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SYNOPSIS.

APTER I—At Troyon's, a Paris inn, outh Marcel Troyon, afterwards to own as Michael Lanyard, is caught ng by Burke, an expert thief, who the boy with him to America and s of him a finished cracksman.

HAPTER II—After stealing the Omber s and the Huysman war plans in on Lanyard returns to Troyon's for irst time in many years because he s Roddy, a Scotland Yard man, is is trail. On arrival he finds Roddy al- y installed as a guest.

HAPTER III—At a dinner a conversa- between Comte de Morbihan, M. Ban- and Mlle. Bannon about the Lone lf, a celebrated cracksman who works ne, puzzles and alarms him as to ether his identity is only guessed at own.

HAPTER IV—To satisfy himself that ddy is not watching him, Lanyard sses and goes out, leaving Roddy ap- ently asleep and snoring in the next m, then comes back stealthily, to find irl in his room.

HAPTER V—The girl turns out to be e, Bannon, who explains her presence saying that she was sleep-walking.

HAPTER VI—In his apartment near Trocadero he finds written on the back a twenty-pound note, part of his con- led emergency hoard, an invitation m The Pack to the Lone Wolf to join m.

HAPTER VII—Lanyard attempts to ose of the Omber jewels, but finds The Pack has forbidden the buyers to l with him. He decides to meet The k.

HAPTER VIII—De Morbihan meets and takes him before three masked bers of The Pack.

APTER IX—He recognizes Popinot, ne, and Wertheimer, English mobs- n, but the third, an American, is un- wn to him. He refuses alliance with m.

HAPTER X—On his return to his room is attacked in the dark, but knocks his assailant.

HAPTER XI—He gives the uncon- us man, who proves to be the mys- us American, a hypodermic to keep quiet, discovers that Roddy has been dered in his bed with the evident in- tion of fastening the crime on him, changing the appearance of the un- scious American to resemble his own, rts to leave the house.

HAPTER XII—In the corridor he en- nters Lucia Bannon, who insists on ing with him.

HAPTER XIII — Having no money cia is obliged to take refuge with Lan- d in the studio of an absent artist nd of his. He locks her in a room e and retires to get some rest him-

HAPTER XIV—After sleep Lanyard s his viewpoint changed. He tells a who he is.

APTER XV—Mutual confessions fol- She is Lucy Shannon, not Bannon, has been used as a tool by Bannon, crook. The American murderer of dy was Bannon's secretary. Both men members of The Pack and out to get yard.

APTER XVI—Lanyard tells Lucy he means to reform and she agrees with him to return the London loot. wspaper wrapped in a brick is thrown ough the skylight.

nsciousness; but presently, seeing at she didn't offer to interrupt, but ntinued to give him her attention exclusively that it had the effect fascination, he stumbled on, at first confidently.

When I woke up just now it was as without my will, I had been think- g all this out in my sleep. I saw yself for the first time clearly, as I ve been ever since I can remember a crook, thoughtless, vain, rapacious, thless, skulking in shadows and inking myself an amazingly fine fel- w because, between coups, I would y the gentleman a bit, venture into e light, and swagger in the haunts of e respectable. In my poor, perverted in I believed there was something and thrilling and romantic in the eer of a great criminal and myself onderful figure—an enemy of so- y—potentially as deadly as a rattle- ake, always ready to kill—if I never d!"

"Why do you say this to me?" she manded abruptly out of a phase of ofound thoughtfulness.

He lifted an apologetic shoulder and ughed with a sheepish air.

"Because, I presume, I'm no longer f-sufficient. I was all of that twenty- ur hours ago, but now I'm as lone- me as a lost child in a dark forest. haven't a friend in the world. I'm e a stray pup, groveling for sym- thy. And you—are unfortunate ough to be the only person I can de- e myself to. It's going to be a t—I know that too well—and with- t something outside myself to strug- le toward I'll be heavily handicapped. But if"—he faltered, with a look of wistful earnestness—"if I thought that ou, perhaps, were a little interested, hat I had won your faith and had that o respect and cherish—if I dared hope hat you'd be glad to know I had won ut against odds—it would mean a reat deal to me; it might mean my alvation!"

Watching her narrowly, hanging up- n her decision with the anxiety of a an proscribed and hoping against hope for pardon, he saw her eyes cloud and shift from his, her lips parted but hesitant, and before she could speak he hastily interposed:

"Please don't say anything yet. First let me demonstrate my sincerity. So far I've done nothing to persuade you but—talk and talk and talk! But give me half a chance to prove I mean what I say."

"How"—she enunciated only with isible effort and no longer met his ap- al with an open countenance—"how n you do that?"

"In the long run, by establishing my- f in some honest way of life, how- er modest; but now, and principally, making reparation for at least one me I've committed that's not ir- parable."

He caught her quick glance of in- iry and met it with a confident nod he placed between them the moroc- bound jewel case.

"In London, yesterday," he said quietly, "I brought off two big coups. One was deliberate, the other the inspiration of a moment. The one I'd planned for months was the theft of the Omber jewels—here."

He tapped the case, then resumed in the same manner: "The other—needs a diagram. Not long ago a Frenchman named Huysman, living in Tours, was mysteriously murdered—a poor inventor, who had starved himself to perfect a stabilizator, an attachment for aeroplanes which renders them practically fool-proof. His final trials had created a sensation, and he was on the eve of selling his invention to the government when he was killed and his plans stolen.

"Circumstantial evidence pointed to an international spy named Ekstrom—Adolph Ekstrom, once chief of the aviation corps of the German army, cashiered for general blackguardism—with a suspicion of treason to boot. However, Ekstrom kept under cover, and presently the plans turned up in the German war office. That was a big thing for Germany; already supreme with her dirigibles, the acquisition of the Huysman stabilizator promised her ten years' lead over the world in the field of aeroplanes.

"Now, yesterday, Ekstrom came to the surface in London with those selfsame plans to sell to England. Chance threw him my way, and he mistook me for the man he'd expected to meet—Downing street's secret agent. Well—no matter how—I got the plans from him and brought them over with me, meaning to turn them over to France, to whom, by rights, they belong."

"Without consideration?" the girl inquired shrewdly.

"Not exactly. I had meant to make no profit of the affair—I'm a bit squeamish about tainted money—but under present conditions, if France insists on rewarding me with safe conduct out of the country, I sha'n't refuse it. Do you approve?"

She nodded earnestly. "It would be worse than criminal to return them to Ekstrom."

"That's my view of the matter."

"But these?" The girl rested her hand upon the jewel case.

"Those go back to Mme. Omber. She has a home here in Paris that I know well. In fact, the sole reason why I didn't steal them here was that she left for England unexpectedly, just as I was all set to strike. Now I purpose to use my knowledge of her house to restore the jewels without risk of falling into the hands of the police. That will be an easy matter. And that brings me to the one great favor I would beg of you."

She gave him a look so unexpectedly kind that it staggered him. But he had himself well in hand.

"You can't leave Paris now before morning—thanks to my having overslept," he continued. "There's no honest way I know to raise money before morning opens the pawnshops. But I'm hoping that won't be necessary; I'm trusting I can arrange matters for us without going to that extreme. Meanwhile—you agree that these jewels must be returned?"

"Of course," she affirmed gently.

"Then—will you accompany me when I replace them? There won't be the slightest danger. I promise you that. Indeed, it would be more hazardous for you to wait for me elsewhere while I attended to the matter alone. And I'd like you to be convinced of my sincerity."

"Don't you think you can trust me for that as well?" she asked with a flash of humor.

"Trust you!"

"To believe. Mr. Lanyard," she told him earnestly, "I do believe!"

"You make me very happy," he said—"but I'd like you to see for yourself. And I'd be glad not to have to fret about your safety in my absence. As a bureau of espionage, Popinot's brigade of Apaches are without a peer in Europe. I'm positively afraid to leave you alone."

She was silent.

"Will you come with me, Miss Shannon?"

"That is your sole reason for asking this of me?" she insisted, eying him steadily.

"That I wish you to believe in me—yes."

"Why?" she pursued, inexorable.

"Because—I've already told you."

"That you want someone's good opinion to cherish. But why, of all people, me—whom you hardly know, of whom what little you do know is hardly reassuring?"

He colored, and boggled his answer. "I can't tell you," he admitted in the end.

"Why can't you tell me?"

He stared at her miserably. "I've no right. In spite of all I've said, in spite of the faith you so generously promise me, in your eyes I must still figure as a thief, a liar, an impostor—self-confessed. Men aren't remade by mere protestations, nor even by their own efforts, in an hour, or a day, or a week. But give me a year. If I can live a year in honesty, and earn my bread, and so prove my strength—then, perhaps, I might find the courage, the—the effrontery to tell you why I want your good opinion. Now I've said far more than I meant or had any right to. I hope," he ventured pleadingly, "you're not offended."

Only an instant longer could she maintain her direct and unflinching look. Then his meaning would no more be ignored. Her lashes fell, a tide of crimson flooded her face, and with a quick movement, pushing her chair a little from the table, she turned away from him. But she said nothing.

He remained as he had been, bending eagerly toward her.

And in the long minute that elapsed before either spoke again, both became oddly conscious of the silence brooding in that lonely little house, of their isolation from the world, of their common peril and mutual dependence.

"I'm afraid," Lanyard said after a time—"I'm afraid I know what you must be thinking. One can't do your intelligence the injustice to imagine you haven't understood me—read all that was in my mind and"—his voice fell—"in my heart. I own that I was wrong to speak so transparently, to suggest my regard for you at such a time, under such conditions. I am truly sorry, and beg you to consider

Held Her There Transfixed in Panic.

unsaid all that I should not have said. After all, what earthly difference can it make to you if one thief more decides suddenly to reform?"

That brought her abruptly to her feet, showing him a face of glowing loveliness, with eyes distractingly dimmed and softened.

"No!" she implored breathlessly. "Please, you mustn't spoil it! You've paid me the finest of compliments, and one I'm glad and grateful for—and would I might think I deserved! You say you need a year to prove yourself? Then—I've no right to say this—and you must please not ask me what I mean—then I grant you that year. A year I shall wait to hear from you from the day we part, here in Paris. And tonight I will go with you, too, and gladly, since you wish me to!"

And then as he, having risen, stood at loss, thrilled and incredulous, with a brave and generous gesture she offered him her hand, across the table whereon still rested the spoils of his final coup.

"Mr. Lanyard, I promise."

To every woman, even the least lovely, her hour of beauty—it had not entered Lanyard's mind to think this woman beautiful until that moment. Of her exotic charm, of the allure of her pensive, wistful prettiness, he had been well aware, even as he had been unable to deny to himself that he was all for her, that he loved her with all the strength that was his; but not till now had he understood that she was the one woman whose loveliness to him would dim the beauty of all other women.

And for a little, while he held her hand tremulous upon his finger-tips, as though he feared to bruise it with ruder contact, he could not take his eyes from her.

Then reverently he bowed his head and touched his lips to that hand—and felt it snatched swiftly away, and started back, aghast, the idyl roughly dissipated, the castle of his dreams tumbling in thunders round his ears.

In the studio skylight overhead a pane of glass had fallen in with a shattering crash as ominous as the trump of doom.

CHAPTER XVII.

"For That's Impossible."

Like a blow from an unseen hand the shock of that alarm drove the girl back from the table to the nearest wall and for a moment held her there transfixed in panic.

To her wide, staring eyes that questioned his so urgently Lanyard promptly nodded grave reassurance. He hadn't stirred after his first involuntary start, and before the last fragment of splintered glass had fallen tinkling to the floor above, he was calming her in the most matter-of-fact tones.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "It's nothing—merely Solon's skylight gone smash!"

"But call that nothing!" she cried gustily. "What caused it, then?"

"My negligence," he admitted gloomily. "I might have known it—that wide spread of glass, with the studio electrics full ablaze below, would give the show away completely. The house is known to be unoccupied, and it wasn't to be expected that both the police and Popinot's crew would overlook so shining a mark. And it's all my fault, my oversight. I should have warned you about the lights! High time I was quitting a game I've no longer the wit to play by the rules!"

"But the police would never—"

"Certainly not. This is merely Popinot's gentle method of informing us he's on the job. But I'll just have a look to make sure. No—stop where you are, please. I'd rather go alone."

He swung alertly through to the reception hall window, pausing there only long enough for an instantaneous reconnaissance through the draperies—a fugitive survey that discovered the Impasse Stanislas no more abandoned to the wind and rain, but tenanted visibly by one, at least, who lounged beneath the lonely lamp-post, a shoulder against it—a featureless civilian silhouette with attention fixed on the little house.

But Lanyard didn't doubt that this one had a dozen fellows skulking within call.

Springing up the stairs, he paused prudently at the topmost step, one quick glance showing him the huge rent gaping black in the middle of the skylight, the second the missile of destruction lying amid a litter of broken glass—a brick wrapped in newspaper by the look of it.

Swooping forward, he retrieved this and darted back from the exposed space beneath the shattered skylight barely in the nick of time, for he had no more than cleared the threshold than a second something fell through the gap and buried itself in the hardwood parquetry. This last was a bullet fired from the roof of one of the adjoining buildings, confirming his prior reasoning that the first missile must have fallen from a height rather than have been thrown up from the street to wreak such destruction with those tough, thick panes of clouded glass.

Swearing softly to himself, he descended to the kitchen.

"As I thought," he said coolly, exhibiting his find. "They're on the roof of the next house—though they've stationed a sentry in the street, of course."

"But that second thump—" the girl demanded.

"A bullet," he answered, placing the bundle on the table and cutting the string that bound it; "they were on the qui vive and fired the instant I showed myself beneath the skylight."

"But I heard no report," she retorted.

"A Maxim silencer on the gun, I fancy," he explained, unwrapping the brick and smoothing out the newspaper. "Glad you thought to put on your hat and coat before you came down," he added with an approving glance; "it wouldn't be safe to go up to the studio again—of course."

His nonchalance was far less real than it seemed, but helped to steady one who was holding herself together with a struggle.

"But what are we to do now?" she stammered. "If they've surrounded the house—"

"Don't worry—there's more than one way out," he responded, frowning at the newspaper; "I wouldn't have picked this place out otherwise. Nor would Solon have rented it in the first instance had it lacked an exit in event of creditors. Ah—thought so!"

"What—"

"Troyon's is gone," he said, without looking up. "This is tonight's Presse. 'Totally destroyed by fire which started at six thirty this morning and in less than half an hour had reduced the ancient structure to a heap of smoking ashes'!" He ran his eye quickly down the column, selecting salient phrases: "'Believed to have been of incendiary origin, though the premises were uninsured'—that's an intelligent guess! 'Narrow escape of guests in their'—whatyemaycallems. 'Three lives believed to have been lost—one body recovered, charred almost beyond recognition'—Roddy's, of course—poor devil! 'Two guests missing, M. Lanyard, the well-known connoisseur of art, who occupied the room adjoining that of the unfortunate detective, and Mlle. Bannon, daughter of the American millionaire, who himself escaped only by a miracle with his secretary, M. Greggs, the latter being overcome by fumes'—what a shame! 'Police and firemen searching the ruins'—h-m, h-m—'extraordinary interest manifested by the prefecture indicates a suspi-

Lanyard Stepped Out Into the Darkness.

cion that the building may have been fired to conceal some crime of a political nature.'"

Crushing the newspaper between his hands Lanyard tossed it into a corner.

"That's all of importance. Thoughtful of Popinot to let me know this way! The prefecture, of course, is humming like a wasp's nest with the mystery of that telegram signed with Roddy's name and handed in at the Bourse an hour or so before he was 'burned to death'—no wonder! Too bad I didn't know then what I do now; if I'd even remotely suspected Greggs' association with the Pack was via Bannon. But what's the use? I did my best possible, knowing the odds were heavily against success."

"What was written on the paper?" the girl demanded obliquely.

He made his eyes blank. "Written on the paper—"

"I saw something in red ink at the head of the column. You tried to hide it from me, but I saw. What was it?"

"Oh—that!" He laughed contemptuously. "Just Popinot's impudence—an invitation to come out and be a good target."

She shook her head impatiently. "You're not telling me the truth. It was something else, or you wouldn't have been so anxious to hide it."

"Oh, but I assure you—"

"You can't. Be honest with me, Mr. Lanyard. It was an offer to let you off if you'd give me up to Bannon—wasn't it?"

"Something like that," he assented a bit sheepishly—"too absurd for consideration. But now we're due to clear out of this before they find a way in. Not that they're likely to risk raiding us until they've tried starving us out, but it would be as well to put a good distance between us before they find out we've decamped."

He shrugged himself into his borrowed raincoat, buttoned it to his chin, and turned down the brim of his soft felt hat; but when he looked up at the girl again he found she hadn't moved; rather, she remained as one spellbound by thought, staring less at than through him, her expression inscrutable.

"Well," he ventured—"if you're quite ready, Miss Shannon—"

"Mr. Lanyard," she demanded almost sharply, "what was the full wording of that message?"

"If you must know—"

"I must!"

He lifted a depreciative shoulder. "If you like, I'll read it to you—or, rather translate it from the thieves' argot Popinot complimented me by using."

"Not necessary," she said tersely. "I'll take your word for it. But you must tell me the truth."

"As you will. Popinot delicately suggested that if I leave you here, to be reunited to your alleged parent—if I'll trust to his word of honor, that is, and walk out of the house alone, he'll give me twenty-four hours in which to leave Paris."

"Then only I stand between you and—"

"My dear young woman!" he protested hastily. "Please don't run away with any absurd notion like that. Do you imagine I'd consent to treat with such canaille under any circumstances?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SKUNK KNOWS NO FEAR

LITTLE ANIMAL IS WELL ABLE TO PROTECT ITSELF.

Picks No Quarrels, but Decidedly Never Goes Out of Its Way to Avoid Them—Formidable Weapon of Defense.

The skunk is not only one of the handsomest of American "varmints," he is also the boldest. He is the beau sabreur, the Cyrano, the insouciant, devil-may-care adventurer. Confident in his powers of offense and defense he goes carelessly about his way, asking only to be let alone. He is not looking for trouble, neither is he avoiding it

Encounter him about sundown on a country road and he will let you alone. if you do not crowd him. Perhaps he will hop along in your pathway, keeping just far enough ahead for your common convenience. If you are acquainted with his little peculiarities you will permit him to set the pace. If you are not acquainted with them—if, perchance, you think he is a pretty, black-and-white, kittenish little thing, and if, so thinking, you rush up and try to make a capture, disillusionment will soon be your portion. For when you are at just the right distance he will give his white-tipped tail a quick flirt in your general direction.

You will then pause. You will suddenly have lost all inclination to advance. Probably you will be nauseated, possibly half-choked and half-blinded. All the Arabic perfumes necessary to purify Lady Macbeth's little hand wouldn't purify your apparel in a year. You are likely to feel a longing to hide from your fellow man for some time to come. Your fellow man is likely to reciprocate the feeling with usury. You have committed a gross indiscretion, a great strategic blunder, and you will have to pay the price. But you have added to your stock of knowledge. Never again will you try to kick any little polecat around.

The oil he employs with such effectiveness is a yellow, clear liquid, slightly phosphorescent, so as to be faintly visible at night. It is acid and is virtually acrid when it falls upon any tender living tissue. It is extremely volatile, and a tiny drop is sufficient to fill all the surrounding atmosphere with the offensive odor. When inhaled in large quantities it is suffocating, sometimes producing unconscicusness and even death.

The liquid is distilled within the body and is carried through long tubes to two small capsules imbedded in the thick muscles at the root of the tail. The animal can discharge either or both capsules at will, and his aim is astonishingly accurate. One would never think it, but he is very miserly with this fluid. He will not waste it, and will even try all kinds of bluffs to avoid using it. With animals anywhere near his own size the skunk prefers to fight with tooth and claw. The conclusion, when one is in the neighborhood of a skunk's recent operations, that he has fired all the oil in the universe, is premature. It smells that way, however, and this is a pardonable error.

Activities of Women.

Woman shooters are now eligible to compete in the Grand American Handicap.

Nurses in Scotland who are now receiving $2.02 per day are asking for an increase of 18¾ per cent in wages.

Mrs. Maude D. Reynolds and Mrs. Mildred D. Blair, twin sisters, recently obtained divorces in the same court on the same day at Edwardsville, Ill. The suits were also filed on the same day and the same attorney represented both women

The three gold medals to be presented by the United States to the ambassadors from the South America countries will be designed by Miss Jeannette Scudder of New York city.

More than 500 jobless women, half of them with college educations, found work through the agency of the Intercollegiate Bureau of Occupations in New York city last year.

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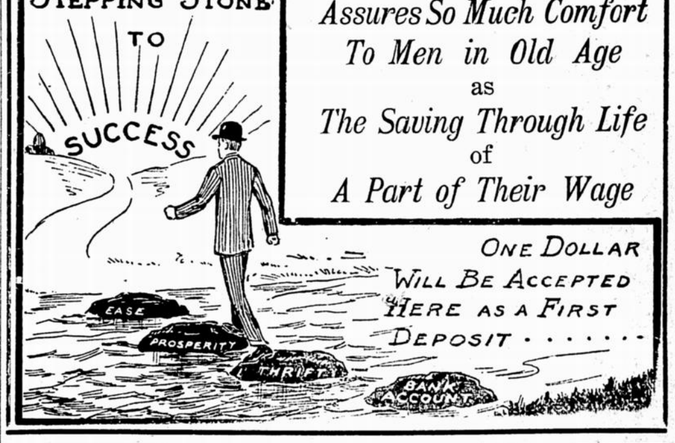

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