

The Story Thus Far:

WITH headquarters in the establishment of one Jo Lung, a dealer in stolen goods, a gang of what the police believe to be opium smugglers is operating in London. To oblige an old friend—Inspector Dawson Haig of Scotland Yard—Matt Kearney goes to Jo Lung's in search of evidence. Gaining admittance by posing as a possible purchaser of gems, he is shown a beautiful necklace. To his amazement, he recognizes it—it had belonged to his aunt; had been lost at sea, with its owner, ten months before!

With his companion, Detective-Sergeant Norwich, he looks the place over and departs—not, however, until he has found, and appropriated, a notebook which he believes may prove of value to the police.

The notebook is missed immediately. Its owner, a sinister-visaged Oriental—Yu'an Hee See, obviously a person of tremendous importance—appears. "Jo Lung," he exclaims, in a weird, piping voice, "get that book! Summon The Adder at once, and follow those men—they're detectives!..." Within half an hour, Norwich's body is found on the street. He has been brutally murdered—torn, not cut, as though some beast had attacked him.

Mystified, Dawson Haig sets to work. The notebook, he finds, contains somewhat cryptic memoranda which make it obvious that the gang he is combating is engaged in some vast and mysterious illegal enterprise, centering around the steamship Wallaroo. And the Wallaroo is the vessel on which the girl Haig loves—Matt Kearney's sister Eileen—is now sailing, en route to Colombo. . . . There follows an audacious attempt on the detective's life by a weird creature, which, when Haig shows fight, amazes him by climbing down the facade of a building and vanishing—with the notebook! . . .

Accompanied by a woman, a beautiful but sinister creature who—like Polodos, a Greek; Ali, an Arab; Jo Lung, and several other sycophants—is always near him. Yu'an Hee See goes to Paris. Haig, now thoroughly cognizant that he is dealing with a band of desperate criminals, directed by a master mind, follows him. . . . Yu'an Hee See's forces gather in a secret upstairs chamber at the Restaurant Suleiman Bey. With Ballon, a French detective, Haig is there—in the dining-room. Now at last he is at close grips with his quarry: the most dangerous band of criminals on earth!

IV

THE meeting to which he referred was taking place in a large room two floors above. Heavy curtains were drawn over windows commanding the side street, and on settees which lined the walls a singular company was assembled.

A case of champagne had been opened in the center of the floor and the carpet was littered with straw and pink wrapping paper. Upon a big, marble-topped table were bottles of whisky, brandy, gin, absinthe and even arrack. Boxes of excellent cigars, all of them opened, lay upon many of the smaller tables placed before the settees. The air was gray, almost unbreathable, with tobacco smoke.

Out of those thick glass mugs which are usually employed to serve lager the guests were engaged in consuming the various beverages provided.

Approach to this room from the restaurant below was guarded by two doors, so that the din created by the party was not audible on the ground floor.

As the big man entered, pipe in hand, and stood, swaying and looking about him with bleared eyes, wild yells of greeting went up:

"Mac! Mac! Good old Mac!..."

"Sink me! it is goot to see you, Mac!..."

"Gott in Himmell! here is Mac!..."

"Viva! Mac!..."

The newcomer seemed bemused by his



the person he was seeking, he picked his way through straw, paper and champagne bottles to a narrow settee placed between two curtained windows, on which one man lounged in supercilious isolation.

THIS was a sprucely groomed Egyptian, his sleek black hair growing low upon his cheekbones. With his clean-shaven, olive face and very white teeth, he was a languorously handsome figure. A scarlet *turbush* lay beside him where he reclined, supported by many silken cushions, and there was an



Illustrated by
John Richard
Flanagan

Yu'an Hee See Laughs

riotous reception. One could almost watch the slow workings of that fuddled brain. He peered through tobacco smoke, nodding shortly to some of the shouters. Then, evidently having discovered

open attaché case upon the floor, apparently full of papers.

"Hello, Macles," he said, greeting the newcomer in English, which he spoke with facility but with a slight accent. "You are late. You and one other are last to report."

Watching the heavy lip twitching under a graying mustache, he thought, "Only desperation has made you report at all. . . ."

"I had hell's work and a'," was the reply, spoken in broad Caledonian. "I had'n a bean. I've had bite nor sup since yesterday morning, and I walked here a' the way from Calais."

"You should have ordered something downstairs."

"I did that. I ordered brandy."

"So it would appear!" the Egyptian smiled. "However, you had a well-lined purse the last time we met, Mac, and

it's your own fault if it's empty now. But"—he smiled more meaningfully into the debauched face—"it will soon be well filled again. Show me your papers and I will see that you have supper."

THE Scotsman sat down on the settee near the extended, neatly shod feet of the speaker and laid a number of papers, including a greasy passport, upon a little table.

"There you are, Chief."

The man addressed as chief glanced through the documents and the passport; then, opening the attaché case which lay upon the floor beside him, he took out a long envelope.

He removed the contents with delicate, yellow fingers, enumerating them as he did so.

"One—fifty pounds English," he said. "Two—a week's pay in advance. Three



By Sax Rohmer

—your ticket for Trieste; you leave in the morning. Four—cabin accommodation, Trieste to Alexandria. Five—in the small envelope—the name and address of the man from whom you will take further instructions when you get there."

He replaced them all, adding those papers which MacIles had given him, then deftly slipped an elastic band around envelope and passport, handing them back with a smile.

"AND now go to it, Mac," he said. "It's your last night. From now on, you are under orders. . . ."

But his keen brain was busy and he was thinking: "This man is efficient but dangerous. I must be prepared to replace him."

MacIles turned and looked about the smoke-laden room. It would have been

difficult to find within any similar area a more complete set of ruffians. Their nationalities were various. But most of them had at least one quality in common—they were drunk.

In the matter of villainy there was little to choose between them. There was a huge, cross-eyed Swede, bearded nearly to the eyes, who apparently possessed no name other than Red; an Italian with sly sidelong eyes, answering without resentment to the name of The Wasp; a Chinaman with a scarred and pock-marked face of so evil a quality that it resembled a cunning mask fashioned by a master with a turn for sadism—this creature was apparently known as One Eye. Other ruffians there were, black, white, yellow and brown, draining tankards of

champagne and shouting coarse personalities from side to side of the room.

The big Scotsman faced them for a moment. The chief was watching him. And he saw an expression as of sudden nausea cross those bloated features.

"MacIles must be watched," he thought, as:

"You look rotten, Mac, you do!" shouted a coarse voice. "Come and feed your face. Uncle Tom, here, wants to talk to you."

MacIles stared in the direction of the speaker, a thick-set, bull-necked individual, scars of the prize-ring visible upon nose and ears. His companion, Uncle Tom, was a powerful Negro, whose little, sunken eyes seemed to hold a reddish light so that they resembled those of a gorilla.

MacIles, exchanging surly greetings with several others, joined these two at their table, and the Negro, standing up, drew a laden supper wagon alongside. As a man who is famished, the Scotsman helped himself promiscuously to caviar, cold grouse, plover-egg sandwiches, smoked salmon and sauerkraut.

"You won't have enough there," said the ex-prize fighter, cutting off and setting before him nearly half a pound of Westphalian ham. "Here, have a drink."

He filled a mug to the brim with champagne.

At which moment the Portuguese came in, greeted with cries of "Ferdy! . . ."

"What's scared you, Ferdy? . . ."

"Has somebody been unkind to you, Ferdy? . . ."

"Didn't think you was goin' to join up again, Ferdy."

This last from Kid Brown, the cockney fighter. Loud laughter, clapping of hands and stamping of feet. . . .

The new arrival smiled uneasily and made his way to the settee where the chief reclined, watching him and thinking: "This man is afraid. He may destroy us. . . ."

DOWNSTAIRS in the restaurant the Russian politician continued his apparently interminable harangue without once losing the interest of his audience. This admirable quality in Russian audiences accounts, no doubt, for the character of Russian plays.

No other customers appeared, and the two men who had penetrated to the mysteries beyond failed to return. Dawson Haig turned to the French detective.

"I may be chasing a shadow," he said, "but I am not satisfied."

The Frenchman shrugged and smiled deprecatingly.

"I cannot know upon what information you are acting, M. Haig," he replied. "But I have done my best for you—and what is the result?"

"Nothing."

"Precisely."

"Except that I mean to wait until one of them comes out again; then I mean to follow him."

The Frenchman shrugged again.

"Shall we then order a bottle of wine?" he suggested.

"For we may have some time to wait."

"Certainly. Is there any other way out of this place?"

"Not that I am aware of. As I told you, it has never come under our notice before. It is used by political fanatics, and Suleiman, the proprietor, is, I believe, a Turkish Communist. Some Algerians, and such people, use it also." He smiled. "There is perhaps a political meeting going on. I fear you are wasting your time, monsieur."

"Having nothing better to do at the moment," Dawson Haig returned grim-

ly, "with your permission I intend to go on wasting my time for at least another hour, M. Ballon."

Upstairs the party was growing riotous. As a result of some small dispute Red, the huge Swede, had challenged One Eye, the Chinaman, to a wrestling match. For the purpose a space had been cleared, but it proved to be inadequate.

One of the tables had been overturned by the combatants and much glass broken. One Eye was wildly cheered by the audience when he proved to be a match for his enormous opponent. Against the bull strength of the Swede he brought to bear an Oriental cunning and a knowledge of the more obscure tricks of wrestling, which resulted in a draw.

CERTAINLY the Swede was very drunk, and halfway through the encounter had paused to be very sick, so that the conditions of the match were perhaps not strictly fair. However, neither the sickness nor the referee's decision had destroyed the harmony of the evening, and all carried on merrily.

The elegant chief sipped coffee and smoked Egyptian cigarettes, exchanging light badinage with various members of the company. But always he remained aloof, reclining amidst his cushions—watching, weighing men and estimating motives. . . .

Two guests were singing at the top of their voices, one in German and the other in Portuguese. The supporters of these rivals (who were not singing the same song) added their voices to the choruses. And in the midst of this uproar The Wasp, drawing a knife from his sleeve, leaped across the table before him and sprang, snarling, upon the German singer.

"You sing that about *me*, you swine!" he shouted.

Someone threw a half-emptied bottle of wine at him; it struck the wall, and fell, cracked, upon a seat.

Both vocalists ceased abruptly, and the German fell back on a table immediately behind him, which was smashed by his weight, so that its contents were spilled all over those seated near it. At the same moment, with great presence of mind, he kicked the Italian in the stomach.

The Wasp's knife fell from his hand, and, howling with agony, he dropped and lay writhing on the floor.

This happy thought was greeted with a wild yell of appreciation and roars of laughter. But the big blond Brandenburg was seriously annoyed. Extricating himself from debris of the broken table he sprang upon the fallen Wasp.

"Italian pig! I strangle you!" he roared.

The chief stood up, smiling no longer; and:

"Orders!" he cried in a sharp voice.

The Brandenburg hesitated, drew back. Catcalls, cheers and laughter ceased. The agonized Italian, groaning, struggled to regain his feet. In the space of ten seconds complete silence came, so that the sound made by wine dripping from the cracked bottle was plainly to be heard.

All faced the chief. The German's great, thick fingers were twitching convulsively, his glaring blue eyes were turned in the direction of the tottering figure beside him.

"I HAVE to remind you of orders." The Egyptian's voice cut through the stillness. "I will overlook this breach—it is the first tonight. But any other infringement I must report to Mr. King."

"To hell with Mr. King!" the German exclaimed thickly, his murderous glance still set upon The Wasp. . . .

(Continued on page 30)





She smiled, and Jody recognized her. It was the lady of the chair

Jody Defies King Charles

What a Kentucky boy saw in New Orleans when that Port of Queer Cargoes was under the flag of Spain

By Harris Dickson

IN ALL that measureless solitude of forest, swamp and water no human eye beheld one small, brown speck that went gliding southward on the turbid currents of the Mississippi. From a range of lordly bluffs at the east this speck might have been indistinguishable among a thousand fragments of driftwood, except for its much more rapid motion. Helpless logs and trees preserved their relative positions on the river's tawny surface, while this tinier object wriggled in and out like a floundering bug that passed them one by one.

The lone Kentucky boy in his frail bark canoe seemed pitifully unequal to battle against the immensities of a flooded Mississippi, yet Jody Karr gazed fearlessly upon its dangers and smiled as he neared the fulfillment of a desire that had become a fixed purpose of his life. The tenacious Karrs never gave up a purpose and at last, in 1787, he was voyaging to New Orleans.

Jody had itched to go, because ever since he was big enough to listen he had drunk in the tales of adventurers who stopped overnight at his father's mountain cabin and told strange yarns about the Creole city. The wide-eyed child was then too young to comprehend what these travelers meant by certain whispers when his mother and sister had gone from the room. But as Jody grew older his secret and half-shamed instincts construed for him the significance of winks and leers as boatmen bragged of money squandered on red-lipped señoritas, who smiled behind their fans, and vivacious dancing demoiselles.

The lad also remembered old Parson Tackett, who at times would come plodding through Big Stone Gap on a flea-

bitten gray nag to preach his gospel of damnation wherever three or four settlers might assemble. Tackett was rabid in lambasting the scarlet sins of New Orleans, just as ancient prophets had denounced the iniquities of Babylon.

Hell-Bent for New Orleans

Many of Tackett's fierce words conveyed no meaning to an unlettered lad, but only roused a wonderment as to whether the parson would be so vicious if he were nineteen years old, like Jody, instead of being sixty. For David, Sweet Singer of Israel, had got pretty well stricken with age before he abandoned the paths of dalliance and devoted himself exclusively to psalms.

Even if New Orleans were more stupid than a monastery, Jody would have traveled there in spite of hell and high water, because King Charles of Spain had ordered the Kentuckians to keep off his river. His river? No, sirree. Not by a jugful! The Mississippi belonged to Kentucky and any foreigner who blocked its passage must stand aside just as soon as Kaintucks got strong enough to crash through.

The sun of early springtime flashed upon waters that were brilliant but not yet hot. Jody dipped his paddle deep,

and down the vast river his canoe went leaping. Its forward half was packed with pelts, lashed fast and covered by a raw cowhide. The deer and bear were his own kill. No man had helped him—he asked none for help. In the arrogance of nineteen years Jody braced a pair of moccasined legs against his cargo of skins and whistled as he paddled. The gray-ringed tail of a coonskin cap dangled behind his head and red fringe fluttered from a deerskin hunting shirt; his eyes danced more brilliantly than the sunshine on the ruffled river and Jody sang a jubilant song, for he was paddling hell-bent to the City of Delicious Sins.

Two days south of Natchez the Mississippi widened and grew quieter. The crests of rugged highlands on his left had now flattened out until both the banks were level. Soon he approached a fort and barracks on the eastern shore.

That must be Baton Rouge, and the boy paused very cautiously to reconnoiter the hostile stockade. A bugle sent its melodious reverberations along the river. Jody saw a few idle soldiers lounging around but none of the Spanish garrison noticed a canoe that stole past them, a slinking shadow. Careful, Jody, or you'll land in Governor Miro's calabozo and never see any sins at all.

"Settlements is too almighty thick down here," the mountaineer grumbled. "A man ain't got room to breathe."

During the early afternoon the boy, whistling and flying along a deserted river, suddenly spied a barge. Quicker than he could cover a sick pup with a saddle blanket his nimble canoe shot in-shore to hide under some bushes.

The huge unwieldy contraption just ahead of him was built like a scow, square at both ends, with high gunwales and three stout tree forks on either side which served as rowlocks for enormous paddle sweeps. The sweep-handles were long hickory saplings with boards spiked at their ends, and each one required the power of a he-man to operate it. Awkwardly the sweeps rose and fell, while a helmsman steered from the stern. "Shucks!" Jody grinned, "that's an Ohio flatboat," and darted out of hiding. Immediately the crew saw him and four idlers ranged themselves at the stern, stalwart pioneers who wore a nondescript garb, half-Indian, half-white.

A Kentucky Greeting

His canoe grated against the barge. A burly arm, covered with red hair, caught the prow and made fast a rope. Then Jody clambered aboard.

The flatboat's crew stared him up and down. Measured him. Nobody extended a hand of welcome. Nobody spoke. A small, wiry, bristle-bearded man, who seemed to be their captain, wore regulation pantaloons of blue homespun and a belted shirt. His jaws kept grinding on a quid of tobacco as he silently regarded the stranger with shrewd gray eyes that rarely made a mistake. Cap'n