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Alias the Lone Wolf

by Louis Joseph Vance

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BEGIN HERE TO-DAY.

That brilliant member of the Secret Service whom England preferred to know as

Andre Duchemin, had incurred the hatred of the Bolsheviki. To protect his life, his superiors ordered him to disappear. He decided to go to southern France.

With Stevenson's "Travels With a Donkey" as guide-book, he visited by moonlight that weird city of monoliths, famous Montpellier-le-Vieux.

After a terrific battle with a Parisian apache, Duchemin rescues from highwaymen Mme. De Sevenie, her granddaughter Louise De Montalais, and Eve De Montalais, widow of Mme. de Sevenie's grandson, who was killed in the World War.

GO ON WITH THE STORY.

CHAPTER IV.

Enter Romance.

When she had graciously permitted Duchemin to assist her to a place in the carriage, Madame Sevenie turned immediately to comfort her granddaughter. It was easy to divine an attachment there, between d'Aubrac and Louise de Montalais; Duchemin fancied (and, as it turned out rightly) the two were betrothed.

But Madame de Montalais was claiming his attention.

Momentarily a hand slender and firm and cool rested in his own. Then its owner was settling into place beside Madame de Sevenie, and Duchemin clambering up to his on the box.

The road proved rough and declivitous. Duchemin was grateful for the moonlight—until he remembered that without the moon there would have been no expedition that night to view the mock ruins of Montpellier by its unearthly light, and consequently no adventure to entangle him.

Upon this reflection he swore softly but most fervently into his becoming beard. He was well fed up with adventures, thank you, and could have done very well without this latest.

What then of the comfortable pseudonymity of Andre Duchemin? Posed in an inescapable glare of publicity, how long might he hope to escape recognition by some acquaintance, friend or enemy? Heaven knew he had enough of both sorts scattered widely over the face of Europe!

It seemed hard, indeed . . .

At La Roque it was as Duchemin had foreseen. Whereas the motor car was waiting safe and sound enough, its chaffeur had vanished into thin air. Whereupon Duchemin asked whether the chauffeur had been a stout man, and being informed that it was so, considered the case complete. Mesdames de Sevenie et de Montalais, he suggested, might give up all hope of ever again seeing that particular chauffeur.

The landlord of the auberge, a surly sot, who had supplied the barouche with the man to act as driver and guide in one, took with ill grace the charge that his employe had been in league with the bandits. But this was true on the word of Madame de Montalais; it was their guide, she said, whom Duchemin had driven over the cliff. And (as Duchemin had anticipated) her name alone proved enough to silence the landlord's virtuous protestations.

Seated beside Madame de Montalais, Duchemin watched her operate the car with skilful hands on the road to Nant.

The sweep of night air in his face was sweet and smooth, and stroked his eyelids with touches as bland as caresses of a pretty woman's fingers.

It was good to be alive to-night, alive and weary and not ill-content with self, in a motor car swinging swiftly and silently along a river road in the hills of southern France, with a woman lovely and mysterious at the wheel.

Duchemin was conscious of something lie a shock of emotion, a sudden surging of some hunger that had long lain dormant in his being, unsuspected, how long he could not surmise, gaining strength in latency, waiting to be awakened and set free by one careless, sidelong look and smile of a strange woman.

"Eve," he whispered, unheard. "Eve de Montalais . . ."

CHAPTER V.

Phinuit & Co.

In the upshot, however, legal necessity had nothing to do with the length of time devoted by Monsieur Duchemin to kicking idle heels in the town of Nant; where the civil authorities proved considerate in a degree that gratified and surprised the confirmed Parisian.

The driver-guide of La Roque turned out to have been a thoroughpaced scamp, well and ill-known to the gendarmerie; the wound sustained by Monsieur d'Aubrac bore testimony to the gravity of the affair, amply excusing Duchemin's interference and its fatal sequel.

Late in the afternoon of his second day in Nant, Duchemin let his vision dwell upon the distant chateau almost as constantly as his thoughts.

He was to dine there that very evening. He had yet to hold one minute of private conversation with Eve de Montalais, and yet . . .

Now he had seen Madame de Montalais another time, and had found that she fitted to the sweetest detail of perfection his ideal of Woman.

On the previous afternoon, meeting the ladies of the chateau by arrangement in the bureau of the mayor, Duchemin had sat opposite and watched and listened to Eve de Montalais for upward of two hours.

Posed with consummate elegance in her half-mourning, she had narrated quietly her version of last night's misadventure, an occasional tremor of humor lightening the moving modulations of her voice. A deep and vibrant voice, contralto in quality, hinting at hidden treasures of strength. A fair woman, slim but round, with brown eyes level and calm, a translucent skin of matchless texture, hair the hue of bronze laced with intimations of gold . . .

Her age, she said, was twenty-nine; birthplace, the City of New York; her parents, Edmund Anstruther, once of Bath, England, but at the time of her birth a naturalized citizen of the United States, and Eve Marie Anstruther, nee Legendre, of Paris. Both were dead. In June, 1914, she had married, in Paris, Victor Maurice de Montalais, who had been killed in action at La Fere-Champenoise on the ninth of September following. Her home? The Chateau de Montalais.

On the hand Duchemin saw a blue diamond of such superb water that this amateur of precious stones caught his breath for a sheer wonder at its beauty and excellence and worth. Such jewels, he knew, were few and far to seek outside the collections of princes.

The mellow resonance of a two-toned automobile horn, disturbing Duchemin's meditations, recalled him to Nant in time to see a touring car of majestic proportions which was sweeping a fine curve round two sides of the public square.

Instantly, as the wheels ceased to turn, a young man in the smartest livery imaginable, green garnished with gold, leaped smartly from the driver's seat, with military precision opened the door of the tonneau and, holding it, immobilized himself into the semblance of a waxwork image with the dispassionate eye, the firm mouth, and the closely razored, square jowls of the model chauffeur.

Rustics and townsfolk were already gathering, when from the tonneau descended first a long and painfully emaciated gentleman, whose face was a cadaverous mask of settled melancholy and his chosen toilette for motoring (as might be seen through the open flapping front of his ulster) a tightly tailored light gray cutaway coat and trousers, with a double-breasted white waistcoat, a black satin Ascot scarf transfixed by a single splendid pearl, and spotless white spats.

His hand as gaunt as a skeleton's, assisted to alight a young woman whose brilliant blonde beauty, viewed for the first time in evening shadows, was like a shaft of sunlight in a darkened room. A well-made creature, becomingly and modishly gowned for motoring, spirited yet dignified in carriage, she was like a vision of the Rue de la Paix.

Following her, a third passenger presented the well-nourished, indeed rotund, person of a Frenchman of thirty devoted to "le Sport"; as witness his aggressively English tweeds and the single glass screwed into his right eye-socket.

Like shapes from some superbly costumed pageant of high life in the twentieth century this trio drifted, rather than merely walked like mortals, across the terraces and into the Cafe de l'Univers.

But there was more and better to come.

There remained in the car a mere average man, undistinguished but by a lack of especial distinction, sober of habit, economical of gesture, dressed in a simple lounge suit such as anybody might wear, beneath a rough and ready-made motor coat.

"We dine here, Jules," he announced in English.

Settling into place behind the wheel, Jules saluted with fine finish and deference.

"Very good, Mr. Phinuit, sir," he said meekly, in the same tongue. To this he added, coolly, and in precisely the tone of respect that became his livery: "What's the awful idea, you big stiff?"

Mr. Phinuit betrayed not the slightest sense of anything untoward in this mode of address.

"Why," he said pleasantly—"you misbegotten garage hound—why do you ask?"

In the same manner Jules replied: "Can't you see it's going to rain?"

"What's the awful idea, you big stiff?"

"So it is," Mr. Phinuit commented amiably; indeed, not without a certain hint of satisfaction. "Blessed if you don't see everything!"

"How do you get that way?" Do you want us all to get soaked to our skins?"

"My dear Jules!" Mr. Phinuit returned with a winning smile—"I don't give a twopenny damn if we do."

At that moment arrived the caleche which Duchemin had commanded to drive him to the chateau; and with a ride of two miles before him and rain imminent, he had no more time to waste.

(To be continued.)

Variations of temperature serve to wind up a clock just invented by a Swiss in Zurich; a model, which has been under a test for twelve months, has never been touched by human hands since it was first set going.

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The Toronto Hospital for Incurables, in affiliation with Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York City, offers a three years' Course of Training to young women, having the required education, and desirous of becoming nurses. This Hospital has adopted the eight-hour system. The pupils receive uniforms of the School, a monthly allowance and traveling expenses to and from New York. For further information write the Superintendent.

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Rainfall.

From out the west, where darkling storm-clouds float,
The waking wind pipes soft its rising note.

From out the west, o'er hung with fringes grey,
The wind precludes with sighs its roundelay.

Then blowing, singing, piping, laughing loud,
It scurries on before the grey storm-cloud;

Across the hollow and along the hill
It whips and whirls among the maples, till
With boughs unbent, and green of leaves blown wide,

The silver shines upon their underside.
A gusty freshening of humid air,
With showers laden, and with fragrance rare;

And now a little sprinkle, with a dash
Of great cool drops that fall with sudden splash;

Then over field and hollow, grass and grain,
The loud, crisp whiteness of the nearing rain.

—E. Pauline Johnson, in "The White Wampum."

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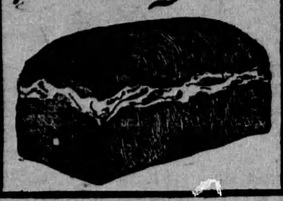

Prove Enough.

In a small village a new letter box had been installed, causing much comment among the village children as to whom it belonged.

"It must be the minister's," said one little lad.

"It can't be," contradicted another, "don't you see what it says on it, 'No collection on Sundays'?"

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All scholars not over seventeen (17) years of age whose parents or guardians subscribe to this paper may enter the contest.

Essays may deal with the subject from any point of view, but must not exceed 1,000 words in length.

Paper of foolscap size must be used, and writing appear on one side only. Neatness will be considered in making awards.

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The following information must accompany each entry:—Name of contestant, Age, Address, Name of School, Name of Teacher, and each essay must bear the following certificate signed by parent, guardian, or school teacher:—

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