

The Dark Mirror

Louis Joseph Vance

Author of "The False Faces," "The Lone Wolf," Etc.

Illustrated by IRWIN MYERS

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They in that distant place where two wills were warring, striving each to impose upon the other its conception of what was right, fair, just, and inevitable.

It was as if her mind were a photographic plate upon which two scenes had been developed: one wherein her common self of everyday was resting securely at home, one in which that wild other self of her dreams disputed hotly with the man she loved, in surroundings strange to both sexes till that hour.

Of the two scenes, the stranger was the stronger; all her interest was centered therein, and all other things were negligible beside the issue of that struggle, since that issue must be (this she knew the passionate certainty) nothing less than life or death, life with love or death with shame.

And she was racked with the imperative need of making Leonora understand that Mario was right, that no good could come of standing out against him, that nothing but good could come of yielding to his insistence, the fruit of his great love and greater wisdom.

Perception of her hostile environment was waning swiftly; with all her strength she was willing herself back to Leonora.

The telephone began again to gibber, in short, strident bursts of sound demanding her heed.

She faltered, hesitated, looked back. In bitter resentment, she understood she could go no further, accomplish nothing, till that insensate thing had been silenced.

In sleep-waking, the girl roused with measured movements that cost her incalculable effort, sat up on the side of the bed, drew the telephone to her. It continued to chatter angrily till the receiver was actually at her ear and she had said: "Hello!"

Out of the enigmas of night Philip Fosdick's voice cried: "Priscilla!" She answered without emotion: "Yes, Philip."

"Did I wake you up? Sorry! I had to. Listen to me Priscilla: I've seen Leonora! I saw her in the street, followed her for blocks, lost her when she entered a tenement; and now I'm on the watch, waiting for her to come out. I had to be sure you were at home—so I called you from a pay station. Are you still there?"

"Are you quite awake? You don't seem to understand. I tell you, I have seen Leonora—the girl you dream about—a living woman so like you I couldn't at first believe it wasn't you in disguise!"

"Yes, Philip." "So now you needn't worry any more. I'm on the right track at last. The problem will be solved in no time, once I clap my eyes on that girl again."

"Yes, Philip." "Priscilla! Can't you say anything else? Is anything the matter?"

"No, Philip." She pursued in the same level accents, speaking slowly, as if with difficulty finding words: "I am quite all right. . . I . . . am safe with Mario now. . . Mario will take good care of me. Good-night."

Without waiting for his reply, she hung up the receiver, replaced the telephone on the bedside stand, sighed, and again stretched out upon the bed.

Immediately deep sleep entailed her senses like a warm cloud of darkness, and her soul faded forth once more on its far quest.

VII. SURRENDER. Out of that blank void grew light and shade in a nebulous swirl of formless patches. Only by slow degrees did it subside, till she opened her eyes one dared open eyes again. The first thing recognized was the concerned dark face of Mario. . .

She was in one of the big leather chairs. Mario knelt with an arm round her shoulders, lifting them forward a trifle that she might drink with more ease from the glass of dark red wine which he was offering her.

"Drink before you try to talk." His tone was tenderly imperative. With an insistence as gentle he pressed the glass to her lips. She drank, gratefully draining the glass.

"Excellent!" Mario let her head back to the cushion, rose, put the glass aside, returned. "The wine is stronger, eh?" She nodded, but her smile was still bewildered.

"What happened, Mario? I felt so funny, all of a sudden, just when the telephone began to ring; and then . . . I don't seem to remember."

"You are overwrought," Mario drew up a chair and sat down. "For days you have been living at high nervous tension, never knowing what fatality the next hour might bring forth. Tonight, against your wish and judgment, you came out to meet a man you fear and loathe—braving the peril of arrest as well as the brutality of this storm. Your clothing is wet through, you are shivering. You suffered a shock at meeting me by chance. Then we quarreled. . ."

He lifted her hands to his lips, one after the other. "The sum of such physical, nervous and emotional stress was too much, Leonora: you fainted without a sign of warning. I caught you barely in time."

"I suppose I must've, if you say so, Mario. . . But I don't understand. I remember our rowing—"

"Think of that no more," Mario pleaded and, at the same time, insisted. "You and I must never quarrel. There can be no excuse for misunderstanding when our hearts are . . ."

one." She nodded meekly. "Tell me one thing only," he pursued. Her eyes promised. "Who is Philip?"

"Philip?" Her look was completely blank. "I don't know any Philip. . ."

"You are sure?" Intent search of her face satisfied him. "Strange! In your faint you spoke that name, as if you were talking in your sleep; you said distinctly: 'Yes, Philip,' and again: 'No, Philip. . . I am safe with Mario, now.'"

"I don't know." She drew a hand over her perplexed brows. "And yet . . . it's funny. . . like an echo, what you say I said."

"No matter." With decision the Spaniard dismissed the puzzle, took her hands in a firm grasp and held her eyes with a gaze earnest and commanding. "For the present forget all that, forget everything but that we are united now and forever. Nothing—nothing, Leonora—can come between us now. We cannot permit it, we will not. Love such as ours is not to be denied or paltered with upon any conceivable consideration. As I am wholly yours, so you must henceforth be mine; and to us all the rest must be such stuff as dreams are made of. You understand that, Leonora? I have your promise?"

Never since childhood had she so surrendered to domination. But now . . . She knew a strange, dear joy in submitting. She bowed her head, then lifted it to show him adoring eyes.

"Yes, Mario. . ."

"So that is settled!" Mario got up and strode into the bathroom. Water began to gush loudly into the tub. He brought back a light, warm robe of fleecy stuff.

"You are cold and wet; a hot bath will make you another woman. Then put this on. Meanwhile, I will find dry clothing for you, and a cab. To-night you sleep upstairs: the best and quietest hotel in the city will be the safest. In the morning I will call for you; we will go to get the license for our marriage. By noon you will be my wife. By nightfall we will be far from New York."

They kissed. Mario lifted her to her feet.

"The door latches of itself. If anyone knocks, pay no attention. I shall be back in a few minutes, and have my key."

In a starting daze, utterly an unthinking puppet of love and gratitude, she saw him go. The sense of his personality lingered, precious and compelling: she did not feel alone.

She moved slowly toward the bathroom, unconscious fingers loosening her sudden blouse. Finding the tub partly full, she shut off the taps. Only with the silence that followed did she appreciate her solitude come home.

Till then, in her wonder and delight, she had accepted without question the easy explanation that Inez had lost her way upon the roofs and brought her to the wrong house.

Even so: Red must be hidden somewhere in the same block of tenements. Suppose he were to learn where she was now. . . Deliberately Inez had not blundered, but deliberately and with malicious intent had led her to Mario, then had gone to tell Red. . .

Intuition linked the poles of fact and surmise, completing the circuit of conviction. Instantaneously Leonora perceived with hideous clearness that Inez had planned this in revenge for the long series of defeats she had suffered in their rivalry, something for which Inez alone had been in the first instance responsible. It was Inez who had made Phyllis hit the pipe too often, thus clearing the way for this supreme trick of treachery. This made it plain why Inez had not followed to the door to Mario's flat, but had climbed back to the roof and shut the trapdoor. Now Leonora no longer guessed; she knew Inez had gone straightway to tell Red that Leonora, refusing to answer his call, had taken refuge with Mario instead.

Beyond shadow of reasonable doubt, Red was even now on his way to make good his threats.

What if he were lurking in the hallways of the house, or in the dark of . . ."

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE NO. 95

State School and Institutional Land, State Land Department. PHOENIX, Ariz., Sept. 10, 1920—In conformity with the provisions of the Public Land Code of Arizona, approved June 26, 1915, and amendments thereto; notice is hereby given that the State of Arizona will sell at Public Auction at 10 o'clock a. m., Tuesday, November 23, 1920, at the county court house at Nogales, Santa Cruz county, Arizona, the following:



"Where's That O—n Wop?"

the street outside the door? And Mario going unsuspectingly to his death. . .

Perhaps it was not yet too late to scream a warning down the stairs. Madly Leonora ran to the door, tore with trembling fingers at the latch and threw it open—to find Red standing on the threshold, a shape of grating menace, his slender, feline body poised alertly, an automatic pistol in the hand at his right hip, an evil snarl twisting his cruel lips, murder in eyes whose glance shot directly past the girl to the room beyond.

Before she could lift a hand the man darted in, caught her arm and sent her reeling to the middle of the room and kicked the door to behind him.

She staggered against the table and caught hold of it to save herself a fall. Carnehan was at her side before any sound could issue from lips which his hand pistol sealed brutally. His pistol muzzleed her bosom.

"One peep out of you—" he rasped. Cunning eyes raked the room suspiciously. "Where's that o—n wop?"

"So that is settled!"

(Continued tomorrow.)

Cruz county, Arizona, the following improved and unimproved state school and institutional lands situated in Santa Cruz county, to-wit:

In Township 28 South, Range 15 East. Lots 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 NW 1/4 Sec. 19 containing 314.91 acres more or less appraised at \$1184.00. Improvements claimed by James W. Hathaway, appraised at \$1088.00.

All of Sec. 23, containing 640 acres more or less, appraised at \$2804.00. Improvements claimed by W. H. Hathaway, appraised at \$1094.00.

W 1/2 Sec. 20, containing 820 acres more or less, appraised at \$1152.00. Improvements claimed by James W. Hathaway, appraised at \$128.00.

SE 1/4 of Sec. 20, containing 160 acres more or less, appraised at \$576.00. Improvements claimed by Virginia Hathaway, appraised at \$128.00.

N 1/2; SE 1/4 Sec. 29, containing 480 acres more or less; appraised at \$1728. Improvements claimed by Virginia Hathaway, appraised at \$256.00.

All of Sec. 1 containing 640 acres more or less, appraised at \$2804.00. Improvements claimed by Harry H. Saxon, appraised at \$688.00.

N 1/2 of NW 1/4 Sec. 18 containing 80 acres more or less, appraised at \$288. Improvements claimed by Anna H. Saxon, appraised at \$408.00.

N 1/2; NW 1/4 Sec. 12 containing 360 acres more or less, appraised at \$1296.00. Improvements claimed by Anna H. Saxon, appraised at \$44.00.

In Township 24 South, Range 14 East. Lots 5, 6, 7, in Sec. 6 containing 27.51 acres more or less, appraised at \$46.00. Improvements claimed by Anna H. Saxon, appraised at \$20.00.

Lots 1, 2, in Sec. 7 containing 55.00 acres more or less, appraised at \$297. Improvements claimed by Anna H. Saxon appraised at \$204.00.

No bid for less than the appraised value will be considered. A bid for any land upon which there are improvements, must carry with it a bid for the appraised value of the improvements thereon, and which must be paid for in cash as provided by law.

This department reserves the right to reject any and all bids. In formation regarding the land and terms of sale may be obtained from the State Land Department, Phoenix, Arizona.

STATE LAND DEPARTMENT. By W. A. Mearns, Commissioner. First pub. Sept. 18, '20. Last pub. Nov. 26, '20

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STATE OF ARIZONA Office of the ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION United States of America, State of Arizona—sa.

The ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION does hereby certify that the annexed is a true and complete transcript of the Articles of Incorporation KEY CITY PUBLISHING COMPANY.

Which were filed in the office of said Corporation Commission on the 25th day of October, A. D. 1920, at 10 o'clock a. m., as provided by law.

In Testimony Whereof, The Arizona Corporation Commission, by its Chairman, has hereunto set its hand and affixed its Official Seal. Done at the City of Phoenix, the Capital, this 25th day of October, A. D. 1920. (SEAL)

Arizona Corporation Commission AMOS A. BETTS, Chairman. A. E. STELZER, Secretary. Articles of Incorporation of the KEY CITY PUBLISHING COMPANY.

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that we, whose names are hereunto subscribed, being desirous of forming a corporation under the laws of the State of Arizona, have, for this purpose voluntarily associated ourselves together into a body corporate, and do hereby make, execute and publish these Articles of Incorporation, and do hereby certify:

I. The name of this corporation and by which it shall be authorized to transact its business is KEY CITY PUBLISHING COMPANY. II. The names of the incorporators are: E. E. WISE, W. F. CHENOWETH, J. A. L. GARRA, J. L. SCHLEIMER, ARCUS REDDOCH and B. F. HANNAH.

III. The time of the commencement of this corporation shall be the day of filing its Articles of Incorporation in the office of the Arizona Corporation Commission, and a certified copy thereof in the Office of the County Recorder of Santa Cruz County, Arizona; and the termination thereof shall be twenty-five (25) years thereafter, unless renewed or dissolved before that time by a majority vote of its members, or by operation of law.

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