

# THE WINNING OF YOLANDE

A CONCLUDING ADVENTURE OF CUPID AND THE CHAPERONE

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Déjol swept down upon them with a stream of presentations



MRS. CHALLONER and Yolande Folsome stood before a full-length portrait that occupied the place of honor in the Salle Descartes. The room was crowded with the aristocracy of Paris, both of beauty and birth. Mlle. Guiry of the Renaissance elbowed the haughty Duchess d'Egremont. Jolivonne, the danseuse, obscured with her egrettes the view of S. A. the Princesse Yvonne of Argaine. All classes were one in admiration of the genius of Raphael Gaule, portrayer par excellence, of feminine charm and loveliness. The exhibition appealed to Smart Paris and Smart Paris was there in its best furs, laces and pearls, quite as much "on the line" as the masterly paintings that adorned the grey walls. Mrs. Challoner glanced from the girl at her side to her framed semblance. The likeness was amazing. There was the same satin-soft hair, gold-bronze in color, waving back from an ivory brow; the same short straight nose; the mouth, a trifle full, and very red—a generous, unselfish, loving mouth; there were the selfsame deep, violet eyes, drooping a little at the corners, and following the long oriental eyebrows by a touch of darkened color. The girlish figure stood revealed in youthful elegance, and the slender hands, in spite of their delicacy, hinted at clasp vigorous and warm.

"Yolande," Mrs. Challoner exclaimed, "it's a real triumph, such a portrait as that. It's marvellously you!"

Yolande smiled and nodded. "Isn't it," she assented. "Mother is going to have Paula painted too, when she comes over for her trousseau."

Mrs. Challoner colored. The mention of either of her former charges, both of whom had shown extraordinary ability to elude her chaperonage and acquire husbands of their own choosing, made her feel uncomfortable.

THEY had been so absorbed in contemplation of the portrait that they had not noticed the attention they were attracting. Mrs. Challoner suddenly discovered herself and Yolande to be centers of interest. There were little whispers and nodding of heads as the dilettanti compared the painted presentment with the beautiful original. Yolande, too, became self-conscious; but it was not the homage of the crowd that gave her pause—wholesale admiration was something to which she was accustomed. The flush that suddenly mantled her cheeks surprised her, and the strange perturbation seemed to emanate directly from the ecstatic gaze of a young man, stationed across the room.

To be sure, he was but one of many who gazed with evident approval, but the look was different. She had a sudden impulse to bow, a flash of half-recognition. Then she realized that the young man was a stranger. He was tall, very tall for a Frenchman, and blonde as a Saxon. Had he worn a wolf skin and thong sandals he might have posed as a young Goth. But modern custom had clothed him

in the garb of the day-after-tomorrow. He wore a Vandyke beard and a short mustache that glittered like spun gold where the overhead light of the *galerie* fell full upon him—a most glorious young Goth—and his eyes cried aloud across the pressing throng, that he had, then and there, laid his heart before the little feet of the girl from over-seas.

Yolande was puzzled. Surely she must know him—there was something very familiar. But how forget such an appealing personality and retain only a vague feeling of "having-seen-before?"

The young man moved nearer. His eyes seemed to plead for recognition. Yolande stiffened and turned away, the blood crowding to her temples, a strange, heavy throb in her heart. She slipped her hand through her chaperone's arm, as they turned toward the exit.

"*Permettez, Madame.*" The yellow-haired young giant stood bowing before Mrs. Challoner, holding in his hand her fur scarf which had slipped from her shoulders in her passage through the press of visitors.

Mrs. Challoner smiled her thanks, and hesitated. Surely she knew him. Or was she mistaken? She looked again, and realized that she did not—doubtless some fancied resemblance. She also realized that while the furs were offered to her hand, and the impressive bow was addressed to her, the eyes of the stranger were fastened upon Yolande with the look she had learned to know and dread.

"A THOUSAND thanks," she said hurriedly with a nod of dismissal, as she steered toward the door. Calling a taxi, she bundled in her charge and seated herself beside her. As the cab started she had a hurried view of the handsome youth as he stood on the steps of the Salle Descartes with a look at once disappointed and respectful. "Do you know that man?" she asked suddenly.

"What man?" Yolande inquired, coloring.

"The one who gave me back my scarf," the chaperone particularized.

"I thought I did," said Yolande slowly, "but I don't."

"That's odd—I had that impression too," Mrs. Challoner acknowledged. "I wonder now—"

She erased him from her mind and conversation, but not for long—no longer, in fact, than the prompt arrival of Mr. Benjamin Loomis to take them out to dinner.

"Well, little chaperone, another ten strike, I opine," he greeted them in his booming voice.

Mrs. Challoner looked at him in amazement and trepidation. The big benevolent Powder King seemed to be possessed with occult powers—and had he not seen her out-generated by Cupid on two occasions, that were not disastrous only because Chance had made them the reverse?

"What do you mean?" she quavered, fear in her sapphire eyes, as they entered the limousine.

"Mean?" he rumbled comfortably. "Well, that my very moneyed young friend, Pierre Déjol, has discovered your lovely Yolande, and has held me up for an introduction."

"Déjol?" repeated Miss Folsome and Mrs. Challoner in one breath.

"Yes, Déjol," reiterated Mr. Loomis. "Don't pretend to forget him, either of you, for he isn't to be forgotten. He's a French version of a football idol, and about the liveliest business man in Paris. I happen to know—we both manufacture powder." At which apparently innocent remark the big man chuckled again.

"INDEED," said Mrs. Challoner guiltily, remembering the retriever of her furs.

"Oh," said Yolande. Again she felt a sudden stopping of her heart, an inexplicable half-frightened thrill.

"And here we are at Paillards," Mr. Loomis announced, "and I'll bet a hat Déjol is there now, pawing the air. I hope you'll be delighted to meet him, because the chances are you can't help yourselves. If I didn't fix it for him, he'd blackmail somebody else. After all," looking full defiance into Mrs. Challoner's eyes, "I'm on the side of Cupid, you know."

They entered the little chopped-off corner entrance and found themselves in the brightly lighted restaurant, being conducted to upholstered seats along a mirrored wall.

A tall form rose to greet them, towering above the groups of diners like a lighthouse on the sands—Déjol. He was superbly unconscious of his physical proportions, making not the slightest effort to conceal his joy at the meeting, and, the presentations over, he plunged into explanations.

"I see your portrait first, Mademoiselle. I fall in love with that," he prologized. "Then I see you—ah, I make to find out who you are and whom you know. So I go straight to the dé-tee-tives."

"Detectives!" exclaimed Mrs. Challoner.

He smiled. "Surely, the Préfecture must know who all foreigners are. I follow you in your taxi to the Elysée Palace Hotel. There I learn your name and country. Then I fly for information to my friend, Grosjean of the Police. 'Yes,' say he, 'The Mademoiselle have been here with Madame, her mother. Monsieur is a richard manufacturer of armor plate for battleships. Then Madame Folsome, she absent to home.' 'Home,' he repeated beaming,