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YU'AN HEE SEE LAUGHS
by Sax Rohmer

SYNOPSIS
Before the Wallaroo sails from London for Australia with 2,000,000 pounds in gold and with Eileen Kearney as a passenger, Yu'an Hee see, head of an international gang, has laid his plans to seize the liner's cargo and to kidnap Eileen. Inspector Dawson Haig of Scotland Yard, is an old friend of Matt Kearney, correspondent of a New York newspaper, and is in love with his sister Eileen. Haig boards the Wallaroo at Marseilles before Dr. Oestler and Joseph, an Armenian fortune teller, agents of Yu'an Hee see, to Moham-mad's shop when she goes ashore. Haig trails them and kills Joseph. Using Joseph's gang credentials, Haig makes his way to Yu'an Hee see's headquarters in Arabia where he is assigned as an outside guard. He sees Eileen at a distance. The Wallaroo is pulled off her course by wireless calls for help and a submarine, directed by Yu'an and As-wami Pasha, sinks the liner after tak-ing off the gold Orange Blossom, Yu'an's fateful favorite, suggests to the Pasha that Eileen be spirited away. She is taken away in a motor cruiser, bound for Keneh, and Haig follows in another motorboat.

Koseir, Dawson Haig was headed for the Nile Valley. He had done every-thing that it was possible to do at the seaport. Jack Rattray, The Walla-roo's first officer whom he had picked up at sea, had stayed behind at the wireless station, busily sending mes-sages. The motorboat with her crew of two had been detained. He had left the establishing of contact with the police, Keneh and Cairo, to Jack.

Hour after hour the dusty journey continued. He was burning to reach Keneh. He gloated over the idea of taking the wizened throat of Hassan es-Suk between his two hands.

Eileen, for the second time since she had set out on that ill-fated voy-age from London, found herself grop-ing in the dark, trying to remember what had happened.... It was some-thing to do with drinking a cup of coffee. And Celeste, poor Celeste, had not been there....

"The fisk is too great," a man's voice had said.... "It's madness! This may ruin us...."

She had been ill, perhaps. It was all part of delirium.... those gardens with the orange trees in which mon-keys played.... and the sickly anaes-thetic smell. And there were voices again....

"Yes, but it is dangerous—very dangerous. How can I ever hope to carry her so far?"

"The price is low, my friend, for such...."

"Her legs are too thin for the taste of His Serene Highness...."

It was this last remark which had finally aroused Eileen. She opened her eyes, looked down at her own bare body—and, galvanized into life, sprang upright. She was in a large saloon with a matting-covered floor and closely shuttered windows. She had been lying on a divan covered with faded tapestry above which hung a lighted lamp. Before her, one plump hand raised to his hairless lip as if in consideration, was a stout, greasy-

looking person wearing European clothes. Besides him stood a very dirty old Arab.

Eileen looked swiftly about her. There was no substitute for a gar-ment in the place. Taking a swift step forward, and conquering a deadly nausea, she struck the hesi-tating buyer on his fat face! Once, she struck.... twice! He recoiled. A third time—and this with her fist!

Hassan es-Suk clutched her in his sinewy old hands. With her knee she kicked him viciously in the stom-ach. He released her. She kicked him again.

But this spurt of strength which had flared up under the sense of out-rage now deserted her. She staggered, swayed forward.... followed an interval of complete unconsciousness. And then, a voice—the voice of the Arab again.

"What could I do, effendim? Said brought her to me. How was I to know she was reserved? Here was a famous jewel—and money is money. But she struck All Mahmoud in the face! And he had offered—my heart bleeds—one thousand English pounds for her!"

"He withdrew his offer, I presume?"

"Immediately, effendim. She has ruined me. Also, the American pigs know she is here. At any moment the cafe may be raided."

"Forget this fear, Hassan. I had thought the chief eunuch of the Prince a wiser man. But my money is as good as his, and I also collect fair women. Twelve hundred pounds English, Hassan? Your share will be a big one."

Eileen opened her eyes. She still lay in that dark, stuffy saloon. The villainous old Arab was there; the other man's features were indistin-guishable because of bandages, but through these bandages dark eyes watched her greedily.

A silk-covered hat had been thrown over her. She grasped this and drew it up to her shoulders.

"You have nothing to fear from me, my child," said the tall Egyptian.

"Although you just offered to buy me! You miserable, cowardly dog! Do you think you or any other man could buy me?"

A door at the further end of the saloon opened softly.... Yu'an Hee See came down the steps. The Egyptian stared at the Chinaman as though hell's gates had opened and Satan had stepped forth.

Yu'an Hee See stood still for a while, hissing softly. "So this is the story, my friend," he said, the quiv-ering flute notes sounding unlike any-thing human. "I passed through the tail of the sandstorm which forced you down in the desert. It delayed your journey—but not mine. A fortu-nate accident, Aswami, for me—not for you. Always—always—I suspect-ed. But last night, or very late this morning, I forced the truth from our little Orange Blossom, Aswami.... forced the truth—you understand?"

He began to laugh; and it was dreadful laughter—laughter which for years afterwards haunted Eileen's dreams. Aswami Pasha seemed to be choking.

"Come, my friend," said Yu'an Hee See, checking his laughter. "I have matters to discuss with you which I do not desire this lady to overhear."

He fixed his slanting eyes on the rigid figure of old Hassan es-Suk. "Carry this lady through to the cafe room," he ordered. "Find clothing. Bar your doors and return. I shall have work for you."

Eileen fell back, sick and faint, up-on the divan. The opiate earlier placed in her coffee, overcame her again.... She felt herself lifted—car-ried.... There was a dull crash.... a stifled gurgling cry....

In a long, low room, a sort of can-teen, Yu'an Hee See's rogues were gathered. Black eunuchs, waited up-on that gang of desperadoes. There was no drink desired by man which was not obtainable. Most of the Asia-tics remained sober, and were clus-tered at one end of the place around Jo Lung and Len Chow.

Above the buzz of general conver-sation, angry cries arose from time to time. There were scattered groups at tables, but the largest of these congregated at the further end of the canteen around Macles, the Scottish engineer. Dr. Oestler was there, Franz Hartog, Red, the Wasp; in short, the bulk of the crew of the submarine.

Dr. Oestler was addressing the Scotsman. "I will tell you, Mac," he said, "what you suggest is madness—ha? Madness. When you consider that we have two millions of minted money, not unloaded from the dhow,

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ha?—where is your good sense to suggest that the Chief has deserted us? Why should he desert us, ha? just when we have accomplish so great a success?"

Macles, who was dead sober—he had to uched nothing for twenty-four hours—fixed bleary eyes upon the speaker. "I say," he replied "tha' life is more valuable than gold. The Chief has gone, and so has Mr. King. And there's a Breetish warship nosing about the island. We a' know that. They can put a landing party ashore, to cut us off on the east, and they cou' blow this place to smithereens in two minutes. Listen to wha' the lads are saying!"

Indeed, it was apparent enough that the ruffians in the canteen were dissatisfied. High above the clamor a voice was heard demanding, "Vot about der share-out? Dis it iss—I ask. Vot about der share-out?"

The voice was drowned in drunken shouts, and:

"They dinna ken the truth," said Macles. "Something's gone awry, and we've been left to face the music. It's true, we have the money, but we'll never live to spend it unless we do wha' I suggest."

"You see, Mac," Dr. Oestler inter-jected, "it is pretty clear that we had a spy amongst us, ha? The Chief has gone to head him off—ha? head him off? If the other has gone also, why the situation is bad I think—bad. But we should wait—ha?—for instructions. You think so?"

"I'm not!" Macles banged his hand upon the table to emphasize his words. "No harm can be done by hiding the bawbies. There's only one place we can hide them, and hide ourself, if we're to be raided."

"I do not think she will carry it, not also with a full crew," said Dr. Oest-ler.

"Leave tha' to me," said the Scots-man truculently. "Stick to your ain province, doctor. If I say she can carry it—she can carry it!"

"The Wasp was suddenly convert-ed. "You call for Orders, Mac?" he said.

"Guid enough," said the Scotsman. A half silence fell upon the drunken gathering. Macles stood up.

"Boys!" he said, "I've ca'd for Or-ders, because there's no one else here to gie them." A stifled roar greet-ed his words. Jo Lung's party moved nearer. "There's something wrong," the speaker continued. "I canna tell what it is, but our course is plain. I'm for transshipping the gold to the submarine and standing by wi' all hands to submerge at the fairest hoot o' danger. Now, who's wi' me?"

A general roar indicated that all were with him.

"It's only us of the crew, have any-thing to be afraid of," he continued. "But when the Chief retairs, if he does retair, he can only thank us. There's a British warship...."

His words dramatically were termi-nated by the sound of a distant gun-shot. Macles looked down at Dr. Oestler, whose face, suddenly, had grown very white.

"The Panther," he said calmly. "She'll be putting a boat ashore!"

The establishments controlled by Yu'an Hee See, wherever they might be, had one notable characteristic; there was a secret entrance and exit. In the case of the Cafe Magrabi, there were two such entrances and exits. One opened upon a narrow lane at the back into an old house which adjoined the establishment of Hassan. The other, reached by a short passage below this lane, was in a smaller house fronting on another

street altogether. This house was the residence, ostensibly, of a well-to-do potter of Keneh, who was much away from home on business.

There were a number of small rooms in the potter's house, and one large saloon on the first floor. This saloon was the secret slave market. And while British and American agents had watched the cafe, Eileen was taken into the potter's house and offered for sale!

(To be concluded)

The Laughing Man

(Manchester Guardian)

A German who has been visiting London has made the interesting dis-covey, which he discloses in an article in the "Berliner Tageblatt" that "the British laugh too much." As soon as they begin a serious conver-sation with a German they turn the talk into easier channels with a laugh. From that he deduces that "superficiality is the vice of the Eng-lish" (he has evidently never heard of the French aphorist's contention that "gravity is a mysterious carriage of the body invented to conceal defects of the mind") and that "humor" is the cloak for that superficiality.

It might also be a form of polite-ness. There are some points about modern Germany on which a modern Englishman could hardly touch at all without his opinions becoming so serious as to be possibly unwelcome to a citizen of that country, and in casual intercourse it is just as well to avoid the awkward topic and the unwelcome treatment of it. So, if the Englishman talking to the German is accused of too much risibility, one excuse for him might be in the words of Figaro: "I make haste to laugh for fear of being obliged to weep."

In any event the general charge that we laugh too much is in curious contrast to the proposition (at least as old as Froissart) that the English take their pleasures sadly. And there was also a mediaeval Latin proverb which asserted that "the English race is the best at weeping and the worst at laughing. Evidently we have changed a good deal since the distant days of what must have been a rather doubtfully merry England.

Probably many of us do today adopt a deliberate lightness of approach which is not in the manner of our German neighbors; the English sol-dier in the trenches displayed it, sometimes to the real bewilderment of those neighbors at the time when they were also enemies. It is, if you like and in a catch-phrase of the moment, an aspect of "the escape from reality." But it does not necessarily mean that reality is not being seri-ously tackled under the surface. And gravity itself, as La Rochefoucauld observed, is sometimes a mere cloak for incompetence.

IDEAS

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A PAGE FROM MY DIARY

by P.C.2

Will wonders never cease! Today I ran across a driver of a car who had forced another car into the ditch and didn't have an excuse to offer!

"I admit it was my fault," he said. "I don't know how it happened. I must have been going too fast." This man's attitude was most refreshing; usually neither party to an accident will accept any part of the blame.

Of course, I knew what the trouble was. It happened to be Sunday and the man who caused the accident was driving at a rate of speed faster than he had been accustomed to during the week. He forgot that six days a week he drove at a twenty or twenty-five miles an hour around town and that all of his motions were keyed to that speed. Out on the highway, going about forty, he couldn't think fast enough. He intended to edge over and give the other chap room on the road to pass, but his city-trained sense of speed and distance deceived him.

That's the case with lots of drivers. The minute they go faster than their usual rate of speed, they're lost. Sooner or later in "highway" traffic they'll encounter a situation they've never faced before and they don't know what to do.... in time to prevent an accident.

The moral is, of course, not to drive too fast. I have been on the job long enough to know that no speed over 35 is safe, and lots of drivers can't drive even that fast without danger of meeting up with a situation they can't handle. Well, I'll be seeing you.

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