

THE WOMAN WITH TWO SMILES

by Maurice Leblanc

CHAPTER 26

RAOUL KEPT an uneasy silence and looked at Clara who was hiding her face in her hands.

"And who committed the murder?" he asked after a bit.

Someone whom no one bothered to question, whose presence in the grounds was known to no one. Gassiou, a poor half-witted shepherd, not mad, but simple. I've proofs that Jean d'Erlemont often went to Gassiou during his stay with the de Jouvellas, and gave him clothes, cigars and even money. Why? In my turn, I cultivated Gassiou. I got bits of confession from him in which he tried to tell me about a woman who sang . . . and she fell down while she was singing! Incomplete incoherent confidences. . . Then one day I came upon Gassiou by surprise just as he was aiming with a clumsy sling at a bird flying over his head. The stone was propelled from his sling, killing the bird. It was a revelation. The whole thing became clear as daylight."

There was a long silence, which Raoul broke.

"What else?"

"What else? The truth was out, Gassiou, primed and paid by the marquis, perched that day on a wall in the ruins, and his projectile mortally wounded Elisabeth Hornain. He jumped down and fled."

"All guess work!"

"It's the truth."

"Can you prove it?"

"Irrefutably!"

"Meaning?" inquired Raoul in distressed tones.

"Meaning that if ever I'm arrested, I shall accuse the marquis of having murdered Elisabeth Hornain. I'll give the police my dossier of the case, I'll prove that at the time d'Erlemont was badly in need of money, that he was already negotiating with an inquiry agency for the recovery of an inheritance he had lost; furthermore, that he could never have gone on living in his accustomed style had it not been for the proceeds of his theft. And as the murdered woman's nephew, I shall demand the restitution of her jewels, or at least their value in cash."

"You won't get a penny."

"Perhaps not. But d'Erlemont will be dishonored and go to prison. And he's so scared even though he doesn't know all I've got against him, that he's never yet refused me money."

Raoul paced the room, lost in thought. Clara stayed where she was, her face hidden in her hands. Valthex stood, arms folded, looking arrogantly on.

Raoul came to a halt in front of him.

"So you're just a common black-maller, after all?"

"My first intention was to avenge Aunt Elisabeth. Now the documents in my possession are my safeguard. I'm simply making the most of them. Now let me pass!"

Keeping his eyes on him, Raoul demanded:

"And what next?"

"What next?"

Valthex was positive he had won the day, that his threats had been effective, and he could now enjoy his triumph to the end.

"Clara," said Valthex, "will become my associate again. I command her to come in an hour's time to the address I shall give her."

A low moan from the divan.

"You've got a nerve," said Raoul, dangerously calm. "And what grounds have you for this impious hope?"

"It's not a question of hope," said Valthex warmly. "It's a command. Clara has worked for me in the past and I need her back. I'm master and the sooner she realizes that, the better!"

So frightful was Raoul's expression, that Valthex stopped speaking. His hand felt for the revolver in his pocket. The two men challenged each other with their eyes. The moment had come. Suddenly springing up, Raoul dealt Valthex a violent kick just above his ankles, then pinioned his arms in a grip of iron.

The other lost his balance with the pain, and before he could recover, fell to the floor.

"Raoul! Raoul!" cried Clara jumping off the divan and running to him.

"Please don't fight! Don't, don't!"

For Raoul's anger was so terrible that he was belabouring his prostrate foe, giving him fearful punishment. No threats or explanations could hold him now. Valthex was at his mercy, and in the white heat of his rage he felt that only kicks and blows could square the account between them.

"Stop, Raoul! Please stop!" moaned Clara. "Let him go! Don't give him up to the police! For my sake . . . for my father's sake, spare him!"

But Raoul, still laying on, answered her:

"Don't worry, Clara. He'll never split on the marquis. And what proof is there that his story is true? And even if it were . . . he'll hold his tongue . . . in his own interests."

"No, he won't," she sobbed. "He'll revenge himself, I know!"

"Then let him! He's like a wild animal . . . that must be put out of the way, or one of these days he'll get you!"

Clara did not give in, but hung onto Raoul staying his hand. She spoke of Jean d'Erlemont, of the danger to which they had no right to expose him. In the end, Raoul gave in. His anger had cooled.

"All right, we'll let him go," he said. "Now then, Valthex, get out of here! But if ever you lift a finger against Clara or the marquis, you're a dead man! Get up and clear out!"

For a moment, Valthex did not stir. Had Raoul so knocked him about that he needed time to recover? He leaned on one elbow, then sank back again, made another effort that brought him closer to the arm chair, tried to rise, but seemed to lose his balance and fell on his knees. But it was all feigned. His one object was to reach the table. Suddenly, he thrust his hand into the drawer and seized the revolver lying there. With a hoarse cry, he took aim at Raoul.

But, swift and unexpected as his action had been, he was not given time to accomplish his design. Someone else was swifter still. It was Clara who threw herself between the two men and plunged a knife drawn from the bosom of her dress, straight into Valthex's chest, so that he was unable to parry the thrust, nor could Raoul do anything.

At first Valthex did not seem to have felt the blow nor to feel any pain. But his face, always very sallow, grew deathly pale. Then his long body straightened out, vast, unwieldy. And then he collapsed in a heap, head and arms stretched upon the divan, and gave a deep sigh, followed by terrible choking. Then all was still as death.

Still clutching the blood-stained knife, Clara looked on with her eyes starting out of her head as she watched him sway and fall. When Valthex crumpled up, Raoul had to support her, as she stammered, terrified and completely unnerved:

"I've killed him! I've killed him! You'll never speak to me again! What a terrible thing!"

Raoul consoled her:

"You know I'm your friend . . ."

nothing makes any difference . . . but what made you do that?"

"He was going to shoot you . . . he had the revolver . . ."

"But you silly child, it wasn't loaded! I'd left it there on purpose to tempt him so that he shouldn't use his own."

He placed her in the armchair, turning her so that she could not see Valthex's body. Then he bent over the wounded man, examining him, and listening to the heart beats.

"It's still beating," he muttered between his teeth, "but he won't last long."

Then, thinking only of Clara whom he must get away from the flat at all costs, he said sharply:

"Go, at once, Clara! You mustn't stay here . . . someone will come."

"What, go and leave you alone?" she protested with sudden energy.

"But, think! If someone should find you here!"

"What of it? What about you?"

"I can't leave this man."

Raoul was undecided. He knew Valthex to be a dying man, but he could not make up his mind to abandon him there; he was worried and upset.

Clara would not hear of his remaining.

"I shan't go without you . . . I did it! I killed him! I'm going to stop and let them arrest me!"

The mere idea spurred Raoul to action.

"Arrest you! Never! I shan't let that happen . . . I won't hear of it! The man was a brute, he got what was coming to him. Come on, let's get out of here . . . You can't stay."

He ran to the window, raised the curtain, then drew back into the room.

"Gorget!" he said grimly.

"What?" cried Clara, terrified. "Gorget? Is he coming up?"

"No . . . he's got two men and he's watching the house. We can't possibly get away."

(To Be Continued)

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(To Be Continued)

Italy Offers Good Prizes for Essays

Over \$1400 in Prizes for the Best Three Articles on Italy. Contest Open to Anyone.

Information sent The Advance by the Italian Line, Limited, Beaver Hall Hill, Montreal, Quebec, gives information in regard to a contest for the best article on Italy. This will be of interest to many here. It may be noted that as the first prize is 10,000 lire, and a hundred lire is approximately equivalent to \$8.34 in Canadian money, the first prize will amount roughly to \$834 as a Canadian win it. The second prize will be approximately \$417.00 and the third prize \$166.80.

The Italian State Tourist Department announces from Rome a worldwide contest for the best article on Italy to be submitted during 1935. The article shall contain a minimum of 1,500 and a maximum of 5,000 words, supported by at least two illustrations. Theme and style are at the discretion of the contestants.

The contest is open to anyone. It may be submitted in English, French, German or Spanish, but must be published in a newspaper or magazine outside of Italy between January 1st and December 31st, 1935.

The contest will be judged by a Committee presided over by the Director General of the Italian State Tourist Department.

Contestants should send ten (10) copies of the newspaper or magazine article to the: Sottosegretariato di Stato per la Stampa e la Propaganda, Direzione Generale per il Turismo, via Marghera 2, Rome, Italy.

No article will be accepted after January 1936.

First prize is put at 10,000 Lire, the second prize at 5,000 Lire, the third prize at 3,000 Lire and fourth prize at 2,000 Lire.

Informative and photographic material may be secured from the Italian State Tourist Department, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York City, New York.

Preliminary Report, Great Bear Lake to the Rae Area

The Bureau of Economic Geology, Department of Mines, Ottawa, has issued a preliminary report dealing with the principal geological features of the strip of territory bordering the water route between Rae on Great Slave Lake and the mouth of Camsell River on Great Bear Lake. The report is designed to give prospectors and engineers immediate advantage of information gained as a result of investigations by D. F. Kidd, along the route during the 1934 field season. Discoveries of pitchblende and silver mineralization at Hottah and at Beaverlodge lakes have brought the area prominently to the forefront.

Expectations are that the region will witness considerable prospecting activity during the 1935 field season, particularly the areas underlain by folded sediments and volcanics. These formations, occurring in narrow belts in stated areas, are described in the report as the most favourable host rocks along the route for pitchblende and silver mineralization. A geological sketch map of a portion of the route accompanies the report.

Copies may be obtained from the Director, Bureau of Economic Geology, Department of Mines, Ottawa.

Powassan News.—Doctor (to rich patient)—You're all run down. You'd better lay off golf for a while and get a good rest at the office.

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Further Interesting Adventures in Timmins and Elsewhere by A. J. Doling.

Timmins, April 2nd, 1935

To the Editor of The Advance, Timmins.

Dear Sir:—I heard a yarn which interested me and I thought perhaps you would like to hear it.

A man in town used to own a farm which was not paying very well. One day he felt the need of some fresh meat for himself and his family so he took his gun and went into the bush.

Presently he saw a moose coming slowly toward him and he hid himself and waited. When the moose came within gunshot, he took aim and fired, and he said he almost shouted for joy when the moose fell.

But when the moose turned on its back and disappeared he did indeed shout for joy. The moose had sunk into the muskeg and if it had come five minutes later, the man himself would have been in it.

The same man said that on one occasion he drove to town for provisions and with his last fifty cents he bought a feed for his horse and sat on the verandah of the hotel while the horse was eating.

The proprietor of the hotel came out and asked: "Aren't you hungry?"

"I am indeed," the man replied.

"Then why aren't you eating?"

"I'm broke," said the man.

"You gave your last fifty cents to feed your horse!" exclaimed the hotel proprietor. "Why?"

"Because," replied the man, "that horse has to carry me home, and when I get there I can eat."

The proprietor of the hotel grabbed him by the arm, saying: "It is worth a dinner to meet a man like you," and he gave the man the biggest dinner he had ever eaten.

"A certain lady sent away for a horse-escape reading and she was telling her neighbour about it.

"The man is wonderful," she said.

"He says I am very intelligent and that I should be an interior decorator."

As I was walking along Hollinger Lane, one day, I saw two boys playing

together. One of them said: "I am going into the house for a minute!"

When he came out again the other boy asked: "Did you get it?"

"Yes," replied the first boy. "Here it is," and he held out his hand.

The other boy studied the hand for a while and then he said: "That is a piece of cake; that isn't a minute!"

A small boy walked into a store on the River Road and at once began looking around.

The storekeeper asked him what he was looking for, and the boy asked: "Have you a cat?"

"Sure we have a cat," replied the storekeeper. "Why? Do you want to buy one?"

"No," replied the boy. "I only wanted to pull its tail."

"If you pull our cat's tail, I'll pull your ear!" exclaimed the storekeeper.

The boy thought for a moment, and then he said: "Well I suppose you would have a right to do so."

I remain

Yours most sincerely

A. J. Doling.

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Swiss Motor Club Members Impressed

Surprised at the Extent of Canada's Motor Industry and Shipments Made to Switzerland.

Members of the Swiss Automobile Club tour during their recent trip through the Goodyear plant in New Toronto evinced unusual interest when they were informed by the superintendent of the Shipping Department that a shipment of Goodyear tires had been made from the plant to Switzerland a few days ago preceding their visit. They were much interested too in the placards revealing the low accident experience of the various departments and all stopped to read the legend in the centre of the suspended truck tire which pointed out that the tire had given 90,029 miles of service, thanks to the quality of workmanship of the employees who had had a hand in its fabrication. The visitors from the Alpine Republic expressed surprise at the size of the plant as process after process was viewed each evoking a tribute in a quietly uttered chorus of "very interesting."

The visitors expressed surprise also at the quality and extent of our highways and amazement at the development and market ramifications of the automotive industry of Canada.

The Swiss Automobile Club, in common with the recognized automobile club of every country, is allied with the Ontario Motor League. It expects to organize a much larger tour to Canada and the United States in the not distant future.

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ANCHOR-DONALDSON

Rouyn and Noranda Friendship Group

Twin Towns Organize to Promote Good Feeling Between Native and Foreign-born Citizens.

A new organization has been formed in Rouyn and Noranda, the twin towns of Northwestern Quebec, and the progress of the new society should be watched with very keen interest by all in the North.

The new group is termed the Council of Friendship, and the purposes of the organization are given as follows:—To bring about closer relationship between native and foreign-born Canadians by means of concerts, lectures, handcraft displays, etc. The functions of the organization are to be purely social and educational. The organization is to take no part whatever in politics or to interest itself in any way in procuring jobs for members or attempting to redress wrongs or grievances, either for groups or individuals inside or outside its ranks.

The officers are to include a president, vice-president and secretary, as the executive, with a board which will include one representative chosen by each membership organization, and meetings of the executive and the board are to be held monthly. Open meetings will be held from time to time, to which all interested will be invited, and it is planned to arrange occasional concerts, and displays of native handcraft, while lecturers will be provided from time to time for any of the societies representing foreign-born residents who may desire them.

The following are the officers elected by the Rouyn-Noranda Council of Friendship:—

President—R. O. Bartlett, principal

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of Noranda Protestant school. Vice-president—Frank Burry, of the Polish Catholic White Eagle Society. Secretary-treasurer—Milosh Chorish.

These officers, with the representatives to be chosen by the various membership organizations, will hold office until the regular meeting in January next.

In reporting the inauguration of the Rouyn-Noranda Council of Friendship, The Rouyn-Noranda Press last week says:—"John Grancevic, representing the local Croatian society, on the strength of a resolution passed by that organization a few days before, informed the meeting that local Croats had offered their hall to the Council for regular meetings free of charge, a gesture of co-operation that was much appreciated and was acknowledged by a unanimous vote of thanks."

Stratford Beacon-Herald:—The Ontario Legislature is going to hold night meetings on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and that will give the members opportunity to go to Young People's meeting on Monday, and prayer service on Wednesday and choir practice on Friday.

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Frost action will soon be at its worst, road beds are soft and very subject to damage.

Unlawful overloading will not be allowed. The abuse of roads by a few, causes great inconvenience to many.

District co-operation in the protection of the roads will result in district benefit.

Pneumatic-tired trucks with carrying capacity of three tons or over are limited to half load and speed of 20 miles per hour. Horse drawn vehicles capacity one ton, 250 lbs. per inch of tire.

Penalty for overloading is a fine, or imprisonment, or both. Permits may also be suspended.

Traffic officers will be on duty in this district to check speed and weigh trucks.

Your co-operation to prevent unlawful and unnecessary abuse of the roads is earnestly solicited

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