

A MAKER OF HISTORY

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Author of "The Master Mummer," "A Prince of Sinners," "Mysterious Mr. Sablin," "Anna the Adventuress," Etc.

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(Continued from Page Three.)

"My dear Andrew," she said, "I will admit that I have been doing all manner of incomprehensible things, I couldn't explain everything. It would take too long. What I did I did for Guy's sake and of my own free will. It will be all over in a day or two now, and we shall be coming back to Haynesworth. Then I will tell you tales of our adventures which will make your hair stand on end."

"It isn't true about Guy, then?" he exclaimed.

She hesitated for a moment. "Andrew," she said, "I cannot tell you anything. It must sound rather horrid of me, but I cannot help it. I want you to go away. In a day or two I will write."

"If I must," he said reluctantly, "I will go away, but not to worry about you—that is impossible. You seem to be surrounded by all the mediaeval terrors which confronted the emancipation of princesses in our fairy books. Only a short time ago Duncombe implored me to follow his example and leave you and Paris alone. The detective whom I brought with me has been shadowed ever since we left Paris. Last night he left me for a few hours, and this morning comes a note from the hospital. He is lying there with the back of his head beaten in—garrotters, of course, the police say, looking for plunder. How can you ask me to be easy in my mind about you?"

She smiled reassuringly.

"No harm will come to me here, I can promise you," she said. "It is you who run the most risk if you only knew it. Sir George Duncombe gave you the best advice when he tried to get you to return to England."

"I cannot leave Lloyd now until he has recovered," Andrew answered. "Tell me, Phyllis, has Duncombe found you out? Has he been here?"

"Yes," she answered. "I sent him away—as I am doing you."

"Has he ever told you," Andrew asked, "why he was willing in the first instance to come to Paris in search of you?"

"No," she answered. "Wasn't it because he was your friend?"

He shook his head.

"It is his affair, not mine," he said, with a sigh. "Ask him some day."

The marquise swept into the room as he passed out, an impression of white ermine and laces and perfume.

"Another of your English lovers, ma belle?" she asked.

"Scarcely that," Phyllis answered. "He is a very old friend, and he was rather hard to get rid of."

"I think," the marquise said, "you would get rid of all very willingly for the sake of one, eh?"

The marquise stared idly into the girl's face. Phyllis only laughed.

"One is usually considered the ideal number—in our country," she remarked demurely.

"But the one?" the marquise continued. "He would not be one of these cold, heavy countrymen of yours, no? You have learned better perhaps over here?"

"I have not had very much opportunity over here, have I, to amend my ideals?" she asked. "I think the only two Frenchmen I have met are the marquise and that large young man with the green tie, the vicomte de Bergillac, was it?"

The marquise watched her charge closely.

"Well," she said, "he is 'comme il faut,' is he not? You find him more elegant, more chic, than your Englishmen, eh?"

Phyllis shook her head regretfully.

"He is twenty-three," the marquise declared.

Phyllis laughed softly.

"Well," she said, "I do not think that I shall amend my ideals for the sake of the vicomte de Bergillac."

"Tell me child," she said, "you mean, then, that of the two—your English Sir George Duncombe and Henri—that you would prefer Sir George?"

Phyllis looked at her with twinkling eyes.

"You would really like to know?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Sir George Duncombe—infinity."

The marquise seemed to have recovered her good spirits.

"Come, little one," she said, "you lose color in the house. I will take you for a drive."

Andrew, conscious that he was being followed, sat down outside a cafe on his way homeward and bade his guide leave him for a little time. Instantly

there was the soft rustle of feminine skirts by his side, and a woman seated herself on the next chair.

"Monsieur has not been up to the Cafe Montmartre lately."

Pelham turned his head. It was the young lady from Vienna.

"No," he answered. "I have not been there since I had the pleasure of seeing mademoiselle."

"Monsieur has discovered all that he wanted to know?"

He nodded a little wearily.

"Yes, I think so."

She drew her chair quite close to his. The sable of her turban hat almost brushed his cheek, and the perfume of the violets at her bosom was strong in his nostrils.

"Monsieur has seen the young lady?"

"I have seen her," he answered.

"Monsieur is indebted to me," she said softly, "for some information. Let me ask him one question. Is it true, this story in the newspapers, of the finding of this young man's body? Is M. Guy Poynton really dead?"

"I know no more than we all read in the newspapers," he answered.

"His sister spoke of him as dead?" she asked.

"I cannot discuss this matter with you, mademoiselle," he answered.

"Monsieur is ungrateful," she declared, with a little grimace. "It is only that which I desire to know. He was such a beau garçon, that young Englishman! You will tell me that?" she whispered.

He shook his head.

"Mademoiselle will excuse me," he said. "I am going to take a carriage to my hotel."

"It is on the way to leave me at my rooms, if you will be so kind," she suggested, laying her hand upon his arm.

"Mademoiselle will excuse me," he answered, turning away. "Good afternoon."

Mademoiselle also took a carriage and drove to a large house at the top

of the Champs Elysees. She was at once admitted and passed with the air of one familiar with the place into a small room at the back of the house, where a man was sitting at a table writing. He looked up as she entered.

"Well?"

She threw herself into a chair.

"I have been following the Englishman, Pelham, all day," she said in German. "He has seen Miss Poynton. I have talked with him since at a cafe, but he would tell me nothing. He has evidently been warned."

The man grumbled as he resumed his writing.

"That fact alone should be enough for us," he remarked. "If there is anything to conceal we can guess what it is. These amateurs who are in league

with the secret service are the devil! I would as soon resign. What with them and the regular secret service Paris is an impossible city for us. Where we would watch we are watched ourselves. The streets and cafes bristle with spies! I do not wonder that you find success so difficult, mademoiselle."

"I haven't done so badly!" she protested.

"No, for you have been set easy tasks. Can you tell me, though, where that young Englishman disappeared to when he left the Cafe Montmartre before your very eyes? Can you tell me whether the secret service got hold of his story, how much the French government believe of it, whether they have communicated with the English government and how much they know? Beyond these things it is not your province to see or mine, mademoiselle, and is not for us to guess at or inquire into the meaning of things. Tell me, is it worth while to have this man Pelham put out of the way for a time?"

She shook her head.

"I do not think so," she answered. "He is quite stupid. The other, Sir George Duncombe, he was different. If he had stayed in Paris he would have been worth watching."

A bell rang. The man rose.

"The chief," he said, "be at the cafe tonight." Mademoiselle went

away thoughtfully.

"It is over this affair," she said to herself. "Carl knows everything."

CHAPTER XXXVII

SPENCER, whose recovery during the last few days had been as rapid as the first development of his indisposition, had just changed for dinner and was lighting a "cigarette d'appert" when, without waiting to be announced, the vicomte de Bergillac entered the room.

Spencer, with lightning-like intuition, knew that his time was come.

"Off with your coat, man and get your code books out. I am going to give you the most sensational story which has ever appeared in your paper!" he exclaimed. "Only remember this—it must appear tomorrow morning. I am arranging for the French papers to have it. Yours shall be the only English journal. Glance through these sheets. They contain the story of 'l'affaire Poynton.'"

Spencer was master of the gist of the thing in a very few moments. His eyes were bright with excitement.

"Who guarantees this?" he asked quickly.

"My uncle has signed it," Henri de Bergillac answered, "and at the bottom of the page there you will see a still more distinguished signature. You understand 'l'affaire Poynton' now? It is very simple. That English by actually witnessed a meeting between the czar and the emperor and was up in Paris, with a loose sheet of a treaty between the two relative to an attack upon England. Our people got hold of him at the Cafe Montmartre, and we have hidden him away ever since. Our friends, the Germans, who seemed to have had some suspicions about him, have filled the city with spies, but from the first we have kept them off the scent. We had a little difficulty in convincing our friends, your country people, but we managed to borrow a few papers from the German ambassador while he was staying at a country house in England, which were sufficient."

Spencer was already writing. His coat lay on the floor where he had thrown it.

"Don't go for a moment, le Bergillac," he said. "I want to ask you a few things. I can talk and code at the same time. What about Miss Poynton?"

"Well, we had to take care of her, too," De Bergillac said. "Of course all her inquiries over here would have led to nothing, but they knew about her at the English embassy, so we walked her off from the Cafe Montmartre one night and took her to a friend of mine, the Marquise de St. Ethol. We told her a little of the truth and a little, I'm afraid, which was an exaggeration. Anyhow we kept her quiet, and we got her to go to England for us with Toquet. They had a very narrow shave down at Runton, by the bye."

"After this," Spencer said, with a smile, "the secret service people proper will have to look to their laurels. It is a triumph for the amateurs."

The vicomte twirled his tiny black mustache.

"Yes," he said, "we have justified ourselves. It has cost us something, though!"

"M. Louis?"

Spencer stopped writing.

"It was an affair of a million francs," the vicomte said. "I hope he has got the money."

Spencer resumed his work.

"The baron a traitor!" he exclaimed. "Where is he?"

"In England. We are not vindictive. If the Germans paid him a million francs they got nothing for it. He has been watched from the first. We knew of it the moment he came to terms with them. He only knows bare facts. Nothing beyond. He is going to Brazil, I think. We shall not interfere."

"Tell me why," Spencer said, "you were so down on all of us who joined in the search for the Poyntons?"

"We could not afford to run any risks of your discovering a clew," De Bergillac answered, "because you in your turn were closely watched by German spies, hoping to discover them through you. That is why we had to strike hard at all of you who interfered. I was sorry for little Flossie, but she knew the risk she ran. We had to stop you, induce Duncombe to leave Paris and knock on the head a fool of an English detective for fear he might discover anything. M. Pelham was getting into danger, but of course it is all over now. Tomorrow we are bringing Guy into Paris."

Spencer nodded.

"Where is Duncombe?" he asked.

"Back in Paris," De Bergillac answered. "Arrived here with me today. He is much in love with the beautiful sister. Alas! It was to him that she entrusted the missing page of that treaty which she found in her brother's luggage. Some day I must tell you of my adventures in England last night, when I went over to get it and found M. Louis a little ahead of me."

"Some day," Spencer murmured, writing for dear life, with the perspiration streaming down his forehead. "My dear vicomte, do you mind ringing the bell? I want my servant. I must telegraph my paper to warn them of this. They must clear two columns of type for me."

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The vicomte did as he was asked. Then he turned toward the door. "I will leave you," he said. "The dust of England is still in my throat. Absinth, a bath and dinner! Au revoir, mon ami! Confess that I have kept the promise which M. Louis made you. It is what you call a coup, this, eh?"

Out on the boulevards the papers were selling like wildfire. The vicomte bought one and, sitting down outside a cafe, ordered absinth. The great headlines attracted him at once. He slipped his absinth and smiled to himself.

"The play commences," he murmured. "I must return to M. Spencer."

Spencer was still working like a madman.

"I must interrupt you for a moment," De Bergillac said. "I have brought you an evening paper. The Baltic fleet has sunk half a dozen English fishing boats, and the whole country is in a frenzy. It is the beginning."

Spencer nodded.

"Leave the paper, there's a good fellow," he said. "I will look it through presently. If there is time—if there is only time this will be the greatest night of my life. No other paper has a hint, you say?"

"Not one!"

"If I could put back the clock a single hour!" Spencer muttered. "Never mind! Williams, more sheets!"

De Bergillac took his leave. He had telephoned for his motor, which was waiting outside. He gave the order to drive to his rooms. On the way he passed the great pile of buildings in the Louvre. In a room at the extreme end of the pile a light was burning. De Bergillac looked at it curiously. A small brougham, which he recognized, stood outside.

"If one could see inside," he muttered. "It would be interesting!"

In a sense it was interesting. M. Grisson sat there in front of his open

[TO BE CONTINUED.]