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**THE LONE WOLF**  
LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

**SYNOPSIS.**

**CHAPTER I**—At Troyon's, a Paris inn, the youth Marcel Roddy, afterwards to be known as Michael Lanyard, is caught stealing by Burke, an expert thief, who takes the boy with him to America and makes of him a finished crackman.

**CHAPTER II**—After stealing the Ombre jewels and the Huisman war plans in London Lanyard returns to Troyon's for the first time in many years because he thinks Roddy, a Scotland Yard man, is on his trail. On arrival he finds Roddy already installed as a guest.

**CHAPTER III**—At a dinner a conversation between Comte de Morbihan, M. Bannion and Mlle. Bannion about the Lone Wolf, a celebrated crackman who works alone, puzzles and alarms him as to whether his identity is only guessed or known.

wasn't strange in his hearing, at least he found this news about her most surprising. He was staring openly, with a slackened jaw and stupefaction in his blank, blue eyes.

Lanyard gently pinched the small end of a cigar, dipped it into his demitasse, and lighted it with not so much as a suspicion of tremor. His brain, however, was working rapidly in the effort to determine whether De Morbihan meant this for a warning or was simply narrating an amusing yarn founded on advance information and amplified by an ingenious imagination. For by now the news of the Ombre affair must have thrilled many a continental telegraph wire.

"Mme. Ombre—of course!" the American agreed thoughtfully. "Everyone has heard of her wonderful diamonds. The real marvel is that the Lone Wolf neglected so shining a mark as long as he did."

"But truly so, monsieur!" "And they caught him at it, eh?" "Not precisely; but he left a clue—and London as well—with such haste as would seem to indicate he knew his cunning hand had for once slipped."

"Then they'll nab him soon?" "Ah, monsieur, one must say no more!" De Morbihan protested. "Rest assured that the chief of the surete has laid his plans—his web is spun, and so artfully that I think our unsociable outlaw will soon be making

friends in the prison of the Sante. But now we must adjourn. One is sorry. It has been so very pleasant."

A waiter conjured the bill from some recess of his waistcoat and served it on a clean plate to the American. Another ran bawling for the cloakroom attendant. Roddy glued his gaze fresh to the Daily Mail. The party rose.

Lanyard noticed that the American signed the bill instead of settling it with cash, indicating that he resided at Troyon's as well as dined there. And the adventurer found time to reflect that it was odd for such a one to seek that particular establishment in preference to the palatial modern hostilities of the Rive Droite—before De Morbihan, ostensibly for the first time espousing Lanyard, plunged across the room with both hands outstretched and a cry of joyous surprise not really justified by their rather slight acquaintanceship.

"Ah! Ah!" he clamored vivaciously. "It is M. Lanyard, who knows all about paintings! But this is delightful—a grand pleasure! You must know my friends. But come!"

And seizing Lanyard's hands, when that one somewhat reluctantly rose in response to this surprising overexuberant greeting, he dragged him willy-nilly from behind his table.

"And you are American, too. Certainly you must know one another. Mlle. Bannion—with your permission—my friend, M. Lanyard. And M. Bannion—an old, dear friend, with whom you will share a passion for the beauties of art."

The hand of the American, when Lanyard clasped it, was cold, as cold as ice; and as their eyes met that abominable cough laid hold of the man, as it were by the nape of his neck, and shook him viciously. Before it had finished with him his sensitively colored face was purple and he was gasping, breathless—and infuriated.

"M. Bannion," De Morbihan explained disconnectedly—"It is most distressing—I tell him he should not step in Paris at this season."

"It is nothing!" the American interposed brusquely between paroxysms. "But our winter climate, monsieur—it is not fit for those in the prime of health!"

"It is I who am unfit!" Bannion snapped, pressing a handkerchief to his lips—"unfit to live!" he amended venomously.

Lanyard murmured a conventional expression of sympathy. Through it all he was conscious of the regard of the girl. Her soft, brown eyes met his candidly, with a look cool in its composure, straightforward in its inquiry, neither bold nor mock-demure. And if they were the first to fall, it was with an effect of curiosity sated, without trace of discomfiture. And somehow the adventurer felt himself measured, classified, filed away.

Between amusement and pique he continued to stare, while the elderly American recovered his breath and De Morbihan jabbered on with unflagging vivacity; and he thought that this closer scrutiny discovered in her face contours suggesting maturity of thought beyond her apparent years—which were somewhat less than the sum of his own—and with this the suggestion of an elusive, provoking quality of wistful languor, a hint of patient melancholy.

"We are off for a glimpse of Montmartre," De Morbihan was explaining—"M. Bannion and I. He has not seen Paris in twenty years, he tells me. Well, it will be amusing to show him what changes have taken place in all that time. One regrets mademoiselle is too fatigued to accompany us. But you, my friend—now if you would consent to make our third, it would be most amiable of you."

"I'm sorry," Lanyard excused himself, "but, as you see, I am only just in from the railroad, a long and tiresome journey. You are very good, but—"

face and throat flamed scarlet with the color that flooded them.

"Your room, Mr. Lanyard!" Her tone was so convincing in its modulation of shame and horror that his heart misgave him. Not that alone, but the girl was very good to look upon.

"I'm sure," he began soothingly, "it doesn't matter. You mistook one door for the—"

"But you don't understand!" She shuddered. "This dreadful habit! And I was hoping I had outgrown it! How can I explain?"

"Believe me, Miss Bannion, you need explain nothing."

"But I must. I wish to. I couldn't bear to have you think— But surely you can make allowances for sleep-walking!"

To this appeal he could at first return nothing more intelligent than a dazed repetition of the term.

So that was how— Why hadn't he thought of it before? Ever since he had turned on the lights he had been subjectively busy trying to invest her presence there with some plausible excuse. But somnambulism had never once entered his mind. And in his stupidity, at pains though he had been to render his words inoffensive in themselves, he had been guilty of constructive incivility.

In his turn Lanyard colored warmly. "I beg your pardon," he muttered.

The girl paid no attention; she was thinking only of herself and the anomalous position into which her infirmity had tricked her. When she did speak her words ran swiftly:

"You see— I was so frightened! I found myself suddenly standing up in darkness, just as if I had jumped out of bed in my sleep at some alarm; and then I heard somebody enter the room and shut the door stealthily. Oh, please understand me!"

"But I do, Miss Bannion—quite." "I am so ashamed—"

"Please don't consider it that way." "But now that you know—your don't think—"

"My dear Miss Bannion!" "But it must be so hard to credit! Why, it's more than a year since it last happened. Of course as a child, it was almost a habit; they had to watch me all the time. Once— But that doesn't matter, I am so sorry!"

"You really mustn't worry," Lanyard insisted. "It's all quite natural—such things do happen—are happening all the time—"

"But I don't want you—"

"I am nobody, Miss Bannion. Besides, I shan't mention the matter to a soul. And if ever I am fortunate enough to meet you again, I shall have forgotten it completely—believe me."

There was convincing sincerity in his tone. The girl looked down, as though abashed.

"You are very good," she murmured, moving toward the door. "I am very fortunate."

Her glance of surprise was question enough.

"To be able to treasure this much of your confidence," he responded with a tentative smile.

She was near the door; he opened it for her, but cautioned her with a gesture and a whispered word: "Wait, I'll make sure nobody's about."

He stepped noiselessly into the hall and paused an instant, looking keenly right and left, listening.

The girl advanced to the threshold and there halted, hesitant, eying him anxiously.

He nodded reassurance: "All right—coast's clear!"

But she delayed a moment more. "It's you who are mistaken," she whispered, flushing again beneath his regard, from which admiration could not be absent. "It is I who am fortunate—to have met a gentleman."

Her diffident smile, together with the candor of her eyes, embarrassed him in such degree that for the moment he was unable to frame a reply.

"Good night," she whispered—"and thank you, thank you!"

Her room was at the far end of the corridor. She gained its threshold in one swift dash, noiseless save for the sliken whisper of her garments, turned, flashed him a final look that left him with the thought that novelists did not always exaggerate, that eyes could shine like stars.

Her door closed softly.

Lanyard shook his head, as if to dissipate a swarm of pestering thoughts, and went back into his own bedchamber.

He was quite content with the explanation the girl had given, but as the victim of a methodical and pertinacious habit of mind, spent five busy minutes examining his room and all that it contained with a perseverance that would have done credit to a

And no shadow could have made less noise than he, slipping cat-footed across the courtyard and up the stairs, avoiding with superdeveloped sensitiveness every lit that might have complained beneath his tread. In a trice he was again in a corridor leading to his bedchamber.

It was quite as gloomy and empty as it had been five minutes ago, yet with a difference, a something in its atmosphere that made him nod briefly in confirmation of that suspicion which had brought him back so stealthily.

For one thing, Roddy had stopped snoring. And Lanyard smiled over the thought that the man from Scotland Yard might profitably have copied that trick of poor Bourke's, of snoring like the Seven Sleepers when most completely awake.

It was, naturally, no surprise to find his bedchamber door unlocked and slightly ajar. Lanyard made sure of his automatic, strode into the room, and shut the door quietly, but by no means soundlessly.

He had left the shades down and the hangings drawn at both windows; and since these had not been disturbed, something nearly approaching complete darkness reigned in the room.

But though promptly on entering his fingers had closed upon the wall switch near the door, he refrained from turning up the lights immediately, with a fancy, of impish inspiration, that it would be amusing to learn what move Roddy would make when the tension became too much even for his trained nerves.

Several seconds passed without the

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He Saw Not Roddy, but a Woman.

least sound disturbing the stillness.

Lanyard himself grew a little impatient when his sight didn't become accustomed to the darkness because it was too absolute—it pressed against his staring eyeballs like a black fluid, impenetrably opaque, as unbroken as the hush within that room.

Still he waited. Surely Roddy wouldn't be able much longer to endure such suspense.

And, surely enough, the silence was abruptly broken by a strange and moving sound, a hushed cry of alarm that was half a moan and half a sob.

Lanyard himself was startled, for that was never Roddy's voice!

There was a noise of muffled and confused footsteps, as though someone had started in panic for the door, then stopped in terror.

Words followed—the strangest he could have imagined—words spoken in a gentle and tremulous voice:

"In pity's name! who are you and what do you want?"

Thunderstruck, Lanyard switched on the lights.

At a distance of some six paces he saw not Roddy but a woman, and not a woman merely, but the girl he had met in the restaurant.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**HONEY CREEK.**

Henry Heyer returned home from his Chicago trip.

M. J. Fitzpatrick went to Chicago Tuesday to attend the wedding of his brother, Atty. Thomas Fitzpatrick.

Mrs. Florence Ryan was a business caller in Manchester Tuesday.

H. E. Wendel, the assessor, was going his rounds here Thursday.

John Moser was a business caller in Manchester Tuesday.

Mrs. John White and Mrs. Wm. Rudy were shopping in Manchester, Tuesday.

Mrs. Jas. Barr visited at the parental Martin home in Edgewood, Thursday.

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