

# Dangerous Young Man

By George F. Worts

## The Story Thus Far:

A GANG, headed by Frankie Fife (alias Frank Merri-cka) and Steve Tetlow, a tavern owner, is plotting to blackmail Jane Griffin, New York debutante. A girl, one with an *entree* to society, is needed to inveigle Jane into leaving a party to be given at Lazarre's and going to the apartment of one Roderico Hova, a tango dancer. And the right girl is found: Franziska Rilling.

Franziska is in debt. And she has lost the man she loves, Roger Van Tyle, to Jane Griffin. She promises (so, at least, it appears) to co-operate with the kidnapers.

At about this time, young Peter Banyard of Nevada reaches New York and immediately consults his wealthy father's wise old ex-valet: Oliver Hooper. He insists that Oliver become his valet and assist him in working his way into Park Avenue society so that he can meet a certain girl who, flying east with him, has snubbed him. The girl, he says, is beautiful; her name is—*Franziska Rilling!*

Oliver is impressed by the young man's obvious strength and apparent courage. He says that he will do anything Mr. Banyard asks him to do, if Mr. Banyard will only accompany him to a certain tavern (Tetlow's) and there administer a drubbing to one of his old enemies: Albert Mowrey. . . . It so happens that Peter is anything but fearless: he is afraid of almost everything—including women! But, to overcome his fears, he deliberately goes out of his way to face danger. . . . At Tetlow's Tavern, he gives Mowrey a beautiful beating!

A few evenings later, he is prepared to face the greatest peril of his life: Franziska Rilling, who (he feels sure) had sensed his timidity on that airplane trip. Leaving his Park Avenue apartment (selected and managed by the omniscient Oliver), he goes to Lazarre's. There, so Oliver has informed him, Franziska Rilling will be a guest at a party being given for Jane Griffin. He has no invitation but, coached by his valet, he knows how to "crash" his way in.

As he drives up, he sees Franziska arrive. He sees a man—Steve Tetlow, whom he had seen at the tavern—slip up to her and hand her some small object. Then he sees the girl, accompanied by a tall, red-haired young man, step quickly into Lazarre's.

## II

WHEN Peter entered Lazarre's lobby, Franziska and the redheaded young man were lost in the crowd. He checked his things and followed the crowd to a point where he could see a little of Lazarre's gilt-and-white ballroom.

He was thinking about Steve Tetlow's strange encounter with Franziska. He was so shocked by its implications that he forgot, for a little while, to be terrified. The rich, deep music of a slow dance gave him a feeling of recklessness and romance. He saw the watchdogs and now and then he heard the voice of a man who looked like Oliver calling the names to the receiving line.

It seemed to him, in that lucid interval, that many of the young men bore themselves with an air of preening, as if they were not any more accustomed to this sort of thing than he was. And he saw girls who, he was certain, did not feel nearly so gay as they acted. His collective impression, which surprised him, was one of stilted gaiety.

He lit a cigarette and smiled at a blue-eyed girl who glanced at him. He was surprised when she smiled mistily in return. He tried it on another girl, a breathless-looking brown-eyed girl in a pale pink lace gown, and was startled when she grinned at him and rolled her eyes a little. He was sure that this little coquetry was the most exciting thing that had ever happened to him. After that, he smiled at every girl whose eyes he encountered, and usually she smiled back at him.

As Oliver had predicted, he wasn't waiting alone. Other unattached young men drifted in and out, and girls, alone, or with other girls or men, came and went.

So far his program was successful. No one had stared at him as if he were a party crasher. And no one had asked him any ques-

tions. Oliver had said it would be easy, and so far it had been easy.

He listened to the smooth music and studied another young man who was waiting, wondering if he could be as bored, as worldly, as blasé as he looked. His eyes were long-lidded, half-mooned. His eyebrows were slightly pinched. His mouth was slightly pursed. He wore white kid gloves. Another worldly-looking young man came out. The two exchanged suave greetings and went in. Peter presently realized that the man who looked like Oliver was no longer calling off names. The receiving line had broken up. Fewer people were going in and the gaiety seemed to have reached a higher note.

IT WAS time to stop loitering. It was time to go in. It was time to pick up an unattached girl and go in and dance with Franziska.

An unattached girl was coming out. She was not looking at anyone. Her head was down a little, and her eyes were downcast. Her air was that of a girl who wished to avoid eyes, who wished to avoid being spoken to.

Peter realized that she was a super-smoothie. She must be a supersmoothie. She was one of the prettiest girls he had seen tonight, and there was something about her that was only to be described as something special.

She was a small, slim thing in a white gown with a large corsage of Talisman roses. Her hair was golden blond and her complexion was a beautiful blending of rose and white. It was a slim, modeled face, with the eyebrows tilting upward toward the temples. Her hair was cut very short, combed straight back, and from the back curls came forward, appearing on top of her head like small golden horns. There was something faunlike about this girl.

She did not raise her eyes when she passed Peter. She seemed in a hurry. She went to a door on which was painted the word "Telephones," opened it and went in.

Another unescorted girl came out of the ballroom. She was the brown-eyed breathless-looking one who had been among the first at whom Peter had smiled. After the blond girl, she looked drab. Even with her beautifully cut shell-pink gown and her artfully arranged black hair, she did not come off as the blond girl had come off. She was pretty. But she wasn't a supersmoothie. She wasn't even a smoothie.

The girl in shell-pink was smiling a little, as if she might talk to him if he encouraged her, but Peter looked at the door marked "Telephones." He had decided that the blond girl was the girl he would walk in with, not because it was sensible, but because it would be a harder test. It was the way he must do this sort of thing—a little perversely. His timidity demanded it.

HE WALKED slowly toward the door marked "Telephones." He was as tense as a fiddle string, and his tongue tasted very brackish. He waited, with his smile ready.

He was going to be returning when she came out. He was going to say, "Hello! Why, hui-lo, there!"

It sounded pretty silly. Why, hui-lo, there! The door opened and she came out in a hurry. She looked angry. She had large blue eyes which were startling and beautiful with their dark blue rims like gentian irises. She looked like an angry faun.

Peter was turning, toward the dance floor,





as she came hurrying out, with that little frown between her eyes, her slanting eyebrows pulled down.

"Hello!" Peter said. "Why, hello, there!"

She hesitated and glanced up. She didn't smile, but the little dent between her eyes flattened out, and her lowered brows went up a little.

"Oh, hello," she said in a sweet, husky voice, with no enthusiasm.

She walked on, and Peter walked beside her, covertly watching her.

"Having a good time?" he said.

"Not especially. Are you?"

They had reached the little foyer where the watchdogs sat, two genteel-looking ladies with sheets of paper in front of them on little tables.

"Well," Peter said, "these things are a lot alike."

She looked up, but her eyes went no farther up than his nose. She looked at his mouth and his shoulders.

They were passing the watchdogs.

"Where did I meet you?" Peter said.

It was the wrong thing. He hadn't intended to say that at all. What had he intended to say?

She looked disdainful, or was she merely preoccupied?

"I don't know. Where?"

**THEY** were past the watchdogs! The watchdogs hadn't even glanced at Peter!

"Was it Bar Harbor?" Peter said.

"Was it?" she said, and looked at him again, this time at his eyes. He was grinning dangerously. Something about her seemed to sharpen, as if she were pulling her perceptions together.

"A cocktail party?" Peter said.

"The Enderbys'?" Her voice indicated a momentary lapse from an enduring boredom.

"Didn't I come riding into that one on a surfboard?" Peter said.

"Didn't you have badminton rackets twined in your hair?" she said.

She turned to him and lifted her arms, not looking at his face but at his tie. They had reached the dance floor.

He danced off with her and had taken no more than six steps when a stern voice said, "May I cut?"

"Don't hurry back," the supersmoothie said.

"You can count on it," Peter said, and went to the stag line. He (Continued on page 30)

ILLUSTRATED BY JAY HYDE BARNUM

His hand covered her mouth. He took it away a moment and she said furiously, "Oh, you'll hear about this!" "Take it easy, sweetheart," the man said



# Six-O'Clock Sailing

By Everett Rhodes Castle

Captain Dan Hickey on the difficult subject of love. The story of Pamela and her two young men, told by one who should know all about them

WITH some people it is the ear," said Captain Dan Hickey as he twisted his tall orangeade reflectively, "but with me it's the eye. Pictures. Not painted pictures or photographs, but quick views—mental impressions. You follow?"

We were seated at a corner table in the smoking room of the *Lirigua*. A chattering group of minor port officials ranged around the bar buying American candy. Outside, in the noisy tropical heat, the *Lirigua's* cargo was rattling over the side, landing with a dull thud on the concrete quay. Aft, a German freighter was unloading cement.

I nodded encouragingly. On the advice of the purser of the *Lirigua*, who had heard that I wrote fiction, I had passed up the sights of Puerto Cabello to meet this stocky man with the twinkling blue eyes who looked as if he had a board buttoned up under the back of his white linen coat.

"He's working for the construction company enlarging the harbor," the purser had explained. "It's an American company, with eighty or ninety other Americans on the job, young engineers and the like. They're spending fifteen million dollars enlarging and improving the port and Hickey is in charge of the natives mining and crushing the rock. Get him to talking and you'll know why I say he would have been meat and drink to a guy like O. Henry. He has the touch, the gift of the unexpected."

"Pictures," the captain murmured thoughtfully over the top of his tall glass.

He gulped the rest of his drink and fished frankly for the cherry. I beckoned the steward and pushed the cigarettes across the table. It was four o'clock Saturday afternoon and work had ceased for the day. At other tables in the room, bronzed, lean figures sat, chatting eagerly with the passengers remaining on board. For the most part they were young and their eyes were hungry. Captain Dan Hickey accepted his second orangeade



"Pamela," said the lad, "do you believe in love at first sight?"

with a little nod and stared at them with benign tolerance.

"'Tis a merry-go-round," he said after a moment. "The tourists are hanging on their words. The boys are out of the pages of romance to them. But they don't know the stiffness that creeps into a young engineer's throat when the short-wave news broadcast is over and the announcer says, 'For details see your favorite newspaper tomorrow morning.'"

"I suppose they all long for home," I said.

"Every mother's son of 'em," the captain agreed promptly; and then added slowly, "but me."

I WAS looking at one of the visitors. A young man tanned to dark saddle leather. He was sitting across a small table from a girl who was making the round trip with her mother. The boy was looking at her as if she were the first girl he had ever seen, or would ever see again.

The captain followed my glance.

"'Tis a coincidence," he said after a moment, "that you should be looking at that lad and I should be after talking to you about my pictures. Of course that was a long time ago. And the work wasn't here. It was a sea wall at Georgetown, British Guiana, you know. But the setting is the same and the idea was the same." The amusement died out of the captain's blue eyes and a little sigh whistled over his tall golden glass. "It will always be the same, I suppose," he added.

The point was a little obscure. I tried a guess:

"You—you mean why you are content while the others—"

"You might call it that." He lit a cigarette and folded his lips over the smoke.

I waited.

"Do you believe in love at first sight?" the captain continued after a thoughtful moment, but it was plain from the look in his eyes that my answer would be a matter of total indifference. He went on: "I am thinking of a story that bears on it. About a girl, of course. She was slender and her hair was black as tar, and her lips were red, even when she smiled; and her skin was of a curious sheen that went straight from your eyes down to your heart without a detour."

"It is all bound up in a picture I saw one night when the *Malagua* pulled out of Georgetown. It is a hard story to tell because it isn't easy for one man to talk to another about the tender passion. It is essentially something for the eye, like the written word, or a rational moving picture or a play where the personalities on the stage reach down into your seat and shut the haw-haw of the intelligentsia out of the ears."

"It needs to be told in the third person to save it from sounding heavy-handed or sappy. Impersonal. And sometimes, when it may seem to you as though the Irish in me is running away with the tale, just raise your eyes and watch the light in the eyes of that young engineer yonder. . . ."

A GIRL (said Captain Dan Hickey) was making a cruise with her uncle. She sat at the captain's table. Her first name was Pamela and that is all that matters and even that was of small consequence to any male under fifty who managed to insert himself into her uncle's deck chair for a few moments or encircle her waist for a second or two of dancing. Her laugh came out of heaven along with the true Southern Cross and the glittering Dog.

She was the belle of the ship before Ambrose light was passed. Even the captain, a dour man, tugged his mustaches when he looked at her. The *Malagua* carried mostly people taking the cruise

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