

THE TEETH OF THE TIGER

BY MAURICE LEBLANC

TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS

CHAPTER FIFTEEN. (Continued.)

"Then, Monsieur le Prefet, you may take it that I am the culprit; and you have only to arrest me. This day, between 5 and 6 o'clock, you will see before you, in this room, the person who killed the Mornington heirs. It is, humanly speaking, impossible that this should not be so. Consequently, the law will be satisfied in any circumstances. He or I: the position is quite simple."

M. Desmalions was silent. He gnawed his moustache thoughtfully and walked round and round the table within the narrow circle formed by the others. It was obvious that objections to the supposition were springing up in his mind. In the end, he muttered, as though speaking to himself:

"No, no. For, after all, how are we to explain that the man should have waited until now to claim his rights?"

"An accident, perhaps, Monsieur le Prefet, an obstacle of some kind. Or else—one can never tell—the perverse longing for a more striking sensation. And remember, Monsieur le Prefet, how minutely and subtly the whole business was worked. Each event took place at the very moment fixed by Hippolyte Fauville. Cannot we take it that his accomplice is pursuing his method to the end and that he will not reveal himself until the last minute?"

M. Desmalions exclaimed, with a sort of anger:

"No, no, and again no! It is not possible. If a creature monstrous enough to commit such a series of murders exists, he will not be such a fool as to deliver himself into our hands."

"Monsieur le Prefet, he does not know the danger that threatens him if he comes here, because no one has even contemplated the theory of his existence. Besides, what risk does he run?"

"What risk? Why, if he has really committed those murders—"

"He has committed them, Monsieur le Prefet. He has caused them to be committed, which is a different thing. And you now see where the man's unsuspected strength lies! He does not act in person. From the day when the truth appeared to me, I have succeeded in gradually discovering his means of action, in laying bare the machinery which he controls, the tricks which he employs. He does not act in person. There you have his method. You will find that it is the same throughout the series of murders."

"In appearance, Cosmo Mornington died of the results of a carelessly administered injection. In reality, it was this man who caused the injection to prove fatal. In appearance, Inspector Verot was killed by Hippolyte Fauville. In reality, it must have been this man who contrived the murder by pointing out the necessity to Fauville and, so to speak, guiding his hand. And, in the same way, in appearance, Fauville killed his son and committed suicide; Marie Fauville committed suicide; Gaston Sauverand committed suicide. In reality, it was this man who wanted them to die, who prompted them to commit suicide, and who supplied them with the means of death."

"Where you have the method, and here, Monsieur le Prefet, you have the man." And, in a lower voice that contained a sort of apprehension, he added, "I confess that never before, in the course of a life that has been full of strange meetings, have I encountered a more terrifying person, acting with more diabolical ability or greater psychological insight."

His words created an ever-increasing sensation among his hearers. They really saw that invisible being. He took shape in their imaginations. They waited for him to arrive. Twice Don Luis had turned to the door and listened. And his action did more than anything else to conjure up the image of the man who was coming.

M. Desmalions said: "Whether he acted in person or caused others to act, the law, once it has hold of him, will know

how to—"

"The law will find it no easy matter, Monsieur le Prefet! A man of his powers and resource must have foreseen everything, even his arrest, even the accusation of which he would be the subject; and there is little to be brought against him but moral charges without proofs."

"Then you think—"

"I think, Monsieur le Prefet, that the thing will be to accept his explanations as quite natural and not to show any distrust. What you want is to know who he is. Later on, before long, you will be able to unmask him."

The Prefet of Police continued to walk around the table. Major d'Astrignac kept his eyes fixed on Perenna, whose coolness amazed him. The solicitor and the secretary of Embassy seemed greatly excited. In fact nothing could be more sensational than the thought that filled all their minds. Was the abominable murderer about to appear before them?

"Silence!" said the Prefet, stopping his walk.

Some one had crossed the anteroom. There was a knock at the door. "Come in!"

The office messenger entered, carrying a card tray. On the tray was a letter, and in addition there was one of those printed slips on which callers write their names and the object of their visit.

M. Desmalions hastened toward the messenger. He hesitated a moment before taking up the slip. He was very pale. Then he glanced at it quickly.

"Oh!" he said, with a start. He looked toward Don Luis, reflected, and then, taking the letter, he said to the messenger:

"Is the bearer outside?"

"In the anteroom, Monsieur le Prefet."

"Show the person in when I ring."

The messenger left the room. M. Desmalions stood in front of his desk, without moving. For the second time Don Luis met his eyes; and a feeling of perturbation came over him. What was happening?

With a sharp movement the Prefet of Police opened the envelope which he held in his hand, unfolded the letter and began to read it.

The others watched his every gesture, watched the least change of expression on his face. Were Perenna's predictions about to be fulfilled? Was a fifth heir putting in his claim?

The moment he had read the first lines, M. Desmalions looked up and, addressing Don Luis, murmured:

"You were right, Monsieur. This is a claim."

"On whose part, Monsieur le Prefet?" Don Luis could not help asking.

M. Desmalions did not reply. He finished reading the letter. Then he read it again, with the attention of a man weighing every word. Lastly, he read aloud:

"Monsieur le Prefet: A chance correspondence has revealed to me the existence of an unknown heir of the Roussel family. It was only today that I was able to procure the documents necessary for identifying this heir, and, owing to unforeseen obstacles, it is only at the last moment that I am able to send them to you by the person whom they concern. Respecting a secret which is not mine and wishing, as a woman, to remain outside a business in which I have been only accidentally involved, beg you, Monsieur le Prefet, to excuse me if I do not feel called upon to sign my name to this letter."

So Perenna had seen rightly and events were justifying his forecast. Some one was putting in an appearance within the period indicated. The claim was made in good time. And the very way in which things were happening at the exact moment was curiously suggestive of the mechanical exactness that had governed the whole business.

The last question still remained: who was this unknown person, the possible heir, and therefore the five or six fold murderer? He was waiting in the next room. There was nothing but a wall between him and the others. He was coming in. They would see him. They would know who he was.

The Prefet suddenly rang the

bell. A few seconds elapsed. Oddly enough, M. Desmalions did not remove his eyes from Perenna. Don Luis remained quite master of himself, but restless and uneasy at heart. The door opened. The messenger showed some one in. It was Florence Levasseur.

CHAPTER XVI.

Weber Takes His Revenge.

Don Luis was for one moment amazed. Florence Levasseur here! Florence, whom he had left in the train under Mazeroux's supervision and for whom it was physically impossible to be back in Paris before eight o'clock in the evening!

Then, despite his bewilderment, he at once understood. Florence, knowing that she was being followed, had drawn them after her to the Gare Saint-Lazare and simply walked through the railway carriage, getting out on the other platform, while the worthy Mazeroux went on in the train to keep his eye on the traveler who was not there.

But suddenly the full horror of the situation struck him. Florence was here to claim the inheritance; and her claim, as he himself had said, was a proof of the most terrible guilt.

Acting on an irresistible impulse, Don Luis leaped to the girl's side, seized her by the arm and said, with almost malevolent force:

"What are you doing here? What have you come for? Why did you not let me know?"

M. Desmalions stepped between them. But Don Luis, without letting go of the girl's arm, exclaimed:

"Oh, Monsieur le Prefet, don't you see that this is all a mistake? The person whom we are expecting, about whom I told you, is not this one. The other is keeping in the background, as usual. Why it's impossible that Florence Levasseur—"

"I have no preconceived opinion on the subject of this young lady," said the Prefet of Police, in an authoritative voice. "But it is my duty to question her about the circumstances that brought her here; and I shall certainly do so."

He released the girl from Don Luis's grasp and made her take a seat. He himself sat down at his desk; and it was easy to see how great an impression the girl's presence made upon him. It afforded so to speak an illustration of Don Luis's argument.

The appearance on the scene of a new person, laying claim to the inheritance, was undeniably, to any logical mind, the appearance on the scene of a criminal who herself brought with her the proofs of her crimes. Don Luis felt this clearly and, from that moment, did not take his eyes off the Prefet of Police.

Florence looked at them by turns as though the whole thing was the most insoluble mystery to her. Her beautiful dark eyes retained their customary serenity. She no longer wore her nurse's uniform; and her gray gown, very simply cut and devoid of ornaments, showed her graceful figure. She was grave and unemotional as usual.

M. Desmalions said: "Explain yourself, Mademoiselle."

She answered: "I have nothing to explain, Monsieur le Prefet. I have come to you on an errand which I am fulfilling without knowing exactly what it is about."

"What do you mean? Without knowing what it is about?"

"I will tell you, Monsieur le Prefet. Some one in whom I have every confidence and for whom I entertain the greatest respect asked me to hand you certain papers. They appear to concern the question which is the object of your meeting today."

"The question of awarding the Mornington inheritance?"

"Yes."

"You know that, if this claim had not been made in the course of the present sitting, it would have had no effect?"

"I came as soon as the papers were handed to me."

"Why were they not handed to you an hour or two earlier?"

"I was not there. I had to leave the house where I am staying in a hurry."

Perenna did not doubt that it was his intervention that upset the enemy's plans by causing Florence to take to flight.

The Prefet continued: "So you are ignorant of the reasons why you received the papers?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Prefet. And evidently you are also ignorant of how far they concern

you?"

"They do not concern me, Monsieur le Prefet."

M. Desmalions smiled and, looking into Florence's eyes, said, plainly:

"According to the letter that accompanies them, they concern you intimately. It seems that they prove, in the most positive manner, that you are descended from the Roussel family and that you consequently have every right to the Mornington inheritance."

"I?"

The cry was a spontaneous exclamation of astonishment and protest.

And she at once went on, insistently:

"I, a right to the inheritance? I have none at all, Monsieur le Prefet, none at all. I never knew Mr. Mornington. What is this story? There is some mistake."

She spoke with great animation and with an apparent frankness that would have impressed any other man than the Prefet of Police. But how could he forget Don Luis's arguments and the accusation made beforehand against the person who would arrive at the meeting?

"Give me the papers," he said.

She took from her handbag a blue envelope which was not fastened down and which he found to contain a number of faded documents, damaged at the folds and torn in different places.

He examined them amid perfect silence, read them through, studied them thoroughly, inspected the signatures and the seals through a magnifying glass, and said:

"They bear every sign of being genuine. The seals are official."

"Then, Monsieur le Prefet—"

"—?" said Florence, in a trembling voice.

"Then, Mademoiselle, let me tell you that your ignorance strikes me as most incredible."

And, turning to the solicitor, he said:

"Listen briefly to what these documents contain and prove. Gaston Sauverand, Cosmo Mornington's heir in the fourth line, had, as you know, an elder brother, called Raoul, who lived in the Argentine Republic. This brother, before his death, sent to Europe, in the charge of an old nurse, a child of five who was none other than his daughter, a natural but legally recognized daughter whom he had had by Mlle. Levasseur, a French teacher at Buenos Ayres."

"Here is the birth certificate. Here is the signed declaration written entirely in the father's hand. Here is the affidavit signed by the old nurse. Here are the depositions of three friends, merchants or solicitors at Buenos Ayres. And here are the death certificates of the father and mother."

"All these documents have been legalized and bear the seals of the French consulate. For the present, I have no reason to doubt them; and I am bound to look upon Florence Levasseur as Raoul Sauverand's daughter and Gaston Sauverand's niece."

"Gaston Sauverand's niece? His niece?" stammered Florence.

The mention of a father whom she had, so to speak, never known, left her unmoved. But she began to weep at the recollection of Gaston Sauverand, whom she loved so fondly and to whom she found herself linked by such a close relationship.

Were her tears sincere? Or were they the tears of an actress able to play her part down to the slightest details? Were those facts really revealed to her for the first time? Or was she acting the emotions which the revelation of those facts would produce in her under natural conditions?

Don Luis observed M. Desmalions even more narrowly than he did the girl, and tried to read the secret thoughts of the man with whom the decision lay. And suddenly he became certain that Florence's arrest was a matter resolved upon as definitely as the arrest of the most monstrous criminal. Then he went up to her and said:

"Florence."

She looked at him with her ear-dimmed eyes and made no reply. Slowly, he said:

"To defend yourself, Florence—for, though I am sure you do not know it, you are under that obligation—you must understand the terrible position in which events have placed you."

(Continued Next Week.)

Major-General Davidson, who was elected to parliament recently, left general headquarters in France by airplane, motored from his landing place to Westminster, took the oath and sat in the house of commons a while. Then he went back as he had come. He was anxious to take his seat before recess, could get only a few hours off, and there was no other way to go.

HUN HIGH COMMAND SHOWS UNEASINESS

Superiority of Allied Air Forces Causes It to Make Ridiculous Claims.

British Air Force Headquarters in France (by mail)—There have been many signs recently of extreme uneasiness by the German high command regarding the increasing ascendancy of the allied airmen on the western front. This has been especially evident since the American airmen have begun to appear in force and have proved themselves of the same mettle as the French and British fliers.

It has become a common place among British airmen that their opponents will not face combat in the air unless in strength of three or four to one, and German prisoners have told of German airmen being punished by their flight commanders for returning to the German wireless editors with bombs and ammunition which they had been ordered to drop over the British lines. It is becoming increasingly hard to find a German airman over the allied side of the lines in the daytime, as is proved by the Germans' own admissions that when they do manage to bring down an allied machine it is almost always over their own territory.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of German official anxiety regarding the allied superiority in the air is to be found in the official German wireless news. This, while always imaginative and rarely accurate, has of late been singularly wild and full of fiction regarding the situation in the air. In an effort to counteract the depressing effect of the real facts of the situation the German wireless editors make the wildest statements, bordering almost on humor.

Thus a recent copy of the German wireless report says: "Superior methods of flying and greater skill have secured for the German air force successes on a scale such as were never known before." The same statement refers in glowing terms of the "reckless attacking spirit" of the pilots of the German chasing planes—a phrase which provoked much merriment among British, French and American airmen, who of late have found that even one of the reconnaissance machines can rely on putting to flight any German machine which is not accompanied by three or four of its own kind.

If Germany is really pleased with her air record for the past few months, remarked a British squadron leader to the correspondent, "there is no reason for us to complain. We are doing better than that Germany should go on having the same kind of success in future months."

He took as an example the report for May, which lay open on his desk. "This report," he explained, "deals with the British air fighting alone and has no reference to the fine air work of the French, Italians and Americans. During the month the British brought down 328 German machines in aerial combat and 20 by fire from the ground, while 100 more were driven down out of control and probably destroyed. During the same period 123 British machines failed to return to their airbases."

VERDUN CITADEL.

Elizabeth Frazer in Saturday Evening Post.

Thanks to my classical education, I had no proper conception of what constitutes a modern fortress. I had vaguely imagined it as a city ringed around with a very substantial stone wall, created and turned into a series of dozens of peepholes for the doughty gunners to take pot shots at the enemy established outside. In the very heart of the city would be the citadel, which figured in my mind as a big, round, impenetrable stone tower bristling with teething rows of cannon, its foundations naturally extending scores of feet underneath.

Accordingly when we set out to traverse the long series of dimly lit reverberating subterranean passages, descended the stony and turned stairs to lower and darker levels, stopped in gun and ammunition rooms, electric plant rooms, kitchens, messrooms, infirmaries, chapels, museums, cinema and rest rooms, dormitories, cavernous abodes 20, 30 and 40 feet below ground, I began to wonder when we were going upstairs.

"But there is no upstairs," responded M. Martin, laughing in answer to my query—"not in this citadel. Here it all is, just as you see, underground. You observed those big iron mushroom affairs six inches or so above ground when we were up on the hill?"

"But I thought they were the observation posts of hidden guns—like that of the Big Bertha."

"So they are—they are our own Big Berthas. Nevertheless, those observation posts are all the upstairs there is to this citadel. What do you suppose would happen to the superstructure of a fort if it were hit by a shell which made a crater as large as the one we saw on the hill—50 feet across and 20 feet deep? Not much upstairs left, eh?"

So much for a classical education! "And all the French troops eat and sleep and pray and drill down here? There are none drilled in Verdun?"

"There's nobody in Verdun."

Looking For Him.

Here is a story that is going the rounds: A negro trooper, put on duty for the first time outside the American command headquarters in Paris, had reason to know the authority of a corporal, a sergeant or a lieutenant, for he had been hustled about by them, but he was a bit puzzled about other officers.

"The lieutenant, sergeant and the major saluted. The lieutenant went inside. He came out in a minute or so and said to the sentry: 'Watch out for General Pershing. I want to see him.'"

"Fessuh," said the trooper as he saluted.

In 10 minutes the lieutenant was back. "General Pershing inside," he asked the negro.

"No, sir, he ain't arrived," the trooper replied.

The lieutenant was angry and spoke rather forcefully to himself. "Again he went away, only to return again in 10 minutes."

"He ain't come yet," said the negro, sorrowfully.

The lieutenant said a lot of things about men who kept him waiting and then departed.

A few minutes later a man in khaki approached. The negro didn't say a word, but he didn't salute. The trooper saluted and expressed regret for his lapse. The white man was stern.

"Don't you know me?" he asked. "I'm General Pershing."

"Is you General Pershing?" replied the trooper, looking at him closely. Then a broad smile came over his face and he added: "General, you sure will get hell when that lieutenant gentleman ketches up with you."

Suffered For Years Back and Kidneys Were in Bad Shape, But Doan's Removed all the Trouble.

"My kidneys were so weak that the least cold I caught would affect them and start my back aching until I could hardly endure the misery," says Mrs. D. C. Ross, 973 Fulton St., Brooklyn, N. Y. "In the morning when I first got up, my back was so lame, I could hardly bend over and could hardly see any more sent darts of pain through my kidneys. It was hard for me to walk up stairs or stoop, and to move while lying down sent darts of pain through me."



"The kidney secretions were scanty and the water remained in my system, making my feet and hands swell. There were dark circles under my eyes and I became so dizzy I could hardly see. I had rheumatic pains in my knees and it was all I could do to get around. For years I was in that shape and I wore plasters and used all kinds of medicine to no avail until I tried Doan's Kidney Pills. They rid me of the trouble and strengthened my back and kidneys. When I have taken Doan's since, they have always benefited me."

Sworn to before me. L. N. VAUGHAN, Notary Public. Get Doan's at Any Store, 60c a Box DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

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BELIEVE IN "LUCK CHARMS"

Fighting Men Have Faith in All Sorts of Things—Living Mascots Especially Popular.

Many and various and queer are the "luck charms" of fighting men. Tiny rabbits and black cats made of "lucky" metal are found quite frequently.

Among the French it is held particularly lucky to have a gold coin in one's possession when going into battle.

The British carry a lucky flower, the white heather. A piece of this heather properly tucked away inside the band is supposed to save the wearer from a fatal wound.

When it comes to living mascots, the fighters have a collection big enough to stock a zoo. Dogs—of almost every breed under the sun—cats, monkeys, birds, raccoons, white rats, goats, deer, lion cubs, bears, armadillos and what not; about anything that wanders into camp or is sent in by friends.

"HARD SKIN" AND FOOT CALLUSES

Magic! Peel them off without pain or soreness

Don't suffer! A tiny bottle of Freezone costs but a few cents at any drug store. Apply a few drops on the toughened calluses or "hard skin" on bottom of feet, then lift those painful spots right off with fingers. Corns also!



When you peel off corns or calluses with Freezone the skin beneath is left pink and healthy and never sore, tender or even irritated. Try Freezone sure!—Adv.

Ancient History. Jack was unusually keen and quick-witted. All of the young women of the store in which he worked teased him, but seldom with profit.

"Oh, Jack," said one of them one day, "it is a good thing you're only fifteen, while I'm twenty-three, or I'd set my cap for you."

"Yes, you're twenty-three? You were twenty-three the year milk was five cents a quart."

Soft, Clear Skins. Night and morning lather the face with Cuticura Soap and hot water. If there are pimples first smear them with Cuticura Ointment. For free samples address, "Cuticura, Dept. X, Boston." Sold by druggists and by mail, Soap 25, Ointment 25 and 50.—Adv.

Don't imagine you are a vocalist simply because the neighbors fall to sing when you attempt to sing.

True art does not imitate nature. It represents her.

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