



HEARTS AND MASKS

By **HAROLD MacGRATH**

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With Drawings by Harrison Fisher

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CHAPTER II.—Continued.

The ten of hearts again! Hang the card! And then with a sigh of relief I recollected that in all probability he, like Columbine, had heard me call out the card to Hamilton. Still, the popularity of the card was very disquieting. I wished it had been seven or five; there's luck in odd numbers. . . . A Blue Domino! My heart leaped, and I thought of the little ticket in my waistcoat pocket. A Blue Domino! If, by chance, there should be a connection between her and the ticket!

She was sitting all alone in a corner near by, partly screened by a pot of orange trees. I crossed over and sat down by her side. This might prove an adventure worth while.

"What a beautiful night it is!" I said.

She turned, and I caught sight of a wisp of golden hair.

"That is very original," said she. "Who in the world would have thought of passing comments on the weather at a masque! Prior to this moment the men have been calling me all sorts of sentimental names."

"Oh, I am coming to that. I am even going to make love to you."

She folded her hands—rather resignedly, I thought—and the rollicking comedy began.

CHAPTER III.

When they give you a mask at a ball they also give you the key to all manner of folly and impudence. Even stupid people become witty, and the witty become correspondingly daring. For all I knew, the Blue Domino at my side might be Jones' wife, or Brown's or Smith's, or even Green's; but so long as I was not certain, it mattered not in what direction my whimsical fancy took me. (It is true that ordinarily Jones and Brown and Smith and Green do not receive invitations to attend masquerades at fashionable hunt clubs; but somehow they seem to worry along without these equivocal honors, and prosper. Still, there are persons in the swim named Johns and Smythe and Browne and Greene. Pardon this parenthesis!)

As I recollected the manner in which I had self-invited the pleasure of my company to this carnival at the Blankshire Hunt club, I smiled behind my mask. Nerves! I ought to have been a professor of clinics instead of an automobile agent. But the whole affair appealed to me so strongly I could not resist it. I was drawn into the tangle by the very fascination of the scheme. I was an interloper, but nobody knew it. The ten of hearts in my pocket did not match the backs of those cards regularly issued. But what of that? Everyone was ignorant of the fact. I was safe inside; and all that was romantic in my system was aroused. There are always some guests who cannot avail themselves of their invitations; and upon this vague chance I had staked my play. Besides, I was determined to disappear before the hour of unmasking. I wasn't going to take any unnecessary risks. I was, then, fairly secure under my Capuchin's robe.

Out of my mind slipped the previous adventures of the evening. I forgot, temporarily, the beautiful unknown at Mouquin's. I forgot the sardonic-lipped stranger I had met in Friard's. I forgot everything save the little ticket that had accidentally slipped into my package, and which announced that some one had rented a blue domino.

And here was a Blue Domino at my side, just simply dying to have me talk to her!

"I am madly in love with you," I began. "I have followed you often; I have seen you in your box at the opera; I have seen you whirl up Fifth avenue in your fine barouche; and here at last I meet you!" I clasped my hands passionately.

"My beautiful barouche! My box at the opera! The girl mimicked. "What a cheerful Ananias you are!" "Thou art the most enchanting creature in all the universe. Thou art even a turquoise, a patch of radiant summer sky, eyes of sapphire, lips—" "Archaic, very archaic," she interrupted.

"Disillusioned in ten seconds!" I cried, dismally. "How could you?" She laughed.

"Have you no romance? Can you not see the fitness of things? If you have not a box at the opera, you ought at least to make believe you have. History walks about us, and you call the old style archaic! That hurts!"

"Methinks, Sir Monk—" "There! That's more like it. By my haldiom, that's the style!"

"Odds bodkin, you don't tell me!" There was a second ripple of laughter from behind the mask. It was rare music.

"I could fall in love with you!" "There once was a Frenchman who said that as nothing is impossible, let us believe in the absurd. I might be old enough to be your grandmother,"—lightly.

"Perish the thought!" "Perish it, indeed!"

"The mask is the thing!" I cried, enthusiastically. "You can make love to another man's wife—"

"Or your own, and nobody is the wiser,"—cynically.

"We are getting on."

"Yes, we are getting on, both in years and in folly. What are you doing in a monk's robe? Where is your motley, gay fool?"

"I have laid it aside for the night. On such occasions as this, fools dress as wise men, and wise men as fools; everybody goes about in disguise."

"How would you go about to pick out the fools?"—curiously.

"Beginning with myself—"

"Thy name is also Candor!"

"Look at yonder Cavalier. He wabbls like a ship in distress, in the wild effort to keep his feet untangled from his rapier. I'll wager he's a wealthy plumber on week-days. Observe Anne of Austria! What arms! I'll lay odds that her great-grandmother took in washing. There's Romeo, now, with a pair of legs like an old apple tree. The freedom of criticism is mine tonight! Did you ever see such ridiculous ideas of costume? For my part, the robe and the domino for me. All lines are destroyed; nothing is recog-

"Your voice lacks the proper and requisite anxiety. It is always the married woman who enjoys the mask with thoroughness. She knows her husband will be watching her; and jealousy is a good sign."

"You are a philosopher. Certainly you must be married."

"Well, one does become philosophical—after marriage."

"But are you married?"

"I do not say so?"

"Would you like to be?"

"I have my share of feminine curiosity. But I wonder,"—ruminatingly, "why they do not give masquerades oftener?"

"That is easily explained. Most of us live masquerading day by day, and there might be too much of a good thing."

"That is a bit of philosophy that goes well with your robe. Indeed, what better mask is there than the human countenance?"

"If we become serious, we shall put folly out of joint," said I, rising. "And besides, we shall miss the best part of this dance."

She did not hesitate an instant. I led her to the floor, and we joined the dancers. She was as light as a feather, a leaf, the down of the thistle; mysterious as the Cumaean Sibyl; and I wondered who she might be. The hand that lay on my sleeve was as white as milk, and the fibert-shaped horn of the finger-tips was the tint of rose leaves. Was she connected with the ticket in my pocket? I tried to look into her eyes, but in vain; nothing could I see but that wisp of golden hair which occasionally brushed my chin as with a sur-



"Look at Yon Cavalier, He Wabbls Like a Ship in Distress."

nizable. My, my! There's Harlequin, too, walking on parentheses."

The Blue Domino laughed again.

"You talk as if you had no friends here,"—shrewdly.

"But which is my friend and which is the man to whom I owe money?"

"What! Is your tailor here, then?"

"Heaven forbid! Strange, isn't it, when a fellow starts in to pay up his bills, that the tailor and the undertaker have to wait till the last."

"The subject is outside my understanding."

"But you have dressmakers."

"I seldom pay dressmakers."

"Ah! Then you belong to the most exclusive set!"

"Or perhaps I make my own dresses—"

"Sh! Not so loud. Suppose some one should overhear you?"

"It was a slip of the tongue. And yet, you should be lenient to all."

"Kind heart! Ah, I wonder what all those interrogation points mean—the black domino there?"

"Possibly she represents Scandal."

"Scandal, then, is symbolized by the interrogation point?"

"Yes. Whoever heard of scandal coming to a full stop, that is to say, a period?"

"I learn something every minute. A hundred years ago you would have been a cousin to Mlle. de Necker."

"Or Mme. de Stael."

"Oh, if you are married—"

"I shall have ceased to interest you?"

"On the contrary. Only marriage would account for the bitterness of your tone. What does the Blue Domino represent?"

"The needle of the compass." She stretched a sleeve out toward me and I observed for the first time the miniature compasses woven in the cloth. Surely, one does not rent a costume like this.

"I understand now why you attracted me. Whither will you guide me?"—sentimentally.

"Through dark channels and stormy seas, over tropic waters, 'into the haven under the hill.'"

"Oh, if you go to quoting Tennyson, it's all up with me. Are you hurt?"

"One can easily see that at any rate you are not."

"Explicit."

repetitious caress. If only I dared remain till the unmasking! I pressed her hand. There was an answering pressure, but its tenderness was destroyed by the low laughter that accompanied it.

"Don't be silly," she whispered.

"How can I help it?"

"True; I forgot you were a fool in disguise."

"What has Romance done to you that you should turn on her with the stuffed-club, Practicality?"

"She has never paid any particular attention to me; perhaps that is the reason."

As we neared the corner I saw the Honorable Julius again. He stretched forth his death's-head mask.

"Beware the ten of hearts!" he croaked.

Hang his impudence! . . . The Blue Domino turned her head with a jerk; and instantly I felt a shiver run through her body. For a moment she lost step. I was filled with wonder. In what manner could the ten of hearts disturb her? I made up my mind to seek out the noble Roman and learn just how much he knew about that disquieting card.

The music ceased.

"Now, run away with your benedictions," said the Blue Domino breathlessly.

"Shall I see you again?" eagerly.

"If you seek diligently." She paused for a moment, like a bird about to take flight. "Positive, fool; comparative, fooler; superlative, foollest!"

And I was left standing alone: What the deuce did she mean by that?

After all, there might be any number of blue dominoes in the land; and it seemed scarcely credible that a guest at the Hunt Club would go to a customer's for an outfit. (I had gone to a customer's, but my case was altogether different. I was an impostor.) I hunted up Imperial Rex. It was not long ere we came face to face, or to speak correctly, mask to mask.

To be Continued.

Captured a Prize.

Gunner—The gridiron hero is all smiles.

Guyver—Yes; he has captured a gridiron heroine.

Gunner—A gridiron heroine?

Guyver—Yes; a college girl who really knows how to broil a beefsteak.—Chicago Daily News.

RESCUED 11

People from Wrecked Steamer Berlin.

THREE ARE WOMEN

The Husband of the Queen of Holland was Very Active in the Work of Saving Lives.

London, Eng.—The worst disaster for many years in the history of the busy cross-channel traffic between England and the continent occurred during a violent gale Thursday morning, when the Rotterdam mail steamer Berlin, from Harwich to Hook of Holland, having safely weathered the hurricane, was wrecked as she was entering port. Only one man out of the 143 persons on board succeeded in reaching shore Thursday.

Hook of Holland—Largely as a result of the courage of Prince Henry of The Netherlands, the prince consort, that which appeared to be an impossible task has been achieved, and the heroic efforts of the Dutch diffeboat men have succeeded in rescuing alive 11 more of the survivors of the ill-fated steamer Berlin.

The gallant Dutch lifeboat men were rewarded after more than 30 hours of hard and dangerous work. Buffered and driven back time after time, the sturdy Dutchmen refused to relax their attempts to rescue the handful of shipwrecked people, and finally at 3:30 o'clock Friday afternoon, the receding tide and some improvement in the weather having made the conditions easier, their long fight was crowned with success.

Although several of the persons rescued were in the last stages of exhaustion, they now are on the road to recovery and some of them have been able to tell the story of their awful experiences. Two women and a child are still on board the wreck, but it is feared that they are dying.

The names of the passengers saved follow:

Mr. Young, Mr. Brodersen, Fraulein Buttel, Fraulein Gabler, Frau Schrader, all three of these women belong to the opera company; a man whose name is not known, and five members of the crew. Only two women and a child are now left on the wreck. Of these the two women are known to be Fraulein Thiele and Frau Wernberg. The husband of the last mentioned woman lies dead in the mortuary here.

A DECLARATION OF WAR.

It is Made by Honduras Against Nicaragua.

City of Mexico.—Word reached this city Friday night that Honduras has formally declared war against Nicaragua. President Bonilla is at the head of the Honduran troops and is marching on the frontier of Nicaragua.

Managua, Nicaragua.—The Nicaraguan forces on February 29 captured without opposition the town of El Trunfo, in Honduras, and Thursday, after six hours' hard fighting the Nicaraguan army occupied San Bernardino, an excellent position owing to the fact that it is in communication by land and water with the Nicaraguan base of operations. Many Hondurans were killed or wounded and the retreating army left quantities of ammunition and many rifles on the field. The casualties on the Nicaraguan side were a few men wounded.

FOUR PEOPLE DROWNED.

They Broke Through the Ice in a Park at Buffalo, N. Y.

Buffalo, N. Y.—Four people were drowned in Scajaquada creek, at the Elmwood avenue entrance to Delaware park, last night.

Mrs. Drummer, with several children, was walking on the ice toward Delaware park. At the Elmwood avenue viaduct over the creek, the ice suddenly gave way under Ruth and the two Beiter boys, throwing them into the water. Mrs. Drummer was about 20 feet away with her 4-year-old son Walter. Mrs. Drummer ran to the rescue of the three children.

In her efforts to save them she broke through the ice and little Walter, who had toddled after his mother, fell in after her. Walter clung to the edge of the ice and was rescued. Mrs. Drummer was unconscious when taken from the water and died shortly afterwards. The bodies of the others were recovered.

Congress.

Washington.—On the 22d the house devoted its session to consideration of the sundry civil bill and passed 360 private pension bills. The senate passed the military academy appropriation bill, but spent most of the day in debate of the agricultural appropriation bill.

Will Make Up the Shortage.

Hartford, Conn.—Most of the \$55,000 taken from the trust funds of the Connecticut Baptist convention by the treasurer, W. F. Walker, the defaulting official of the Savings Bank of New Britain, will be made up by friends of the denomination.

Explosion Injured Nine Miners.

Collinsville, Ill.—Nine coal miners were injured, two seriously, by the explosion of a compressed air tank 200 feet below the surface in Lumaghi mine No. 2, near here, Friday.

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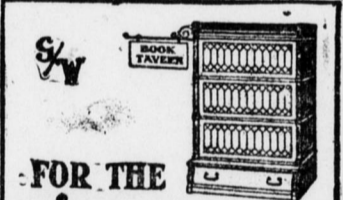
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