

# THE TEETH OF THE TIGER

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## CHAPTER ELEVEN (Continued.)

"And confessed our love? Apart from the fact that her womanly modesty would have prevented her, what good would it have done? On the contrary, it meant lending greater weight to the accusation. That was just what happened when Hippolyte Fauville's letters, appearing one by one, revealed to the police the as yet unknown motives of the crimes imputed to us. We loved each other."

"How do you explain the letters?"

"I can't explain them. We did not know of Fauville's jealousy. He kept it to himself. And then, again, why did he suspect us? What can have put it into his head that we meant to kill him? Where did his fears, his nightmares, come from? It is a mystery. He wrote that he had letters of ours in his possession: what letters?"

"And the marks of the teeth, those marks which were undoubtedly made by Mme. Fauville?"

"I don't know. It is all incomprehensible."

"You don't know either what she can have done after leaving the opera between 12 and 2 in the morning?"

"No. She was evidently lured into a trap. But how and by whom? And why does she not say what she was doing? More mystery."

"You were seen that evening, the evening of the murder, at Auteuil station. What were you doing there?"

"I was going to the Boulevard Suchet and I passed under Marie's windows. Remember that it was a Wednesday. I came back on the following Wednesday, and still knowing nothing of the tragedy or of Marie's arrest, I came back again on the second Wednesday, which was the evening on which you found out where I lived and informed Sergeant Mazeroux against me."

"Another thing. Did you know of the Mornington inheritance?"

"No, nor Florence either; and we have every reason to think that Marie and her husband knew no more about it than we did."

"That barn at Damigni: was it the first time that you had entered it?"

"Yes; and our astonishment at the sight of the two skeletons hanging from the rafters equalled yours."

Don Luis was silent. He cast about for a few seconds longer to see if he had any more questions to ask. Then he said:

"That is all I wanted to know. Are you, on your side, certain that everything that is necessary has been said?"

"Yes."

"This is a serious moment. It is possible that we may not meet again. Now you have not given me a single proof of your statements."

"I have told you the truth. To a man like yourself, the truth is enough. As for me, I am beaten. I give up the struggle, or, rather, I place myself under your orders. Save Marie."

"I will save the three of you," said Perenna. "The fourth of the mysterious letters is to make its appearance tomorrow: that leaves ample time for us to lay our heads together and study the matter fully. And tomorrow evening I shall go there and, with the help of all that you have told me, I shall prove the innocence of you all. The essential thing is to be present at the meeting on the 25th of May."

"Please think only of Marie. Sacrifice me, if necessary. Sacrifice Florence even. I am speaking in her name as well as my own when I tell you that it is better to desert us than to jeopardize the slightest chance of success."

"I will save the three of you," Perenna repeated.

He pushed the door ajar and, after listening outside, said:

"Don't move. And don't open the door to anybody, on any pretext whatever, before I come to fetch you. I shall not be long."

He locked the door behind him and went down to the first floor. He did not feel those high spirits which usually cheered him on the eve of his great battles. This time,

Florence Levasseur's life and liberty were at stake; and the consequences of a defeat seemed to him worse than death.

Through the window on the landing he saw the detectives guarding the courtyard. He counted six of them. And he also saw the deputy chief at one of the windows of his study, watching the courtyard and keeping in touch with his detectives.

"By Jove!" he thought, "he's sticking to his post. It will be a tough job. He suspects something. However, let's make a start."

He went through the drawing-room and entered his study. Weber saw him. The two enemies were face to face.

There was a few seconds' silence before the duel opened, the duel which was bound to be swift and vigorous, without the least sign of weakness or distraction on either side. It could not last longer than three minutes.

The deputy chief's face bore an expression of mingled joy and anxiety. For the first time he had permission, he had orders, to fight that accursed Don Luis, against whom he had never yet been able to satisfy his hatred. And his delight was all the greater because he held every trump, whereas Don Luis had put himself in the wrong by defending Florence Levasseur and tampering with the girl's portrait. On the other hand, Weber did not forget that Don Luis was identical with Arsene Lupin; and this consideration caused him a certain uneasiness. He was obviously thinking:

"The least blunder, and I'm done for."

He crossed swords with a jest. "I see that you were not in Mlle. Levasseur's lodge, as your man pretended."

"My man spoke in accordance with my instructions. I was in my bedroom, upstairs. But I wanted to finish the job before I came down."

"And is it done?"

"It's done. Florence Levasseur and Gaston Sauverand are in my room, gagged and bound. You have only to accept delivery of the goods."

"Gaston Sauverand!" cried Weber. "Then it was he who was seen coming in?"

"Yes. He was simply living with Florence Levasseur, whose lover he is."

"Oho!" said the deputy chief, in a bantering tone. "Her lover!"

"Yes; and when Sergeant Mazeroux brought Florence Levasseur to my room, to question her out of hearing of the servants, Sauverand, foreseeing the arrest of his mistress, had the audacity to join us. He tried to rescue her from our hands."

"And you checkmated him?"

"Yes."

It was clear that the deputy chief did not believe one word of the story. He knew through M. Desmalions and Mazeroux that Don Luis was in love with Florence; and Don Luis was not the man even through jealousy to hand over a woman whom he loved. He increased his attention.

"Good business!" he said. "Take me up to your room. Was it a hard struggle?"

"Not very. I managed to disarm the scoundrel. All the same, Mazeroux got stabbed in the thumb."

"Nothing serious?"

"Oh, dear, no; but he has gone to have his wound dressed at the chemist's."

The deputy chief stopped, greatly surprised.

"What! Isn't Mazeroux in your room with the two prisoners?"

"I never told you that he was."

"No, but your butler—"

"The butler made a mistake. Mazeroux went out a few minutes before you came."

"It's funny," said Weber, watching Don Luis closely, "but my men all think he's here. They haven't seen him go out."

"They haven't seen him go out?" echoed Don Luis, pretending to feel anxious. "But, then, where can he be? He told me he wanted to have his thumb seen to."

The deputy chief was growing

more and more suspicious. Evidently Perenna was trying to get rid of him by sending him in search of the sergeant.

"I will send one of my men," he said. "Is the chemist's near?"

"Just around the corner, in the Rue de Bourgogne. Besides, we can telephone."

"Oh, we can telephone!" muttered Weber.

He was quite at a loss and looked like a man who does not know what is going to happen next. He moved slowly toward the instrument, while barring the way to Don Luis to prevent his escaping. Don Luis therefore retreated to the telephone box, as if forced to do so, took down the receiver with one hand, and, calling, "Hullo! Hullo! Saxe, 2409," with the other hand, which was resting against the wall, he cut one of the wires with a pair of pliers which he had taken off the table as he passed.

"Hullo! Are you there? Is that 2409? Are you the chemist?"

"Hullo! . . . Sergeant Mazeroux of the detective service is with you, isn't he? Eh? What? What do you say? But it's too awful! Are you sure? Do you mean to say the wound is poisoned?"

Without thinking what he was doing, the deputy chief pushed Don Luis aside and took hold of the receiver. The thought of the poisoned wound was too much for him.

"Are you there?" he cried, keeping an eye on Don Luis and motioning to him not to go away.

"Are you there? . . . Eh? . . . It's Deputy Chief Weber, of the detective office, speaking. . . . Hullo! Are you there? . . . I want to know about Sergeant Mazeroux. . . . Are you there? . . . Oh, hang it, why don't you answer!"

Suddenly he let go the instrument, looked at the wires, perceived that they had been cut, and turned round, showing a face that clearly expressed the thought in his mind.

"That's done it. I've been tricked!"

Perenna was standing a couple of yards behind him, leaning carelessly against the woodwork of the arch, with his left hand passed between his back and the woodwork. He was smiling, smiling pleasantly, kindly, and genially:

"Don't move!" he said, with a gesture of his right hand.

Weber, more frightened by that smile than he would have been by threats, took good care not to move.

"Don't move," repeated Don Luis, in a very queer voice.

"And, whatever you do, don't be alarmed. You shan't be hurt, I promise you. Just five minutes in a dark cell for a naughty little boy. Are you ready? One, two, three! Bang!"

He stood aside and pressed the button that worked the iron curtain. The heavy panel came crashing to the floor. The deputy chief was a prisoner.

"That's a hundred millions gone to Jericho," grinned Don Luis. "A pretty trick, but a bit expensive. Good-bye, Mornington inheritance! Good-bye, Don Luis Perenna! And now, my dear Lupin, if you don't want Weber to take his revenge, beat a retreat and in good order. One, two; left, right; left, right!"

As he spoke, he locked on the inside, the folding doors between the drawing room and the first floor anteroom; then, returning to his study, he locked the door between this room and the drawing room.

The deputy chief was banging at the iron curtain with all his might and shouting so loud that they were bound to hear him outside through the open window.

"You're not making half enough noise, deputy!" cried Don Luis. "Let's see what we can do."

He took his revolver and fired off three bullets, one of which broke a pane. Then he quickly left his study by a small, massive door, which he carefully closed behind him. He was now in a secret passage which ran round both rooms and ended at another door leading to the anteroom. He opened this door wide and was thus able to hide behind it.

Attracted by the shots and the noise, the detectives were already rushing through the hall and up the staircase. When they reached the first floor and had gone through the anteroom, as the drawing room doors were locked, the only outlet open to them was the passage, at the end of which they could hear the deputy shouting. They all six darted down it.

When the last of them had vanished round the bend in the passage, Don Luis softly pushed back the door that concealed him and looked it like the rest. The six detectives were as safely impris-

oned as the deputy chief.

"Bottled!" muttered Don Luis. "It will take them quite five minutes to realize the situation, to bang at the locked doors, and to break down one of them. In five minutes we shall be far away."

He met two of his servants running up with scared faces, the chauffeur and the butler. He flung each of them a thousand-franc note and said to the chauffeur:

"Set the engine going, there's a sportsman, and let no one near the machine to block my way. Two thousand francs more for each of you if I get off in the motor. Don't stand staring at me like that: I mean what I say. Two thousand francs apiece: it's for you to earn it. Look sharp!"

He himself went up the second flight without undue haste, remaining master of himself. But, on the last stair, he was seized with such a feeling of elation that he shouted:

"Victory! The road is clear!"

The boudoir door was opposite. He opened it and repeated:

"Victory! But there's not a second to lose. Follow me."

He entered. A stifled oath escaped his lips.

The room was empty.

"What?" he stammered. "What does this mean? They're gone. . . . Florence—"

Certainly, unlikely though it seemed, he had hitherto supposed that Sauverand possessed a false key to the lock. But how could they both have escaped, in the most of the detectives? He looked around him. And then he understood.

In the recess containing the window, the lower part of the wall, which formed a very wide box underneath the casement, had the top of its woodwork raised and resting against the panes, exactly like the lid of a chest. And inside the open chest he saw the upper rungs of a narrow descending ladder.

In a second, Don Luis conjured up the whole story of the past: Count Malony's ancestress hiding in the old family mansion, escaping the search of the perquisitors, and in this way living throughout the revolutionary troubles. Everything was explained. A passage contrived in the thickness of the wall led to some distant outlet. And this was how Florence used to come and go through the house; this was how Gaston went in and out in all security; and this also was how both of them were able to enter his room and surprise his secrets.

"Why not have told me?" he wondered. "A lingering suspicion, I suppose."

But his eyes were attracted by a sheet of paper on the table. With a feverish hand, Gaston Sauverand had scribbled the following lines in pencil:

"We are trying to escape so as not to compromise you. If we are caught, it can't be helped. The great thing is that you should be free. All our hopes are centered in you."

Below were two words written by Florence:

"Save Marie."

"Ah," he murmured, disconcerted by the turn of events and not knowing what to decide, "why, oh, why did they not obey my instructions? We are separated now."

Downstairs the detectives were battering at the door of the passage in which they were imprisoned. Perhaps he would still have time to reach his motor before they succeeded in breaking down the door. Nevertheless, he preferred to take the same road as Florence and Sauverand, which gave him the hope of saving them and of rescuing them in case of danger.

He therefore stepped over the side of the chest, placed his foot on the top rung and went down. Some 20 bars brought him to the middle of the first floor. Here, by the light of his electric lantern, he entered a sort of low, vaulted tunnel, dug, as he thought, in the wall, and so narrow that he could only walk along it sideways.

Thirty yards farther there was a bend, at right angles; and next, at the end of another tunnel of the same length, a trapdoor, which stood open, revealing the rungs of a second ladder. He did not doubt that the fugitives had gone this way.

It was quite light at the bottom. Here he found himself in a cupboard which was also open and which, on ordinary occasions, must have been covered by curtains that were now drawn. This cupboard faced a bed that filled almost the whole space of an alcove. On passing through the alcove and reaching a room from which it was separated only by a slender partition, to his great surprise, he recognized Florence's sitting room.

(Continued Next Week.)



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**Bean Cake as Food in Japan.**  
Bean cake, which is produced in large quantities in South Manchuria, has been regarded locally as good for little else than fertilizer. The Manchuria Daily News now suggests its use as food, stating that Viscount Taji, the new mayor of Tokyo, holds the cake as excellently suited to the Japanese palate. The News states that bean cake costs only one-third as much as rice, and contains more nutriment than wheat or barley. To prepare it for the table the cake is mixed with an equal quantity of rice.—Commerce Reports.

**Cause for Manslaughter.**  
It was a Scottish gathering in one of the colonies, and what the playing of the one and only piper present lacked in skill was made up in energy. At the end of a particularly strenuous outburst, as the piper was taking a short rest, one of the guests went up to him. "That's capital," he said. "Thank you very much. Now would you mind playing 'The Cock o' the North' for us?" "The Cock o' the North!" almost shrieked the piper. "Mam, do ye no ken A've bin playin' it for the last quarter o' an' oor?"

A man likes to believe in eternal punishment for the other fellow. Any man who lives within himself is apt to be troubled with indigestion.



## One Carload Every Two Minutes

**15,000 POUNDS MEAT A MINUTE GOING TO ALLIES**  
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—Chicago Tribune, June 5, 1918

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