

The WOMAN with TWO SMILES

by Maurice LeBlanc



It was Clara!

CHAPTER 31
AND ONCE again Raoul was tortured by the possibility of Clara taking her life. All day his one idea and effort had been to let her know the truth about Big Paul, either through the clerk at headquarters or through Gorgoret. As he had failed, it was easy to imagine her abandoning hope, utterly overwhelmed. Clara would be capable of enduring anything—prison, trial, sentence—but not the thought that her hand had dealt death.

Raoul remembered her agonized recollection from that tottering, swaying figure: "I've killed him! I've killed him! You'll never speak to me again!"

And he felt that the unhappy girl's flight had been to seek death and oblivion. And the fact that she had been arrested and imprisoned would only add to her mental anguish, convincing her that she had indeed committed murder and was an outcast among men.

The thought was torture to Raoul. As the night wore on, and midnight struck, then one, then half-past, he felt more and more convinced that Clara would destroy herself if she had not already done so. He imagined all sorts of terrible and secret ways of committing suicide, all fatal, and having rehearsed her dying means and agonies, he would go over it all again, till his forehead and the palms of his hands were wet with cold sweat.

Later, when he learned the simple truth of the matter and the key to the enigma, Raoul was astounded at his own lack of perspicacity over the whole thing. He could not help feeling then that he, with his great knowledge of human nature and his almost second-sight, should have jumped to the right conclusion from the start, and pieced the puzzle together correctly. There are times when problems are set forth so clearly that one cannot fail to see the obvious solution—once one knows the truth!

But just as he was nearest that moment of revelation, Raoul was lost in abyssal night. His mental agony prevented him from seeing things as they really were; he was enmeshed in a web of despair. He did not even attempt to fight off his depression, but seemed rather to rejoice in piling agony on agony throughout the interminable

hours of that terrible night! Two o'clock struck... then the half hour...

Raoul could see the first streaks of dawn showing above the trees. He persuaded himself, childishly, that if Clara were not already dead, she would never have the courage to kill herself at the beginning of a new day. Suicide needs the complicity of night!

Then a church clock struck three. Raoul took out his watch and followed the second hand in its laboring journey. Then he suddenly shivered.

Someone was ringing at the gate. Could it be someone bringing him news?

At any ordinary time, he would have made sure who was there, coming at such an hour, before pressing the button that opened the gate. But now he merely opened it from his room.

He could not distinguish in the gloom who was coming up the garden path and into the villa.

Slow, very faint steps were mounting the stairs.

Then a sudden anguish seized Raoul, and he felt powerless to take a single step to meet this unknown visitor, who might be the bearer of fatal news.

A feeble hand was slowly pushing open the door of the room.

Raoul's eyes were strained upon the figure that entered.

It was Clara.

Raoul's life—the life of Arsene Lupin—was certainly one full of shocks, mysteries and surprises; he was accustomed to living the impossible. But of all that ever happened to him, he was emphatic in his assertion that the totally unexpected apparition of Blonde Clara at dawn at the door of his room caused him the greatest surprise and shock—not to mention its being a complete mystery—of his whole career.

Clara's dramatic appearance, deathly pale, her face a tragic mask of despair and fatigue, her own eyes burning with fever, her dress torn and dirty, seemed to Raoul a nightmare hallucination. That she should still be alive seemed possible, but that she could have escaped from the police was manifestly impossible! The police as Raoul knew only too well, were not in the habit of thus lightly relinquishing their prey; there was no known instance of a woman having escaped from police headquarters, especially one guarded by Inspector Gorgoret. What could it all mean?

Raoul and Clara gazed at one another, speechless—he, dumbfounded, trying to grasp the fact of her presence; she, wretched, bowed with shame, her whole appearance seeming to say:

"Don't you want me back here? Can you welcome a murderer? Will you send me away?"

At last, trembling with anguish, she managed to falter aloud:

"I hadn't the courage to kill myself... God knows I wanted to... several times I leaped out over the water... but my courage failed me!"

Raoul gazed at her in breathless astonishment, scarcely seeming to hear what she said, so engrossed was he in thinking, thinking... The problem was absurd in its mere statement: Clara stood there, facing him yet Clara was in a prison cell at police headquarters. Beyond that he could not see—he must not try to see.

But Arsene Lupin could not long remain confounded by a tangible fact. If the truth had remained obscure on account of its very simplicity, now was the time to tear aside the veil.

Dawn touched the trees in the garden, the wan light mingling with the electric light in the room. Clara's face was strangely illuminated as she kept repeating monotonously:

"I hadn't the courage to kill myself... I ought to have, oughtn't I?... You'd have forgiven me then... but my courage failed me."

Raoul remained gazing upon that vision of terror and suffering, and as he gazed his expression gradually lost its tenseness and bewilderment, and he even smiled faintly. Then suddenly, without any warning, he burst out laughing. Nor was it a mirthless, nervous laugh, but a hearty laugh that doubled him up as though he could never stop.

And Raoul besides laughing so hilariously was capering about delightedly in the most spontaneous fashion as

though he must express in every possible way his appreciation of a superb jest.

Clara, sunk in her misery, looked so utterly dejected at his unseemly exhibition that Raoul rushed at her and, seizing her in his arms, whirled her round in his mad dance like a child, finally depositing her on the divan saying:

"Now, honey, you may cry as much as you like, and when you've had your cry out, and decided there's no reason to kill yourself, we'll talk."

But Clara jumped up, seizing Raoul by the shoulders:

"Do you forgive me, then? Do you forgive me?"

"My dear, there's nothing to forgive—you've no cause to blame yourself."

"Yes, I have. I've committed a murder."

"Oh, no, you haven't."

"What do you mean?"

"You can't have a murder without a corpse, my child!"

"But Big Paul's dead!"

"No, he's not."

"Oh, Raoul, what do you mean? Didn't I stab him?"

"Yes, you struck Valthez, but villains of his kind have nine lives. Haven't you read the papers?"

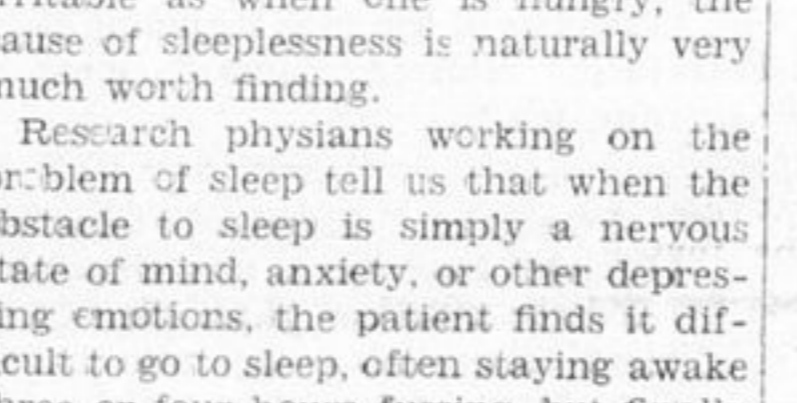
"No, I didn't dare. I was so afraid of seeing my name..."

"Your name's in the headlines all right. But that doesn't mean Valthez is dead."

"Do you really mean that? You're not pretending to comfort me?"

"Only this evening—or rather last night, as it's morning now—my old friend Gorgoret declared that Valthez was out of danger."

(TO BE CONTINUED)



By James W. Barton, M.D., Toronto
CAUSES OF SLEEPLESSNESS

As sleep is as important as food and loss of sleep causes one to be just as irritable as when one is hungry, the cause of sleeplessness is naturally very much worth finding.

Research physicians working on the problem of sleep tell us that when the obstacle to sleep is simply a nervous state of mind, anxiety, or other depressing emotions, the patient finds it difficult to go to sleep, often staying awake three or four hours fussing, but finally gets to sleep and thereafter sleeps until morning.

However when the trouble lies in some physical condition such as high blood pressure, or some low or slow poisoning of the system from infection, the individual fails to sleep readily enough but wakes up in two or three hours and after that finds it almost impossible to go back to sleep.

The explanation is that when the individual can't get off to sleep when first going to bed it is his worry that keeps him awake, but when he falls asleep from sheer fatigue he stops worrying and sleep continues.

In the case where the patient gets off to sleep, but wakes up later and remains awake, the patient goes off to sleep at first because he is drowsy from his physical ailment—undernourishment, poisoning or other condition; but as soon as he has regained some strength from his sleep, these physical conditions awaken him again.

Now it is admitted that the above is not always a true or sure guide as to the cause of sleeplessness. Besides there are some mental ailments where the patient is awake for hours at a time and yet is not worrying about anything.

The point then is that we should all sleep at night 6 to 9 hours according to constitution or habit, and if we are not sleeping should find the reason and correct it just as we would find out what is causing loss of appetite or weight.

The above guide may help us to worry less, and have a complete physical examination to locate any hidden infection.

However one very common cause of sleeplessness is worrying about not getting enough sleep.

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Distribution of Forest Trees by the Government

The Ontario government announces that the distribution of forest trees is restricted to the following purposes:

The reforesting of suitable land for the production of forest crops.
The improvement of existing woodlands which have become depleted.
The reclamation of unproductive wastelands which are lying idle and which would support forest growth.
The protection by forest planting of slopes and hill which are subject to erosion and of light soils which are subject to blowing or drifting.
The conserving of water flow by forest planting on the slopes at the headwaters of streams.
The planting of shelter belts and windbreaks for the protection of agricultural crops.

Kincardine Review.—Maid—Please, Mrs. Whaitie, will you come up to the bathroom at once? I can't make out whether Mr. Whaitie is scalding to death or singing.

PLANS

BUILDING IN CANADA is something quite new in "home" magazines. It is profusely illustrated, delightfully easy to read and beautifully printed. The Spring Plan Book number contains pictures and floor plans of twenty charming homes and summer cottages. There are illustrated articles on modernizing, furnishing, gardening and real estate development. Also ten pictures illustrating the "Evolution of the House" since 12,000 B.C.

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BUILDING IN CANADA
201 Fullerton Bldg., Toronto, Ont.

MEMBERS OF COMMONS WANT MONEY FOR SLUMS CLEARANCE

Toronto may not get its \$1,000,000 waterfront tunnel after all. The House of Commons adjourned for Easter without having sanctioned it. Western Ontario members want the money used for slum clearance in Toronto, not a "luxury."

Ottawa Journal.—Now it's Austria that is wanting an army. Well, if, as we are told, all these big armies are merely to maintain peace, why should not Austria be let help?

Fire Retardant Lumber Coming to the Front Now

There is no question about fire retardant lumber coming into the picture in future building construction, states Ernest F. Hartman, president of the Protexol Corporation, successor to the Carbolinum Wood Preserving Co., of Kenilworth, New Jersey, in a recent communication to The Timberman. Particularly interested in this development, is the U. S. Bureau of Navigation and Steamboat Inspection, anxious to avoid such catastrophes as befell the steamer Morro Castle last September off the Jersey coast.

In the case of the Morro Castle, the steel buckled so badly that the plates were pulled out of position, causing the vessel to leak. Boxing in this steel with a two-inch fire retardant wood covering will give greater protection than six inches of concrete and without the handicap of much added weight. According to Mr. Hartman, there is a strong possibility of legislation being passed by Congress to safeguard passenger vessels by requiring the use of fire retardant lumber. The new Cunard-White Star liner Queen Mary is being fitted with fire retardant lumber, coming about without mandatory legislation on the subject.

In the fifty million dollar federal housing project for slum clearance in various cities in the United States the specifications actually call for apartment entrance doors of fire retardant wood but there are no door manufacturers to make them.

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On the large housing project which has already ear-marked 1500 five to six-room houses, there is a possibility of having about 14,000 feet of fire retardant wood used per house.

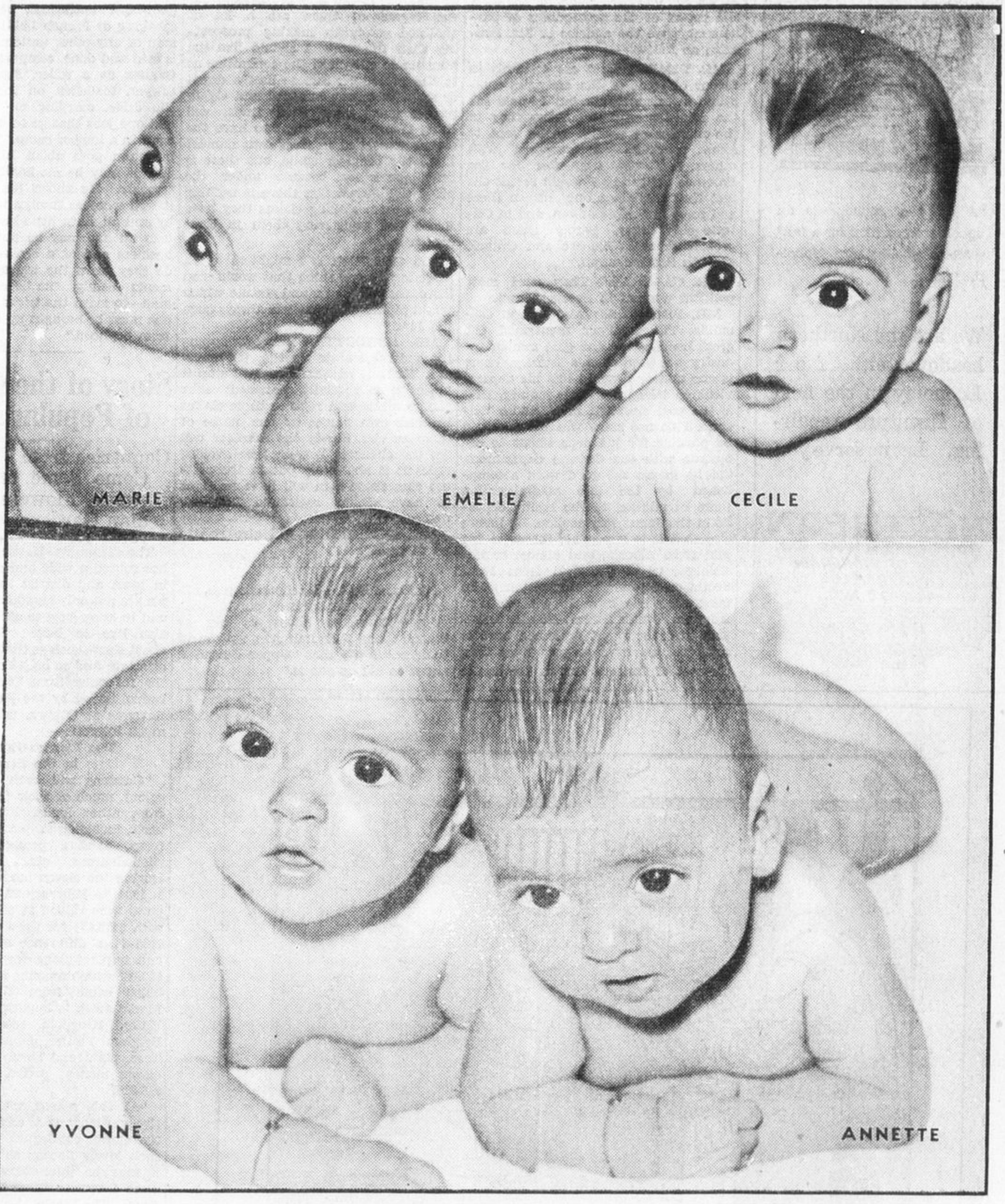
Taylor. (A millionaire father moves his contrary daughter to a small town, hoping she'll "reform.")
"Salt of the Earth," by Margaret Morris Marshall. (Novel of a New Hampshire girl, who "went to life for an education.")
"Jap-nica Grove," by Mary Barrow Linfield. (Romance of the post Civil War period in Louisiana.)
"Michael's Wife," by Alice DeFord. (A man marries a woman for companionship, but the calm is soon broken.)
"The Bannerman Case," by Jeremy Lord. (A diplomat dies and a former secret service man turns detective.)
"Gunlock Ranch," by Spearman. (Western. Cattle rustlers and love interest.)

Recent Fiction at the Public Library

Some More New Books Added to the Array of Works of Fiction at the Library Here.

Recent fiction added to the Timmins Public Library are:
"Boulevard," by Katherin Haviland-

Toronto Mail and Empire.—Quintuplets Lose in Weight Again.—Headline. No doubt worry about the distressing happenings to Quebec power companies.



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honor bestowed upon their product by these all-Canadian sisters.
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