

Alias the Lone Wolf

by LOUIS J. VANCE

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CHAPTER XV
The Vampire and the Jewels
Lanyard left Athenais at her apartment and immediately followed her directions to the house of Liane.

It stood four-square and massive on a corner between the avenues de Friedland and the Champs-Elysées, a solid stone pile of a town-house in the most modern mode.

Heavy gates of wrought bronze guarded the front doors. The single side or service-door was similarly protected if more simply. And stout grilles of bronze barred every window on the level of the street.

Tomorrow night would be too late. Tonight, if there were any warrant for his suspicions, the jewels of Eve de Montalais lay in the dwelling of Liane Delorme; or if they were not there, the secret of their hiding was.

But tomorrow Liane would be on the wing; or Lanyard had been sorely mistaken in seeing in her as badly frightened a woman as he had ever known, when she had learned of the assassination of de Lorges.

He must adventure the consequences ***

Poised to leave his shelter with his point of attack selected, he checked and fell back into the shadow. Something was happening in the house across the way.

A man had opened the service-door and paused behind the bronze gate.

Following a little wait, it swung slowly out, perhaps eighteen inches, the man advancing with it and again halting to peer up and down the street. Then quickly, as if alarmed, he withdrew.

Listening intently, Lanyard heard no click of latch, such as should have been audible in that dead hour of dusk. Evidently the fellow had neglected to make fast the gate. What was he up to? Why this furtive appearance, why the retreat so abruptly executed?

By way of answer came the soft drone of a high-powered motor.

Before the corner house it stopped. A lackey alighted with an umbrella but Liane Delorme would not wait for him. The car had not stopped when she threw the door open; on the instant when its wheels ceased to turn she jumped down and ran into the house.

Now if only it were true that the man at the service-door had failed to close it securely—!

It proved so. The gate gave readily to Lanyard's pull. The knob of the small door turned silently. He stepped across the threshold, and shut himself into an unlighted hall.

To one side a broad flight of stairs ascended; Lanyard went up with the activity of a cat, making no more noise.

The second floor proved to be devoted mainly to a drawing room, a lounge, and a library, all furnished in a weird, inchoate sort of magnificence, with money rather than with taste, if one might judge fairly by the stilted and guarded beam of the torch.

Lights were burning on the floor above, and a rumor of feminine voices drifted down, interrupted by an occasional sibilant rustle of silk, or a

brief patter of high-heeled feet; noises which bore out the conjecture that madame's maid was unpressing and putting her to bed.

A change in the tenor of the talk between mistress and maid was conveyed by a sudden lift of half an octave in the latter's voice, sounding a sharp note of protest, to be answered by Liane in accent of overbearing abruptness.

One simply could not rest without knowing what that meant: Lanyard mounted the second flight of stairs as swiftly, surely, and soundlessly as he had the first. Just below a landing he paused, crouching low, his head lifted just enough to permit him to see a section of glowing, rose-pink wall—it would be rose-pink!

He could see nothing more; and Liane had already reduced the maid to responses feebly submissive.

"And why should you not go with me to that America if I wish it?" Lanyard heard her say. "Is it likely I would leave you behind to spread scandal concerning me with that gabbling tongue in your head?"

"It is well, madame. I say no more. I will go.

"Fetch my jewel-case—the large one."

"Madame takes all her jewels, then?" the maid inquired, moving about the room.

"But naturally, I shall pack them tonight, before I sleep."

"Damnation!"—from Lanyard, because his breath. More delay?

"And we leave tomorrow, madame, at what time?"

"It matters not, so we are in Cherbouy by midnight."

Lanyard slipped like a shadow to the floor below, and took shelter behind a jug in the wall.

The maid came down, carrying an electric candle. Its rays illuminated from below one of those faces of crude comeliness. She hesitated, look-

ing up toward the room of her mistress, as if lost in thought.

But some secret thought amused the woman, a shadow deepened in the visible corner of her full-lipped mouth. One fancied something sardonic in that covert smile.

She went on down. Lanyard came out of hiding with a fresh enterprise abrew.

But the racked pigeonholes held nothing to interest him whose aim was the recovery of the Montalais jewels. The safe was, in fact, dedicated simply to the storage of documents.

"Love Letters!" Lanyard mused with a grimace of weariness. "And each believed, no doubt, she cared too much to compromise him. Good Lord!"

He selected a pigeonhole at hazard, and emptied it of several bundles of letters, all neatly bound with tape or faded ribbon and clearly docketed. His eye was caught by a great name endorsed on the face of one of the packages; and reading what else was written there his brows rose high while his lips shaped a soundless whistle.

Liane had kept such documents as gave her power over others. Lanyard wondered if it were possible he held in his hand an instrument to bend the woman to his will. ***

Suddenly he put out a hand and switched off the light, a gesture quite involuntary simple reaction to the muffled thump of a chair overturned on the floor above.

Sounds of scuffling forward, as if

it had yet to be dealt with by the shade of the Lone Wolf.

Amused by the conceit, Lanyard laid hold of the knob with steady, delicate fingertips that had not yet, in spite of honorable illnesses, forgotten their cunning. The dial whirled, paused, reversed, turned all but imperceptibly. In three minutes he sat back on his heels, grasped the T-handle, turned it, had the satisfaction of hearing the bolts slide back into their sockets, and closed the door wide.

This time Lanyard ascended the stairs without heeding what noise he made. Nevertheless his actions were never awkward or ill-timed; his approach was not heard, his arrival on the upper landing was unnoticed.

In an instantaneous pause he entered into the rose-pink room and saw Liane Delorme, in a negligee like a cobweb over a nightdress even more sheer, kneeling and clawing at her throat, round which a heavy silk handkerchief was slowly tightening; her face already purple with strangulation, her eyes bulging from their sockets, her tongue protruding between swollen lips.

A thick knee was planted between her shoulder-blades. The ends of the handkerchief were in the sinewy hands of Albert Dupont.

(Continued in Our Next Issue.)

FARMER FOUND DEAD

By Times Special

GREENCASTLE, Ind., Sept. 22.—Starling McCannach, farmer, was found in a cornfield on his farm in Cloverdale Township, by J. O. Plessinger. His death is believed to have been due to heart trouble.

Bath Towels, 59c Each

Extra large, heavy, double-thread Turkish weave; jacquard border; 23x47 inches.

Canton Flannels, 19c and 23c Yard

Heavy weight, full bleached, for children's wear.

Heavy Outings, 20c Yard

Plain colors, white and pink; 27 inches wide; extra heavy, well woven, closely woven.

Children's Sateen

Bloomers, 50c Each

Good, heavy sateen, for school wear, ages 2 to 16 years.

Novelty Sateen Petticoat, \$1.49

High master sateen, made up with novelty flounces of various new color combinations. Black, navy, brown; assorted size lengths.

Children's School Hose, 25c Pair

Extra heavy rib, of fine combed cotton, good black, double knee; sizes 6 to 10; SECONDS.

Women's Slip-on Sweaters, \$2.98 Each

All-wool yarn, some with fiber mixtures, beautiful novelty weaves, long sleeves, some with smart collars; fall shades; sizes 38 to 44.

Newly Arrived Cotton Frocks, \$1.98 and \$2.98

For the woman who likes a neat house frock for morning wear. Sample line of a high-grade maker, of fine gingham, some trimmed with organdy, others with contrasting materials. Sizes from 18 to 50.

Full Fashioned Silk Hose, \$1.49 Pair

Heavy, pure silk hose, full-fashioned; black, cordovan, white, nude, gray; sizes 8½ to 10; IRREGULARS.

Women's Pure Silk and Fiber Silk Hose, 69c Pair

Will wear well; narrow fashioned ankle, high-spliced heel, deep lace garter top, double sole, toe and heel; black, white, cordovan, gray, nude, sports mixtures; 8½ to 10; SECONDS.

New Fall Corsets, \$1 to \$2.98

Coutil, herringbones, brocades, satins, stripes, shadow stripes, with double boning; guaranteed non-rustable; medium high, medium low and low bust models; sizes 22 to 30. Models for stout figures run to 36. All priced according to quality.

Boys' Blouses, 79c Ea.

Extra fine lot of striped madras, percales and chambray; regular style; collar attached. Specially priced.

Men's Lisle Hose, 19c Pair

In black only, double sole and heel, good length, elastic ribbed top; sizes 9½ to 11½; SECONDS.

L. S. AYRES & CO. Downstairs Store

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