

Woman of the Family

By May Edginton

ILLUSTRATED BY JAY HYDE BARNUM

The Story Thus Far:

HAVING become the hostess of the Regalia, a London night club, through the friendly offices of Lennie Ward, a young dancing man, Eve Langham, a charming girl, meets and falls in love with one of the club's patrons: Captain Jonathan Horne.

She believes Horne to be a wealthy explorer. She is not aware that he is working with the police, who, trailing a band of jewel thieves, are planning to raid the Regalia, on "gala evening." She does not suspect that, strongly attracted to her, but believing her to be one of the gang, he is watching her; also, Fero, the club's manager; Tonetti, the orchestra leader; and some of the patrons—notably, Mrs. Louise Poinsetter, a wealthy American. . . .

Eve's sister, Sophia (a thoroughly unscrupulous girl), inveigles Lennie Ward into marrying her; then, learning that her husband has no income, begs Eve to find him a job. Eve knows of only one person who may possibly solve the problem—Jonathan Horne. But she hesitates to ask a favor of him. Louise Poinsetter has warned her against him, has intimated that he is a dangerous man. And following that warning, she and Horne have quarreled and parted, Horne announcing, in anger, that he is off for Le Touquet by plane.

Nevertheless, she asks Horne's aid. "I'll get Ward a job," Horne says coldly, "if you'll fly to France with me, at once." Eve, in love with him, and desperate, agrees.

They board a plane, fly a considerable distance and descend. As they approach the ground—"This," Eve exclaims, "isn't Le Touquet!" Horne smiles. "Far from it, my dear," he replies calmly. "We'll go to Le Touquet tomorrow—perhaps."

Conclusion

THEY skirted the belt of trees and she saw what must have been the smallest village in the world; a tiny hamlet, asleep except for a dim light in a building only a little larger than the other buildings clustering round it.

"That's not a bad little inn there," said Horne imperturbably.

"But we're . . . not staying here?"

He answered:

"I can promise you you'll be comfortable enough."

Without glancing at her again he knew: "She is afraid of me, and I don't wonder. She suspects I'm a queer fish. She probably knows enough about queer fish." And then he was glad that she might be afraid. It was salutary for her. The more unhappiness, even the more danger that he could bring to this evening's performance, would be all to the good.

She deserved it, and she should have it.

"This little village," he remarked, "is right off the beaten track. Even motorists haven't discovered it, to my knowledge. It has no attractions and very little beauty; but it's at least charmingly peaceful, isn't it? There's no one even stirring in the fields, for when the light fails, the thrifty French peasant goes to bed."

She said, "I didn't expect this."

And he answered equably, "I know that."

And they were at the open door of the tiny inn. An old woman kept it; a peasant, very aged and sleepy, deaf.

She had been on the point of going to bed like the other peasants, but she was glad to see custom, and she began to offer them a room garrulously.

Horne had a few minutes' swift conversation with her, which Eve could not follow, for he had dropped into the old woman's own *patois*.

Eve said to herself feverishly: "It's too primitive. It's too horrible here alone with him, in a place like this, thinking what he does of me!"

For what did he think? That she was a light girl, out for fun, for money, for gifts; for a "holiday."

And she recoiled from the thought that it would be like him devilishly to circumvent such a girl.

He was cruel.

Then he turned to her and made things clear.

"There's a room. I remember it, and the old lady remembers me. She'll take you some supper upstairs, and she'll look after you very well. Fortunately I have a couple of books in my case which I'll leave for you."

THEY were standing in the cramped café living-room. He began to open his bag and to take out the books, while she gazed at him speechlessly.

He had more information:

"There's a little twelfth-century church, and the curé will love to show it to you tomorrow. You won't be too bored, I hope, till I come back."

Now she would be frightened; now she would realize that no alluring female crook could play with Jonathan Horne.

"Till you come back?"

"I said 'till I come back.' It will be rather a change from an evening at the Regalia, but perhaps you will be all the better for resting. Let me mention, by the way, that there is no motorcar of any kind in this village; no general traffic goes through it. I don't believe there's even a telephone." He swept a look round the room to make sure. "The telegraph office is four miles away in the next village. Of course it's dark now, but in the morning you will see that it is really quite charming here, if one makes the best of it."

He kept his eyes on her face.

"I don't understand," she faltered.

"You needn't understand tonight."

He swept her with that ice-gray look. "I'm returning to London—for gala night at the Regalia. I wouldn't miss it . . . even for you." His smiling voice changed. "And now—as for you . . . you'd better take my orders quietly. You will stay here till you're wanted."

"W-wanted?" The word offended her. It was a cut across the face. "Wanted—by you!" She hardly breathed it. He kept his eyes on her.

"You'll be lucky if you're only wanted by me. I may be . . . kind."

"Kind—you!"

She forgot Lennie and Sophia, forgot her intention to delight and appease Jonathan Horne; could only cry with all scorn in her voice:

"Kind—you!"

"I'm a man," he said. "Mortal. Human . . . I say I may be kind. Anyway, you'll wait here for me because there's nothing else to do."





She wasn't frightened. . . . He stared at her. Oh, yes, she knew he was a man, mortal, human. She knew all right. So she wasn't frightened. Surely, though, she must be thinking of Fero, Tonetti, Louise. . . ?

"Good night," he said; and was gone. She ran out of the inn, through the tiny cobbled courtyard; stood and listened.

In a few minutes she heard the rising hum of the engines; she heard the plane take off and go roaring up into the night sky.

His "Good night" seemed to linger in the still darkness.

Complete silence fell around her. She turned and saw the old woman gesticulating in the doorway, so she went back; she tried to make the old woman understand her, but she had not the *patois* of the district.

Shruggings, apologetic gesticulations, unintelligible torrents of words were all that met her questions or requests.

The old woman merely managed to make it clear that the inn must now be shut up; that madame must go to bed; and that supper would be in her room.

As Horne had said, there was nothing else to do.

LENNIE was tremendously pleased. It was a great night, the gala night; and, suddenly standing up to his rôle of family man—irksome as it threatened to be—he had brought Sophia.

Little thing. She was loving and she was bright, and she had lost the job which she had taken so that she might contribute to his support—not to mention her own. And she had been crying—such a pity for Sophia to cry—so he had made her a great, grand promise.

"Sweetheart, I will take you to the Regalia Club's gala night."

Tonetti had been good about it when he had asked permission to bring a lady—better not mention the word "wife." One had had enough of that with Sir Edgar Marter.

"Yes, yes. Oh, yes, Leonardo," Tonetti said, "but she must be a beautiful lady, and she mustn't interfere with your dancing too much. We've got to keep all our clients very well amused, you understand."

"She'll look wonderful, I promise you. As a matter of fact—I don't know if you noticed it—she was in here the other night with Sir Edgar Marter."

It was a good name to mention to such as Tonetti.

"Sir Edgar Marter, eh? Can't she bring him along?"

"Afraid—afraid she can't bring the old boy tonight, Tonetti."

"Ah, well," said Tonetti, with a wave of the hands, "there will be enough; enough."

Indeed he was right. The club was full; and the success for which Fero and little Captain Hopton had been working seemed to be achieved.

Some of the most distinguished of London's foreign visitors had tables tonight. Young society beauties glowed like hothouse flowers; a score of actresses, great and less great, had come on for supper after their shows. The jockey who should have won the Derby that afternoon had a party of fifty, all eminent in one way or another, and all jockey worshipers after the manner of the times.

"My God," breathed Lennie, standing tall, slim and elegant in the doorway, while he waited for his Sophia to emerge from the dressing-room. "My God, old Fero's done it."

Gasps, murmurs of admiration, rose from the audience sitting crowded together in the darkness

His Sophia was a credit to him. He had selected her clothes himself, rejecting this and that article of her still scant wardrobe, and keeping her to unrelieved white.

"White's always white, and black's always black. If you wear colored things, they've got to be damned good."

"You'll dance with me, Lennie?"

"Of course I'll dance with you, but I shall introduce you to other fellows too."

AS HE said it, he rather wondered which of the Regalia's male clients he dared approach. For men had a nasty habit of snubbing him. "Because you see, Sophia, my sweet, there are various old ladies I have got to trot around; the princess, for example."

"Oh yes! Your princess. Of course, Lennie," she agreed tractably.

"And I shan't have to tell her that you're my wife," he added.

So they went quite blissfully to their table, the table at which he sat so often with Eve, but Eve was not at the table tonight.

"This is Eve's table," he said to Sophia. "I suppose she is dancing."

But there were no signs of occupation at that table, and Sophia answered, "No one's been sitting here."

Fero came up to them. He cast an appraising look over Sophia's soft fairness and took Lennie aside.

"A word with you, Leonardo. This young lady dances?"

"Like a dream. I may as well tell you she's Miss Langham's sister."

"Si? . . . That's good! Then, Leonardo, she is deputy hostess for tonight. Instruct her."

"But where is Miss Langham?" asked Lennie, who, even on this unprecedented occasion, was anxious to ask Eve what she had done for him and Sophia today.

"Who knows?" said Fero with a little shrug. He looked cunningly at Lennie. "I think she goes to Le Touquet with a friend."

"Le Touquet—with a friend?"

Fero gave his faint sinister simper.

"Tonight of all nights," Lennie cried. "You've let her off tonight?"

"Ah, well, Leonardo, we shall miss her, but it's a good miss all the same. And I am *simpatico*. It is something I understand."

"**W**HOS she gone with?" Lennie asked breathlessly, for he thought that he would be a happy man if he could catch his sister-in-law in a transgression.

"Perhaps I know," said Fero cunningly, "but I shall not tell."

Lennie jumped to it.

"Is Horne coming in tonight? Has he a table?"

"He canceled it."

"Has Miss Langham gone with him?" cried Lennie breathlessly.

"Oh, what do I know?" smiled Fero.

"What can I know? Do not ask me, Leonardo."

He moved away. His cares tonight were multitudinous. He must be everywhere, speak to everyone. Especially did he hover over the jockey's table, where diamonds were brightest and it might be supposed that men's pockets were fullest.

Lennie was almost the complete respectable family man for the next moment, as he sat down again by his young wife.

"Sophia, never let me hear another preachy word from that moral sister of yours again. I like to think *you've* never done what she's doing."

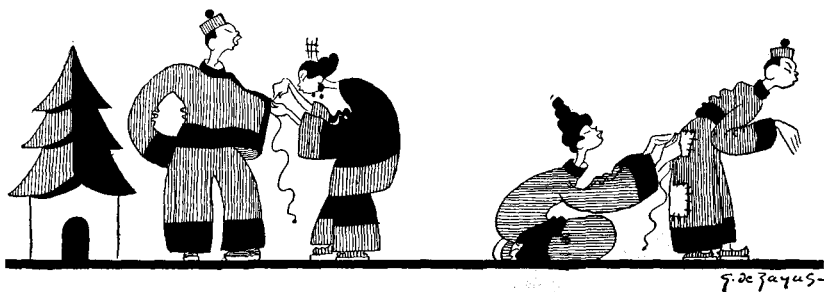
"Oh, Lennie!"

"Gone off to Le Touquet with Horne."

"Lennie!"

Then she begged with shining eyes: "One dance, Lennie. One dance together before you go to that princess."

It was a very happy dance for Sophia. She loved Lennie; she loved life.



Keep Up with the World

By Freling Foster

The curbstands on the sidewalks of China not only sell every kind of commodity but also nearly every kind of professional service. Barbers, dentists, doctors, letter writers and others carry on their businesses in full view of the passers-by. Most interesting of all, however, are the mending maidens who, for a penny, quickly sew a button on your coat or a patch on your pants—while you hold still.

Among at least three quarters of the people of the world, goods bought and sold seldom have a fixed value. The price paid is determined only after negotiations between buyer and seller. When the parties wish to keep the price a secret between themselves, the negotiations are carried on in a finger code under cover. Prices for rugs in Persia and rubies in Burma are settled by the two men squeezing each other's hands beneath a table or a piece of cloth.

Of the many historic marks, spots and stains in existence today after several centuries, two are connected with the Reformation. The first are mud tracks of cannon wheels on a number of parchment volumes in Skokloster Castle in Sweden. The Swedish Army confiscated these parchments during the Thirty Years' War and used them to pave the miry roads on the way home about 1648. The second is a large ink spot on the wall of Luther's room in Wartburg Castle in Germany which he made when hurling his ink pot at the devil in 1521.

Teasing wild animals is not a safe sport—even from an airplane in the air. Recently an aviator, flying over an African plain, discovered a number of sleeping lions and decided to "run them." Three times he swooped down close to the ground, but none even stood up. The fourth time, however, one big fellow—then slightly annoyed—suddenly leaped in the air, caught one of the wings with both paws and damaged it badly.—By Louis Straus, New York City.

The discarded gasoline can is one of the most widely used objects throughout Asia and Africa. It is employed chiefly for carrying or storing water, milk, clothes and money. However, there are whole towns made out of these flattened tins and some people turn them into musical instruments and bird cages. In Tibet those with sacred animals stamped on their sides are even used in the temples for the burning of incense.—By Katherine Gardner, Rapid City, South Dakota.

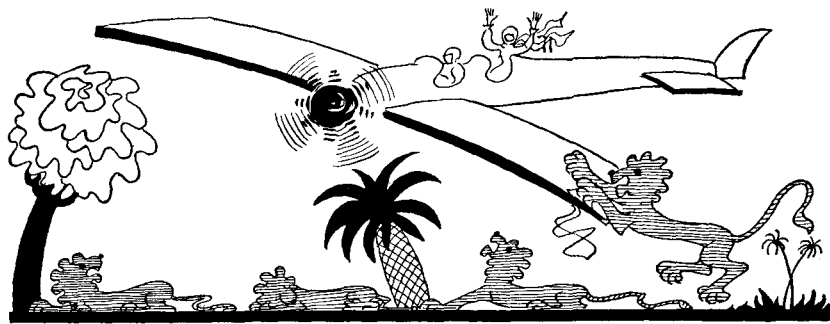
Most of the arguments against war fail to mention the vast waste which occurs in the purchasing of war equipment and supplies. A classic example took place when America entered the World War. Although the Army had only 86,000 horses, some imaginative individual placed orders for 945,000 saddles, 1,000,000 horse covers, 1,500,000 horse brushes, 2,000,000 feed bags and 2,800,000 halters.

Cells in which two of the most famous men in history spent some time still are intact today after many hundreds of years. The first is the caged room in the Monastery of San Francesco del Deserto on an island off Venice where St. Francis of Assisi spent many months in 1220. The second is the prison, dug in the side of a stone cliff in Athens, where Socrates was confined up to the day of his death in 339 B. C.

The most widely used drug in history was theriac, or Venetian treacle. For more than 1,700 years, from the day of Nero up to 1788 in England, this compound, which consisted usually of about 45 vegetable ingredients, opium, viper's flesh and honey, was extensively used in various modifications throughout Europe, Asia and Africa for almost every conceivable illness.

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And after all, there was old Sir Edgar Marter clamoring for a table, and beside him the girl—another blonde—who now filled the secretary's chair.

It was sheer glory to be able to stare at that girl who had ousted her, and to murmur as one with the *entrée* to this place: "Oh, Sir Edgar, haven't you booked? Mr. Fero had been wondering about you. Is there really no table? Oh, how dreadful! But you mustn't go away. Come and sit at mine."

The girl had pearls round her neck. Pearls!

Given any chance of appraisal, Sophia knew real from false, although she had never possessed any but cheap strings of imitation beads. She stood close—those pearls were real—not like Mrs. Poinsetter's. . . . What she did not know was that poor old Sir Edgar had actually taken Lady Marter's own necklace out of the bank for this one night, at the urgings of his latest blonde.

After all, it wasn't necessary for Sir Edgar and his lady to squeeze in behind that really very inconspicuous and inconsiderable table which accommodated Sophia and Lennie, for the all-seeing Fero hurried up.

He looked at those two rows of pearls dropping over the blonde's flat and modish bosom, although his eyes seemed to go straight to Sir Edgar.

"Sir Edgar Marter? I can arrange for you to share one of the best tables, if you do not mind that! If the lady does not mind!"

THEY all knew that something special had been arranged in the way of entertainment.

Toward midnight, sense of expectancy soared. The music paused, Tonetti came right forward on his dais, spread his arms wide, held up his bow, smiled benignly down over the restaurant, and stood in that attitude of asking for a hush; and there was a hush.

Loitering dancers left the floor and there ensued the sound of a great settling down; the lights dimmed group by group, went out. Only a spotlight from on high, falling on Tonetti, showed him poised there, smiling, waiting.

Then into the center of the floor, which was now merely a faintly shining pool of blackness, rushed two of the most amazing dancers people had ever seen—the much-heralded two Black Devils. Masked in close black from head to foot, they wore painted gargoyle faces; they carried about them pin points of light from tiny batteries on their persons.

They began to dance.

Gasps, cries of astonishment, murmurs of admiration, rose from the audience sitting crowded together in the darkness.

Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

For a moment the spotlight on Tonetti kept steady; then it too went out. The dancers danced now in absolute darkness except for the pin points of light on their persons. It was a fierce, fast, joyful, savage dance of ghouls; and the tribute paid to it was that queer audible sound of breathless people.

And the dancers left the floor and began to circle with incredible swiftness and sinuosity round about, and between, the tables.

Bravo!

People laughed and women uttered little shrieks all over the room, as in that congested space they felt the touch of the whirling dancers on their arms, or hair, or shoulders.

"I feel as if I was playing tag in the dark," Sir Edgar's blonde screamed out, feeling herself a wit.

Then, quite suddenly—how it happened, and where they went, which was their exit, nobody afterwards could say—the dancers had completely vanished,

and there was a general rustle of spell-bound people again moving in their seats. . . .

At least it seemed that the dancers had gone, but suddenly a half-muffled shout—loud above the renewed hum of voices—arose at the end of the room near the dais. Another shout checked itself near the door.

There was a big scuffle somewhere, and suddenly a sharp voice—it was the jockey's—called: "Put up the lights. Put up the lights!" And then other voices called: "Fero, Fero, put up the lights."

And just for a moment there was an intense silence except for that gathering scuffle near the main door.

And the main door showed no lighted aperture to the vestibule without. It remained shut.

"Music!" cried a voice. It was Fero's.

Music began in the darkness—one instrument; Tonetti's violin. His orchestra waited behind him for lights, but Tonetti played urgently.

"Lights, Fero! Lights!"

"A moment, a moment, ladies and gentlemen," came Fero's voice. "It is unfortunate, the main fuse has blown. It will be restored in a moment; a moment. We've an electrician on the premises. A moment, a moment, ladies and gentlemen."

And then as Fero spoke the lights went up and revealed Tonetti playing, with the eyes of a trapped demon; and Fero in the center of the floor, big and fat with a scowling white face surprised, dumfounded, by that rush of light that had not been restored at his bidding. Women clutched at their necks, their arms, crying out for their jewels; men sprang up, feeling their denuded pockets, and two groups still struggled at two closed doors, one at either end of the club—the only exits. And the struggle ceased.

There was a squad of police, with the Rich Fellows already handcuffed; there was a nonentity in dungaree—that electrician who at Fero's instruction was to have kept the club in darkness, and he was also handcuffed; and there were three waiters in the police grip too. The two Black Devils were there to be unmasked and identified for the first time in their criminal careers.

And Louise Poinsetter stood there, also, a policeman beside her, quiet and wearing her bored look . . . very elegant.

AT THE other exit behind the dais two of the orchestra had been caught and held, and a moment after all the lights went up, a plain-clothes police officer—who, impeccably attired, had been giving a party at that end of the room—stepped forward and arrested Tonetti.

Little Captain Hopton was crying, "Good God!" and "What's up?" but no one took any notice of him. He was an honest man and, as such, out of this rogues' gallery.

And a quiet-looking man in his faultless evening black-and-white, a gala cap of crimson paper askew on his head, stood beside the table where Lennie huddled, aghast for Sophia.

He touched Lennie on the shoulder.

"I must trouble you to come with me."

"My husband!" little Sophia shrieked.

The man touched her too:

"I'll trouble you too, then, madam."

She fainted, and they let Lennie carry her to join the group at the main entrance.

In the midst of the floor Fero stood alone. Captain Jonathan Horne crossed the shining floor with his limping gait, and said easily: "Glad I got back for the kill. I will have the pleasure of taking you at last, Fero."

There was no fighting. . . .

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