

THE YELLOW SEVEN-CHINATEA!

BY EDMUND SNELL.
ILLUSTRATED BY
RAMSAYERFIELD

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BEGIN HERE TODAY

Captain John Hewitt, Commissioneer of Police, at Jesselton, British North Borneo, has been captured by Chai-Hung, a gang of Chinese bandits. Chai-Hung captures Captain Hewitt and tells him that he is to be his slave, and that he is held prisoner while Chai-Hung goes to call on Monica.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

C HAI-HUNG appeared to reflect. He stepped presently aside as she walked her pony past him, his piercing eyes never leaving her face.

She stared hard at a leaf that gleamed white in a truant ray of tropical sunshine that had managed to pierce the interwoven screen of foliage above, but a force, greater than any she had yet encountered, seemed to be tugging at her. A drowsy feeling crept over her and she awoke, as if from a dream, to find herself looking down into orbs that glowed like wells of fire. The flabby fingers of the bandit had closed round the bridle and the Bajau pony was brawsing on the soft herbage that fringed the forest track.

"One is never in a hurry in Borneo," he was saying. "I should like you to come and see me sometimes."

"I'm afraid that would be impossible," Monica hastened to assure him. "It must be perfectly obvious to you, Mr. Chai-Hung, that, under existing circumstances, a visit such as you suggest is entirely out of the question." Her cheeks had gone suddenly pale and two bright spots of crimson glowed beneath her eyes.

"Please let go my bridle."

"And the Tuan Dawson?"

"The Tuan-Hakim eats the air also."

"Bi-la," she said in a tone that signified dismissal.

And still the cook-boy hesitated.

"Will the mem-sahib take tea?"

"Yes, I will have tea as soon as possible. I am very tired," he added.

"If an excuse were necessary.

The boy had almost disappeared through the doorway when she called after him.

"Will you send one of the Tuan-Hakim's orderlies. I wish to speak to him."

"The master has taken them all. A messenger came to him, an hour ago, with an important paper. He was in a great hurry, for he did not stop to tell me when he would be back."

Dawson, servant, entering noiselessly set her tray on the table in front of her. She glanced up wearily to see the Oriental fall to his hands on the boards, flattered himself abjectly, his teeth chattering together like a man with theague. Following the direction of his frightened eyes, she became aware that a broad shadow had fallen across the floor. The color left her cheeks and her hand shook so that some of the amber fluid fell from the spout on the lacquer tray.

Chai-Hung stood on the threshold, his hands clasped in front of him, beaming amiably in spite of a certain shortness of breath. Behind him, on the wooden stairway, a hump-backed cooie, a red paper umbrella stuck under one arm, carried between his two hands a thing that resembled a bokk-box, shaped like a barrel, with a knob at one side and a handle at the top, the existence of which did not appear to have occurred to him. "I trust I am not intruding, Mrs. Viney?" He dropped uninvited into a chair. "I have hastened to proffer my apologies for my conduct this afternoon. I have not been very well, and the remains of a fever from which I had been suffering went to my head."

"The Oriental did not appear to have heard.

"I admire you immensely," he continued with an oily smoothness that filled the girl with utter loathing. "I do not presume to imagine you have given credence to the exaggerated fairy-tales that have been spread concerning my supposed exploit. Neither would you be prepared to condemn me without a trial. You will hardly believe me, perhaps, when I tell you that I was actually on my way to see you when the good fortune to meet you face to face. I was coming to leave my card."

In spite of herself, Mrs. Viney could not restrain a smile.

"Mrs. Chai-Hung," she protested. "You have seen fit to credit me with a certain amount of intelligence. I assure you, I deliberately proceed to insult it. Now, will you be good enough to let me go?"

An ugly light shone in Chai-Hung's eyes and he raised his voice to a pitch that sent a chill sensation passing down her spine.

"I was going to tell you where I now live. Are you afraid to come and see me, Mrs. Viney?"

"Afraid? Of course not. Why should I be afraid?"

"Are you afraid of—that?"

He held the thing before her face so closely that she started back, momentarily incapable of visualizing it. Suddenly she clutched at the saddle and uttered a wild piercing scream that set a colony of monkeys shrieking and gibbering in chorus.

She was staring as if fascinated at a long, narrow strip of pasteboard, yellow and shiny with seven black dots marked clearly on the surface.

A second later and the Chinaman had uttered a peculiar, guttural cry and footsteps began patterning down the glade behind her. Chai-

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