

# SERIAL STORY

## No Man's Land A ROMANCE By Louis Joseph Vance

Illustrations by Ray Walters

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### SYNOPSIS.

Garrett Coast, a young man of New York City, meets Douglas Blackstock, who invites him to a card party. He accepts, although he dislikes Blackstock, the reason being that both are in love with Katherine Thaxter.

### CHAPTER I.—(Continued.)

He felt her eyes upon him, seriously sweet and questioning, and frowned slightly, wishing he had held his tongue, though aware that he could not have, caring the way he did.

"Why not tell me? I'm waiting, Garrett."

"Well, . . ." It was difficult: an impertinence; incredible, besides. But now that he had committed himself, he stiffened a resolve and plunged. "It was said that your engagement to this man Blackstock would be announced before long."

That out bluntly, he caught a long breath and, divided between fear and faith, sat watching her.

The seconds of her silence spun for him an hour of anguish.

"Katherine . . ."

She turned. "Yes?"

"Have you nothing to say?" he asked involuntarily, and at once regretted it.

"What do you wish me to say?" Her tone was dull, as if she spoke mechanically, with a mind detached.

"Either affirm or deny. You owe me that, at least."

"Do I?" She seemed surprised.

"But what," she pursued, rousing, "does 'this man Blackstock'—"

"You know I don't like him, Katherine. I can't."

"Put I can and do, Garrett."

There was simplicity in that, almost confessional. His fears assailed him more imperiously.

"Then it's true? Don't tell me that!"

"What does Mr. Blackstock say?"

"I haven't interviewed him, of course. I seemed too absurd—"

"Why?"

The only report he had at command was pitifully inadequate: "Because I love you."

"Is that any reason why Mr. Blackstock should not?"

"There are reasons why you shouldn't let your name be coupled with his."

"And they are—?"

She put it crisply. His heart sank, foreseeing defeat. He veered at a tangent, evasive. "You haven't answered me. Is there any truth in this rumor?"

"Not yet."

"You mean it may be true—later?"

"It's possible," she affirmed quietly.

"Mr. Blackstock has asked me to marry him; he hasn't as yet had my answer."

"Katherine! . . . You can't really—care for him?"

"I'm trying to be sure, Garrett, before I tell him so—or you."

"But—but you mustn't! . . . The thing's impossible. . . . You—"

"You'll tell me why?"

Her composure was sobering. He got himself more in hand; she was not to be moved by storming, he knew. Reason, logic, an appeal to her intelligence; she would require these of him. Yet when put to it he could not bring himself to tell what he knew of the man by hearsay, if very credibly. Personal defects, lack of breeding, and the like were all unstable objections. . . . In the end the best he could do, since some sort of an answer was essential, was to frame a halting, inconclusive: "He's not the sort."

She misinterpreted his confusion. "I know what you're thinking: that he's not a spoke in our particular social wheel; an outsider. Must I condemn him for that? Are there no right men, Garrett, but yourself and others of our set? I know he has his lacks; I fancy you'd call him crude, if you were candid with me. But men of his genius, his upbringing . . ."

Not that I concede any crudity in him; it's hardly that; he merely lacks—something—difficult to name it; not cultivation, not sensibility, but, I'd say, friends."

"He has many."

So she cared enough to fight for him! There was bitterness, surpassing the bitterness of aloe, in that discovery.

"I mean the right kind, yourself, for instance; friends to bring him out. He's quick, adaptable, of a good family—if not a wealthy one."

Coast fell back upon the one mentionable objection of which he had certain knowledge. "He's got a villainous temper."

"Friends would teach him to control it. And there are excuses for that; his sight—his eyes are in a bad way. He injured them seriously, somehow,

in his work—something about the spark, I believe."

"Those wireless experiments of his?"

"Yes. He's going to do great things, Garrett."

"Late in the field."

"He leads it today; they all look to him. His inventions, discoveries, improvements, will make wireless as every-day a thing as the telephone."

I don't mean he couldn't win without friends; he's strong enough."

"Men have little use for him, Katherine."

"Women have."

Coast struggled temptation. . . .

"He has magnetism."

"That and strength, ambition, enthusiasm. He's worth being a friend to. I want you to know him better, to like him, Garrett."

After a little he managed to say: "I'll try, if you wish."

"I do wish. Please, Garrett."

"Then I'm to understand you seriously contemplate marrying him?"

Her "Yes!" was absolute.

"Don't you see"—he hated himself for this—he's after your money, Katherine?"

"Garrett, that is unworthy of you."

He said nothing, doggedly taking what comfort he might from the knowledge that he was right.

Gradually he comprehended that in the course of their conversation the car had left Fifth Avenue at the Plaza and was crossing Central Park at the Seventy-second Street entrance.

"We're near the gate," he said abruptly. "If you'll drop me there, please—"

"Certainly. Tell Patrick."

Coast groped for the speaking tube and communicated with the driver. When he sat back he was conscious of the woman's softening regard.

"You're not angry, Katherine?"

"No, Garrett; but I'm very, very sorry."

"If I've seemed presumptuous—"

"To me, Garrett? Can you remember the time when we were no-

friends?"

"No. . . . I want you to understand that it wasn't altogether because I want you myself—need you, because I love you—as you know—have loved you for years. . . . It was jealousy of your happiness. I said nothing that I didn't believe."

"I know. But you were—mistaken. You'll come to understand."

"I don't want you to make a mistake. Wait, Katherine, wait a little before deciding. I'm sure of your heart; it won't misguide you."

"I believe not. I know my heart and mind."

"You know mine," he said gently, and no more.

That stabbed her; she winced, wondering why. But the personality of Douglas Blackstock stood forth so largely, limned in such vivid coloring, in the foreground of her consciousness, that there was left little room, even for old friends such as Garrett Coast.

A foot, Coast lingered at the door, keen eyes searching hers almost plaintively.

"I'll drop in for tea tomorrow, if you ask me, Katherine."

"Have you ever needed an invitation, Garrett?"

"Then I'll come."

He nodded to the driver and the car swept away.

Long after it had shot out of sight, he stood staring. Then discovering himself bareheaded, hat and stick in hand, an object of amused regard, with a curt laugh of confusion and awakened self-consciousness, he turned back through the park.

### CHAPTER II.

Resigning with little reluctance his place at the card table to Dundas, whose turn it was to cut in, Coast

lighted a cigarette and wandered round the dining-room of Blackstock's apartment, idly inspecting the half-dozen hunting-prints that adorned the green burlap walls.

Unspeakingly bored, he went to the buffet, where he poured a very little Scotch into a tall glass, drowning it with icy charged water. He had refused to drink up to that moment, and was thirsty, but as he sat sipping and watching the players, Van Tuyl's unnatural pallor, moist hair and fixed smile affected him with a faint disgust, and he put the glass aside, not half-emptied. His brows knitted in his concern for the man, who had been drinking heavily and would pursue that madness until satiated or sodden; no influence that Coast knew of would restrain him; he was as unmanageable as a wild horse, and as spirited.

Slender, graceful, high lord of Devil-may-Care, Van Tuyl sober was inimitable, more loved than feared in spite of, perhaps because of, the wit he wielded like a whip-lash. Excesses fanned that brilliancy to a burning frenzy; at such times he knew no friends, and those who knew him avoided him; his wits, submerged, frothed with a satiric humor that etched as indelibly as an acid when he did not lay on with a bludgeon of vituperation. . . . A dangerous foil to Blackstock, Coast thought, comparing them, wondering that they were so much together. Contrasting them he thought: fire and tow, rapier and broadsword!

Blackstock was the broadsword of that comparison, heavy and cumbersome if capable. Without an effort he dominated the others, Van Tuyl always excepted; the sheer weight of Blackstock's personality forced them into the background. Little Dundas, with his deferential smile, delicately pink face and permanently rounded shoulders, seemed the veriest shadow of a man; Blackstock's shadow he had apparently constituted himself, Truax, round of face and blandly prac-

tical, if unquestionably independent, was only less dwarfed by his host.

"A good bridge"—Blackstock in the current slang; giving himself wholly to the game, playing to win, "wolfing the tricks," Van Tuyl told him.

The comment brought a darkish smile to the man's face.

"What'd you want me to do with 'em?" he growled semi-humorously, flipping a card from his hand and as swiftly making his play from dummy.

"Make you a present of 'em? Play to that, now; come through with that ten-spot." He chuckled as he gathered in the trick and led the final card from dummy. "That'll teach you to double my original make, I guess. . . . Game and rubber, Dunny; six without, doubled, and a little slam. Got that down?"

"Yes," replied Dundas, grinning feebly as he jotted down the score.

"Tough luck, partner," Truax observed to Van Tuyl. "You couldn't help doubling on your hand, of course, and equally of course I had to be chicaned in hearts."

"Brains, rather," observed Van Tuyl blandly, shuffling.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Different.

"Why, a year ago you told me this place was easily worth \$15,000. Now you estimate its value at less than \$10,000."

"You must remember that I was trying to sell it to you then. Now you want me to sell it for you."

### Foreign Health Resorts.

According to the latest statistics about \$40,045,000 is expended each year by visitors from foreign countries who take the "cure" at the natural mineral spring resorts in western Bohemia, along the Erzgebirge (Or mountains).

## COMMERCIAL

### Weekly Review of Trade and Market Reports.

R. G. Dun & Co.'s weekly review of trade says:

"Reports from the principal trade centers are nearly satisfactory, indicating a fair volume of activity, and in the Northwest the feeling is that conditions in that section have fully recovered from the setback of last year."

"Limited stocks of cotton goods and woollens result in a prompt revival of consumptive demand and inducements are now offered for increased production. Favorable prices named on dress fabrics and men's wear are also stimulating factors. Immediate shipments are asked for and small orders are frequently repeated. Heavy brown and colored domestics are being ordered to the end of the year. In woollens there is an active demand for heavy weight men's wear and some lines of fancy worsteds have sold so well that advances have been obtained. Trading in footwear has been checked to some extent by higher quotations, but Eastern manufacturers are well employed on current orders. Leather continues firm."

Bradstreet's says:

"Trade displays little change, with perhaps a slightly greater tendency toward irregularity. Yet the consensus of reports from many markets, barring some at the South, indicate that retail trade has been materially helped by cooler weather. Proceeding to the larger lines, the reports, as a whole, do not indicate anything better than fair, though the low condition of retailers' stocks, coupled with the fact that final distribution is now likely to increase, may, and probably will, eventuate in much small-lot buying, as well as in the reinstatement of orders heretofore canceled by timid buyers."

### Wholesale Markets

NEW YORK—Wheat—Spot steady; No. 2 red, 102½c elevator export basis and 102½ f o b afloat; No. 1 Northern Duluth, 118½ f o b afloat.

Corn—Spot steady; new corn, January, February and March, 71¼ f o b afloat; export No. 2, 81c old f o b nominal.

Butter—Firm; receipts, 5,181 packages; creamery specials, per lb, 33c; extra, 32; first, 28½@30; seconds, 26@27½; thirds, 24@25; creamery held, specials, 31; extras, 29½@30; firsts, 28@29; seconds, 25½@27; thirds, 24@25; state dairy tubs, finest, 30@31; do, common to fair, 22@26; process, seconds, 21@22; factory, current make, seconds, 21; thirds, 19@20.

Eggs—Firm; receipts, 6,461 cases, fresh gathered extras, per dozen, 31@32c; extra firsts, 27@29; firsts, 24@26; seconds, 20@23; fresh gathered checks, prime, 16@16½.

Poultry—Alive irregular; Western chickens, 12@13c; fowls, 12@13½; turkeys, 16. Dressed weak; Western chickens, 10@16c; fowls, 7@16½c; turkeys, broiling, 23; others, 10@20.

PHILADELPHIA—Wheat—Steady; contract grade, No. 2, red, in export elevator, 97@98c.

Corn—Firm; No. 2 yellow, for local trade, 83½@84c.

Oats—Quiet; No. 2 white natural, 53@53½c.

Butter—Firm; Western creamery 10c higher; extra Western creamery, 34; do, nearby prints, 35.

Eggs—Firm; Pennsylvania and other nearby firsts, f c, \$8.40 per case; do, current receipts, f c, \$7.80 per case; Western firsts, f c, \$8.40 per case; do, current receipts, f c, \$7.50@7.80 per case.

Cheese—Quiet; New York full cream fancy, 15c; do, fair to good, 14@14½.

Live poultry—Firm; fowls, 12@13c; old roosters, 9@9½; spring chickens, 12@13; ducks, 13@14; geese, 13@14; turkeys, 15@18.

BALTIMORE—Wheat—Settling prices were; No. 2 red Western, 100½; contract, 98½; No. 3 red, 97½; steamer No. 2 red, 95; steamer, No. 2 red Western, 95½. The closing was easier; spot and October, 98½; November, 99½; December, 101.

Corn—Spot, 79 nominal; year, 68½; January, 68 bid; February, 68½; March, 68½.

Oats—No. 2 white, 51½c; standard white, 51; No. 3 white, 50½; light-weight white oats are bringing a premium over the above prices.

Hay—Timothy—No. 1, \$24@24.50; No. 2, \$22.50@23.50; No. 3, \$19@21. Clover, Mixed—Choice, \$22@22.50. No. 1, \$21.50; No. 2, \$19@20. Clover—No. 1, \$21.50@22; No. 2, \$19@21.

Butter—Creamery, fancy, 30½@31; creamery, choice, 28½@29; creamery, good, 25@27; creamery, imitation, 22@24; creamery, prints, 30@32.

Eggs—Maryland, Pennsylvania and nearby firsts, 27c; Western firsts, 27; West Virginia firsts, 26; Southern firsts, 25@25½; guinea eggs, 13@14.

### Live Stock

CHICAGO—Close: Cattle—Beeves, \$4.55@8.75; Texas steers, \$4@5.85; Western steers, \$4.15@7; stockers and feeders, \$2.90@5.75; cows and heifers, \$1.90@5.85; calves, \$5@8.50.

Hogs—Market 5c higher; strong; light, \$5.70@6.40; mixed, \$5.80@6.50; heavy, \$5.75@6.45; rough, \$5.80@6.05; good to choice heavy, \$6.05@6.45; pigs, \$3.75@5.85; bulk of sales, \$6.20@6.35.

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