

"un, no, Madame"-she curtisted as to a queen-"not your woman but the crystal and yourself."

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The other threw up her bead incredulously. "If you reveal," she said harshly, "that I have visited you-" "I never reveal who my visitors are," the face. was the quiet answer, "they always reprovocation in the simple grace of the

madame d'Etiolles turned away. "And your pay?" she demanded sharp-

"As Madame pleases," came the indifferent answer from the sofa. The visitor placed five pleces on the table, replaced her veil, and walked towards the door. "Adieu!" she said over her shoulder, but Andre could see she stepped as one intoxicated by a

"And will Madame remember the wise woman," the sorceress pleaded in her soft voice, "if the crystal be found

to speak the truth?" "Yes,"; she had wheeled sharply, a merciless freezing vengeance glistened in her eyes and steeled her voice. "I will have you burned for an insolent witch. I promise not to forget."

"My thanks, Madame." She rang the hand-bell, and Madame was unceremoniously ushered out. The sorceress sat reflecting and then placed the crystal in her bosom and took away the

"It is the turn of Monsieur le VIcomte," she remarked pleasantly. "It is a pity I did not ask the lady to stay and hear." "No. I thank you," Andre answered.

"I am satisfied, and so was she." "Monsieur is not as Madame," the sorceress said, fixing a penetrating

raze on him, "he fears his fate." "Oh, no," was the quick reply. "My fate lies in my sword and my head. I am ready to face it without fear or reproach when and as it comes. But I will got know beforehand, not even for

For a brief second her eyes rested on him with approval, and indeed he looked very handsome and noble at that moment.

said gently, and before he could refuse she had taken his hand, "I will not speak unless he wishes."

What a subtle pathos seemed to lie in those blue eyes, those smiling lips, that dainty head almost touching him, into the brain. And how enchanting was that diamond cross rising and falling on that dazzling breast.

thing far away.

"The hand of Monsieur le Vicomte," ed really cared. is one dream that is always there—the the Comtesse des Forges. dream of love. Women," she added, "The King has already chosen," Ma-Woman in particular-"

Andre failed to suppress an exclafined that secret too?

"Yvonne!" he laughed heartfly. hore in a peasant girl to tempt and of the De Nesles back again." ruin than in a Comtesse des Forges, or a marquise-" it was her turn to laugh. the Vicomte is a gallant and leckless lover. He thinks as the nolesse think, that women are neces-Tho is necessary to them."

"And your fee for the advice, mis-

PEN-ANGLE.

only one, fits right, have made him incredibly vulgar. As if wears out slowest, and satis- the King of France would so far forhes you from the day you | get himself or be so impertinent to us buy it. That kind is trade- as to introduce into our Versailles a (as above) in red, and guaranteed to you bourgeoise. There would be a revolu-Mores that sell it and the people who make it tion." Made in many fabrics and styles, at various prices, in form-fitting sizes for women, men and children. Look for the

She flung the five gold pieces of Ma dame d'Etiolles into a drawer. "Ma dame has paid for both," she said. "But !

if the Vicomte de Nerac will offer

something of his own, I will accept-a

kiss," and she looked him daringly in

The hall of the Chateau de Beau Se real themselves." She sat down in- jour swept in a vision before him. Dieu delently, but there was almost insolent Le Vengeur seemed to be written in scroll of fire round the cat's ruff "I understand," she added with

> contemptuous shrug of her shoulders, "though I am not a marquise or a com "You shall have it," he blurted out make any soldier happy. with husky petulance.

She put her hand to her diamond cross-they looked at each other-the woman melted into a defiant reverence "The horse of Monsieur le Vicomte." she commanded quickly to the girl who had appeared as if by magic. "Good-

And here he was alone with the shifty-eyed fille de chambre, who plainly gave him an invitation to mistake her for Yvonne.

day, sir. You can pay the fee to-

for?" Andre said irritably. "Fetch the horse at once if you don't want to taste a rogue's fare with your mistress And as he rode through the woods it was little comfort to remember that he had won his wager with Henri, Com-

"Confound you, what do you wait

CHAPTER VII.

te de St. Benoit.

In December the Duchesse de Cha teauroux, the maitresse en titre of the King of France, had died, some said of poison, some of a broken heart at her treatment at Metz when she had been driven by her enemies from the sick King's bedside and from the Court, a few because she had caught a chill and even maitresses en titre were mortal. Would Louis select another lady to take her place? Who would she be? That was the question. France was at war-that dreary war called in the books the "War of the Austrian Succession"-and this spring-1745-under the Marechal de "But Monsieur will permit me." she Saxe, (the son of a king and Aurora von Konigsmarck, himself the idol of women of quality as he had been the idol of Adrienne Lecouvreur) great ef-While she studied it he studied her. forts were to be made to drive from the Low Countries the red-coated English and white-coated Austrians, to win for the Fleurs-de-Lis the boundaries a pathos like her perfume ascending that, since the days of Henri IV., God, nature, and French genius had destined to be French. Was not Louis, Le Bien Aime, himself going to the cam-"What is it?" he asked, for she had paign with the flower of his nobility dropped his hand with a faint sigh, and with his son and heir? Yes, surely and sat staring mysteriously at some- great things would be accomplished before the September winds shook the "I am forbidden to speak," she an- apples off the trees in the orchards of swered, averting her eyes, and she Normandy or they trod the wine-vats picked up her cat, and walked away. | on the sun-clad slopes of Gascony. "You shall tell me," Andre said im- Paris was in a fever of excitement; the Court was still en fete for the mar-But she only laughed over the cat's 'riage of Monsieur le Dauphin to a Saxbody, stroking it softly with her chin on princess. But would there be a suctill its purr echoed through the room. | cessor to the hapless Duchesse de "Confess, confess," he said, "I will Chateauroux? That was the only question about which the Paris that count-

the answered, smiling mischievously, Andre of course went to tell St. "Is full of interesting revelations- Benoit how he had won his bet, and he treams which come and go-but there found him gossiping in the salon of

women, women everywhere in Mon- dame remarked, fanning herself placidsleur's life; as in the years that were ly. "But Monseigneur the Archbishop Mest, so in the years to come. Let the and the royal confessor are still able Vicomte de Nerac be on his guard to work on his remorse, so for the against all women—and against one present His Majesty affects to play at being a devot."

"I don't believe it," St. Benoit remation. Had this beautiful witch di- torted. "The King will be a devot for one day in the week and a lover for "Her name," she paused to bury her the other six, as all kings of France face in the cat's fur, "is-Yvonne- and their subjects, too, ought to be. Tonne," she repeated, "of the Spot- Naturally he does not wish to shock Madame la Dauphine, but wait till the campaign is over; Mars will give way Yes, Yvonne. Sometimes there is to Venus, and then we shall have one

Whereat Madame lifted her heavylidded eyes, of which she was so proud, and said contemptuously,

"I have won the wager," Andre inary to him. But it is not so. It is he | terposed, "and I will undertake to win another. I will bet that it will not be a De Nesles, but a bourgeoise that the King will select."

"Impossible!" both St. Benoit and Madame cried, genuinely shocked. 'A bourgeoise at Versailles! It would be a scandal, unheard of, monstrous, not to be tolerated."

But Andre only smiled, and press him as they might he refused to say

"Well," said the Comtesse, "if you will go to-night, my dear De Nerac, to the ball at the Hotel-de-Ville you will learn whether I am not right." And after Andre had taken his leave she turned to St. Benoit, with genuine con-One kind of cern. "England," she said, "has deunderwear, and moralized our dear friend. The English

"I can see you, Madame," he answered, "giving the lady her footstool." He kneeled mockingly at her feet. "God bless my soul! you might as well expect me to kiss the hand of your fille de chambre. Andre was joking; he knows if the King were to bring her "A week!" Madame threw up her no-

ble head. "Not twenty-four hours." But Andre, who had heard the crystal's story, had his good reasons. Already fertile schemes were fermenting in his brain; his ambition, too, was daily soaring upwards, and he dimly guessed that in this strange circling of Fortune's wheel the opportunity for which he thirsted would at last come. And so like the rest of the gay world he went that night to the grand ball given by the municipality of Paris at the Hotelde-Ville in honor of the marriage of 'the Dauphin; for the King had promised to be present, and it was to be one of those rare occasions when the noblesse had consented to rub shoulders with the middle class in doing honor to the royal bride and bride groom. Coming events were in the air. Andre felt, though why he could not say, that to-night would somehow prove a decisive turning-point in the history of himself and of France.

for the purpose of dancing, the court of the Hotel-de-Ville had been converted into a ballroom, superbly festooned and illuminated, and the crowd that had gathered was immense. Nobles of the realm, great ladies, peers, peeresses, and the Court here jostled in the wildest confusion with the gentlemen of the robe, with aldermen, shopkeepers, and even flower girls and the danseuses of the royal ballet. The company was supposed to be masked, but many had already discarded the flimsy covering; and for all who still wore it the disguise was the merest affectation. Most of the ladies of the middle class had donned fancy attire, but the noblesse for the most part showed their quality by refusing to | imitate the canaille. Andre of course was content with his uniform of the Chevau-legers de la Garde, that beautiful and famous livery of scarlet with in itself conferred an enviable distinction, and about his neck, more proudly sill, he carried that Croix de St. Louis, whose possession sufficed to

For a few minutes he stood gazing at the brilliant spectacle presented by the moving throng,-one vast arena of human beings in which the uniforms. the stars and ribbons, the jewels, the bright eyes, and the fair shoulders were blended into a magic and inspiring panorama, over which floated the tender music of harp, violin, and flute. And as he moved slowly forward kissing noble hands, receiving gentle congratulations, or looking into eyes to which in past days he had whispered devotion in the Oeil de Boeuf or beneath the balmy fragrance of a fete champetre at Rambouillet his ambition soared still higher. But dance he would not; he had come to watch, to teach, and to learn. The Chevalier to his joy was not here; he had been despatched, Andre discovered with grim satisfaction, on special business of the King. But yonder was Denise, holding a miniature court. As Andre edged his way towards her, her glance fell on the familiar uniform, and it plainly said: "Here at least let us forget the past—I have forgiven you—come let us be friends as we were before." And Andre replied to her graceful reverence with his stiffest bow, as he had deliberately come to do, and then moved slowly off, but not before he had marked with a lover's joy painful surprise in Denise's eyes, angry flush that colored her cheek. But the lesson must be completed. A | the one who dared, it was the homage paused-looked about him-started.

checking his astonishment, for Denise was watching him. "I, Monsieur le Vicomte," was the se rene reply. "This is more fun than spelling the truth from a crystal," and

"You, Madame!" he ejaculated

she laughed wickedly. Yes, it was indeed the wise woman from "The Cock with the Spurs Gold," wearing her diamond cross and dressed in adorably pale blue satin, just such a color as her eyes covered by the pale blue mask. Strangest of all, Andre felt at that moment there was

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"The Vicomte looks to-night as the Vicomte de Nerac should," she remarked quietly. "But is it my presence here or is it my perfume that perplex-And Andre started again at her un-

ceeded. Recall, if you please, a supper party in London-the perfume was there then-now it is here. That is all." "What?" He stopped in sheer amaze-

ment. "You are that-that woman?" "Certainly. The same, only a trifle disguised. In London I was dark, in Paris I am fair, because," she shrugged | ply. her shoulders, "I love change and I hate being recognized unless I choose You will not betray my secret, will

"No. But why are you in Paris?" "Women like myself," she answered and I was born a Parisienne. Can a dance if you please.' Parisienne live without Paris? Well, I cannot. London, men Dieu! Those suf- d'Etiolles danced divinely. She had focating English! They make love as | been taught by the best masters, but they eat beef and drink beer. Their wo- it was only art that she owed to their men are prudes, their men heavy as science. The rest was her own. bull-dogs made of lead. London is a ville de province-no wit, no ideas, no she whispered as the violins tripped out life. Here," she pointed with her fan, a stately minuet. "And trust me." "it is far different. Where will you find | "Rely on me, Madame," he answerthe like of that for gaiety of heart, and | ed. sparkle of the soul? It is the city of breeding, of philosophers, of poets, of chivalry, and of lovers. Why, that griwhen even the lovers who make love a little to permit His Majesty a better

the mystery that enveloped her which voice, her manner, reminded him in the most tantalizing way of somebody else and for the life of him he could not think who that somebody was.

"No," she replied to his invitation. "I will not disgrace you by dancingyou the Vicomte de Nerac and I-" she smiled. "Besides you have seen me dance in the only kind of dancing that I care about. But see," she added, dropping her voice, "do you not recognize a friend, perhaps a partner? Is she not charming-conquering and to con-

"Name of a dog!" he ejaculated. Away at the other end of the ballroom was a raised dais on which was gathered a bevy of the fairest of the bourgeoisie. One of them, escorted by three or four gentlemen, was descending the stairs into the throng-a woman in the guise of Diana, clad in the airiest, gauziest, purest white, with a silver bow in her hand and a quiver on her shoulder and a jewelled half-moon in her powdered hair. It was-yes, it was-the fair huntress of the woods of Versailles, to-night a matchless spec tacle of majestic beauty which rippled over into the gayest, most provocative coquetry imaginable-Juno and Venus and Diana in one and defying you to say which was the more divine. And that cunningly arranged robe glittering white, with its artful jewels to suggest every and line, was just what witchery would have chosen to be foil to the laughter of her eyes and the subtle sheen of her skin. What other woman could have worn it? But for partner must be found and at once. He of a woman's art to the triumph of na-

ture's womanhood Andre watched her with absorbing interest. Fate had ordained that this woman's ambitions should be bound up with his. But how? how?

"She has a mind," his companion was saying, "as well as incomparable beauty. That Abbe at her elbow is Monsieur de Bernis, a poverty-stricken poet who writes her love-letters for her, whom she will make great some day, perhaps, and if Monsieur de Voltaire cared as much for balls as for the muses, he, too, would be snarling his honeyed venom in her ear. She can act and dance and sing. She will not always be Madame d'Etiolles."

The plans of years were sweeping through Andre's brain. What if the crystal-the thought was cut short by a stately flourish of trumpets and the loud hum of applause.

"See," the sorceress whispered, "the King has arrived." Men and women pressed to the entrance and then fell back-on all sides the lowliest reverences. The King, the master of France, had entered and was facing the crowd. And a truly royal figure he made in his splendid dress, for Louis XV. knew how to present himself as a worthy grandson of the Sun God who had created Versailles and made monarchy in Europe sublime: the pose of his handsome head, the dignity of his carriage, the match- is." less air of command that conveyed an air of majesty such as could only belong to one whose wish since boyhood was law, whose words were orders, whose will was the inspiration of a nation. And when you marked that faint mysterious smile, those blue eyes delicately dull, was he not just like his grandfather, indefinable and impenetrable? What was the real man concealed behind that regal presence? What were the real thoughts masked by that gaze, slightly bored yet caressing and sweet? "You do not like the King?" Andre asked quickly, for he had caught be-

hind the pale blue mask a swift glance which sent a shiver down his spine. "I love him," she answered, "as all we women do. But I was thinking of the day when I am to be burnt for a witch."

it. A woman's jealousy, he thoughtbut that, too, he knew it was not. "My friend," she said, "go you and salute Madame d'Etiolles. Perhaps you will see something later on to amuse you," and as if to assist him she glided from him and was lost in the crowd. She had divined his mind again. To speak with the fair huntress was the resolve that had mastered him. And to his satisfaction Madame no sooner recognized him than she beckoned with

Andre kissed her hand, looking into her eyes, imperial eyes in which slumbered imperial ambitions, such wonderful eyes, now blue, now grey, now softly dark as the violet, now glittering with the lightest mockery. "Un morceau de roi," he muttered. "Yes, by God! a morceau de roi!"

her fan, smiling a shy and intoxicating

"Conduct me to yonder pillar," she said presently, "we can talk better | there." But that was not her reason, for to reach the pillar they must pass near the King. Clearly Madame d'Etiolles

carried herself with more of the true as he escorted her now felt that all air of the noblesse than did this young | eyes, including Denise's, were on him sorceress, who plied a charlatan's trade | but he enjoyed it, walking slowly on the giddlest tiptoes of bravado. In front of Louis, he paused to make his rever ence. Madame paused too- and as she unslung her quiver to curtsey with more graceful ease Andre could feel her tremble. The King's roaming gaze rested on them both. Andre's salute he acknowledged with a smile, a word or "Surely it is very simple," she pro- two of kind greeting, but it was on the jewels on the breast of the huntress

> "Fair archeress," he said, "surely the shafts you loose are mortal." Madame d'Etiolles flushed with pleasure, curtsied again, and promptly passed on, without attempting to re-

that his bored eyes lingered.

"Mon Dieu! what a figure! Who the devil is she?" Andre heard one of the gentlemen of the Chamber mutter. "You did that to perfection," his partner whispered by the pillar. "You are a man who understands women, cynically, "are always dying of ennui, and they are so rare. And now we will

The sorceress was right. Madame

"Will you please do what I tell you?"

Imperceptibly Madame d'Etiolles in her minuet drew nearer and nearer to the King, who began to observe them sette over there can be more spirituelle | closely. A gleam of animation crept than an Englishman of genius. And into his face and the courtiers parted of themselves become annoying I go | whispers, knowing looks, commenced to run through the group. Yes, the Andre listened with a puzzled de King was distinctly interested. But the white facings, silver buttons, spurs of light. It was not the perfume-it was fair Diana paid no heed. She had only eyes for the superb officer in the scarlet and white of the Chevau-legers de la Garde, who was dancing as he had never danced before.

> Completely puzzled Andre obeyed as in a dream. His partner caught the handkerchief dexterously on her fan and was rewarded by a ripple of delighted laughter from the spectators. "A forfeit, Vicomte," she said loud enough for all to hear, "I give you tit for tat," and she pressed her own to But it was not intended to reach him. The huntress had calculated carefully and the handkerchief lightly hit

What would the King do? Would he resent or accept the challenge? kerchief-a second's pause, the pause in which a nation's destiny may be decided-and then the King smilingly threw the handkerchief back, fair and

A pent-up cry arose, hands were clapped. "The King has thrown the handkerchief, the King has thrown the handkerchief," was the ringing sentence on the lips of all.

Madame caught the royal gift and melted into an enchanting reverence. One alluring side-glance under demure eyelashes, a glance of challange and of submission, and she had taken Andre's arm and glided swiftly back to

"The King has thrown the handkerchief" still rang round the crowded room. But where was the dancer? She was gone-yes, actually gone without waiting to follow up her victory. And of the expectant, excited throng Andre alone recognized how unerring was her tact. The huntress had accomplished her object. Henceforward it would not be she who must hunt, for defiance to royal hunters can be more trium-

Andre went over to Madame des Forges and St. Benoit. "You have lost again," he said, "and you will confess

it now." "It is infamous," replied the Comthe road from the Hotel-de-Ville to Ver-

sailles is long and difficult!" when you can travel in a royal carriage. You will see what you will see when the campaign is over. The bourgeoise before long will have the heel of her slipper on all our necks." "And you believe," said the Comtesse, "that we will permit her to be

She promptly took St. Benoit's arm to mark her anger at the part Andre had played. But he only shrugged his shoulders in infinite amusement. A

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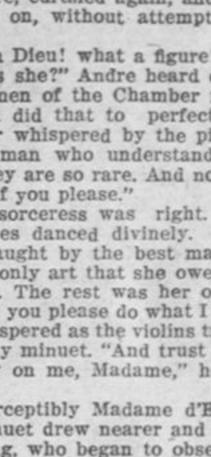
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"Throw your handkerchief," came the soft command. her lips, and tossed it back to him.

the King. A flush shot into Louis's face: Ma dame colored over neck and shoulders. she dropped her eyes, after one swift giance at His Majesty. Silence, save for the dying lullaby of the music. Andre's heart beat fast, but not so fast surely as was beating that ambitious heart of the huntress prisoned in its jewels and | * special attention to this line white satin.

Gentlemen and ladies, nobles and bourgeois alike, drew a deep breath. | + of your patronage. Ah! the King had picked up the handtrue, at the audacious dancer.

the dais.

phant than obedience.

tesse, with fierce indignation. "Infamous! But that grisette has not won yet; "Ah, no," Andre answered: "not

forced on us. You are as mad as she

(To be Continued)

It was not the truth and Andre knew



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