

No Man's Land
A ROMANCE
By Louis Joseph Vance
Illustrations by Ray Walters

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"Hard!" commented Blackstock. "You've got strength, haven't you? Not as great as mine, though; you'd hardly realize how immensely strong I am. See now!" His hands moved swiftly back to Coast's throat and girdled it with a collar of iron. "Do you realize I could easily squeeze your breath out of your body. I could!"

Coast's face explored the face above him. His smile was gone. Something ran cold along his spine, and of a sudden he was without emotion, quite calm and collected.

"But you won't, you know," he said easily; "that is, you wouldn't if you knew my right hand in my pocket was pointing a pistol directly at your heart."

"Would you?"

Perhaps the fact that he had merely stated the truth was responsible for his coolness. . . . He noted the instinctive movement of the blind eyes, as if they sought to see if it was true; and he thought: Habit is strong.

Raising his left hand, he grasped Blackstock's right by the wrist and removed it with a certain firmness. The other hand released him an instant later, and the man stood back with a short laugh.

"But you wouldn't have fired?"

"Not any sooner than you'd have tried to strangle me."

"Of course I'd no such idea."

"Of course not; but you shouldn't have suggested it. You made me nervous."

For a moment it was as if the mask had been dropped, as if they openly acknowledged one another as implacable enemies. And again Coast remarked that Blackstock quivered as he had when surprised, an hour before; a ripple of tensed muscles, hardly to be detected, seemed to shake him from head to foot—and was gone in a twinkling, while the hard smile reappeared on the Satyr's features.

"Do you really tote a gun, Handy-side?"

"Always," Coast rejoined briefly.

"Why—up here—?"

"You never can tell what's going to happen."

"Perhaps you're right," Blackstock conceded the point graciously. "I don't mind, but you really ought not to take a joke so seriously. However, I'm full of sleep and you must be. . . . John—hat, cane."

One of the servants brought them instantly. "G'd-night, Handyside."

Blackstock hesitated an instant, then got his bearings and found the back door with unerring accuracy. On the stoop he paused long enough to say: "We'll get together after breakfast and talk business;" and the blackness received him.

Mystified, Coast waited, staring at the spot where he had last seen the man, until one of the Chinamen mildly suggested that his room was ready. He followed the fellow stupidly, preoccupied, his mind ranging far in futile speculation as to the riddle of Blackstock's conduct. Long after he was left alone in the room that had been Power's he sat on the edge of the dingy bed, his gaze fixed upon the reflection of the lamp's flame in the window pane—absorbed in the enigma.

He could not rid himself of the impression that an inarticulate menace lurked beneath Blackstock's apparently unassuming reception of him.

Was insanity the explanation? Was the man in reality a homicidal maniac, at whose intellect the lust to slay are like a cancer? . . . But in such case, would he have delegated to another the assassination of Power?

Did he or did he not suspect? Did that sudden slip of the mask signify that he had merely allowed himself to appear to be deceived and was but waiting to deliver some telling stroke in retaliation?

How much has Coast to apprehend, what to guard against?

To this latter question his every instinct answered in chorus: Everything. He dared leave no stone unturned to safeguard himself—that he might remain able to protect Katherine.

It came to him that it was not unlikely he had been left in that lonely cottage with the three Chinese that they might quietly make away with him while he slept.

With this in mind he took a more detailed inventory of his surroundings; and found them hopelessly exposed.

Unquestionably he would have been safer in the open; but the storm was now at the top of its fury. Sheets of water were sluicing the house as if cast from some gigantic bucket.

Danger within seemed very much preferable to misery without. More than that, if Blackstock had planned an attempt upon his life during the night, Coast might as well know it; for he was armed and unafraid, and he who knows what to fear is doubly armed.

Having wedged a chair beneath the knob of each door, he placed the lamp upon the table, turning it low that it

scanty store of oil might last the night, and sat down on the bed, the pillow at his back, Appleyard's pistol ready at his side.

Insensibly as the dead hours lagged marked by no disturbance foreign to the storm, his weariness bore heavily upon him. His thoughts blurred into a chaotic jumble of incoherencies. He nodded, drowsed with chin on



Every Nerve on the Qui Vive.

breast, roused with a start when some unusually violent squall swooped over the island, drowsed again, and in the end slipped over upon his side and slept the sleep of the exhausted, profound and dreamless. . . .

CHAPTER XV.

Coast awakened with a gasp, jumping to his feet as if to the peremptory summons of a subconscious alarm-clock. Such, in fact, was more or less the case; he who sleeps upon the thought of danger is apt to waken with that thought predominant.

A moment gone everything had been densely dark, with that narcotic blackness which characterizes the slumbers of the overworked and overwrought. Now in a twinkling he found himself intensely conscious, in the middle of the floor, pistol in hand, every nerve on the qui vive, every muscle tense.

Gradually he realized that his nerves must have tricked him, that the hair-trigger of his suspended faculties must have been pulled by some common but unexpected noise. The room was bright with garish daylight; at the doors the chairs were in place, as he had left them; there was not a sound to be heard in the house.

Very stealthily he opened the hall door and looked out. From the silence within doors, there was no one else astray. He went out and back to the kitchen, finding it empty. After some momentary hesitation he returned to his room, found a towel and took it with him out into the open.

He went quickly down through the Cold Lairs to the beach. The Echo was gone, but this did not surprise him; it had been Appleyard's purpose to leave anchor and get away as soon as the gale showed signs of slackening. Inside the sheltering spit a sturdy little catboat was dancing crazily at its mooring, but it was evidently deserted, and Coast rightly guessed that the vessel belonged to Blackstock, that its tender was the boat which Power had been accused of stealing—principally, no doubt, to allay the suspicions of Katherine; some means of accounting for the man's disappearance had necessarily to be invented. The boat was, of course, nowhere to be seen; doubtless Blackstock had caused it to be carried up and secreted in one of the abandoned dwellings, or in some recess beneath the bluffs to the west and south.

It was in the shelter of the westerly bluff that Coast stripped and took to the water. Here, as all round the island, the beach shelved boldly, the surf breaking close inshore.

Scrubbing his flesh aglow, he dressed quickly, tingling with the exhilaration of his recent contest, every trace of fatigue and drowsiness washed clean away. A sense of life and well-being ran like quicksilver through his veins; he could have sung aloud or whistled but for the sobering thought, never far beneath the surface of his consciousness, of his responsibility. With Katherine to guard and care for, with Blackstock to watch and guard against and circumvent, there could be little room for cheerfulness in his humor.

Instead of returning the way he had come, an impulse moved him to scale the bluff, which at this point presented not too steep an ascclivity.

As he continued along the sole, approaching the heel of what has been likened to a crude sketch of a child's shoe, Coast remarked the crumbling stone walls of what had apparently once been a rude summer house and observatory set atop the highest hill-top to seaward. But he had drawn quite near to it before he desisted

a hem of skirt whipping round a corner of a half-fallen wall. He quickened his steps and took her suddenly unawares as she stood, half-sheltered from the breeze and wholly invisible from the body of the island, her back to the weather-beaten and lichened stones, her gaze leveled to seaward in somber reverie.

It was as if she had been expecting him; she seemed not at all surprised. But there was no light of welcome in her look, nor any trace of welcome in her greeting as he stopped before her, hat in hand and heart in his throat, with something in his bearing that called to mind a child convicted of transgression and pleading for suspension of judgment.

"I came out here to think," she said—"at least to try to think. But I

hoped that if you saw me you would follow."

"I'm glad," he said; "though I didn't know you were here. It's hardly likely we'll have so good a chance to talk again."

"Yes," she admitted simply. There was a little catch in her voice and he fancied her lips quivered like the lips of a tired child as she looked away from him, seeking again the sight of the sea as if she drew from it some solace, some sorely needed strength against her trials. "We must talk, of course. . . . I have been trying all night to think . . . but everything seems so. . . ."

She left the sentence incomplete, raising her hands to press them against her temples and then dropping them with a gesture of utter weariness.

"Oh," she cried, "why did you come back? You promised, you went away, and I—I was sorry for you and prayed you might find happiness, Garrett. You promised, and—you came back—came back like a ghost to haunt me with memories and regrets." Her voice rose to a pitch of wildness. "Sometimes, last night, I thought that surely you must be a ghost—that you had been executed, killed and buried, and were come back to be his punishment and mine, and mine!"

"His punishment—his?" he echoed. "Then, Katherine, then you do believe—!"

"Ah, how do I know? What do I believe—what can I believe? I don't know. I can't think right; it's all so—so terrible." Her tone fell to a low pitch of fatigue, dejection and bewilderment. She leaned heavily against the wall, watching the sullen, interminable succession of the surges.

"You sowed doubt in my mind and fear in my heart when you bade me weigh what I once knew of the good in you against what I have learned of him. I tried—so hard!—to do so justly and still believe you the guilty one. . . . You swept the ground from under me with arguments, your attitude, your explanations; and though they were your unsupported words. . . . I never knew you to lie to me, Garrett, and I couldn't, can't believe you would bring me a lie to torture me, just for revenge. . . . You made me think, and—at times I feared I should go mad, and then again I was afraid I wouldn't."

She turned suddenly to him and grasping his arms, lifting frantic, piteous eyes to his. "Oh, Garrett, Garrett!" she pleaded, half hysterically, "tell me you lied, tell me it isn't true, tell me it was you—!"

He shook his head sorrowfully, and with a short dry sob she released him and fell back against the wall, shaken and trembling.

"It," he said, slowly—"if I thought it would make you happy, if I believed that any good of any sort could come of it to you, Katherine, if I could even think it safe, I would lie—I'd lie with a clear conscience and tell you it was I who killed Van Tuyl. I've taken time to think it over and I've tried to think straight, to think the way that would be best for you, and . . . Well, I've come back."

"But why?" she repeated abruptly. "Why? What good can you do? Can you lift this weight from my heart, can you right the wrong to yourself, by being here? Can you bring Van Tuyl back to life or make my—the man I married less than a murderer—?"

"I came to protect you; you were alone and friendless."

"He would not harm me," she said in an uncertain voice.

"Do you believe that? Do you expect me to believe it when I have seen the marks of his brutality upon your arm?"

"He didn't mean it, Garrett. He has his temper and—sometimes he forgets and doesn't realize his strength—but he would never do worse. If it's true—and, oh, I know it must be!—that he did—what you were accused of—it has been a lesson to him. I'm sure it has. He—"

Garrett shook his head. "Then what made you write that message last night?" he asked.

"What do you mean? . . . Oh, I don't know. I was afraid . . ."

"And I was afraid," he said gravely, "and still am. That's why I couldn't stay away. The only man you could turn to in case of need was gone."

"Mr. Power?" She flashed him a startled look.

"How did you know that yesterday? And how did you find another man to take his place—his name, and everything? So that you dared come here in his stead . . ."

"I found it out before I left the island yesterday morning," he said slowly, wondering how much he dared tell her.

(Continued Next Week.)

Non-Resident Notice.

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI.

To the unknown heirs at law of James Kellum, deceased. To all unknown heirs at law of James Wilson and Rachel R. Wilson, deceased, and to all unknown parties, firms or corporations owning or claiming to own any interest in certificate of stock No. 4599 for two shares standing on the books of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad Company, in the name of James Wilson and the unpaid dividends due on said stock, Defendants.

You are commanded to appear before the Chancery court of the county of Lee, in said State, on the 3rd Monday of October, A. D., 1912, to defend the suit in said Court of Mrs. Shannon Masley, et al., asking for a sale of said two shares of stock of said Mobile & Ohio R. R., wherein you are a defendant.

This 20th day of September, A. D., 1912.

JOHN M. WITT, Clerk.

Anderson & Long, Sols. for Compl't.

27-31

When you have that awful pain in the back don't delay but go and buy a box of Bloodine Blood and Kidney Tablets. They make sick kidneys well. They even cure Brights Disease and Diabetes.— Pound-Kincannon-Elkin Co., Agents.

WHAT SAVED HER LIFE
Mrs. Martin Tells About a Painful Experience that Might Have Ended Seriously.

Riversville, W. Va.—Mrs. Dora Martin, in a letter from Riversville, writes: "For three years, I suffered with womanly troubles, and had pains in my back and side. I was nervous and could not sleep at night."

The doctor could not help me. He said I would have to be operated on before I could get better. I thought I would try using Cardui.

Now, I am entirely well. I am sure Cardui saved my life. I will never be without Cardui in my home. I recommend it to my friends."

For fifty years, Cardui has been relieving pain and distress caused by womanly trouble. It will surely help you. It goes to the spot—reaches the trouble—relieves the symptoms, and drives away the cause.

If you suffer from any symptoms of womanly trouble, take Cardui. Your druggist sells and recommends it. Get a bottle from him today.

N. B.—Write for Ladies' Advisory Dept., Chattanooga Medicine Co., Chattanooga, Tenn., for Special Instructions, and 64-page book, "Home Treatment for Women," sent in plain wrapper, on request.



The man who drives home a Milburn bids goodbye to repair shops—

Goodbye to Tire Setting, Rattling Spokes, Split Fellos, Checked Hubs, Breakdowns.

Of course the Milburn costs a trifle more than some wagons. But what of it?

It's the Wagon of Quality.

Every Milburn is worth to its owner more than its costs. We sell the Milburn because the Milburn suits the people. We back our faith with reasons. If you need a wagon, come and see us.

Weaver & Azwell Co.

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Avon Heel Lining

ALDRIDGE The Shoemaker
Prevents low shoes and pumps from slipping at heel.

Notice

Of Special Election as to the Office Of County Prosecuting Attorney.

Notice is hereby given to the qualified electors of Lee County, Mississippi, that on

November 5th, 1912,

an election will be held in said county for the purpose of determining whether or not the office of County Prosecuting Attorney for Lee County, Mississippi, shall be abolished. All qualified electors may participate in said election.

Said election will be held at the same time and places designated for the holding of the General Election to be held in the State of Mississippi on that date.

This 4th day of September, 1912. 25-4t

E. PARKER, President, Of the Board of Supervisors of Lee County, Miss.

JOHN M. WITT, Clerk, Of the Board of Supervisors, Lee County, Miss.

Trustee's Sale Notice.

Pursuant to the provisions of a certain Deed of Trust executed by J. T. H. Ramage and his wife, Mary F. Ramage, on the 9th day of February, A. D., 1906, to secure certain indebtedness therein mentioned to Wiygul Bros., which Deed of Trust is duly recorded in the Chancery Clerk's office of Lee County, Mississippi, in Deed Record Book, No. 74, page 582, I will, as Trustee, in said Deed of Trust, on the

14th day of October, A. D., 1912,

in front of the Postoffice door in the town of Nettleton, Miss., within legal hours, offer for sale, at public outcry, to the highest bidder for cash, the following described property: Forty acres of land the North side of the East half of the Northwest quarter, Section twenty-nine, township eleven, range seven. One bay mare mule about 6 years old named Rhody, also one gray horse about 3 years old named Johnson, also one surrey.

Such title conveyed as is vested in me as Trustee aforesaid.

This 9th day of September, A. D., 1912.

25-4t J. M. WIYGUL, Trustee.

No. 666

This is a prescription prepared especially for Chills and Fever. Five or six doses will break any case of Chills and Fever, and then taken as a tonic the Fever will not return. It acts on the liver better than Calomel and does not gripe or sicken. 25c. 24 8-

EAGLE-THISTLE SODA

Pure. Fresh. Economical. Guaranteed. Dust-proof, sanitary package.

16 full ounces to the pound—and costs no more!

The Mathieson Alkali Works, Saltville, Va.

I enclose the tops of 6 Eagle-Thistle packages, also Money Order (or stamps) for 58c. Please send me, all charges prepaid, one set (6) Rogers' Guaranteed Genuine Silver Plated Tea-spoons. These spoons bear no advertising, their retail value is \$2 per doz.

Miss (or) Mrs. P. O. County State

Use 1/4 less

SILVER MOON COFFEE

A Man's Preference

WATCH him chuckle with mirth and power as he sips a cup of Silver Moon Coffee.

It isn't stimulation. It's the good humor caused by this satisfying, delicious beverage.

A man never tires of "That Last Delicious Drop"

Silver Moon Coffee

Its crisp, catchy flavor comes from the nourishing, nerve quieting oils which are retained in the berry by careful roasting.

Silver Moon Coffee always has the same strength and uniform quality.

No impurity can enter the air-tight tin and change its delicious taste. You can't forget it.

A word to your grocer will bring this one best coffee to you.

In one and three pound hermetically sealed cans. Roasted and packed by—

OLIVER-FINNIE CO., Memphis, Tenn.

No indeed! All canned goods are NOT the same quality. There is a difference between silk and cotton; there is a difference in canned goods.

Our "Can" goods you can eat

Buy them; try them; and you'll come again for them.

Buy from US.

BROWN'S GROCERY

WHERE QUALITY TELLS AND PRICES SELL.

BOTH PHONES

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

600 acres, three miles northwest of Okolona, good 6 room house, five 4-room tenant houses, large barn, good wire fence. All improvements practically new. Grows fine alfalfa, corn and cotton.

240 acres 2-1/2 miles southwest of Shamon, rich creek bottom and prairie land.

195 acres five miles west of Verona. Nearly all level, does not wash or overflow. No waste land on the place. A fine cotton farm. In a good neighborhood near school and church and well improved.

Also three small farms, 57 acres, 80 acres and 93 acres. All in good neighborhoods and in good state of cultivation. If you are thinking of buying a farm it will pay you to see us.

ASA W. ALLEN COMPANY

TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI

Have your eyes tested and fitted by the old Optician in Tupelo.—T. J. Joudan, in back rooms Peoples Bank.