

# The POOL of FLAME

by LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

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## SYNOPSIS.

The story opens at Monte Carlo with Col. Terence O'Rourke, a military free lance and something of a gambler, in his hotel. Lolling on the balcony he sees a beautiful girl who suddenly enters the elevator and passes from sight. At the gaming table O'Rourke notices two men watching him. One is the Hon. Bertie Glynn, while his companion is Viscount Des Trebes, a duelist. The viscount tells him the French government has directed him to O'Rourke as a man who would undertake a secret mission. At his apartment O'Rourke, who had agreed to undertake the mission, finds a mysterious letter. The viscount arrives, hands a sealed package to O'Rourke, who is not to open it until on the ocean. A pair of dainty slippers are seen protruding from under a doorway curtain. The Irishman finds the owner of the mysterious feet to be his wife, Beatrice, from whom he had run away a year previous. They are reconciled, and opening the letter he finds that a Rangoon law firm offers him 100,000 pounds for a jewel known as the Pool of Flame and left to him by a dying friend, but now in keeping of one named Chambret in Algeria. O'Rourke worships the nobleman in a duel. The wife bids O'Rourke farewell and he promises to soon return with the reward. He discovers both Glynn and the viscount on board the ship. As he finds Chambret there is an attack by bandits and his friend dies telling O'Rourke that he has left the Pool of Flame with the governor general, who at sight of a signet ring given the colonel will deliver over the jewel. Arriving at Algiers the Irishman finds the governor general away. Des Trebes makes a mysterious appointment, and tells O'Rourke that he has gained possession of the jewel by stealing it. In a duel O'Rourke masters the viscount, secures possession of the Pool of Flame and starts by ship for Rangoon. He finds the captain to be a smuggler who tries to steal the jewel.

## CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)

He ran as seldom he had run before, straining and laboring, stumbling, recovering and plunging onward. And, by the gods, wasn't it hot! The khamsin raved and tore like a spirit of hell-fire through that narrow alley, turning it into a miniature inferno. But in the course of some minutes, the end of the tunnel came in view; a lighted rift between house walls, giving upon the illuminated street beyond. The sight brought forth a fresh burst of speed from O'Rourke. He dashed madly out of the alley, stumbled and ran headlong into a strolling Greek, who grappled with him, at first in surprise and then in resentment, while the clamor of the pursuing rabble shrilled loud and near and ever nearer. Exhausted as he was, the Irishman struggled with little skill before he mastered his own surprise; and in time saw his fists written along the blade of a thin, keen knife which the Greek had whipped from the folds of his garments and jerked threateningly above his head.

It was falling when O'Rourke saw it. In another breath he had been stabbed. Unexpectedly the Greek shrieked, dropped the knife as though it had turned suddenly white-hot in his hands, and leaped back from O'Rourke, nursing a broken wrist; while a voice as sweet as the singing of angels rang in the fugitive's ears, though the spirit of its melody was simple and crude enough.

"O'Rourke, be all th' powers! The masher himself! Glory, ye beggar, 'tis sorry I am that I didn't split the ugly face of ye wid me sthick! . . . This way, yer honor! Come wid me!"

Blindly enough (indeed the world was all awlri about him) O'Rourke, his arm grasped by a strong and confident hand, permitted himself to be swung to the right and across the street. In a thought blackness again was all about him, but the hand gripped his arm, hurrying him onward; and he yielded blindly to its guidance—without power, for that matter, to question or to object; what breath he had he sorely needed. And as blindly he stumbled on for perhaps another hundred yards, while the voice of the rabble made hideous the night behind them. Hardly, indeed, had the two whipped into the mouth of the back-way ere it was choked by a swarm of pursuers. But—"Niver fear!" said the voice at his side. "Tis ourselves that'll outwit them. . . . Here, now, yer honor, do ye go straight on widout stoppin' ontill ye come to an iron dure in a dead wall at the end of this. Knock there, I'll lead 'em away and be wid ye again in a brace av shakes!"

Benumbed by fatigue and exhaustion, O'Rourke obeyed. He was aware that his preserver with a wild whoop had darted aside into a cross-alley, but hardly aware of more. Mechanically he blundered on until brought up by a wall that closed and made a cul-de-sac of the way.

With trembling hands he felt before him, fingers encountering the smooth, cool surface of a sheet of metal. This, then, was the door. As carefully as he could he knocked, counted ten, and knocked again—while the mob that had lusted for his blood trailed off down the side alley in frantic pursuit of his generous preserver. And he heard with a smile, the latter's shrill

defiant Irish yells luring them further upon the false scent.

"If 'tis not Danny," gasped the adventurer, "then myself's not the O'Rourke! Bless the lad!" But as he breathed this benediction the iron door swung inward and he stumbled across the threshold, half-fainting, hardly conscious that he had done more than pass from open night to the night of an enclosed space. His foot caught on some obstruction and he went to his knees with a cry that was a cross between a sob and a groan; and incontinently fell full length upon an earthen floor, his head pillowed on his arm, panting as if his heart would break.

In the darkness above him someone cried aloud, a startled cry, and then the door was thrust to with a clang and rattle of bolts. A match rasped loudly and a flicker of light leaped from a small hand lamp and revealed to its bearer the fagged and quivering figure on the floor.

Some one sat down beside him with a low exclamation of solicitude and gathered his head into her lap. Some one quite simply enfolded his neck with soft arms and pressed his head to her bosom, and as if that were not enough, kissed him full and long upon his lips.

"My dear! My dear!" she murmured in French. "What has happened, O, what has happened? My poor, poor boy!"

Now the integral madness of all this was as effectual in restoring O'Rourke to partial consciousness as had been a douche of cold water in his face. Blankly he told himself that he was damned, and that it was all a dream. And yet, when he looked, it was to see, dim in the feeble glimmer of the lamp, the face of a woman as beautiful as young, as young as beautiful. One glance was enough. O'Rourke shut his eyes again. "If I look too long," he assured himself, "she'll vanish or—turn into a fend. Sure, 'tis a judgment upon me! Too long have I been an amorous dram-drinker; this will undoubtedly be the delirium-tremens of love!"

And with that he passed quietly into temporary unconsciousness.

## CHAPTER XV.

He opened his eyes again, alone on the cool, damp, earthen floor, but assured that the feminine element in his adventure had been no hallucination, after all; for he could see the girl standing a little to one side and looking down upon him, her face so deep in shadow that he could gather nothing from its expression, whether it were of displeasure or of perplexity. From this and that, however, he deduced that she, discovering herself lavishing endearments on the wrong man, was not utterly delighted with the situation. The circumstances taken into consideration, such a state of mind he thought not unreasonable; and being now to some extent recovered, he saw no profit in making her suffer more. So with a show of faintness not wholly assumed, he rolled his head to one side, opening wide his eyes and looked the woman in the face, inquiring with his faint, thin brogue: "What's this, now, me dear?"

The girl's face darkened. She shook her head impatiently. "I have no English," she told him in excellent French. "Who are you? Why do you come here? You are not Danny!" "Oh!" commented O'Rourke knowingly, "and that's the explanation, is it?" He sat up, embracing his knees and drawing a rueful face. "Faith, me dear," he admitted, "I concede ye the best of the argument, thus far. I am not Danny—'tis true as Gospel."

She frowned. "Then what are you doing here, monsieur? How did you learn—who told you—the signal?" "Faith, from no less a person than Danny Mahone himself. He showed me the way and bade me knock—but niver a word said he of yourself, me dear."

"Monsieur does not recall that I admitted him?" she persisted, but with a lightening face, "nor anything that happened thereafter?"

"Not the least in the world. What did happen, now?"

But she flanked that embarrassing question adroitly, evidently much relieved by O'Rourke's reassurance. Which was just what he wished her frame of mind to be. "Nothing that matters," she replied, continuing to employ the French tongue, and that very prettily, with a fetching little accent. "I think you fainted. Then—but you know my Danny?"

"Your Danny!" said O'Rourke, his mood quizzical. "None better, me dear. I've known him since he was so high, or thereabouts. And he held a palm some six inches or so above the floor. And he—brought you here?"

"Who else? How else would I be knowing the signal? Ye see, there was a bit of a shindig down the street and me in the middle thereof and getting all the worst of it—if ye must know—when along comes Danny and lends me a hand and whips me off here and says he'll be back in a moment. He'll tell ye the details himself; but I—he eyed her quizzically—"would now ask ye to overlook the unceremonious manner of me entrance and a certain lack of dignity as to me attire, which I beg ye to believe is not me ordinary evening dress, and—and faith! me throat is baked entirely, if me clothes are not. May I ask for a drink at mademoiselle's fair hands?"

He was on his feet now and enjoying the situation hugely. "And 'tis the Irish eye for beauty Danny has!" he told himself. "I commend his taste, the rogue!"

For the girl was exceedingly fair to see; slender and straight and girlish and sweet; a Greek, if he were to judge of her features and her dress, and in that odd light, with perturbation in her pose, a smile half-perplexed trembling on her lips (because of O'Rourke's conceit) and the shadow of anxiety clouding her eyes, she made a charming picture indeed.

She was quick to grant his request. "Danny will explain," she agreed with conviction. "This way, then, if you please, monsieur, and—as they passed through a low doorway—"if you will have the patience to wait here, I will fetch wine."

She smiled enchantingly, dropped him a bewitching little courtesy with a deference evoked, no doubt, by the man's subtle yet ineradicable air of distinction, and left him wholly captivated. "Bless her heart and pretty face!" he murmured, eyeing her retreating figure. "'Tis Danny who's the lucky dog . . . not that he's not deserving."

He reviewed his refuge summarily, discovering that he stood in one corner of a small courtyard, the center of a hollow cube of masonry; a dwelling of two stories, round whose upper floor ran an inner gallery to which steps led up from the court and from which access was to be had to the living rooms—all dark and silent.

In the center of the courtyard a little fountain tinkled, a tiny jet of water rising from the central upright of stone to spray the black, star-smitten pool beneath. There was a little

ful fluid grapple with his fatigue, temper it, and send new strength leaping through his veins. "And as good, I'm sure, as she is kind," he added; and "Ah!" he sighed, resuming his seat but rising again, and quickly, as a second summons clanged upon the iron door and sent the girl flying towards the rear of the house.

"That will be Danny now," O'Rourke opined as she swept past him.

She murmured a response he did not clearly catch. "What's that?" he called after her.

"Or, possibly," she repeated, pausing at the entrance to the rear chamber, "it may be Monsieur the Captain Hole!"

"The divvie!" cried O'Rourke, and was on his feet in a twinkling, casting about him for a weapon. "That can't be—"

Nothing offered itself suitable either for offense or defense, save and except the jug he had been drinking from, and the Irishman was weighing this thoughtfully with a definite intention of hurling it at Captain Hole's head, if indeed he had heard aright, when the entrance of quite another person relieved his mind, however temporarily.

It was Danny, plainly enough; Danny, the same as of old, with his half-sheepish, half-impudent grin and his shock of flaming hair, his upper lip that was long even for an Irish boy's, his roving and twinkling blue eyes, his tip-tilted nose, his short, sturdy physique.

"Faith," said O'Rourke, "the gods are not so unkind after all! 'Tis as welcome as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, the sight of ye, Danny!" And "Danny!" he observed with some severity, "I'll ask ye to explain what the divvie at all ye're doing here."

Danny's assurance deserted him on the instant. He had done his former master a signal service that night, but in his estimation nothing more than was due the O'Rourke. Whatever he felt, he looked to perfection a boy caught at mischief—hanging his head and eyeing O'Rourke under his brows, ashamed and ill at ease.

"Aw!" he deprecatd, "sure, now, yer honor, now—"

"Danny," demanded O'Rourke sternly, "does Miss Cleopatra here understand English?"

"Divvie a word!" the ex-valet pro-

ing ye more than ye deserves. Is it in love with you she is?"

Danny stole a sidelong glance at the girl. "Begg'n yer honor's pardon," he stammered, "and I believe she is that."

"Umm!" snorted O'Rourke. "And what, if ye please, about poor Annie Bragin, at home? Is it marrying a Greek ye would be, and leaving poor Annie to cry her eyes out for ye, ye worthless scut?"

"Divvie a bit, respects to yer honor! Sure, 'tis only for amusement—"

"And who may she be, that ye make so free to amuse yourself with her?"

"The daughter av me partner, yer honor, Noccovic, the Greek tobacco merchant."

"This will be his house, then?"

"No, sir, but a—sort av a storehouse, in a way av speaking. 'Tis just 'round th' corner they do be livin' in a gran' foine house, sir."

"Then what's the young lady doing here?"

"Waiting for me to take her place, sir. Noccovic is away and—and," in a blurted confession, "'tis a bit of bashful smuggling we be doing on the side. The stuff is always brought here, sor; and tonight's the night a consignment's due."

"Ah-h!" observed O'Rourke darkly. One by one, it seemed, he was gathering the trumps again into his own hand. He resumed his catechism of the boy.

"Danny, is this the way a decent man should be behaving himself?" he browbeat him. "Is it your mother's son and the sweetheart of Annie Bragin that's become no more than an idle breaker of hearts? Danny, Danny, what would Father Malachi be saying if he could hear what ye've just told me? Whin, boy, did ye confess last?"

Danny covered. "Aw, dear!" he whimpered. "Aw, dear-dear! And meself meant no harm at all!"

"Thin take your light-o-love home, Danny, and come back to me here at once with a change of clothes!"

"Yiss, yer honor. I'll do that, yer honor. But will ye hark for the signal at the door and let Cap'n Hole in?"

It was true, then!

"I will. But see that ye don't forget the change of clothes, Danny, and don't be lingering too long over your fond farewells with the lady, if ye're not looking for a hiding, and—Danny!"

"Yis, sor?"

"Have ye a revolver?"

"Here, sor."

"Give it here, and bring another back with ye. Lively, now!"

Alone, O'Rourke seated himself on the edge of the fountain and considered gravely the uncertainties of life. "'Tis fate," he concluded soberly, at length. "And 'tis hard upon eleven now. They will not dare to run that cargo before midnight; and—meself sorely needs a bath."

Deliberately he stripped off rags and tatters and plunged into the fountain. Danny was back with the promised wearing apparel ere he had finished splashing.

And while O'Rourke dressed, and for long thereafter, the two sat and smoked and confabulated, talked of Men and Things and the turn of the Wheel of the World.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## CUT RATE FOR AN AMERICAN

Judge Donnelly's Amusing Experience With the Sharp Irish Cab Driver in Dublin.

Chief Justice Joseph G. Donnelly of the civil court, in illustrating an Irishman's idea of wit, told a story of an adventure with an Irish hack driver in Dublin, relates the Milwaukee Wisconsin.

"I asked him how much he would take to drive me to Hotel —," he said. "The driver looked at me and said: 'You are from the states, aren't you?' I answered yes.

"Well," he said, "since you are from the states, and I've driven nothing but Englishmen all day, I'll drive you to the hotel for three shillings."

"As I thought that was reasonable, I got into the hack. We drove on and on for hours, over hills and across streams, until we finally got to the hotel. While driving, I wondered at the difference between this hack driver and those in America, and wondered what an American hack driver would say if I were to hand him three shillings for such a long ride.

"I went to bed and slept sound that night. When I woke up early in the morning, I went down and out on the front steps. I almost fainted, for directly in front of the hotel was the self-same depot that I arrived at on the train. I suppose the hack driver thought he was having a pile of fun while driving me around the city and country."

In the Garden of Eden. "Did you know this was my birthday?" asked Eva.

"Could I forget it?" answered Adam. "Let's see—how old are you, this year—now don't answer—let me guess. You are—ah—seven!"

"You hateful wretch!" cried Eva. "I'm only five, and you know it."

"But that is just like you men—you try to pretend that the time is dragging and that your wives are growing old! Just because you are over six, and have lots of gray hairs, you think you can insult your wife!" Eden was never the same after that.

Inexpensive. "I am thinking of going to Europe on a vacation."

"You are! I didn't know you had that much money."

"I haven't, but, you see, it doesn't cost anything to think of going."—Lippincott's.

## Whenever You Use Your Back



Does a Sharp Pain Hit You? It's a sign of sick kidneys, especially if the kidney action is disordered, too, passages scanty or too frequent or off-color. Do not neglect any little kidney ill for the slight troubles run into dropsy, gravel, stone or Bright's disease. Use Doan's Kidney Pills. This good remedy cures bad kidneys. A TYPICAL CASE—

L. G. Warner, 126 N. Garfield Ave., Pontiac, Mich., says: "Kidney complaint often confined me to bed for weeks. I passed kidney stones and the pain was terrible. Morphine was my only relief until I used Doan's Kidney Pills. After taking this remedy the stones dissolved and passed without pain. I am now free from kidney trouble."

Get Doan's at any Drug Store, 50c. a Box Doan's Kidney Pills

## MORE HOSPITALS ARE NEEDED

Situation Improved, but Further Work is Needed to Stamp Out Tuberculosis.

Only four states, Mississippi, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming, have no beds whatever in special hospitals or wards for consumptives. Eight years ago when the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis was organized, there were 26 states in which no hospital or sanatorium provision for consumptives existed, and the entire number of beds in the United States was only 10,000. "While these figures would indicate a remarkable growth in anti-tuberculosis activity," says Dr. Livingston Farrand, executive secretary of the National association, in commenting on the subject, "there are still practically ten indigent consumptives for every one of the 30,000 beds, including those for pay patients. In other words, we have from 250,000 to 300,000 consumptives in this country too poor to provide hospital care for themselves. If tuberculosis is ever going to be stamped out in the United States, more hospital provision for these foci of infection must be provided."

## CERTAINLY.



The Philosopher—It's the man with a pull that gets ahead. The Politician—Yes; but it's the man with the head that gets a pull.

## Hope Eternal.

Every new day and night of joy or sorrow is a new ground, a new consecration, for the love that is nourished by memories as well as hopes.—George Eliot.

A girl expects a man to think her hair is naturally curly even when she knows that he knows it isn't.

## GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

No Medicine So Beneficial to Brain and Nerves.

Lying awake night's makes it hard to keep awake and do things in day time. To take "tonics and stimulants" under such circumstances is like setting the house on fire to see if you can put it out.

The right kind of food promotes refreshing sleep at night and a wide awake individual during the day.

A lady changed from her old way of eating Grape-Nuts, and says: "For about three years I had been a great sufferer from indigestion. After trying several kinds of medicine, the doctor would ask me to drop off potatoes, then meat, and so on, but in a few days that craving, gnawing feeling would start up, and I would vomit everything I ate and drank."

"When I started on Grape-Nuts, vomiting stopped, and the bloated feeling which was so distressing disappeared entirely."

"My mother was very much bothered with diarrhoea before commencing the Grape-Nuts, because her stomach was so weak she could not digest her food. Since using Grape-Nuts food she is well, and says she doesn't think she could do without it."

"It is a great brain restorer and nerve builder, for I can sleep as sound and undisturbed after a supper of Grape-Nuts as in the old days when I could not realize what they meant by a 'bad stomach.' There is no medicine so beneficial to nerves and brain as a good night's sleep, such as you can enjoy after eating Grape-Nuts." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Look in pkgs. for the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.



Exhausted as He Was, the Irishman Struggled With Little Skill.

plot of grass, likewise, with flowers generous of their cordial perfume.

The girl came silently out from the shadows beneath the gallery, bringing him a cup and a jar of earthenware brimming with wine.

He accepted the service with a bow. "Mademoiselle is as kind as she is beautiful!" said he, and with the appreciation of a connoisseur first watched her blush, then drained the jug to its last drop and felt the grate-

tested earnestly. "Beyond Greek and French and Arabic, sure, she's ignorant as Paddy's pig!"

So much was plainly evident from the girl's manner and expression of puzzlement. Reassured, O'Rourke proceeded:

"'Tis good hearing, Faith, if she understood the King's English, 'tis me hair she would be tearing out by the roots in one minute. Danny, I gather that the lady is be way of lik-