It's a diagram design, that you can finish in a few hours. For this, choose percale, calico, or gingham.

The Afternoon Dress.

Just wait to see how nice and slim your hips look, in this cleverly designed dress, with just a little fullness above the waist to emphasize the sleek, smooth cut below. This design gives you the fashionable bodice detailing, in soft, lengthening jabot drapes that have a dressy, but not a fussy, look. Bishop sleeves are another new and very becoming style,

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Not Humanity Without a friend, what were humanity?—Byron.



most flattering to large women. This dress will be lovely in velvet, crepe satin, thin wool or silk crepe.

The Patterns.

1559 is designed for sizes 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46 and 48. Size 36 requires 4 3/4 yards of 35 inch material. 2 1/2 yards of ricrac braid.

1613 is designed for sizes 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50 and 52. With long sleeves, size 38 requires 5 yards of 39 inch material; with short sleeves, 4 3/4 yards. Collar and jabot in contrast would take 3/4 yard.

Fall and Winter Fashion Book.

The new 32-page Fall and Winter Pattern Book which shows photographs of the dresses being worn is now out. (One pattern and

Culture a Study

Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a study of perfection.—Matthew Arnold.

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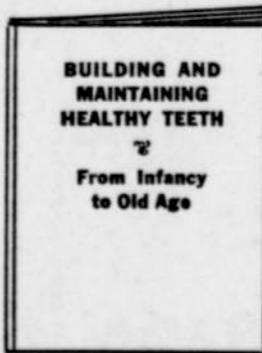
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