



SYNOPSIS.

George Percival Algernon Jones, vice-president of the Metropolitan Oriental Rug company of New York, thriving for romance, is in Cairo on a business trip. Horace Ryanne arrives at the hotel in Cairo with a carefully guarded bundle. Ryanne sells Jones the famous holy Yildizes rug which he admits having stolen from a pasha at Bagdad. Jones meets Major Callahan and later is introduced to Fortune Chedsoye by a woman to whom he had loaned 50 pounds at Monte Carlo some months previously, and who turns out to be Fortune's mother.

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

"Well?" said Mrs. Chedsoye, a quizzical smile slanting her lips. "You wish my opinion?" countered the daughter. "He is shy, but he is neither stupid nor silly; and when he smiles he is really good-looking." "My child," replied the woman, drawing off her gloves and examining her shapely hands, "I have looked into the very heart of that young man. A thousand years ago, a red-cross on his surcoat, he would have been beating his fists against the walls of Jerusalem; five hundred years later, he would have been singing chant-royales under lattice-windows; a pasha and a poet." "How do you know that? Did he make love to you?" "No; but I made love to him without his knowing it; and that was more to my purpose than having him make love to me," enigmatically. "Three days, and he was so guileless that he never asked my name. But in Monte Carlo, as you know, one asks only your banker's name." "And your purpose?" "It is still mine, dear. Do you realize that we haven't seen each other in four months, and that you haven't offered to kiss me?" "Did he go away without writing to you about that money?" Mrs. Chedsoye calmly plucked out the returned fingers of her gloves. "I believe I did receive a note inclosing his banker's address, but, unfortunately, in the confusion of returning to Paris, I lost it. My memory has always been a trial to me," sadly. "Since when?" coldly. "There is not a woman living with a keener memory than yours."

"You flatter me. In affairs that interest me, perhaps." "You never meant to pay him. It is horrible." "My dear Fortune, how you jump at conclusions! Did I not offer him a draft the very first thing?" "Knowing that at such a moment he could not possibly accept it?" derisively. "Sometimes I hate you!" "In these days filial devotion is a lost art." "No, no; it is a flower parents have ceased to cultivate." And there was in the tone a strained note which described an intense longing to be loved. For if George Percival Algernon Jones was a lonely young man, it was the result of his own blindness; whereas Fortune Chedsoye turned bitter and thither in search of that which she never could find. The wide Lybian desert, held upon its face a loneliness, a desolation, less mournful than that which reigned within her heart. "Hush! We are growing sentimental," warned the mother. "Besides, I believe we are attracting attention." Her glance swept a half-circle complacently. "Pardon me! I should be sorry to draw attention to you, knowing how you abhor it." "My child, learn from me; temper is the arch-enemy of smooth complexions. Jones—it makes you laugh." "It is a homely, honest name." "I grant that. But a Percival Algernon Jones!" Mrs. Chedsoye laughed softly. It was one of those pleasant sounds that caused persons within hearing to wait for it to occur again. "Come; let us go up to the room. It is a dull, dusty journey in from Port Said." Alone, Fortune was certain that for her mother her heart knew nothing but hate. Neglect, indifference, injustice, misunderstanding, the chill repugnance that always met the least outreaching of the child's affections, the unaccountable disappearances, the terror of the unknown, the blank wall of ignorance behind which she was always kept, upon these hate had builded her dark and brooding retreat. Yet, never did the mother come within the radius of her sight that she did not fall under the spell of strange fascination, enchainning, fight against it how she might. A kindly touch of the hand, a single mother-smile, and she would have flung her arms about the other woman's neck. But the touch and the mother-smile never came. She knew, she understood; she wasn't wanted, she hadn't been wanted in the beginning; to her mother she was as the young of animals, interesting only up to that time when they could stand alone. That the mother never made and held feminine friendships was in nowise astonishing. Beauty and charm, such as she possessed, served immediately to stimulate envy in other women's hearts. And that men of all stations

in life flocked about her, why, it is the eternal tribute demanded of beauty. Here and there the men were not all the daughter might have wished. Often they burst sweet flattery at her shrine, tentatively; but as she coolly stamped out these incipient fires, they at length came to regard her as one regards the beauty of a frosted window, as a thing to admire and praise in passing. One ache always abided; the bitter knowledge that had she met in kind smile for smile and jest for jest, she might have been her mother's boon companion. But deep back in some hidden chamber of her heart lay a secret dread of such a step, a dread which, whenever she strove to analyze it, ran from under her investigating touch, as little balls of quicksilver run from under the pressure of a thumb.

She was never without the comforts of life, well-fed, well-dressed, well-housed, and often her mother flung her some jeweled trinket which (again that sense of menace) she put away, but never wore. The bright periods were when they left her in the little villa near Mentone, with no one but her old and faithful nurse. There, with her horse, her books and her flowers, she was at peace. Week into week and month into month she was let be. Never a letter came, save from some former schoolmate who was coming over and wanted letters of introduction to dukes and duchesses. If she smiled over these letters it was with melancholy; for the dukes and duchesses, who fell within her singular orbit, were not the sort to whom one gave letters of introduction. Where her mother went she never had the least idea. She might be in any of the great ports of the world, anywhere between New York and Port Said. The major generally disappeared at the same time. Then, perhaps, she'd come back from a pleasant tram-ride over to Nice and find them both at the villa, maid and luggage. Maybe a night or two, and off they'd go again; never a word about their former journey, uncommemorative, rather quiet. These absences, together with the undemonstrative reappearances, used to hurt Fortune dreadfully. It gave her a clear proof of where she stood, exactly nowhere. The hurt had lessened with the years, and now she didn't care much. Like his not, they would drag her out of Eden for a month or two, for what true reason she never could quite fathom, unless it was that at times her mother liked to have the daughter near her as a foil. At rare intervals she saw steel-eyed, grim-mouthed men wandering up and down before the gates of the Villa



There weren't two other women in all Cairo to compare with these two.

Fanny, but they never rang the bell, nor spoke to her when she passed them on the street. If she talked of these men, her mother and the major would exchange amused glances, nothing more. If, rightly or wrongly, she hated her mother, she despised her uncle, who was ever bringing to the villa men of money, but of coarse fiber, ostensibly with the view of marrying her off. But Fortune had her dreams, and she was quite content to wait.

# The Carpet from Bagdad

by HAROLD MAC GRATH  
Author of HEARTS AND MASKS,  
The MAN ON THE BOX etc.  
Illustrations by M.G. KETNER  
COPYRIGHT 1911 by BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

There was one man more persistent than the others. Her mother called him Horace, which the major mellowed into Huddy. He was tall, blond, good-looking, a devil-may-care, educated, witty, amusing; and in evening dress he appeared to be what it was quite evident he had once been, a gentleman. At first she thought it strange that he should make her, instead of her mother, his confidante. As to what vocation he pursued, she did not know, for he kept sedulous guard over his tongue; but his past, up to that fork in the road where manhood says good-by to youth, was hers. And in this direction, clever and artful as the mother was, she sought in vain to wrest this past from her daughter's lips. To the mother, it was really necessary for her to know who this man really was, had been, knowing thoroughly as she did what he was now.

Persistent he undeniably was, but never coarse nor rude. Since that time he had come back from the casino at Monte Carlo, much the worse for wine, she feared him; yet, in spite of this fear, she had for him a vague liking, a hazy admiration. Whatever his faults might be, she stood witness to his great physical strength and courage. He was the only man, among all those who appeared at the Villa Fanny and immediately vanished, who returned again. And he, too, soon grew to be a part of this unreal drama, arriving mysteriously one day and departing the next.

That a drama was being enacted under her eyes she no longer doubted; but it was as though she had taken her seat among the audience in the middle of the second act. She could make neither head nor tail to it. Whenever she accompanied her mother upon these impromptu journeys, her character, or rather her attitude, underwent a change. She swept aside her dreams; she accepted the world as it was, saw things as they were; laughed, but without merriment; jested, but with the venomous point. It was the reverse of her real character to give hurt to any living thing, but during these forced marches, as the major humorously termed them, and such they were in truth, she could no more stand against giving the cruel stab than, when alone in her garden, she could resist the tender pleasure of succoring a fallen butterfly. She was especially happy in finding weak spots in her mother's

she had often heard him referred to as "that brute" or "that fool" or "that drunken imbecile." If a portrait of him existed, Fortune had not yet seen it. She visited his lonely grave once a year, in the Protestant cemetery, and dreamily tried to conjure up what manner of man he had been. One day she plied her old Italian nurse with questions. "Handsome? Yes, but it was all so long ago, cara mia, that I can not describe him to you."

"Did he drink?" Behind this question there was no sense of moral obliquity as applying to the dead. "Sainted Mary! didn't all men drink their very souls into purgatory those unreligious days?" "Had he any relatives?" "I never heard of any."

"Was he rich?" "No; but when the signora, your mother, married him she thought he was."

It was not till later years that Fortune grasped the true significance of this statement. It illumined many pages. She dropped all investigations, concluding wisely that her mother, if she were inclined to speak at all, could supply only the incidents, the details. It was warm, balmy, like May in the northern latitudes. Women wore white dresses and carried umbrellas over their shoulders. A gold band played airs from the new light-operas, and at one side of the grand-stand were tea-tables under dazzling linen. Fashion was out. Not all her votaries enjoyed polo, but it was absolutely necessary to pretend that they did. When they talked they discussed the Spanish dancer who paraded back and forth across the tea-lawn. They discussed her jewels, her clothes, her escort, and quite frankly her morals.



"I Expect Every Hour to Hear of Some One Arriving From Bagdad."

which of the four was by all odds the most popular theme. All agreed that she was handsome in a bold way. This modification invariably distinguishes the right sort of women from the wrong sort, from which there is no appeal to a higher court. They could well afford to admit of her beauty, since the dancer was outside what is called the social pale, for all that her newest escort was a prince incognito. They also discussed the play at bridge, the dullness of this particular season, the possibility of war between England and Germany. And some one asked others who were the two well-gowned women down in front, sitting on either side of the young chap in pearl-grey. No one knew. Mother and daughter, probably. Anyhow, they knew something about good clothes. George was happy. He was proud, too. He saw the glances, the nods of approval. He basked in a kind of sunshine that was new. What an ass he had been all his life! To have been afraid of women just because he was Percival Algernon! What he should have done was to have gone forth boldly, taken what pleasures he found, and laughed with the rest of them. There weren't two other women in all Cairo to compare with these two. The mother, shapely, elegant, with

the dark beauty of a high-class Spaniard, possessing humor, trenchant comment, keen deduction and application; worldly, cynical, high-bred. The student of nations might have tried in vain to place her. She spoke the French of the Parisians, the Italian of the Florentines, the German of the Hanoverians, and her English was the envy of Americans and the wonder of the Londoners. The daughter fell behind her but little, but she was more reserved.

As Fortune sat beside the young collector that afternoon, she marvelled why they had given him Percival Algernon Jones was all right, solid and substantial, but the other two turned it into ridicule. Still, what was the matter with Percival Algernon? History had given men of these names mighty fine things to accomplish. Then why ridicule? Was it due to the perverted angle of vision created by wits and humorists in the comic weeklies, who were eternally pillorying these unhappy prefixes to ordinary cognomens? And why this pillorying? She hadn't studied the subject sufficiently to realize that the business of the humorist is not so much to amuse as to warn persons against becoming ridiculous. And Percival Algernon Jones was all of that. It resolved itself into a matter of values, then. Had his surname been Montmorency, Percival Algernon would have fitted as a key to its lock. She smiled. No one but a fond mother would be guilty of such a crime. And if she ever grew to know him well enough, she was going to ask him all about this mother.

What interest had her own mother in this harmless young man? Oh, some day she would burst through this web, this jungle; some day she would see beyond the second act! What then? she never troubled to ask herself; time enough when the moment arrived. "I had an interesting adventure last night, a most interesting one,"

and humorously explained why he did so.

"Is he young, old, good-looking, or what?" Mrs. Chedsoye eyed her offspring through narrowed lids.

"I should say that he was about thirty-five, tall, something of an athlete; and there remains some indications that in the flush of youth he was handsome. Odd. He reminded me of a young man who was on the varsity eleven—foot-baller—when I entered my freshman year. I didn't know him, but I was a great admirer of his from the grand-stand. Horace Wadsworth was his name."

Horace Wadsworth. Fortune had the sensation of being astonished at something she had expected to happen.

Just before going down to dinner that night, Fortune turned to her mother, her chin combative in its angle.

"I gave Mr. Jones a hundred and fifty pounds out of that money you left in my care. Knowing how forgetful you are, I took the liberty of attending to the affair myself."

She expected a storm, but instead her mother viewed her with appraising eyes. Suddenly she laughed mellowly. Her sense of humor was too excitable to resist so delectable a situation.

"You told him, of course, that the money came from me?" demanded Mrs. Chedsoye, when she could control her voice.

"Surely, since it did come from you."

"My dear, my dear, you are to me like the song in the Mikado; and she hummed lightly—

"To make the prisoner pent Unwillingly represent A source of innocent merriment, Of innocent merriment!"

"Am I a prisoner, then?"

"Whatever you like; it can not be said that I ever held you on the leash," taking a final look into the mirror.

"What is the meaning of this rug? You and I know who stole it."

"I have explicitly warned you, my child, never to meddle with affairs that do not concern you."

"Indirectly, some of yours do. You are in love with Ryanne, as he calls himself."

"My dear, you do not usually stoop to such vulgarity. And are you certain that he has any other name?"

"If I were I should not tell you."

"Oh!"

"A man will tell the woman he loves many things he will not tell the woman he admires."

"As wise as the serpent," bantered the mother; but she looked again into the mirror to see if her color was still what it should be. "And whom does he admire?" the Mona Lisa smile hovering at the corners of her lips.

"You," evenly.

Mrs. Chedsoye thought for a moment, thought deeply and with new insight. It was no longer a child but a woman, and maybe she had played upon the taut strings of the young heart once too often. Still, she was unafraid.

"And whom does he love?" "Me. Shall I get you the rouge, mother?"

Still with that unchanging smile, the woman received the stab. "My daughter," as if speculatively, "you will get on. You haven't been my pupil all these years for nothing. Let us go down to dinner."

Fortune, as she silently followed, experienced a sense of disconcertion rather than of elation.

CHAPTER VI.

Moonlight and Poetry.

A ball followed dinner that night, Wednesday. The ample lounging-room filled up rapidly after coffee; officers in smart uniforms and spurs, whose principal function in times of peace is to get in everybody's way, rowel exposed ankles, and demolish lace ruffles. Egyptians and Turks and sleek Armenians in somber western frock and scarlet eastern fez or tarboosh, women of all colors (meaning, as course, as applied) and shapes and tastes, the lean and the fat, the tall and short, such as Billy Taylor is said to have kissed in all the ports, and tail-coats of as many styles as Joseph's had patches. George could distinguish his compatriots by the fit of the trousers round the instep; the Englishman had his fitted at the waist and trusted in Providence for the hang of the rest. This trifling detective work rather pleased George. The women, however, were all Eves to his eye; liberal expanses of beautiful white skin, the bare effect being modified by a string of pearls or diamonds or emeralds, and hair which might or might not have been wholly their own. He waited restlessly for the reappearance of Mrs. Chedsoye and her daughter. All was right with the world, except that he was to sail altogether too soon. His loan had been returned, and he knew that his former suspicions had been most unworthy. Mrs. Chedsoye had never received his note. (TO BE CONTINUED.)