SERIAL STORY

THE MAKER OF MOONS

By

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

Illustrations by J. J. Sheridan

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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens in New York. Roy Carr, artist, the story-teller, inspecting a reptile owned by Gerald Geoffrey of Calcutta. Roy and Barris and Pierpont, two friends, depart on a hunting trip to Arsdale Woods, a ratty, cheerless place. Barris revealed the fact that he had joined the secret society for the purpose of running down a gang of gold makers. Prof. Laibrando, on discovering the gang's formula, had been mysteriously killed. Barris received a telegram of instructions. He and Pierpont set out to locate the gold making gang. A valet recognized seeing a queer Chinaman in the neighborhood of Arsdale Woods. Roy went hunting. He fell asleep in a dell. On awakening he met a beautiful girl at a dell. She: "A Mandarin's dragon claw." Roy's forehead had a mysterious effect upon the girl, who said: "Come with Yondé." Suddenly she disappeared. Closing in on Roy behind were the Chinese, who were peering at him from the woods. Barris and Pierpont found Barris captured a reptile the old man owned in exchange for a full of spot gold, he said, suddenly became ill. He told of the Kuen-Yuin, a Chinese nation of sorcerers numbering 100,000 and explained that the Moon Maiden, priest and sorcerer, whose symbol was a dragon claw, was supposed to have descended upon earth. Barris, Pierpont and Roy found Yondé's dell. Yondé's father, Roy, hurried home to the bungalow, where he found Yondé. She told him how her stepfather, evidently a Chinaman, made gold and of his mysterious actions.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

"Where is this city?" I asked, faintly.

"Yian? I don't know. It is sweet with perfume and the sound of silver bells all day long. Yesterday I carried a blossom of dried lotus buds from Yian, in my breast, and all the woods were fragrant. Did you smell it?"

"Yes."

"I wondered last night whether you did. How beautiful your dog is! I love him. Yesterday I thought most about your dog, but last night—"

"Last night?" I repeated, below my breath.

"Thought of you. Why do you wear the dragon claw?"

I raised my hand involuntarily to my forehead and covered the mark. "Why do you know of the dragon claw?" I murmured.

"It is the symbol of the Lords and Ladies of Yian. The Kuen-Yuin—my father says. My stepfather tells me everything that I know. We lived in Yian until I was 10 years old. I am 18 now, that is two years we have lived in the forest. Look! look! see those strange birds! What are they? There are birds of the same color in Yian."

"Where is Yian, Yondé?" I asked, with deadly calmness.

"Yian? I don't know."

"But you have lived there?"

"Yes, a very long time."

"Is it across the ocean, Yondé?"

"It is across seven oceans and the great river which is longer than from the earth to the moon."

"Who told you that?"

"Who? My stepfather, he tells me everything."

"Will you tell me his name, Yondé?"

"I don't know it, he is my stepfather, that is all."

"And what is your name?"

"You know it, Yondé."

"Yes, but what other name?"

"That is all, Yondé. Have you two names? Why do you look at me so impatiently?"

"Does your stepfather make gold? Have you seen him make it?"

"Oh, yes. He made it also in Yian, and I loved to watch the sparks at night whirling like golden bees. Yian is lovely—if it is all like our garden and the gardens around. I can see the thousand bridges from my garden, and the white mountain beyond—"

"And the people—tell me of the people, Yondé!" I urged gently.

"The people of Yian? I could see them in swarms like ants—oh! many, many millions crossing and recrossing the thousand bridges."

"But how did they look? Did they dress as I do?"

"I don't know. They were very far away, moving specks on the thousand bridges. For 16 years I saw them every day from my garden, but I never went out of my garden into the streets of Yian, for my stepfather forbade me."

"You never saw a living creature near by in Yian?" I asked in despair.

"My birds; oh, such tall, wise-looking birds, all over gray and rose color."

She leaned over the gleaming water and drew her polished hand across the surface.

"Why do you ask me these questions," she murmured; "are you displeased?"

"Tell me about your stepfather," I insisted. "Does he look as I do? Does he dress, does he speak as I do? Is he American?"

"American? I don't know. He does not dress as you do and he does not look as you do. He is old, very, very old. He speaks sometimes as you do, sometimes as they do in Yian. I speak also in both manners."

"Then speak as they do in Yian," I urged, impatiently, "speak as—why, Yondé, why are you crying? Have I hurt you?—I did not intend—I did not dream of your caring! There, Yondé, forgive me—see, I beg you on my knees he—at your feet."

I stopped, my eyes fastened on a small golden ball which hung from her waist by a golden chain. I saw it trembling against her thigh, I saw it change color, now crimson, now purple, now flaming scarlet. It was the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin.

She bent over me and laid her fingers gently on my arm.

"Why do you ask me such things?" she said, while the tears glistened on her lashes. "It hurts me here—" she pressed her hand to her breast—"it pains—I don't know why. Ah, now your eyes are hard and cold again; you are looking at the golden globe which hangs from my waist. Do you wish to know also what that is?"

"Yes," I muttered, my eyes fixed on the infernal color flames which subsided as I spoke, leaving the ball a pale gilt again.

"It is the symbol of the Kuen-Yuin," she said, in a trembling voice. "Why do you ask?"

"Is it yours?"

"Y—yes."

"Where do you get it?" I cried, harshly.

"My—my stepfa—"

Then she pushed me away from her with all the strength of her slender wrists and covered her face.

If I slipped my arm about her and drew her to me—if I kissed away the tears that fell slowly between her fingers—if I told her how I loved her—how I cut me to the heart to see her unhappy—after all, that is my own business. When she smiled through her tears, the pure love and sweetness in her eyes lifted my soul higher than the high moon vainly glimmering through the sombre blue above. My happiness was so sudden, so fierce and overwhelming that I only knew those her fingers clasped in mine, my eyes raised to the blue vault and the glimmering moon. Then something in the long grass beside me moved close to my knees and a damp acrid odor filled my nostrils.

"Yondé!" I cried, but the touch of her hand was already gone and my

"Flung Like a Corpse on My Own Threshold."

two clenched fists were cold and damp with dew.

"Yondé!" I called again, my tongue stiff with fright—but I called as one awakening from a dream—a horrid dream, for my nostrils quivered with the damp acrid odor and I felt the cold reptile clinging to my knee. Why had the night fallen so swiftly—and where was I—where?—stiff, chilled, torn and bleeding, lying flung like a corpse over my own threshold with Voyou licking my face and Barris stooping above me in the light of a lamp that flared and smoked in the night breeze like a torch. Faugh! the choking stench of the lamp aroused me and I cried out.

"Yondé!"

CHAPTER VII.

What the devil's the matter with him?" muttered Pierpont, lifting me in his arms like a child; "has he been stabbed, Barris?"

In a few minutes I was able to stand and walk stiffly into my bedroom where Howlett had a hot bath ready and a hotter tumbler of Scotch. Pierpont sponged the blood from my throat where it had coagulated. The cut was slight, almost invisible, a mere puncture from a thorn. A shampoo cleared my mind, and a cold plunge and alcohol friction did the rest.

"Now," said Pierpont, "swallow your hot Scotch and lie down. Do you want a broiled woodcock? Good, I fancy you are coming about."

Barris and Pierpont watched me as I sat on the edge of the bed, solemnly chewing on the woodcock's wishbone and sipping my Bordeaux, very much at my ease.

Pierpont sighed his relief.

"So," he said, pleasantly, "it was a mere case of ten dollars or ten days. I thought you had been stabbed—"

"I was not intoxicated," I replied, serenely picking up a bit of celery.

"Only jagged?" inquired Pierpont, full of sympathy.

"Nonsense," said Barris, "let him alone. Want some more celery, Roy? It will make you sleep."

"I don't want to sleep," I answered; "when are you and Pierpont going to catch your gold-maker?"

Barris looked at his watch and closed it with a snap.

"In an hour; you don't propose to go with us?"

"But I do—toss me a cup of coffee, Pierpont, will you—that's just what I propose to do. Howlett, bring the new box of Pantella's—the mild imported; and leave the decanter. Now, Barris, I'll be dressing, and you and Pierpont keep still and listen to what I have to say. Is that door shut tight?"

Barris locked it and sat down.

"Thanks," said I; "Barris, where is the city of Yian?"

An expression akin to terror flashed into Barris' eyes and I saw him stop breathing for a moment.

"There is no such city," he said at length, "have I been talking in my sleep?"

"It is a city," I continued, calmly, "where the river winds under the thousand bridges, where the gardens are sweet scented and the air is filled with the music of silver bells—"

"Stop!" gasped Barris, and rose trembling from his chair. He had grown ten years older.

"Roy," interposed Pierpont, coolly, "what the deuce are you harrying Barris for?"

I looked at Barris and he looked at me. After a second or two he sat down again.

"Go on, Roy," he said.

"I must," I answered, "for now I am certain that I have not dreamed."

I told them everything; but, even as I told it, the whole thing seemed so vague, so unreal, that at times I stopped with the hot blood tingling in ears, for it seemed impossible that sensible men, in the year of our Lord 1896, could seriously discuss such matters.

I feared Pierpont, but he did not even smile. As for Barris, he sat with his handsome head sunk on his breast, his unlighted pipe clasped tight in both hands.

When I had finished, Pierpont turned slowly and looked at Barris. Twice he moved his lips as if to ask something and then remained mute.

"Yian is a city," said Barris, speaking dreamily, "was that what you wished to know, Pierpont?"

He nodded silently.

"Yian is a city," repeated Barris, where the great river winds under the thousand bridges—where the gardens are sweet scented, and the air is filled with the music of silver bells."

My lips formed the question: "Where is this city?"

"It lies," said Barris, almost querulously, "across the seven oceans and the river which is longer than from the earth to the moon."

"What do you mean?" said Pierpont.

"Ah," said Barris, rousing himself with an effort and raising his sunken eyes, "I am using the allegories of another land; let it pass. Have I not told you of the Kuen-Yuin? Yian is the center of the Kuen-Yuin. It lies hidden in that gigantic shadow called China, vague and vast as the midnight heavens—a continent unknown, impenetrable."

"Impenetrable," repeated Pierpont, below his breath.

"I saw it," said Barris, dreamily. "I have seen the dead plains of Black Cathay, and I have crossed the mountains of the Moon, whose summits touch the air sphere. I have seen the shadow of Xaindé cast across Khabdor. Better to die a million miles from Yondé and Ahe Quedah than to have seen the white waterfowl close in the shadow of Xaindé. I have slept among the ruins of Xaindé, where the winds never cease and the Widwidden is wailed by the dead."

"And Yian," I urged, gently.

"There was an unearthly look on his face as he turned slowly toward me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CANNIBALISM IS STILL ALIVE.

Evidently Work Remains for Missionaries in Africa.

"You may be interested to know," says J. J. Reynard of the Cape-to-Cairo telegraph construction staff, "that cannibalism still survives and is, to my knowledge, practiced by the Chikanda dwelling along the Zambezi and Shire rivers. A case came to my notice last year. The body of a celebrated hunter, who had succumbed to fever, was exhumed and devoured. At one important center of the Shire the cemetery has to be guarded to prevent the natives devouring the newly buried bodies.

"As far as I know, cannibalism is not practiced openly by tribes in the country with which I am acquainted. The natives who devour our dead believe that if they eat the body of a European they will acquire his intelligence, just as they eat the heart of a lion because they believe they will gain the courage of the lion.

"The Manyaas of the Tanganyika, regard the lion as sacred, and believing implicitly in the transmigration of the soul, hold that the spirit of a dead chief enters into the body of a lion or python. Those animals are therefore taboo, unless they kill man, when the taboo is withdrawn."

Tree Death Trap for Birds.

Queensland, Australia, has a curious tree which ensnares and kills insect life and sometimes birds also. A traveler says of it: "The seed vessels of the Queensland apus tree, 'Ahmoo' of the blacks (Pisonia Brunoniana), which are produced on spreading leafless panicles, exude a remarkably viscid substance approaching birdlime in consistency and evil effect. Sad is the fate of any bird which, blundering in its flight happens to strike against any of the many traps which the tree in unconscious malignity hangs out on every side. In such event the seed clings to the feathers, the wings become fixed to the sides, the hapless bird falls to the ground and as it struggles heedlessly gathers more of the seeds, to which leaves and twigs adhere, until by aggregation it is inclosed in a mass of vegetable debris as firmly as a mummy in its clothes."

Our Pleasant Vices.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us. —Shakespeare.

BOREAS PLAYED WITH THE SNOW

BLIZZARD SWEPT FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN, MAKING TIE UP GENERAL.

JUMPED ABOUT LIVELY

Disasters in Other Countries That Caused Death and Destruction Are Briefly Noted.

The storm which began Sunday seems to have sported with the whole country, causing great trouble to steam and electric roads, in some cases stopping traffic almost entirely. It reached the Atlantic Tuesday and the tail of it was frolicking over the Mississippi while widewise it sprawled from the gulf to the great lakes. It was central over Pennsylvania, and caused all kinds of trouble in Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, eastern Missouri, northern Kentucky, Ohio and the eastern states.

The storm was on seeing something of the country, too. Sunday night it came with bag and baggage to California but only stopped long enough to rile the inhabitants, then made a beeline for Detroit, but before it got far it changed and struck south to New Orleans, where it shed its snowy robe and came down in wet bathing trim. After furnishing a liberal supply during Monday, it headed back north again.

From the whole section of the state comprised in that district north and east of a line drawn from Battle Creek to Bay City came reports of a continued heavy fall of snow, much drift and consequent delay of traffic. Trains are away off the schedules the Thumb district being the worst. The interurban lines are keeping the way open by constant and vigorous use of snow plows, but the service is irregular. The western part of the state does not appear to be getting much snow, except in the extreme north section, around Traverse City. Jackson reported that freight trains were moving.

Three Hundred Perished.

Roasted alive, crushed, mangled to death with none to help, were the fates meted out Sunday night to the 300 more members of the boat samples of Acapulco, 241 miles southwest of the City of Mexico, when fire broke out in the midst of a performance in the Flores theater, given in honor of Gov. Damian Flores, of the state of Guerrero, of which Acapulco is the capital and chief city.

Nothing more terrible ever happened in Mexico and the disaster ranks in horror with the worst theater fire in history.

Earthquake Takes Thirty.

A number of houses and a vermicelli building in Sivas, the capital of a village of the same name in Asiatic Turkey, collapsed Tuesday, as the result of an earthquake. The loss of life has not been ascertained, but reports say that 30 persons have been killed and others injured. Many of the inhabitants are without shelter.

Sivas sometimes spelled Sivas, is a town of about 1,000 inhabitants.

Four Killed, Twenty Hurt.

Illinois Central train No. 2 bound south from St. Louis to New Orleans was wrecked six miles east of Morgan, Ill., Tuesday. Four persons were killed and 20 injured.

The accident was caused by a broken rail. The engine and two first cars passed safely over, but the next four were overturned.

The Peaceful Japs.

"Japan will not allow a purely local question, such as the status of Japanese residents in California, to disturb the feeling of amity toward the United States which has been growing ever since Perry's expedition half a century ago." Baron Kogu Takahira, Japanese ambassador to the United States, thus put into a nutshell the Japanese attitude toward the recent race troubles on the Pacific coast. "Japan will consent to any action the federal government may come to take regarding the situation in California," continued the baron. "She has never, in any way, through me or any other official representative, protested to the United States government. It must not be forgotten that when diplomatic pleasure was shown in this country at the number of Japanese immigrants, we at once consented to restrict immigration to the minimum figure.

"The Japanese are educated to be patriotic. They are loyal to their country, but they are not forgetful of the rights of other nations."

Knocks Knox.

The house of representatives by a vote of 176 to 124 rejected the Senate bill removing the constitutional bar to Senator Knox serving as secretary of state. The action by the house does not make the controversy final. The senate bill is to reduce the salary of the secretary of state to $8,000. There is a bill still pending in the house to remove the barrier against Knox entering the cabinet, but its phraseology differs from the senate bill. It was thought that a settlement of the matter could be hastened by the house taking favorable action on the bill passed by the senate. The house bill is meeting with the objection of some representatives.

The effort of Borough President Bird S. Color, of Brooklyn, to get the evidence of President Roosevelt orally or by deposition in his libel suit against a Brooklyn newspaper, has been futile. Sec. Loeb for the executive responded to the request with a court telegram to the effect that the president of the United States does not testify in court nor give evidence by deposition.

The New York, New Haven & Hartford railway threatens to quit 3 Massachusetts, declaring it is impossible to obey all the laws affecting them and survive.

"BOBBY" WAS SO NERVOUS.

He Was Not to Be Agitated, Even by "Percy, Dear."

It was moving day for the summer colony along the North shore of Massachusetts. On the morning train from Rockport, bearing many well-known Bostonians to their town houses for the winter, rode a stormy old gentleman from the west. At Pride's crossing a family of three—father, mother and daughter—boarded the train, bearing respectively the family treasures: One pet poodle, one gray rat in a blue blanket, and one traveling clock in a much worn leather case. The party had no sooner found seats across from the westerner, than it became apparent that the excitement of boarding the train had caused a commotion among the pets. The cat was chided for talking aloud. "Calm yourself, Bobby," said his mistress. "Be yourself once more—we are now on our way home." Whereupon Bobby grew calm.

The poodle became restless in the company of his master on a seat in front and signified his yearning for Bobby's company by climbing up the back of the seat and casting goo-goo eyes at the Tabby. The sympathetic mistress understood at once and said:

"You may come over here and sit with us, Percy, dear, on one condition—you must not agitate Bobby."

This was too much for the stormy westerner. With a loud snort he reared up, pawed his hand-bag from the rack above his head, and pranced into a coach ahead.

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A Dire Threat.

It is well known that certain vagabonds desire nothing better, especially when the cold weather comes on, than to be arrested and locked up, in order that they may be taken care of a while. One of this fraternity succeeded in getting himself arrested for vagrancy, and on the way to the lock-up he was so much overjoyed by the prospect of not having to sleep in the open air that he behaved somewhat boisterously.

"Keep quiet!" threatened the policeman; "if you don't, I'll let you go!"—Exchange.

Their Good Time.

Little Elsie was very disobedient and mother was cross and scolding. Suddenly the little one looked up and said, very sweetly: "Oh, mamma, aren't we having a good time?"

"How?" asked mother, crossly.

"Oh, just a fussing!"—Delineator.

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