

Cutlass Empire

CHAPTER TWO

CLARISSA

SIPPING AT HIS hot Madeira, Michell Measey ran an appraising eye over Clarissa's slender figure, tiny feet, curling flax-white hair and wide, Cervelian-blue eyes; added to a little practical guile, such charms should secure for the girl not only wealth, but that title for which she yearned little less earnestly than himself.

Speculatively, the tanner's pale eyes narrowed before he caught his breath and said, "So, my young friend Morgan pleases you?"

Needle poised, Clarissa looked up, nodded carelessly. "More than a trifle, but, Pa, he's uncommon bold."

"You are to be sweet — very charming with this young gentleman from Glamorganshire."

"Twill be easy, I do on him, really I do," Clarissa declared in lazy accents, blue-veined lids half obscuring the clear blue of really lovely and long-lashed eyes.

The expression on Measey's gray-white, pudding-like features was not attractive. "You are no doubt aware, 'Rissa, in what esteem young Morgan's sort holds a tanner and his daughter? More underlings. If you're to win this handsome young gentleman you'll have to act 'cute and subtle.' First" Measey held up a sausagelike finger, "you should know that he is involved in a — well, an effort to restore the Monarchy."

Clarissa beamed, gently clapped her hands. "Oh, how romantic! King Charles! How wonderful it will be to be ruled by a king once more."

"Bah! You don't remember such times — further, Charles Stuart ain't yet astride his throne—not by a long 'carter!'" Measey belched, having too hastily swallowed his wine. "Now, listen well; king-making is a risky business, therefore, my chick, I would you shall learn all that you may from your friend Harry."

"Oh, Father, how soon do you presume Harry will call?"

"Tonight, 'tis more than likely. He's back in town and will have found your note. Remember now it's to our — your interest to coax out of him what he's about and who he's seen. Now in God's name, go scrape a message of that paint from your cheeks."

She had scarcely hurried upstairs than along the empty reaches of Baldwin St. sounded a ringing of feet being solidly planted and a big voice singing.

Admitted by Measey's yellow-clad butler, Harry Morgan strode into the large and pretentious house, stood waiting in the hallway, eyes busy with the rich hangings, fine Flemish tapestries and some well-polished brass candleabra.

Teeth gleaming in a rapturous smile and long-lashed eyelids fluttering, Clarissa came running downstairs and sailed up to him, vivid blue skirts a-swing. She extended tiny white hands redolent of a very costly French scent.

"Oh — Harry! Harry! How very wonderful it is to have you safely back."

BY 11 OF the evening, embers in the chimney place now only occasionally roused themselves to dart out little orange tongues of flame which briefly dispelled that comfortable gloom prevailing in Mr. Measey's walnut-paneled cabinet.

Side by side, their arms interlaced, Clarissa and her guest sat on a wide red leather settee, eyes fixed on the diminishing mound of jewel-bright coals.

"Are you not flattered that Mr. Armourer repposes such an extraordinary trust in your judgment? After all, Harry dear, you are not very old."

"I'm no lad! I'm one and 20 years," Morgan snapped. "And

"You are well come, Squire

Morgan. I campaigned with your seeding. King Charles II's offer never explain, yet the impulse was shared the Ironsides's pike head clean away from its shaft.

Uncle Edward in Poland." Stevens smiled, then demanded in his father's saving only the actual tones, "You made certain your legicides has produced a most happy effect. Better still, the old, white, meth glimmered in a tight smile — "for all that there's an uncommon lot of Parliament dragoons riding the streets."

Measey judged it wise to draw attention to his presence. "I, too, noticed more than the usual of the garrison abroad. Let us hope that we all have been extra cautious in approaching this tavern."

Deliberately, Lord Rochester raised bloodshot eyes from an intensive scrutiny of various documents placed before him. His heavily beringed fingers drummed briefly, irritatedly on the rough and food-spattered boards of the table as he drawled. "If you are apprehensive, Messer Measey, you have our permission to depart. Here we have no room for the timorous of heart."

The master tanner's plump, pallid and shiny cheeks flamed. "I crave your pardon, my Lord."

The conspirators gathered closer about that knife-scarred table upon which four beef-tallow candles gave off a miserably poor, orange-red light and stank all the while like badly scorched beef.

"There must be many Glamorgan men ready to follow you."

"Twenty at the least. I recruited on this journey mayhap more than of their own volition. The King's cause grows stronger every day in Southern Wales. But on twice 10 stout lads I can rely — all young, hearty, and true. Depend upon it, my pet."

Clarissa lolled further backwards among the cushions. "These fellows must be relatives?"

"Some few are, to be sure," he returned and, snatching up a goblet of excellent Rhine wine, held it in line with a sudden brief banderole of flame. What rich and indescribably purple red tints glowed in the depths of the wine.

"There'll come a-riding Charles and Frederick Morgan, Herbert and Evan Lloyd — Thinking to detect a small sound beyond a door to the left of the chimney piece, he broke off.

"Tis only a rat in the wall," Clarissa informed him. "Because of the leather in Papa's loft, it is hard to keep out such vermin."

Though he listened intently there came no sound beyond a drowsy snapping of the embers.

THE LOUD and uneven drone of many voices becoming warmed with hard cider reverberated in the long, low-ceilinged taproom of the Rose Tavern.

In a small apartment not far from the head of a broad and gritty staircase located towards the rear of the inn, a momentary silence was prevailing because young Morgan had just put in an appearance.

Mighty stiff, stern and military, he bowed to Lord Rochester, then to silvery handsome old Mr. Stevens, next, to waspish-thin and freckle-faced Major Armourer and finally, a trifle condescending, to Clarissa's father.

Once a weasel-faced cavalry sergeant had closed the door behind him, Morgan rallied his self-confidence and found himself able to consider his fellow conspirators with a measure of assurance. By at least a dozen and a half years he was the youngest man present. He felt better at the entrance of Geoffrey Yeomans, a tall, wind-whipped-looking young fellow wearing a new, green leather buff coat, brown baggy breeches and a crimson underjacket.

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Although the impact momentarily numbed his wrist, Morgan charged straight on at that half-seen figure beneath the dully glistening burgonet and, bunching his shoulders, he thrust hard at the pikeman's pallid face divided by his helmet's nasal. A sharp jarring of the Welshman's sword hand told him that his thrust had been accurate.

On purpose Morgan picked an unhurried course through the shadowy outlines of a pair of pikemen standing, all but obscured with the deep shadows of the latrines.

A covert movement caught his eye — not for nothing had he stalked stags on many a misty morning. He was able to discern the shadowy outlines of a pair of pikemen standing, all but obscured with the deep shadows of the latrines.

Sensing that these soldiers must be about ready to close in on "The Rose," Harry Morgan made hurried preparations which consisted of winding a short cloak tightly about his left arm and of tightening his broad, brass-studded belt before easing his sword from its scabbard.

The pikeman was granted just enough warning to level his short-shafted weapon and shout, "Halt! Halt!" In the Lord Protector's name!"

The other soldier, meanwhile, fell back still further, all the while fumbling frantically for the fuse match with which to touch off his cumbersome firelock.

Once he saw the pike point flashing towards him, Morgan put his full weight behind his blade and slashed so hard that his steel

passed clear through the other's body.

Once his blade came free, Morgan hurdled the fallen form, raced off, slipping and again on soft mud choking the alley and thinking "If they take me now, 'tis the gallows for sure."

(To Be Continued)

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3 (UP) — Sir Harry Lauder, 79, seriously ill of cerebral thrombosis, Scotland, Oct. 3, died at the Athlete Club. At a luncheon, Lt. Charles H. Hutchins, Wabash, Ind., who commanded a destroyer during the war, spoke. In the photo, Dr. William F. King, state board of health, reviews Scout Mike Wayt, Michigan town on his knowledge of health matters.

42 Boy Scouts Given Tests Here



Eagle Scout Board of Review gave tests to 42 Boy Scouts from the Central Indiana Council Friday at the Athletic Club. At a luncheon, Lt. Charles H. Hutchins, Wabash, Ind., who commanded a destroyer during the war, spoke. In the photo, Dr. William F. King, state board of health, reviews Scout Mike Wayt, Michigan town on his knowledge of health matters.

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