

# HEARTS and MASKS

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## CHAPTER VII.

The consummate daring of it! Why the rascal ought to have been in command of an army. On the Board of Strategy he would have been incomparable!

There followed a tableau that I shall not soon forget. We all stared at the real Haggerty much after the fashion of Medusa's victims. Presently the tension relaxed, and we all sighed. I sighed because the thought of fall for the night in a dress-suit divided in perspective; the girl sighed for the same reason and one or two other things; the chief of the village police and his officers sighed because darkness had suddenly swooped down on them; and Hamilton sighed because there were no gems. Haggerty was the one among us who didn't sigh. He scowled blackly.

This big athlete looked like a detective, and the abrupt authority of his tones convinced me that he was. Haggerty was celebrated in the annals of police affairs; he had handled all sorts of criminals, from thieves and impostors down to petty thieves. He was not a man to trifle with, mentally or physically, and for this reason we were all shaking in our boots. He owned to a keen but brutal wit; to him there was no such thing as sex among criminals, and he had the tenacity of purpose that has given the bulldog considerable note in the pit. But it was quite plain that for once he had met his match.

"I don't see how you can blame me," mumbled the chief. "None of us was familiar with your looks, and he showed us his star of authority, and went to work in a business-like way—By George! and he has run away with my horse and carriage!"—starting from his chair.

"Never mind the horse. You'll find it safe at the railway station," snarled Haggerty. "Now, then, tell me everything that has happened, from beginning to end."

And the chief recounted the adventure briefly. Haggerty looked coldly at me and shrugged his broad shoulders. As for the girl, he never gave her so much as a single glance. He knew a gentleman without looking at her twice.

"Humph! Isn't he a clever one, though?" cried Haggerty, in a burst of admiration. "Clever is no name for it. I'd give a year of my life to come face to face with him. It would be an interesting encounter. Hunted him for weeks, and today laid eyes on him for the first time. Had my clumsy paws on him this very afternoon. He seemed so willing to be locked up that I grew careless. Duff! and he and his accomplices, a first-class valet, had me trussed like a chicken and bundled into the clothes-press. Took my star, credentials, playing-card, and invitation. It was near eleven o'clock when I roused the housekeeper. I telegraphed two hours ago."

"Telegraphed?" exclaimed the chief, rousing himself out of a melancholy dream. "There would be no mention of him in the morning's paper."

"Yes, telegraphed. The despatch lay unopened on your office-desk. You're a good watchdog for a hen-coop!" growled Haggerty. "Ten thousand in gold to-night, and by this time he is safe in New York. You are all a pack of blockheads."

"Used the telephone, did he? Told you to hold these innocent persons till he went somewhere to land the accomplice, eh? The whistle of the train meant nothing to you. Well, that whistle ought to have told you that there might be a mistake. A good officer never quits his prisoners. If there is an accomplice in toils elsewhere, he makes them bring him in."



Haggerty Looked Coldly at Me.

he does not go out for him. And now I've got to start all over again, and he's in New York, a bigger cat-amount than Rome ever boasted of. He's not a common thief; nobody knows who he is or what his haunts are. But I have seen his face; I'll never forget him."

The chief tore his hair, while his subordinates shuffled their feet uneasily. Then they all started in to explain their theories. But the de-

fective silenced them with a wave of his huge hand.

"I don't want to hear any explanations. Let these persons go," he commanded, with a jerk of his head in our direction. "You can all return to town but one officer. I may need a single man," Haggerty added thoughtfully.

"What are you going to do?" asked the chief.

"Never you mind. I have an idea; it may be a good one. If it is, I'll telephone you all about it when the time comes."

He stepped over to the telephone and called up central. He spoke so low that none of us overheard what he said; but he hung up the receiver, a satisfied smile on his face.

The girl and I were free to go whither we listed, and we listed to return at once to New York. Hamilton, however, begged us to remain, to dance and eat, as a compensation for what we had gone through; but Miss Hawthorne resolutely shook her head; and as there was nothing in the world that would have induced me to stay without her, I shook my head, too. It seemed to me I had known this girl all my life, so closely does misfortune link one life to another. I had seen her for the first time less than eight hours before; and yet I was confident that as many years, under ordinary circumstances, would not have taught me her real worth.

"Mrs. Hyphen-Bonds will never forgive me," said Haggerty bitterly. "If she hears that I've been the cause, indirectly and innocently, of turning her away."

"Mrs. Hyphen-Bonds need never worry," replied the girl, smiling innocently. "In fact, it would be perfectly satisfactory and agreeable to me if she never heard of all."

"I will call a conveyance for you," said the defeated M. F. H. "I shall never forgive you Dicky."

"Yes, you will, Teddy. A loving-cup, the next time we meet at the club, will mellow everything."

Quarter of an hour later Miss Hawthorne and I, wrapped in buffalo-ropes, our feet snugly stowed away in straw, slid away, to the jangle and quarrel of sleighbells, toward Moriarty's Hollywood Inn. The moon shone; not a cloud darkened her serene and lovely countenance. The pearly whiteness of the world would have aroused the poetry in the most sordid soul; and far, far away to the east the black, tossing line of the sea was visible.

"What a beautiful night!" I volunteered.

"The beginning of the end," said the defeated M. F. H. "What does that mean?"

"Why, when you first spoke to me, it was about the weather."

"Oh, but this isn't going to be the end; this is the true beginning of all things."

"I wish I could see it in that light; but we can not see beauty in anything when hunger lies back of the eyes. I haven't had anything to eat, save that little apple, for hours and hours. I was so excited at Moriarty's that I ate almost nothing."

"You are hungry? Well, we'll fix that when we get to Moriarty's. I'll find a way to waking him up in case he asleep, which I doubt. There will be cold chicken and ham and hot coffee."

"Lovely!"

"And we shall dine with the gods. And now it is all over and done, it was funny, wasn't it?"

"Terribly funny!"—with a shade of irony. "It would have been funnier still if the real Haggerty hadn't turned up. The patrol had arrived."

"But it didn't happen! I shall never forget this night!"—romantically.

"I should be inordinately glad to forget it completely,"—decidedly.

"Where's your romance?" I asked. "I'd rather have it proved to me between book-covers. At least I'll offer my love of repose to you."

"Do you know?" I began boldly. "It seems that I have known you all my life."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, why, I might really have known you all my life, and still not have known you as well as I do this very minute—and less than a dozen hours between this and our first meeting. You are as brave as a valiant, wise as a serpent, cool, witty—and beautiful!"

"Shall I ask the driver to let me out?" Then she laughed, a rattling joyous laugh.

"What is so funny?"

"I was thinking of that coal-bin."

"Well, I didn't permit a lonely potato to frighten me," I retorted.

"No, you were brave enough—among the potatoes."

"You are beautiful!"

"You are the most beautiful girl!"

"I want something to eat."

"I ever saw! Do you think it possible for a man to fall in love at first sight?"

be thinking of paper collars."

"I wish I were witty like that!" She snuggled down beneath the robes.

An artist's model, thought I. Never in this world. I now understood the drift of her uncle's remark about her earning capacity. The Alice Hawthorne miniatures brought fabulous prices. And here I was, sitting so close to her that her shoulders touched; and she a girl who knew intimately emperors and princesses and dukes, not to mention the world-rich. I admit that for a moment I was touched with awe. And it was beginning to get serious. This girl interested me marvelously. I summoned up all my courage.

"Are you married?"

"No."

"Not engaged to be married?"

"No. But you mustn't ask all these questions."

"How would you like to ride around in a first-class motor-car the rest of your days?"

She laughed merrily. Possibly it was funny.

"Are you always amusing like this?"

"Supposing I were serious?"

"In that case I should say you had not yet slipped off your fool's motley."

This directness was discouraging. "I wonder if the ten of hearts is lucky, after all," I mused.

"We are not in jail. I consider that the best of good fortune."

"Give me your card," said I.

She gave me the card, and I put it with mine.

"Why do you do that?"

"Perhaps I want to bring about an enchantment,"—sincerely.

"As Signor Fantoccini, or as Mr. Comstock?"

"I have long since resigned my position in the museum. It was too exciting."

She made no rejoinder; and for some time there was no sound but the music of the bells.

Finally we drew up under the colonial portico of the Hollywood Inn, and were welcomed by the genial Moriarty himself, his Celtic countenance a mirror of smiles.

"Anything in the house to eat?" I cried, shaking the robes from me.

"Anything ye like, if you like cold things. I can have ye a pot of coffee on the gasolene-burner, and there's mummy a vintage in the cellars."

"That will be plenty!"—joyfully, helping Miss Hawthorne to alight.

"Sure, and ye are from the Hunt Club?"—noting our costumes. "Well, well! they never have any too much grub. Now, I'll put ye in a little room all be yerlives, with a whisky and a log fire; cozy as ye please. Ye'll have nearly two hours to wait for the car from the village."

We entered the general assembly room. It was roomy and quaint, and somewhere above us was the comfortable room in which George Washington had slept. The great hooded fireplace was merry with crackling logs. Casually I observed that we were not alone. Over yonder, in a shadowed corner, sat two men, very well handled up, and, to all appearances, fast asleep. Moriarty lighted a four-branched candelabrum and showed us the way to the little private dining-room, took our orders, and left us.

"This is romance," said I. "They used to do these things hundreds of years ago, and everybody had a good time."

"It is now all very wicked and improper," murmured the girl, laying aside her domino for the first time; "but delightful! I now find I haven't the least bit of remorse for what I have done."

In that dark evening gown she was very beautiful. Her arms and shoulders were united like Carrara marble; and I knew instantly that I was never going to recover. I drew two chairs close to the grate. I sat down in one and she in the other. With a contented sigh she rested her blue-slipped feet on the brass fender.

"My one regret is that I haven't any shoes. What an adventure!"

"It's fine!" Two hours in the society of this enchanting creature! It was almost too good to be true. Ah, if it might always be like this—to return home from the day's work, to be greeted warmly by a woman as beautiful as this one! I sighed loudly.

Moriarty came with the chicken and ham and coffee.

"If ye would like, it won't be a bit of trouble to show ye George Washington's room; or—with inimitable Irish drollery—I can tell ye that he died in this very room."

"That will serve," smiled the girl; and Moriarty bowed himself out.

His departure was followed by the patter of silver upon porcelain. Of a truth, both of us were hungry.

"I was shapely ravenous," the girl confessed.

"And as for me, I never dreamt I could be so unromantic. Now," said I, pushing aside my plate, and dropping sugar into my coffee, and vainly hunting in my pockets for a cigar, "there remains only one mystery to be cleared up."

"And what might this mystery be?" she asked. "The whereabouts of the bogus Haggerty?"

"The bogus Haggerty will never cross our paths again. He has skipped by the light of the moon. No, that's not the mystery. Why did you tell me you were an impostor; why did you go to the cellars with me, when all the while you were at the ball on Mrs. Hyphen-Bonds' invitation?"

She leaned on her elbows and smiled at me humorously.

"Would you really like to know, Signor? Well, I was an impostor."

She sat with her back to the fire, and a weird halo of light seemed to surround her and frame her. "Mrs. Hyphen-Bonds accidentally dropped that invitation in my studio, a few days

before she sailed for Europe. I simply could not resist the temptation. That is all the mystery there is."

"And they still think you were there rightfully?"

"You are no longer mystified?"

"Yes; there is yet another mystery to solve: myself." I knew it. Without rhyme and reason, I was in love; and without rhyme or reason, I was glad of it.

"Shall you ever be able to solve such a mystery?"—quizzically.

"It all depends upon you."

"Mr. Comstock, you will not mar the exquisite humor of my adventure by causing me annoyance. I am sure that some day we shall be very good friends. But one does not talk of love on eight hours' acquaintance. Besides, you would be taking advantage of my helplessness; for I really depend upon you to see me safe back to New York."

It is only the romance, the adventure; and such moonlight nights often superinduce sentimentality. What do you know of me? Nothing. What do I know of you? Nothing, save that there is a kindred spirit which is always likely to lead us into trouble. Down in your heart you know you are only temporarily affected by moonshine. Come, make me a toast!"—lifting her cup.

"You are right," said I. "I am a gentleman. But it was only consistent that, having been the fool, I should now play the ass. Here's!"—and I held up my cup.

But neither of us drank; there wasn't time.

As the door opened quietly, and in walked the two men we had seen upon

CLIMBING TO THE SUMMIT.

This party started from Calapan, the capital and coast town of Mindoro, October 31, 1906, and traveled inland for three days, reaching a ridge of the mountain 2,300 feet above the sea level. From this on hiking became more and more difficult and the ascents steeper and more perilous until an elevation of 6,000 feet was reached, at which point the party made their base camp. After much blazing of trails an altitude of 8,000 above sea level was reached and from thence the explorers were able to climb to the summit of the mountain and return to camp each night.

This journey consumed twenty-two days from the coast, although the distance "as the crow flies" was only eighteen miles. During much of this time a downpour of rain obliged the party to sleep in wet clothes and prevented them from making fires for the preparation of food, consequently the menu consisted of hard tack and cold corn beef.

A STORM AT THE TOP.

When the party reached the top of the mountain November 22 a storm was raging and they suffered from rain and cold, the thermometer registering 50 degrees above zero. After the storm subsided the scientists found much interesting work before them. Dr. Merrill, the botanist, collected 800 species of plants, including many beautiful ferns and orchids, some of which have never been described in botanical works. Major Mearns secured about 200 mammals and reptiles as well as several varieties of birds and insects, nearly all which will prove to be of heretofore unknown species.

Forester Hutchinson made many interesting and valuable notes of the character and composition of the dense forest. At the higher altitudes he found several species of oak, one of maple, and among the shrubs were found huckleberry bushes bearing edible fruit.

A STRANGE TRIBE FOUND.

The greatest surprise, however, was yet in store for the explorers. On the third day after their arrival at the summit of the mountain, while each scientist was absorbed in the interests of his particular specialty and the soldiers were lying quietly in the now comfortable camp, a creature which was at first thought to be a large ape peered out from behind a clump of huckleberry bushes. On being approached by Major Mearns the creature stood its ground and proved to be a human being, the leader of a party of some twenty of his kind concealed in the underbrush. This leader, an old man, allowed the doctor to come up to him, and as he could speak Tagalog, conversed with him, but refused to

reveal the dwelling place of his band.

These people were of the Mangyan tribe which inhabits the interior of Mindoro and other unexplored regions of the group. They are no more than four feet in height, have the brown, flat faces of the Negrito type and are of an exceedingly timid nature. While the party were sleeping the Mangyans would creep down the mountain side and throw sticks against the sides of the tents to ascertain if they were still occupied, but otherwise they showed no signs of hostility.

SOIL IN CULTIVATION.

Tomatoes, squash, corn and sugar cane were found growing in abundance and gave evidence of cultivation by these little people. The party remained ten days in the vicinity of the mountain crest, making many observations and discoveries of value and interest which will be reported in full to the government bureau of science.

Another expedition is to be made by Major Mearns in the near future in which he expects to travel over and beyond Mount Halcon into the dense forests of the unexplored interior of Mindoro.

Obituary.

Christian Parchen was born in the proving Prussia, Germany, May 28th, 1832, and died with heart disease at his home, one mile west of the brick schoolhouse in this county on January 17, 1907 at the age of 74 years, 7 months and 11 days. Mr. Parchen immigrated with his parents, 3 brothers and one sister in 1848 to the United States and lived near Buffalo, New York, he was united in marriage to Miss Louisa Tomas in 1857; eleven children were born to them, six are deceased. In 1860 he moved with his family to the new town of Arago in this county and later on his farm near the brick schoolhouse. Only a few old settlers can remember the hardship of pioneer life in a new country; landing by boat on the Missouri river at Arago, Mr. Parchen and family had to live with four more families in a little storehouse there. Later on his farm was visited only by hungry Indians and prairie wolves. Mr. Parchen was a true member of the W. Luth. Church to his death, nearly the last one who built the St. Peter's church 1874 near the brick schoolhouse. The very large funeral services were conducted by Rev. W. Zoog, Sunday morning January 20 1907, the remains were laid to rest at the cemetery near the St. Peter's church. Mr. Parchen was a true christian, he leaves his wife, five children and one brother, H. M. Parchen in Helena, Montana, besides a large number of friends to mourn his loss.

A FRIEND.

Poultry Wanted

I will pay the following prices in cash for Poultry, delivered near the old Armour Poultry House, Falls City, Neb., Tuesday, Feb. 5, until 1:00 p. m., one day only. Crows to be empty:

Hens..... 9 1/2c

Young Roosters..... 8c

Old Roosters..... 4c

Hen Turkeys..... 12c

Young Toms..... 11c

Fat Old Toms..... 9c

Ducks F. F..... 8c

Geese F. F..... 7c

Cow Hides, pound..... 10c

Horse Hides, each..... \$3.00

W. E. Keeney

THE ORIGINAL BEES

Best for Coughs, Croup, Whooping Cough, Etc.

LAXATIVE

No Opium, Contains National Pure Food and Drug Law

COUGH SYRUP

CONTAINS HONEY AND TAR

All cough syrups containing opiates constipate the bowels. Bee's Laxative Cough Syrup moves the bowels and contains no opiates.

BEGGS' CHERRY COUGH

SYRUP cures coughs and colds.

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