

The DARK MIRROR

By
LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

Author of
"The False Faces," "The Lone Wolf," Etc.

Illustrated by IRWIN MYERS

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"RED SENT FOR ME."

Synopsis.—Vaguely conscious of a double personality, but without any idea of its meaning, the girl, Leonora, makes her accustomed way into the Street of Strange Faces in the underworld of New York. Mario joins her. Greatly in love and seeing the fine qualities which the girl really possesses, Mario seeks to turn her from the path of inevitable destruction. She promises to marry him. At Ristori's cafe, gathering place of criminals, Leonora meets her partner, "Red" Carnehan, and his associate, and is accused of betraying a fellow criminal to the police. She savagely defends herself. Police crash into the room and two are killed by Carnehan. Leonora and the rest escape. In her studio, Priscilla Maine, wealthy artist, awakes from troubled sleep with a distinct feeling of having her life linked with Leonora's. Priscilla has painted a picture of herself in fancy dress—a gipsy—which has a strange effect on her. Unnerved, and fearful that her mind is affected, Priscilla calls to her aid a dear friend, Dr. Phillip Fosdick, who is in love with her. He is stunned to find that her dream story of the police fight is confirmed by the newspapers. Priscilla tells him about the mystery of her mother, who died when she was born. He sees the effect of the painting and pronounces it a case of auto-hypnosis. Priscilla makes him promise not to go to the police and he begins investigating for himself.

IV. MERE PAINT AND CANVAS?

After one week of gadding about, of shopping and theaters and dances and motoring, Priscilla felt quite fed up with distractions. She wanted to get back to her work, and wouldn't be happy till she did.

And why not? she demanded when she failed to get Philip on the telephone and secure his professional permission to return to her studio. "A few days" of trifling was all he had stipulated; and those few had served. She dreamed no more of Leonora or Red Carnehan or Mario. Today, all that, indeed, seemed remote and unimportant. What though she had dreamed a nightmare which coincided so mysteriously with actual events as to scare her nearly out of her wits? After all, it was at worst a dream; and in this delightfully substantial and matter-of-fact world, coincidences don't count with anybody except novelists hard up for a plot.

She found Ada Meyer pottering with a hopeless dab of still life, spent most of the morning giggling and gossiping, carried her off to the Ritz for luncheon, and left her there with some friends who needed a fourth at bridge; an arrangement perfectly agreeable to Priscilla; it was hard enough at any time to settle down to work after a spell of idling. It was the next thing to an impossibility with Ada on the premises.

The quiet of the empty studio was soothing and grateful. Priscilla sighed contentedly, wheeled the heavy easel over to its stand beside the pier glass, shrugged into a paint-smeared snood, and in the next fifteen minutes did nothing whatever but sit in a chair before the self-portrait, in stressless, intent study of her work.

Again it seemed good in her sight, decidedly the best thing she had ever done; and yet she was dissatisfied;



The head she must not touch

something was wrong, something was missing without which it could not prove convincing.

The head she must not touch, lest one misjudged stroke mar the excellence of its spirited gesture. Neither could she see any way to improve her painting of the figure. The folds of the skirt needed some little attention, not much, possibly half an hour's work. . . . No; the fault was in a background treated in a fashion too

academic and tame to suit that brilliant counterfeiter of life.

At length, rising, Priscilla took up her palette and from fat shining tubes squirted upon its satiny surface sleek coils of color.

For hours she worked steadily, absorbed, till a premature change in the light broke the spell. With a slight frown of annoyance she looked up to find the frosted glass of the north-light overcast with pale blue shadow. No matter: her task was ended, and sooner than she had thought it would be. A few days more and she could varnish.

"She put aside brushes and palette, shut the windows (through which now a cold, strong draught was blowing) drew the draperies close, and returned to the chair before the portrait. Reverted to her insensibly back to memories of the Street of Strange Faces whose dim reaches stretched away indefinitely behind that painted shape of dream. The effect of return to old associations grew strong, she could veritably see, she could almost smell and hear the Street . . ."

V. BEYOND THE THRESHOLD.

Out of nothingness, out of a sort of inert chaos, spectral walls like veils of mist took shape, closed in, added unto themselves a floor and ceiling, assumed a semblance of stability, became a boxlike room wherein her spirit was pent in a mood of sluggish and melancholy mutiny: a room hideously familiar to her in its every hateful detail: its poisonous wall paper, stained ceiling and threadbare linoleum, its iron sink in the corner, its rude chairs and common table cluttered with soiled crockery and a gas stove linked to an overhead jet by frayed tubing, its shelf from which hung articles of dejected clothing, its shabby iron bedstead with sagging springs and the lumpy mattress upon which her self lay, half dressed and half conscious, too bored to care whether she waked or slept . . ."

Weariness and disorientation were eloquent in her posture as she rested on her side, a hand between her head and the emaciated pillow, and written legibly in bluish shadows under listless eyes, in sallow cheeks whose normal hue was clearest pallor barely warmed by glowing health, in the un-studied disarray of her masses of fine black hair, in the sulen cast of her firm-lipped mouth.

A mutter of far thunder swelled and died.

The girl moved only her eyes, looking up to a window that revealed the storm-black sky.

What mattered it to her whether or not it rained? She was condemned, apparently, to endless imprisonment in this dismal place whose threshold her foot had not crossed in so many days she had lost count of them.

The room grew dark the sky more savage. A sword of lightning slashed the gloom, and again distant thunder boomed and grumbled into silence.

By the pert tin clock whose stridulation was the only voice her hiding place had heard in days, the hour was barely five.

She wondered why she had taken the trouble to look. What was the use of it, this keeping count of time? What was time indeed but waste, one long-drawn torment of waiting in idleness and impotence for the sign that never came to set her free?

She could have shrieked for sheer exasperation of ennui without alloy. She told herself that anything were better than such a fate as this. Why not shriek till her cries fetched the police? Or, better still, arise, go forth, and court arrest? A cell in the Tombs were preferable to this place of dubious security. Was she less a prisoner here than she would be there? But she did not shriek, she did not move, she did nothing, but remained as she had been on a waking from the desolating stupidity of unneeded sleep, so still she scarcely seemed a living, breathing being.

More lurid lightning, a deeper diapason of thunder, again that breathless hush . . . Of a sudden she left the bed and in one soundless bound gained the middle of the floor, where she paused in the crouch of a hunted thing at bay, her wide gaze fastened to the door. Through a wall so long that she concluded her hearing must have been at fault, she heard nothing. She relaxed, drew a deep breath—and grew rigid with alarm when she heard the

noise repeated, a stealthy knocking on the panels.

With an ear to the crack between door and frame she seemed to detect a panting murmur: "Nora! . . . Nora! . . ."

She called guardedly: "Who's there?" A voice of greater confidence replied: "Me—Charlie—le' me in!" She drew a bolt and turned the knob, distrustfully opening the door a few inches with a shoulder to it, prepared to slam it shut with all her might should she find cause to think she was being tricked. In the outer muck, the pale contour of a face she knew was just discernible. She stood aside and let its owner enter.

"Well? What do you want?" The Coke returned a twisted, pin-cating grimace.

"I don't want nothin'. Red sent me to tell yuh he wants yuh."

"Red?" She caught her breath sharply. "Where—?"

"I darsent tell. He made me take me out'. But he wants yuh."

"When? How?"

"T'night. He says it's all right. Ristori's kep' his trap shut. Th' bulls



"Honest t' Gawd, Nora, Yuh Got Me Wrong!" the Coke Protested.

ain't wise to Red and Leo's hang-out. He wants yuh shou'd come to him t'night."

"He does?" There was a trace of challenge in her tone that was less disguised when, after brief deliberation, she demanded: "Suppose I don't? What if the bulls pipe me in the street? Suppose I don't come?"

The dope slave shuffled spasmodically.

"Red says yuh're to—"

"So you say. But how do I know he does? How do I know Red sent you here to tell me that? How do I know this ain't some dodge the Nut put you up to—or Inez?"

"Hones' t' Gawd, Nora, yuh got me wrong!" the Coke protested. "I ain't seen the Nut, nor Inez either, sinst that night. Red sent me."

"Prove it."

"How'm I gonna do that?"

"Go back to Red and bring me something to prove he sent you—that silver ring he wears—anything."

"I would, Nora"—the protestation was convincingly earnest—"but I darsent. Red'll half kill me if I go back without yuh. Besides, it ain't safe, goin' there too often. The bulls might see and follow me."

"Well, what about me? What if they see and follow me? I suppose it's all right if I get pinched along with Red and Leo." The girl gave a gesture half impatient, half defiant.

"Nothing doing. You tell Red I said so."

"Red says, tell yuh if yuh don't come t'night somepin yuh won't like'll happen to that Wop what's stuck on yuh."

Mario! . . . Her lips framed without uttering the name. She retreated a pace, convulsively tightening the fist that clutched the folds over the kimono above her bosom.

"What—what are you talking about?"

"What Red said to tell yuh. Take it from me, Nora, yuh better do like he says. Somebody's been givin' him an earful about yuh an' that Spanish guy."

"Spanish guy?" she echoed shrilly. "I don't know what you're talking about!"

"Maybe so, maybe not." The Coke licked his lips with a furtive tongue. "Anyhow he's sore. If I was yuh, and didn't want no more trouble I'd do like Red says."

"After a while the girl said solemnly: "How am I going to find him if you won't tell me where he is?"

"I'll take yuh there. Red said I should. It's all right, Nora—yuh don't hafta be afraid—"

"What time—?"

"Ten o'clock tonight."

"Where'll I meet you?"

"In the room upstairs at—"

A lurid flame of lightning dried speech upon his lips. Terrified, he covered back to the wall. Darkness fell. Thunders shook the tenement on its foundations, crash upon rippling crash. Half stunned, the girl felt the leash upon her senses slipping. Her hands caught wildly at nothingness . . .

VI. THE STORM.

Body and soul seemed welded into one taut string vibrating in agonized response to the fury of the tempest: she found herself standing far from the chair in front of the easel, in quivering affright gazing over-shoulder at the featureless long rectangle of the portrait in the shadows.

Rain sluiced the skylight in wind-whipped waves, with a crisp, tearing noise. Thunder rocked the skies, ripped and raved, rumbled away in lessening reverberations. Then without warning the gloom was abolished by a ghastly lilac glare—and the face on the canvas started out of its dark background with an uncanny look of life, the gay mockery of its smile distorted into grinning malice. She was fain to switch on the lights to lay that ghostly leer.

Even then she dared not look again. With head averted, she swung the easel round so that the painting faced the wall.

Still she was ill at ease in the company of the thing. She could not forget how that cold electric blaze had seemed to wake the painting into goblin life, transient but terrible. The memory of its jeering smile persisted. Like a specter unseen but importunate at her shoulder, round a corner of her consciousness, denied but insistent, the notion lurked of the work of her own hands turned monster, preternaturally inspired with a spirit of fa l animus . . .

She had a crawling shiver of superstitious dread. Commonsense was powerless to comfort her with its assurance that she had merely had one more hypnotic hallucination induced by auto-suggestion. Instinct insisted commonsense for once was wrong, that there was more in this than the human mind, fettered to the claims of natural laws, could comprehend or cope with. Surely supernatural forces were here at work . . .

She strove without success to cast out that thought. . . . Comparing her wrist watch with memory of the hour marked by the clock in Leonora's refuge, she reckoned her lapse from full waking consciousness had not lasted longer than five minutes: in that scant spell her soul had journeyed far, tarried a while in communion with another, and returned with a freight of fears, of doubts and cares that threatened the stability of her reason; in those few moments the work of a week had been undone. She stood now where she had been immediately after the last preceding dream, poised perilously near the verge of derangement, haunted by a shape of fear no whit less awful if it were after all only the creature of her imagination.

Within five hours her other self must go to keep an assignation with a murderer. Fancy pictured Leonora stealing through streets of sinister shadow to that rendezvous with a fate inscrutable . . .

But not for Leonora was all this torture of sollicitude. Through unhappy mischance Mario had been marked for Red's enmity. And where Red hated, tenure of life was treacherous . . .

Now it was revealed to her that, however inexplicable the affinity of their souls, however dissimilar their circumstances and irreconcilable their ways of thought and standards, in this respect Leonora and Priscilla Maine were one: in love with Mario.

Acknowledging this incredible fact without protest, Priscilla told herself she had loved Mario always, ever since that time, long past, when he had first figured in her life of dreams.

And contemplating the prospect of living through the night to come, under whose impenetrable cover Mario and Leonora must work out their dark entangled destinies, while she waited, powerless to help or hinder, in an ignorance irremediable and maddening, Priscilla felt a shadow fall athwart her understanding, as black and cold as Death.

The Hop Joint.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Hassler Expedition.

The Hassler scientific expedition was made in the United States coast survey steamer Hassler, between Dec. 4, 1871, and August, 1872. P. C. Johnson commanding. The scientific investigations were carried on under the charge of Prof. Louis Agassiz, Starting from Philadelphia, the route embraced the West Indies, Brazilian coast, Strait of Magellan, and the Pacific coast and islands to San Francisco. Deep sea dredgings were made at all favorable points.

The Kitchen Cabinet

(By 1921, Western Newspaper Union.)
"Smile, and while you smile another smiles; And by and by there's miles of smiles, And life's worth while because you smile."
SEASONABLE GOOD THINGS.

A nice sandwich to serve on fish days is prepared as follows: Toast several pieces of bread cut in triangles and spread when cool with sauce tartare. On each piece of toast set one or two heart leaves of lettuce, each with a bit of sauce; above these place two to four fried oysters, above the oysters a lettuce leaf holding the dressing, and above that two slices of broiled bacon and the second piece of toast. On the plate with the sandwiches place a lettuce leaf holding more of the dressing.

Oranges in Jelly—Soften one-fourth of a package of gelatin in one-fourth of a cupful of cold water; add one-half cupful of boiling water and one-third of a cupful of honey, one cupful of orange juice, and the juice of half a lemon. Set a mold in ice water, pour in one-half inch of the liquid, and when firm arrange a layer of orange sections freed from all membrane and seeds; cover with another layer of the liquid and repeat the layers of fruit until all the gelatin mixture has been used. Serve when molded with sugar and cream.

Cabbage and Beet Salad—Use one or two quarters of a firm cabbage head; cut the hard center and shave as fine as possible; cut small, cooked beets in slices, or larger beets in cubes. Make a French dressing, using a teaspoonful of onion pulp with three tablespoonfuls of oil and two of vinegar, mustard, salt, cayenne and paprika to taste. This quantity of dressing will season a pint of material. Set the beets in the center of a ring of cabbage. Season the vegetables separately.

Scalloped Chicken with Macaroni—Allow a pint of cooked macaroni, one pint of cream and a pint of chicken, or that proportion. Arrange in layers, using but two layers of the chicken and three of the macaroni. Season well with celery salt, or a cupful of cooked celery may be added to piece out the chicken, which will improve the dish. A cupful of vegetable oysters will be another good addition.

Cheese Souffle—Take two cupfuls of medium thick white sauce, one cupful of stale bread crumbs, one-half cupful of grated cheese, two eggs, salt, paprika and onion juice. Fold in the stiffly beaten whites of the eggs. Pour the souffle into a greased baking dish, set in a pan of hot water and bake in a slow oven until it is puffed and firm.

Wherever a true woman comes, home is always around her. The stars may be over her head, the glow worms in the night-cold grass may be the fire at her foot, but home is where she is.—Ruskin.

WHAT TO HAVE FOR DINNER.

"With a healthy body, a mind at ease," a simple dinner will always please. When we lose interest in our meals it is time to consult a physician.

Hungarian Goulash—Put three tablespoonfuls of fat, fried from salt pork, in a frying pan with a peeled sliced onion; cook until brown.

Remove the onion, and put in a pound of lean veal cut in small pieces. Stir and cook until the meat is seared and lightly browned, then place in a casserole. Add a pint of broth, a teaspoonful of paprika, put on the cover and bake. Brown in a little hot fat a dozen small potato balls, and the same number of onions. As soon as the onions are well browned, add the vegetables to the casserole after the meat has cooked an hour. Season with salt and add two tablespoonfuls of flour mixed with cold water. Let cook about two hours in all.

Onions Stuffed with Ham—Peel eight good-sized onions, cover with boiling water and cook until nearly tender; drain, rinse in cold water and drain again. Cut out the center of each onion to leave a thin-walled cup. Sprinkle the inside with salt. Mix together one cupful of chopped cooked ham, one cupful of soft bread crumbs, one-fourth of a cupful of melted butter, half a teaspoonful of paprika, one tablespoonful of finely chopped parsley, one-fourth of a teaspoonful of salt, and the onion that was taken from the centers, chopped not too fine. Fill the onions with this mixture, rounding it up well. Pour a cupful of thin cream or rich milk around the onions and cook in the oven one-half hour, basting three times with the liquid in the pan. Mix three tablespoonfuls of melted butter with three-fourths of a cupful of cracker crumbs and spread the mixture over the onions. Return to the oven to brown the crumbs. Serve from the baking dish.

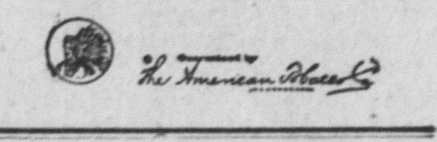
Any good snappy cheese which has become dry, if grated and stirred into hot cream, seasoned with paprika and red pepper, makes a fine cream cheese which may be used for sandwiches.

Nellie Maxwell

Do you know why it's toasted

To seal in the delicious Burley tobacco flavor.

LUCKY STRIKE CIGARETTE



Glad But Confusing New Year. "I wish you a happy first of January. Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-one!" exclaimed the person who is genial but precise. "You have been going through that rigmorole over and over again," protested his wife. "Why don't you say 'Happy New Year,' and let it go at that?" "I want to keep myself reminded of the change in figures. I never write the date correctly until the middle of February."

Important to Mothers
Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, that famous old remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the Signature of *Dr. J.C. Fletcher* In Use for Over 30 Years. Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria

Usually So. "Pa, what is a peacemaker?" "He is a man, my child, whose chief success is generally in precipitating a fight."

Garfield Tea, taken regularly, will correct both liver and kidney disorders.—Adv.

Trouble is something that generally visits us without warning. Some people are too conscientious to preach what they practice.

Suffered For Fourteen Years

Richwood, W. Va.—"Before the use of Dr. Pierce's medicines I could hardly walk across the house. I suffered for fourteen years. But after taking Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, I got better. I can now walk all day and never get tired."—MRS. MAGGIE PERKINS, 122 Riverside Drive.

All druggists sell Favorite Prescription and Medical Discovery.



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PETROLEUM JELLY
A convenient safe antiseptic for home use. Invaluable for dressing cuts and sores. A time-tried remedy.

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PISO'S