



DEVIL-MAY-CARE

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Sixth Instalment

Synopsis

What Happened Before

At a party in Palm Beach given by Mr. Cooper Clary, Leson, an attorney, meets Lucy Harkness, known as Devil-May-Care because of her adventurous, eventful life. In a game in which partners for the evening are chosen, Lucy is won by Tim Stevens, who has a great reputation as a successful heart-breaker. Leson is a bit jealous. Tim Stevens tells Lucy they are going aboard his boat, the *Minerva*, and she accedes in order not to be "a quitter." And if she is sorry that she won her company, Lucy says she is not and that evidently Fate has arranged it. Tim thereupon tells her to stop looking regretfully after Leson.

Aboard Stevens' boat, the *Minerva*, Stevens tells Lucy of his love. When she replies with contempt for him, he grows violently angry and she becomes afraid of him. He says he will never let her go from the *Minerva* until she accepts him. To escape him, she leaps into the water from her cabin window, swimming a short distance under water.

Lucy reaches land and meets Dr. Fergus Faunce on an island. He takes care of her and takes her home. Everyone is worried about her, and when she meets Stevens he is frantic, regretful and still ardent in protestations of love.

Leson informs Lucy that Stevens must raise a quarter of a million dollars or go to jail—at five o'clock. Lucy goes to her bank and raises the sum.

Lucy goes to Stevens to help him, but he refuses to take money from a woman to whom he is not married. So Lucy marries this man that she hates, and promptly runs away from him, going to her staunch friend Dr. Fergus Faunce to tell what she has done.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

Tim Stevens left the villa of his wife in a state of mind that bordered on insanity. Bewilderment, outraged pride, denied love—all these conspired to render him something less than sane. But the breezes from the Gulf Stream blew upon him; the exercise of walking, by its very monotony, soothed his nerves, and by the time he reached his own home he was able to think coherently.

She had run away. No doubt of that. Why she had run away, why she had married him only to desert him for all the world like a heroine of a cheap novelette, he could not imagine. Only, it was no cheap and vulgar motive that actuated her. He knew that. Lucy might be bizarre, but never common.

It suddenly occurred to him that she might be mad. Certainly this would seem a reasonable explanation of all that she had done. Only, he remembered the cool gray eyes, the broad forehead to know that no insanity here, within that perfectly shaped head, could have been the cause of his creature on earth. He knew this. And yet, though she might have acted upon impulse, in marrying and leaving him, it would be impulse only because it had been done so suddenly. She had done whatever she had done with deliberation, even though she had not wasted much time in planning.

Nevertheless, his eyes lighted as he looked inside his patio, only to grow instantly as she was not revealed to his eager glance. Hope—or, rather, its pale specter—vanished completely.

He sat down, rang for a servant, ordered a high-ball, and drank it slowly, sipping it carefully, as though he sought by taste to analyze its ingredients. A sudden odd thought came to him: the liquor had no savor, and nothing else in life would have savor again unless it were accompanied, or spiced, by the presence of Lucy.

This was love. This was an ache that distracted, that maddened, that drove one to frenzy. No mere barked desire this, but an overwhelming longing, a frantic longing that, he suddenly realized, was not only of the flesh but of the soul.

He could understand why man, frustrated in love, might sink to any level of dissipation, to win a moment of forgetfulness. An overwhelming urge seized upon him, to drink and drink until he won unconsciousness. Then his mouth hardened, and his eyes, that had not been focussed, but had been wide and staring, resumed their customary coolness. Lucy Harkness had made a public fool of him. —at least, publicity could not be long avoided,—but he would add to the foolishness nothing of his own. He wouldn't drink, and he wouldn't kill himself, and he'd do nothing . . . save find her.

He rang again, and ordered a servant to fetch Modane, the skipper of the *Minerva*. The swart Levantine arrived shortly.

"I was married to-day, Modane," said Stevens.

Modane nodded.

"I congratulate you, sir."

"And Mrs. Stevens and I sail on the *Minerva* in half an hour, on our honeymoon, Modane," Stevens continued.

Again the skipper nodded.

"Our destination, sir?"

"You are to proceed south, beyond Miami. Every second day you'll send a man to Miami in a motorboat, and at the post-office he'll inquire for letters for yourself. For, Modane, Mrs. Stevens and I shall not be aboard the *Minerva*."

"No, sir," said Modane.

"But the crew are not to know this, and no one else is to know it. Once you've started, the crew will discover it, but it will be too late for them to gossip. Send a tight-mouthed man ashore for letters, one that isn't inclined to gossip."

"Yes, sir," said Modane. "You

should never have let her get ashore when once you had her aboard the boat, sir."

Stevens grinned faintly.

"Had she been your woman you'd have tamed her, eh? But what made you suspect . . ."

"She's not here, sir," said Modane. "And after jumping overboard . . . Well, a man thinks, sir."

"Modane, you've been in my employ several years. You know me as well as any one."

"And like you better, sir," said

Modane, "than any one else."

"Much obliged. Then tell me: why would a woman marry me and then run away?"

"You've got a way, sir, of commanding, not asking; a proud woman might resent that, might want you to come to heel, instead of herself."

"I'll think that over," said Stevens. "And when I bring my wife aboard—Modane, where could she have landed yesterday morning?"

Modane drew a pocket map from inside his double-breasted reefer jacket. He unfolded it, squinted at it, then placed a stubby forefinger on a point south of Palm Beach.

"Mango Key, sir, or one of those other keys. I told you the drift was inward, but you thought that the Gulf Stream current set outward where she went overboard. Mango Key or thereabouts, sir."

"Much obliged, Modane. You may go."

"You don't want . . . help, sir?" asked the sailor.

Stevens laughed.

"To fetch back my own wife? Not help, not even my own two hands, Modane. If she won't come for words, then . . . she'll never come."

"Don't waste 'em, sir," pleaded Modane. "Take her, grab her, make her come."

Stevens shook his head.

"Would you have an unwilling wife, Modane?"

Modane showed his white teeth.

"If I wanted her, and could get her, it wouldn't matter to me whether she came willing or unwilling, I'd make her willing."

"All women aren't the same, you know," suggested Stevens.

"Sure they are, sir, like all men! They don't know what they want. They wait for some stronger person to tell 'em what they want, and then they jump with joy and claim they wanted it all the time."

"Not all men, nor all women," said Stevens.

"Yes, sir, all men, and all women," insisted Modane.

"But suppose . . . suppose one isn't the stronger?" asked Stevens.

Modane shrugged.

"In that case lie down, let her walk on you. You got to, if she's stronger than you. But is she, sir?"

In his turn Stevens shrugged.

"That remains to be found out, Modane."



"Hang on!" she heard him cry, his voice barely audible.

dened by the weight of their virtues, so the sweetness of the tropics becomes insupportable to Nature, who when sweetness has lost its savor promptly proceeds to show what a real wild lady she can be.

Out at sea Faunce saw a whirling something that twisted and strained in its effort to climb higher, although already it reached, or seemed to reach a dark cloud that had sprung suddenly from nowhere. He had never seen a waterspout before, but he needed no previous acquaintance for instant re-

ognition. Lucy sat upright as a cold chill descended upon her. Already the sun was obliterated and a false night was upon them. The placid ocean had awakened, was stirring, was tossing as though in agony. The *Lucy* rose suddenly, rolled sideways, then pitched into a gulf. Water broke over her bows, sluiced the deck, drenched Lucy Stevens, splashed over Faunce at the wheel.

"Hang on!" she heard him cry, his voice barely audible above the roar of the cyclone. And now not merely the salt water drenched her, but the wildest rain she had ever known came down from the darkened skies; huge hailstones hit the deck, bounded about, she oddly thought, like tennis-balls, or rounded dice. . . . Was this some gambling demon up aloft who shook dice for the lives of Faunce and herself?

The *Lucy* seemed to rise clear of the water; propelled by wind and wave it shot along like a hydroplane. Lightning gleamed and thunder roared. Beaten flat to the deck by the force of the wind, and hanging on with grim determination to the rail, she saw Faunce straining at the wheel, trying to deflect the course of the craft.

But why try to steer in this hurricane? She turned her head and knew the answer to her unuttered question. Ahead of them, a rod away, loomed the terrifying bulk of the great waterspout which first had told Faunce of their peril.

And as the *Lucy* smashed into the watery tower, her lips twisted in the ironic smile. It was for this that she had swum agonizingly to shore only thirty-six hours ago.

How much of life is real, and how much of it is a dream? Or is it all a dream? Lucy, lying in a berth, asked herself these questions. This was the room aboard the *Minerva* from which, some time ago, she distinctly remembered having dived into the Gulf Stream. Yet she was in this cabin, dry, not soaked from long immersion, clothed in pajamas which she recognized as having seen in this room just after she had shut the door upon Tim Stevens.

And why, unless she had been drugged, had she dreamed such terrible dreams? And yet they hadn't all been terrible. Fergus Faunce had appeared in them, dear Fergus Faunce with his kindly, whimsical mouth, his gentle eyes behind the green sunglasses, his graying hair, his twisted nose.

Ah, Fergus at least was real! No dream could have evoked so quaint and lovable a character. And if Fergus was real, then all of the mad things that she remembered—her swim ashore, Mango Key, her marriage, her flight . . .

She sat up, while something cold seemed to lay a clammy hand or claw upon her breast. The hurricane, the waterspout, the final crash! She had been saved; but what about Fergus? She seemed to remember that his hand had clutched at her, as though to drag her from beneath the flood, and after that she remembered nothing.

CHAPTER IV

The *Lucy* was christened solemnly; the human *Lucy* broke a pint bottle of champagne over the craft's bows, and then another pint was opened and the ritual was sealed by Faunce and herself drinking the new *Lucy's* health and success.

"Though what greater measure of success the *Lucy* can hope for than to have carried you as a passenger—"

"As a member of the crew," Devil-May-Care interrupted Faunce.

"I accept the amendment, Lucy," said Faunce. "Well, what more this craft can hope for I cannot imagine."

They were bowling leisurely south, across a placid ocean, beneath a shimmering sun and fleecy clouds. There was the faintest swell, and along the sandy shore, miles inland, breakers curled and broke foamily, and the murmur of their dissolution sounded like a faint chant in the distance.

Sky, atmosphere, and sea had combined to lull the travelers into dreamy security. But in the tropics Nature is more treacherous than in the frozen Arctic. As the good are supposed to die young, their evil counterparts

Continued Next Week

Catalogue Competition

The thing for the merchants of this community to do in their own interests is to advertise faithfully, and to make their printed announcements interesting and helpful to those whose trade and favor are desired.

Mail Order Houses and the large departmental stores of neighboring cities with their striking advertisements and catalogues are the serious competition of local merchants.

The poorest way to offset this competition is for our local merchants to remain silent. For them not to "speak up" is to give the Mail Order Houses a better chance to get business from this community.

A Word to the Public

When you send your money to a city store you enrich the great stores and impoverish this community. Strengthen—not weaken—the merchants of this community. It will be returned to you in the form of better service and better values.

Advertisements Are Interesting —Read Them

Watch for remaining Instalments of this story which will run in this paper for three months