



The pet from Carp Bagdad

by HAROLD M^{AC} GRATH Author of HEARTS AND MASKS, The MAN ON THE BOX etc. Illustrations by M.G. KETTNER. COPYRIGHT 1911 BY BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY.



SYNOPSIS. George Percival Algernon Jones, vice-president of the Metropolitan Oriental Rug company of New York, thirsting for romance, is in Cairo on a business trip. Horace Ryanne arrives at the hotel in Cairo with a carefully guarded bundle. Ryanne sells Jones the famous yellow Yli-orde rug which he admits having stolen from a palace at Bagdad. Jones meets Major Callahan and later is introduced to Fortune Chedsoye by a woman to whom he had loaned 150 pounds at Monte Carlo some months previously and who turns out to be Fortune's mother. Jones takes Mrs. Chedsoye and Fortune to a polo game. Fortune returns to Jones the money borrowed by her mother. Mrs. Chedsoye appears to be engaged in some mysterious enterprise unknown to the daughter. Ryanne interests Jones in the United Romance and Adventure company, a concern which for a price will arrange any kind of an adventure to order. Mrs. Chedsoye, her brother, Major Callahan, Wallace and Ryanne, as the United Romance and Adventure company plan a risky enterprise involving Jones. Ryanne makes known to Mrs. Chedsoye his intention to marry Fortune. Mrs. Chedsoye declares she will not permit it. Ryanne is laid to prevent Jones sailing for home. Ryanne steals Jones' letters and cable dispatches. He wires agent in New York in Jones' name that he is renting a house in New York to some friends. Mahomed, keeper of the holy carpet, is on Ryanne's trail. Ryanne prompts Fortune that he will see that Jones comes to no harm as a result of his purchase of the rug. Mahomed accuses Ryanne and demands the Yli-orde rug. Ryanne tells him Jones has the rug and suggests the abduction of the New York merchant as a means of securing it. Ryanne returns. Fortune receives a message purporting to be from Ryanne asking her to meet him in a secluded place that evening. Fortune receives a message asking him to meet Ryanne at the English-Bar the same evening. Jones is carried off into the desert by Mahomed and his accomplices after a desperate fight. He discovers that Ryanne and Fortune also are captives; the former is badly battered and unconscious. Ryanne recovers consciousness and the sight of Fortune in captivity reveals to him the fact that Mahomed intends to get vengeance on him through the girl. Fortune acknowledges that she stole the rug from Jones' room. She offers to return it to Mahomed if he will free all three of them. Mahomed agrees to liberate Fortune and one of the men in return for the rug. A courier is sent to Cairo for the two companions. The caravan continues the journey toward Bagdad. Ryanne tells Jones that Mrs. Chedsoye is the most adept smuggler of the age, and is overheard by Fortune. The three captives are rescued by Henry Ackermann, who is in charge of a caravan. Mahomed escapes.

as the nimble fingers of the maid flew over her. "The silly little fool; and at a time like this!" Not that remorse of any kind stirred Mrs. Chedsoye's conscience; she was simply extremely annoyed.

She hastened out into the corridor and knocked at the door of her brother's room. No answer. She flew down-stairs, and there she saw him coming in from the street. He greeted her cheerily.

"It's all right, Kate; plenty of room on the Ludwig. We shall take the afternoon train for Port Said. She sails at dawn to-morrow instead of to-night. . . . What's up?" suddenly noticing his sister's face.

"Fortune did not return to her room last night."

"What? Where do you suppose the little fool went, then?"

"They both seemed to look upon Fortune as a little fool."

"Yesterday she threatened to run away."

"Run away? Kate, be sensible. How the deuce could she run away? She hasn't a penny. It takes money to go anywhere over here. She has probably found some girl friend, and has spent the night with her. We'll soon find out where she is." The Major was not worried.

"Have you seen Horace?" with discernible anxiety.

"No. I didn't wait up for him. He's sleeping off a night of it. You know his falling."

"Find out if he is in his room. Go to the porter's bureau and inquire for both him and Jones."

The Major, perceiving that his sister was genuinely alarmed, rushed over to the bureau. No, neither Mr. Ryanne nor Mr. Jones had been in the hotel since yesterday. Would the porter send some one up to the rooms of those gentlemen to make sure? Certainly. No; there was no one in the rooms. The Major was now himself perturbed. He went back to Mrs. Chedsoye.

"Kate, neither has been in his room since yesterday. If you want my opinion, it is this: Hody has sequestered Jones all right, and is somewhere in town, sleeping off the effects of a night of it."

"He has run away with Fortune!" she cried. Her expression was tragic. She couldn't have told whether it was due to her daughter's disappearance or to Horace's defection. "Did he not threaten?"

"Sh! not so loud, Kate."

"The little simpleton defied me yesterday, and declared she would leave me."

bulletin-board, returned to the windows and watched the feluccas sail past as the great bridge opened; and during all these aimless occupations but a single thought busied her mind: what could a man like Horace see in a chit like Fortune?

It was an hour and a half before the Major put in an appearance. He was out of breath and temper.

"Come up to the room." Once there, he sat down and bade her do likewise. "There's the devil to pay. You heard Hody speak of the nigger who guarded the Holy Yliordes, and that he wanted to get out of Cairo before he turned up? Well, he turned up. He fooled Hody to the top of his bent. So far as I could learn, Fortune and Hody and Jones are all in the same boat, kidnapped by the Mahomed, and carried out into the desert, headed, God knows where! Now, don't get excited. Take it easy. Luck is with us, for Hody left all the diagrams with me. We need him, but not so much that we can't go on without him. You see, these Arabs are like the Hindus; touch anything that concerns their religion, and they'll have your hair off. How Fortune got into it I can't imagine, unless Mahomed saw her with Hody and jumped to the conclusion that they were lovers. All this Mahomed wants is the rug; and he is going to hold them till he gets it. No use notifying the police. No one would know where to find him. None of them will come to actual harm. Anyhow, the coast is clear. Kate, there's a big thing in front. No nerves. We've got to go to-day. Time is everything. Our butler and first man cabled this morning that they had just started in, and that everything was running like clock-work. We'll get into New York in time for the coup. Remember, I was against the whole business at the start, but now I'm going to see it off."

Feverishly Mrs. Chedsoye prepared for the journey. She was irritable to Celeste, she was unbearable to her brother, who took a seat in a forward compartment to be rid of her. It was only when they went aboard the steamer that night that she became reconciled to the inevitable. At any rate, the presence of Jones would counteract any influence Horace might have gained over Fortune. That the three of them might suffer unheard-of miseries never formed

could turn the trick without Hody's assistance; only, it seemed rather hard for him not to be in the sport.

"He told me that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to stick his fist in the first bag of yellow-boys. There was something mysterious in the way he used to chuckle over the thing when I first sprung it on him. He saw a joke somewhere. Let's go into the smoke-room for a peg. It won't hurt either of us. And that poor little girl! It's a hell of a world, eh?"

The Major admitted that it was; but he did not add that Fortune's welfare or ill-fare was of little or no concern of his. The little spiteful had always openly despised him.

They were drinking silently and morosely, when Mrs. Chedsoye, pale and anxious, appeared in the companion-way. She beckoned them to follow her down to her cabin. Had Fortune arrived? Had Ryanne? She did not answer. Arriving at her cabin she pushed the two wondering men inside, and pointed at the floor. A large steamer-roll lay unstrapped, spread out.

"I only just opened it," she said. "I never thought of looking into it at Cairo. Here, it looked so bulky that I was curious."

"Why, it's that damned Yliordes!" exclaimed the Major wrathfully. "What the devil is it doing in Fortune's steamer-roll?"

"That is what I should like to know. If they have been kidnapped in order to recover the rug, whatever will become of them?" And Mrs. Chedsoye touched the rug with her foot, absently. She was repeating in her mind that childish appeal: "You

"I have known him for years," said Mrs. Chedsoye sweetly. "It was at his own suggestion that we take the house over for the month. He really insisted that we should pay him nothing; but, of course, such an arrangement could not be thought of. Oh, good-by, Mr. Wallace," tolerantly. "We hope to see you again some day."

Wallace, taking up his role once more, tipped his hat and rushed away for one of his favorite haunts.

"Bouder!" growled the Major. "Well, well; a ship's deck is always Liberty-Hall."

"You have turned your belongings over to an expressman?" asked the agent. These were charming people; and any doubts he might have entertained were dissipated. And why should he have any doubts? Jones was an eccentric young chap, anyhow. An explanatory letter (written by the Major in Jones' careless hand), backed up by a cable, was enough authority for any reasonable man.

"Everything is out of the way," said the Major.

"Then, if you wish, I can take you right up to the house in my car. Your butler said that he would have lunch ready when you arrived."

"Very kind of you. How noisy New York is! You can take our hand-luggage?" Mrs. Chedsoye would have made St. Anthony uneasy of mind; Reynolds, young, alive, metaphorically fell at her feet.

"Plenty of room for it."

"I am glad of that. You see, Mr. Jones intrusted a fine old rug to us to bring home for him; and I shouldn't want anything to happen to it."

The Major looked up at the roof of the dingy shed. He did not care to have Reynolds note the flicker of admiration in his eyes. The cleverest woman of them all! The positive and he would not have thought of it touch to the whole daredevil affair!

anced against another. Here was a rare bit of Capo di Monte, there a piece of Sevres or Canton. Some houses, with their treasures, look like museums, but this one did not. The owner had not gone mad over one subject; here was a sane and prudent collector. The great yellow Chinese carpet represented a fortune; she knew enough about carpets to realize this fact. Ivories, jades, lapis-lazuli, the precious woods, priceless French and Japanese tapestries, some fine paintings and bronzes; the rooms were full of unspoken romance and adventure; echoed with war and tragedy, too. And Fortune might have married a man like this one. A possibility occurred to her, and the ghost of a smile moderated the interest in her face. They might be upon the desert for weeks. Who knew what might not happen to two such romantic simpletons?

The butler and the first man (who was also the cook) were impeccable types of servants; so thought Reynolds. They moved silently and anticipated each want. Reynolds determined that very afternoon to drop a line to Jones and compliment him upon his good taste in the selection of his friends. A subsequent press of office work, however, drove the determination out of his mind.

The instant his car carried him out of sight, a strange scene was enacted. The butler and the first man seized the Major by the arms, and the three executed a pas-sau. Mrs. Chedsoye eyed these manifestations of joy stonily.

"Now then, what's been done?" asked the Major, pulling down his cuffs and shaking the wrinkles from his sleeves.

"Half done!" cried the butler.

"Where's that wall-safe?" the Major wanted to know.

"Behind that sketch by Detaille." And the butler, strange to say, pronounced it Det-I.

"Can you open it?"

"Tried, but failed. Wallace is the man for that."

"He'll be along in an hour or so."

"Where's Ryanne?"

"Don't know; don't care." The Major sketched the predicament of their fellow-conspirator.

The butler whistled, but callously. One more or less didn't matter in such an enterprise.

When Wallace arrived he applied his talent and acquired science to the wall-safe, and finally swung outward the little steel door. The Major pushed him aside and thrust a hand into the metal cavity, drawing out an exquisite Indian casket of rose-wood and mother-of-pearl. He opened the lid and dipped a hand within. Emeralds, deep and light and shaded, cut and uncut and engraved, flawed and almost perfect. He raised a handful and let them tinkle back into the casket. One hundred in all, beauties, every one of them, and many famous.

And while he toyed with them, pleased as a child would have been over a handful of marbles, Mrs. Chedsoye spread out the ancient Yliordes in the library. She stood upon the central pattern, musing. Her mood was not one which she had called into being; not often did she become retrospective; the past to her was always like a page in a book, once finished, turned down. Her elbow in one palm, her chin in the other, she stared without seeing. It was this house, this home, it was each sign of riches without luxury or ostentation, where money expressed itself by taste and simplicity; a home such as she had always wanted. And why, with all her beauty and intellect, why had she not come into possession? She knew. Love that gives had never been hers; hers had been the love that receives, self-love. She had barred her body once for riches and had been fooled, and she never could do it again. . . . And the child was overflowing with the love that gives.

The flurry of snow outside in the court she saw not. Her fancy reformed the pretty garden at Mentone, inclosed by pink-washed walls. Many a morning from her window she had watched Fortune among the flowers, going from one to the other, like a bee or a butterfly. She had watched her grow, too, with that same detachment a machinist feels as he puts together the invention of another man. Would she ever see her again? Her shoulders moved ever so little. Probably not. She had blundered wiffully. She should have waited, thrown the two together, maneuvered. And she had permitted this adventure to obsess her! She might have stood within this house by right of law, motherhood, marriage. Ryanne was in love with Fortune, and Jones by this time might be. The desert was a terribly lonely place.

She wished it might be Jones. And immediately retrospection died away from her gaze and actualities resumed their functions. The wish was not without a phase of humor, forced as it was upon this magic carpet; but it nowise disturbed the gravity of her expression.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

"We might as well get Fortune's things out of the way, too, Celeste."

"Yes, Madame."

"And bring my chocolate at half after eight in the morning. It is quite possible that we shall sail tomorrow night from Port Said. If not from there, from Alexandria. It all depends upon the booking, which can not be very heavy going west this time of year."

"As Madame knows," came from the depth of the cavernous trunk. Celeste was no longer surprised; at least she never evinced this emotion. For twelve years now she had gone from one end of the globe to the other, upon the shortest notice. While surprise was lost to her or under such control as to render it negligible, she still shivered with pleasurable excitement at the thought of entering a port. Madame was so clever, so transcendently clever! If she, Celeste, had not been loyal, she might have retired long ago, and owned a shop of her own in the busy Rue de Rivoli. But that would have meant a humdrum existence; and besides, she would have grown fat, which, of the seven horrors confronting woman, so Madame said, was first in number.

"Be very careful how you handle that blue ball-gown."

"Oh, Madame!" reproachfully.

"It is the silver braid. Do not press the rosettes too harshly."

Celeste looked up. Mrs. Chedsoye answered her inquiring gaze with a thin smile.

"You are wonderful, Madame!"

"And so are you, Celeste, in your way."

At ten o'clock Mrs. Chedsoye was ready for her pillow. She slept fitfully; awoke at eleven and again at twelve. After that she knew nothing more till the maid roused her with the cup of chocolate. She sat up and sipped slowly. Celeste waited at the bedside with the tray. Her admiration for her mistress never waned. Mrs. Chedsoye was just as beautiful in dishabille as in a ball-gown. She drained the cup, and as she turned to replace it upon the tray, dropped it with a clatter, a startled cry coming from her lips.

"Madame?"

"Fortune's bed!"

It had not been slept in. The steamer-cloak lay across the counterpane exactly where Celeste herself had laid it the night before. Mrs. Chedsoye sprang out of her bed and ran barefoot to the other. Fortune had not been in the room since dinner-time.

"Celeste, dress me as quickly as possible. Hurry! Something has happened to Fortune."

Never, in all her years of service, could she recollect such a toilet as Madame made that morning. And never before had she shown such concern over her daughter. It was amazing.

"The little fool! The little fool!" Mrs. Chedsoye repeatedly murmured



"Fortune Did Not Return to Her Room Last Night."

"Oho!" The Major fingered his imperial. "That puts a new face to the subject. But Jones! He has not turned up. We can not move till we find out what has become of him. I know. I'll jump into a carriage and see if he got as far as the English-Bar."

Mrs. Chedsoye did not go up-stairs, but paced the lounging-room, lithe and pantherish. Frequently she paused, as if examining the patterns in the huge carpets. She entered the reception-room, came back, wandered off into the ball-room, stopped to inspect the announcement hanging upon the

thought in her mind. It appealed to her in the sense of a comedy which annoyed rather than amused her.

They were greeted effusively by Wallace, he of the bulbous nose; and his first inquiry was of Ryanne. Briefly the Major told him what had happened and added his fears. Wallace was greatly cast down. Hody had so set his heart upon this venture that it was a shame to proceed without him. He had warned him at the beginning about that infernal rug but Hody was always set in his devil schemes. So long as the Major had the plans, he supposed they



"You See, Mr. Jones Intrusted a Fine Rug to Us to Bring Home for Him."

don't know how loyal I should have been!"

They took the first good sailing out of Naples. Twelve days later they landed at the foot of Fourteenth Street. There was some trifling difficulty over the rug. It had been declared; but as Mrs. Chedsoye and her brother always declared foreign residence, there was a question as to whether it was dutiable or not. Being a copy, it was not an original work of art, therefore not exempt, and so forth and so on. It was finally decided that Mrs. Chedsoye must pay a duty. The Major paid grudgingly, very cleverly assuming an irritability well known to the inspectors. The way the United States government mulcted her citizens for the benefit of the few was a scandal of the nations.

A smooth-faced young man approached them from out the crowd.

"Is this Major Callahan?"

"Yes. This must be Mr. Reynolds, the agent?"

"Yes. Everything is ready for your occupancy. Your butler and first man have everything ship-shape. I could have turned over to you Mr. Jones."

"Not at all, not at all," said the Major. "They would have been strangers to us and to them. Our own servants are best."

"You must be very good friends of my client!"

had he lived to be a thousand. "One might as well disembark in a stable," he said aloud. "Ah! We are ready to go, then?"

They entered the limousine and went off buzzing and zigzagging among the lumbering trucks. The agent drove the car himself.

"Where is Jones now?" he asked the Major, who sat at his left. "Haven't had a line from him for a month."

"Just before we sailed," said Mrs. Chedsoye through the window, over the Major's shoulder, "he went into the desert for a fortnight or so; with a caravan. He had heard of some fabulous carpet."

Touch number two. The Major grinned. "Jones is one of the best judges I have ever met. He was off at a bound. I only hope he will get back before we leave for California." The Major drew up his collar. It was a cold, blustry day.

The agent was delighted. What luck a fellow like Jones had! To wander all over creation and to meet charming people! And when they invited him to remain for luncheon, the victory was complete.

Mrs. Chedsoye strolled in and out of the beautifully appointed rooms. Never had she seen more excellent taste. Not too much; everything perfectly placed, one object nicely bal-

anced against another. Here was a rare bit of Capo di Monte, there a piece of Sevres or Canton. Some houses, with their treasures, look like museums, but this one did not. The owner had not gone mad over one subject; here was a sane and prudent collector. The great yellow Chinese carpet represented a fortune; she knew enough about carpets to realize this fact. Ivories, jades, lapis-lazuli, the precious woods, priceless French and Japanese tapestries, some fine paintings and bronzes; the rooms were full of unspoken romance and adventure; echoed with war and tragedy, too. And Fortune might have married a man like this one. A possibility occurred to her, and the ghost of a smile moderated the interest in her face. They might be upon the desert for weeks. Who knew what might not happen to two such romantic simpletons?