

# NIGHT LIFE TALES

25c

Vol. 1. No. 19



- FAUSTIN -

**"THE WAGES OF GIN"**



**"YE GADS — NOW I'M SEEING PINK WOMEN."**

# NIGHT LIFE TALES



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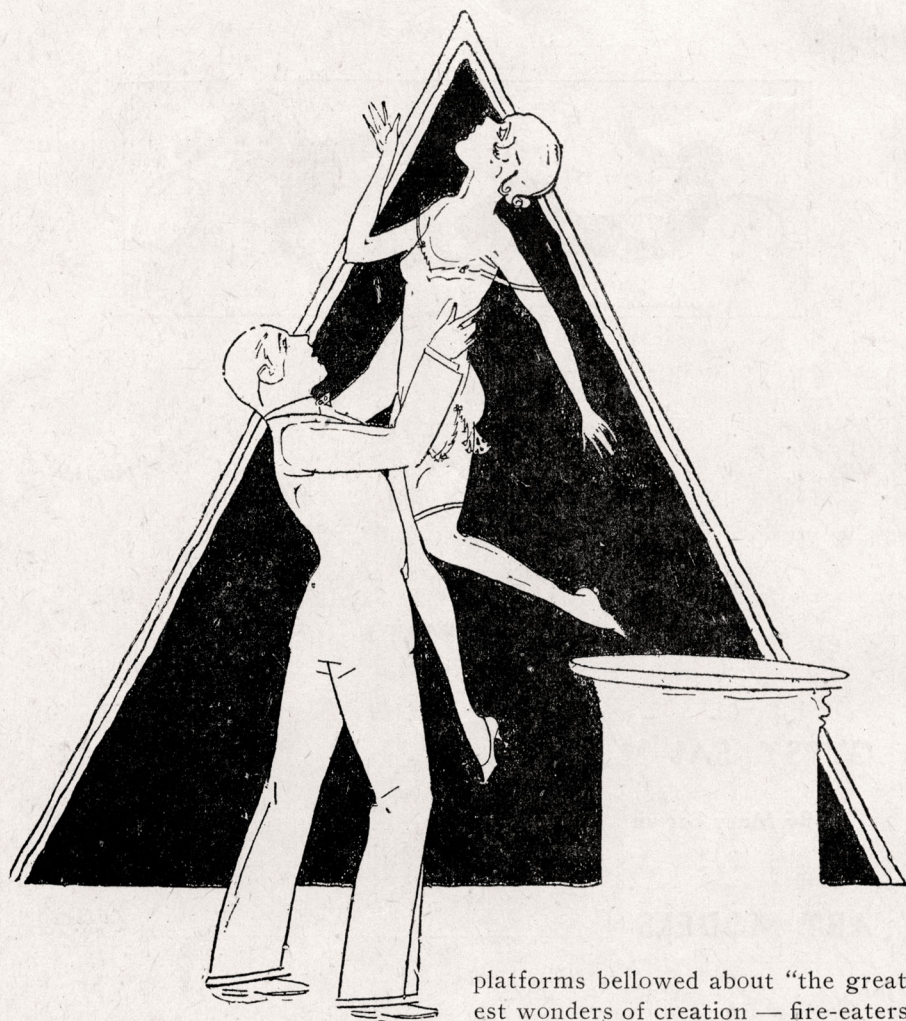
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# GYPSY SAL

By MARY BROWN



**S**ALVATIA BERTOVI stood just under the flap of her tent watching the droves of people as they thronged in through the gates. Every foot of the circus grounds was crowded now. Lions roared for the customers' benefit, the merry-go-round churned with shrill American melodies, men on

platforms bellowed about "the greatest wonders of creation — fire-eaters, wild men from Borneo, bearded women and tattooed men!"

Salvatia watched the opening day of the Benoit Circus: a girl of nineteen in a white tulle ballet skirt with a glittering rhinestone brassiere around her high-peaked, jutting bosom. Always the Benoit Circus opened on the grounds just a kilo-

meter from Versailles; always her heart pumped like mad and her big black eyes widened and her small red tongue came out to moisten soft red lips.

And so Salvatia watched and her heart beat like mad. She did not hear Pietro come in through the rear of the tent; she did not know that her fiance was there until she felt his arms go around her waist.

He whispered, "Salvatia! Salvatia!" And, his mouth touched her cheek, pressing her head back, seeking her lips.

Despite herself Salvatia went a little stiff. She thought to herself:

"Sometime, when Pietro takes me in his arms like this, I shall go limp with joy; I shall go out of my head with loving him. It will come in time. I have not made a mistake in promising to marry him."

But so far it had not come. Nor could she understand why her blood stayed so cool when Pietro kissed her and caressed her lovingly. Pietro was very handsome and young and gypsy-dark. His tent, where he managed the rifle shooting, was always crowded with women asking to be taught how to shoot.

For Pietro had fire in his eyes. She, Salvatia Bertovi, was very lucky indeed to have won the love of this great dark man whom so many women wanted.

She thought all this as Pietro's arms drew her closer, as his mouth closed over her own and as his hands slid around her waist, pressing her to him tightly.

Pietro looked down into her slim, dark face, his black eyes burning over that soft beauty. He said,

"I shouldn't have come. There is so little time before your act is on, before I'm needed at the rifles. Once I hold you like this I can't let you go."

She understood. She tried to pull out of his embrace but Pietro held her, firmly. He said, evenly,

"Salvatia, do you love me? When I'm with you I think YES. When I'm away and can see things clearly I think NO."

Salvatia said coolly, "I love you, Pietro." But her voice lacked



warmth; her eyes did not glow as Rosalie Benoit's blue eyes glowed when she looked upon Pietro. And Salvatia thought:

"Rosalie really loves Pietro even though she is ashamed of loving a gypsy." And Salvatia knew as Pietro gazed at her that he was mentally comparing her coolness with Rosalie's warm emotions; that he was weighing them both, one against the other, and that he was finding her, Salvatia, lacking.

"There's time for a few kisses, Pietro," she whispered, huskily.

Pietro crushed her to him, put his

mouth on hers with such force that her lips parted. She was not surprised then that her heart did thump, that her knees trembled and that a pulse throbbled unmercifully in her throat. The flame of his love swept her up into a moment where she was blind.

Later, Pietro put Salvatia out of his arms and hurried back to his concession. His thoughts were of business now; not of love.

"Why doesn't love come to me? I was made for love!"

But there was no time to wonder. She hurried out of the tent into the late summer afternoon. The fair grounds were as hot as all oven, steaming with people. The men stopped short with a clatter of their wooden shoes as Salvatia sped toward the main tent and the little groups of waiting performers behind it. She felt those masculine eyes upon her and wondered if, among the peasants or the Paris gentlemen, there was one man who could touch off the spark of her lambent love.

And then suddenly Salvatia stopped short, her black eyes wide, her mouth apart and her bosom swelling suddenly with an emotion that was strangely akin to love—for it was hate. She stood there, tense and stiff, staring straight in front of her.

At a raised platform facing a tent where a tall, slim, yellow-haired giant, in an American cow-boy costume — chaps, blue polka-dot shirt, handkerchief knotted at the throat—was calling to the passer-by, waving his ten gallon hat at them:

"See the greatest wild bear in the world! Watch me wrestle with the wildest bear in captivity. A Rocky Mountain grizzly! Only ten centimes! The show begins at once, *monsieurs et mesdames!* Only ten centimes!"

The tall blond man on the platform was Sammy Richards, the American. And Salvatia hated him. Four years ago he had been with the Benoît Circus as a barker; four years ago she had thought that she loved him. She had stayed awake nights wondering how it would feel to be in his arms, to have him crushing her gypsy loveliness close to him. She had even gone so far as to make up a pretext that would take them walking in the woods in the moonlight.

But even though Sammy's blue eyes had blazed, even though his breath had gone short in his throat that lovely dance had not made him forget that she was, after all, a gypsy girl and therefore a social caste beneath the other members of the circus. He had gone away after the season, to America, his home—to some strange place called Hollywood where he said a fortune awaited him.

But before he had gone he had done the one thing that made Salvatia hate him. She had gone to his tent that last night, she had stood there in the semi-darkness with hunger in her black eyes, with love trembling on her full lips. She was his woman. He had only to reach out and take her in his arms. Instead, he had looked at her closely . . . at the inward curve of her waist, her slim perfect legs, and he had said, unmoved:

"Salvatia, I saw you edging through the crowd today. Don't pick pockets. Be content with what Benoît pays you."

She had stiffened, with hurt pride, with resentment.

"All the gypsies pick pockets," she had said, evenly. "There's no harm in it."

"But there is, Salvatia. One of these dumb Frenchmen will catch you at it

one of these days and you'll find yourself in prison . . . you and your father and Pietro. Just because all the gypsies pick pockets you don't have to. Promise me that you'll cut it out, Salvatia.'

And then, without giving her a chance to answer he had practically

huskily. "I did not know it before." He had slipped his neck beads about her throat, had kissed them in place in gypsy betrothal fashion and had crushed her in his arms.

The next morning Sammy left and as if to prove to herself how much she hated him, Salvatia moved



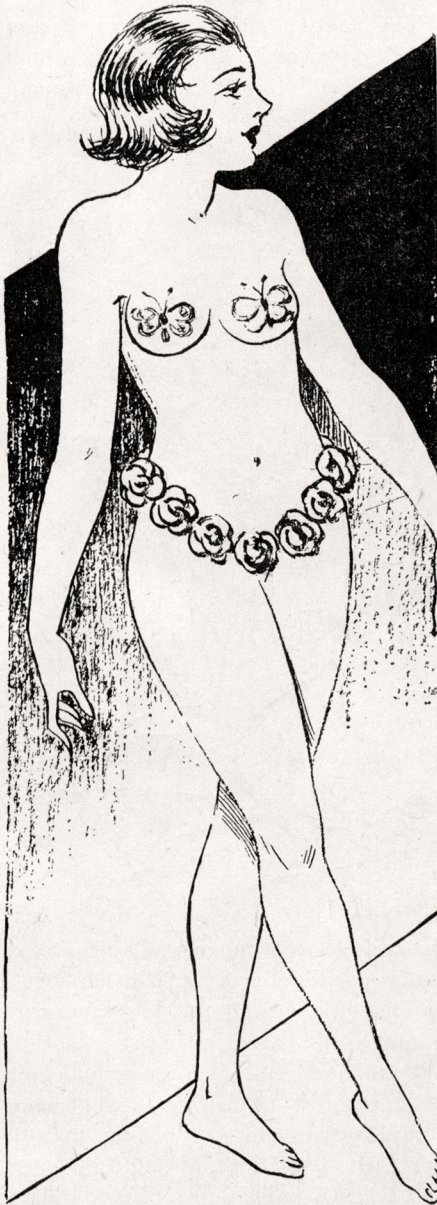
pushed her out of his tent, had said, "Run along to bed now, Salvatia. Like a good little girl!"

Because she was too furious to trust words in her mouth she had flung herself into a dance . . . wildly, . . . her hips swaying, her whole body swaying rhythmically with her agitated steps. Pietro had thrown aside his accordion. He had come to her through the moonlight.

"You are my woman," he had said,

through the circus crowd and picked every pocket she saw. She had been picking pockets all the four years of Sammy's absence, getting satisfaction out of her nimble fingers and her defiance of his advice. She hadn't been caught nor would she be, even though her father and her mother had been and were in jail in Paris now. Pietro had just missed being caught. But Pietro was too slick . . . slick with his own cunning technique.

And at night when they emptied purses and laughed over some of the contents, Salvatia found a wild satisfaction in it.



“We’re gypsies, Pietro. There is no law for us. We do what we wish to do, don’t we? We defy whom we

choose!” she would whisper. And there would be such a fire of hatred in her eyes that Pietro, seeing that strange flame, would confuse it with love and would crush her to him.

And now Salvatia looked at Sammy Richards who was back after four years. There was sawdust flecked on his breeches and on his polka-dot blouse from the floor of the cage in which he had wrestled the bear. There was sawdust in his blonde hair and on the side of his face. In that moment he looked over the heads of the people and saw her. He nodded to her, coolly, looking down upon her . . . a gypsy . . . as if from a mountain top.

Salvatia bit her lip and she seemed to gasp with indignation. She tossed her glossy head up, proudly, swung around on her heel and edged her way through the crowd picking pockets as she went. Out of the tail of one dark eye she could see Sammy watching her, disapproving. Her heart began to pound and her knees trembled beneath her as she hurried on to the big tent. She hated Sammy. It was fun doing something he loathed.

That night after her last performance in the tan bark ring, Salvatia got into her gypsy costume and mingled with the crowd, her nimble fingers busy with pockets. She delighted in Sammy watching her from his platform, scowling down at her from his six-foot-three. And it came to her as she stood there, even as he yelled out for customers to watch him wrestle with the bear, that she could hurt him. Not with love—but with hate. She went quickly over to Sammy’s platform, leaned negligently against a cypress trunk, and with deep malice in her eyes, she consistently



laughed at everything he said to the crowd; she said, derisively, loud enough for Sammy to hear,

"I've seen that man do his act. It looks real, almost as if he were actually tussling with that grizzly. It's a nice act . . . but only an act! That old bear is as tame as any cat that ever curled up on a hearth!"

People began to laugh. They looked up at Sammy and laughed in his face, and moved to other side-shows. Sammy climbed down off his platform and came up to Salvatia. His jaw was grim, his blue eyes furious.

"What sort of a lousy gypsy trick was that, Salvatia Bertovi?" he demanded, evenly. And he stood there in front of her, tall and blond and whitely American in his anger.

Salvatia's heart began to pound beneath the tight blouse of her gypsy dress, her knees shook one against the other. Hatred was delicious. She hadn't felt as alive as this since she could remember. She threw back her dark head, her black eyes burned their hatred against his face.

"You are a fake, Sammy Richards!" she said, coldly. "Four years ago you were a barker for Benoit. Now you come back wrestling a bear! You have but to look at that old grizzly to know that he is as tame as any kitten. You have but to look at YOU to know that you couldn't even wrestle ME!"

Somehow, even hating him as she did, she couldn't endure him looking at her like that. He had never looked at her like that before and so she said, "Fake! Go back to your cage and wrestle with that tired old bear! I think you have two customers waiting!" And then she spun around on her heel and left him.

With quick little steps she hurried

across the circus lot. She headed straight for Poetro's rifle range which was closed now. She thought wildly,

"I'll go into Pietro's arms. I'll stay in them for a long while and tomorrow Pietro and I will be married. There is no need to wait any longer!"

She slipped around behind Pietro's tent and would have gone straight through the opening. But the sound of whispers inside stopped her, made her stand there in the moonlight listening despite herself.

Pietro was saying, softly, in a hurt voice, "Salvatia does not love me, Rosalie. For four years I have never been sure of her. But now I know. She doesn't care. Perhaps it's because your yellow hair dazzles my eyes when I'm with her. Perhaps it's because I've offered her only a part of my heart since most of it belongs only to you. Rosalie . . ."

Then Salvatia heard Pietro say, in that throbbing voice, "Rosalie are we always to hide our love like this?"

Salvatia listened no longer. With a little sigh she struck out toward the woods where she could sit in solitude and think; where she could stare up at the moon and try to puzzle out why hatred had become so much more important in her life than love. Hating Sammy was more important to her than loving Pietro . . . and so she had lost Pietro.

She was clear across the circus grounds, walking slowly, when she heard footsteps behind her, when she heard Sammy Richards say, in a furious voice, "Salvatia!"

He came up behind her, caught her slim, bare shoulders in his hands and swung her around to face him. He shook her until her teeth rattled in her head and until her eyes felt as if

they were being wrung from their sockets. He stormed out.

"You stay away from my platform tomorrow, do you hear? If you don't I'll call the gendarmes the first time I see you slip a finger into a pocket . . . you or your beloved Pietro. I'm going to be with Benoit all this season and I'm not going to have you starting this fake business on the road. Do you understand that?"

Salvatia tossed her dark head upward, gypsy chieftain blood stirring in her veins, proud and hot.

"Fake! Fake!" and her strong young arms locked themselves behind his back. When he broke that hold she slid another upon him, back of his neck. "Wrestle!" she spat at him. "If you can wrestle wild bears you can wrestle Salvatia who is only a woman . . . ."

"Woman?" Sammy cried. "Not a woman! A gypsy hell-cat!"

Salvatia gritted her teeth and tightened her hold. They wrestled furiously. They tumbled to the ground, rolled on top of one another, their legs thrashing in the air. Their breaths mingled. Their arms locked. When Salvatia realized that he had indeed been wrestling that huge bear in the cage, that he was a far cry from a fake . . . and when she realized that the man held on to her even when he could have easily broken her hold . . . she went limp in his arms.

Sammy bent nearer her, not speaking. His hand came out from his side and caressed her thick dark hair. He moved his palm over her face, feeling her slim straight nose, her lips, the soft line of her chin and looked into Salvatia's wide, burning eyes. He said,

"I did not want to love you, Salvatia. That is why I went away. You're a gypsy. Men can not trust gypsies. Only another gypsy would know how to manage you . . . to tame you!"

Salvatia whispered, "You manage and tame that bear, Sammy. I'm not so strong as he."

"It seems that neither of us knew our own minds," said Sammy. "For I went to California to forget you Salvatia. I made lots of money there, not with my bear, but with singing. I trapped that bear in the Rockies. I wrestled him because I knew that one day, despite myself, I would come back to you . . . that I would have to be strong to be worthy of you . . . ."

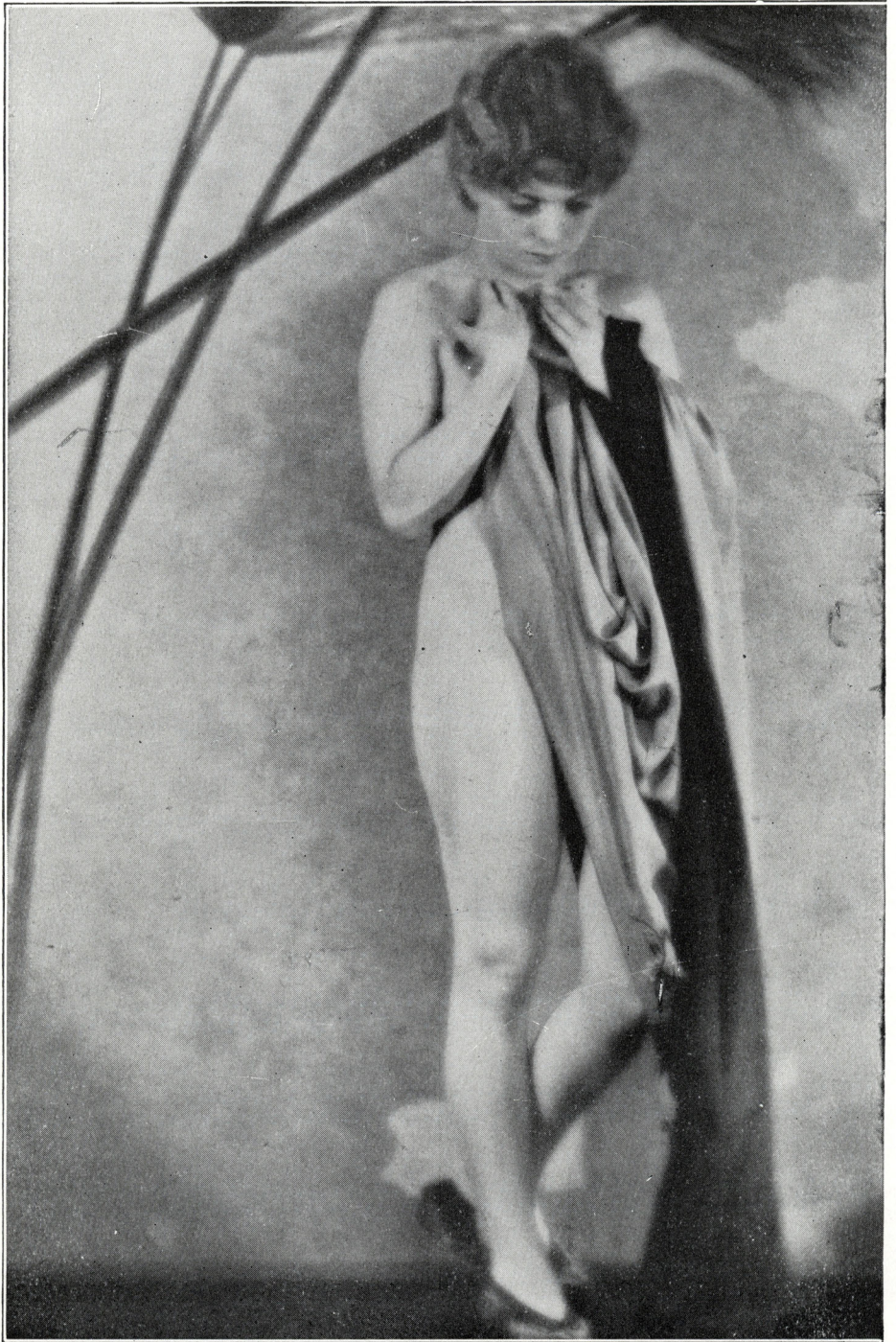
Salvatia's lips turned up in a slow smile. "You understand women, Sammy . . . especially gypsy women!"

And then she didn't say anything more. She even ceased to think. For Sammy had her in his strong young arms. Sammy's mouth was crushing down on her own in an endless kiss. She didn't even think of Pietro in that exquisite moment; Pietro who was thinking of her . . . Pietro who was holding Rosalie in his arms, who was threading his fingers through her golden hair and who was listening to Rosalie saying, softly, breathlessly,

"Pietro, we'll run away tonight. Salvatia won't care. Earlier this evening I saw her hanging around that American gorgio, telling people what a fake he is and all the time love burned in her eyes. Just as I saw it burning once four years ago when he was a barker for mon pere. Pietro, you want me, too, don't you . . . oh, Pietro, darling, what does it matter if mon pere will be furious with me



















# SCRAMBLED YEGGS

By ART NUNCE



**A**LITTLE Frenchman at the office of the Bal de Legion d' Honeur was adamant. His waxed black moustache danced excitedly on his upper lip. Indigo eyes sparkled.

"I am sorry, Monsieur," he repeated. "I cannot do nossing for you! Zere is not one ticket to zee Bal! Zey have all been taken by zee Legion d' Honeur and zere guests. I am sorry."

Eddie Quince gave vent to a labial

noise closely approximating the familiar Bronx cheer. "Nuts!" he muttered.

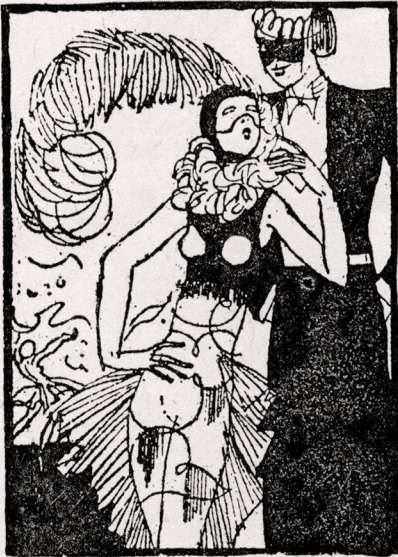
"I beg your pardon, Monsieur," the little Frenchman said.

"Forget it, Froggie. You're sure you can't get me into the shindig? I'm a gentleman of the press."

A pained expression floated over the Frenchman's face. "If I could, Monsieur, I would be tres happy. But, Mon Dieu, what can I do? Zee members and zere friends have all zee tickets."

Eddie scratched his head. "How about letting me see the admission list so I'll know who's going to be there? I've got to send some sort of a story back to my paper."

The "gentleman of the press" label Eddie had assumed was nothing more than a label. He had been a newspaper reporter back in Kansas City, but it was so long ago he had forgotten what it was all about. His main purpose in posing as a newspaperman



was to gain admission to the exclusive Bal de Legion d'Honneur.

The little Frenchman brightened. "Oui, Monsieur, of course! Zat I can do!" He scuttled off, returning with countless sheets of typewritten names. Nine out of ten were prefixed "Chevalier". Eddie ran his eyes down the list. They stopped at the impressive cognomen: His Highness Victor San Remo Vallento et entourage d'Allsia.

"Who's he?" Eddie queried.

"Zee Crown Prince of Alesia, Monsieur."

"And where is Alesia?"

The Frenchman shrugged. "Zat I do not know, Monsieur. His Highness is now at zee Vendome Hotel."

There was a strange glint in Eddie's eyes. He copied down the royal dignitary's name. "Thanks a lot," he said.

The Vendome was one of Paris' most expensive rococo hostelries. Bold as brass, Eddie walked up to the desk, asked for the Crown Prince.

The clerk eyed him. "Who shall I say is calling, Monsieur?"

"A representative of the Paris edition of the New York Bulletin."

Ten minutes later, Eddie was admitted to a suite of rooms on the sixth floor of the hotel. As he entered the drawing room, he stopped short, stared straight ahead of him. There, reclining on a low, damask-covered divan, was a gorgeous dark-haired female! She was wearing a thin, spun-silver negligee, draped loosely about her body.

"I—I beg your pardon," he murmured.

The girl looked up from her magazine. Her black eyes flashed from long curled lashes. Her mouth, carmine red and moist, smiled a greeting.

"Bon jour, Monsieur. You have come to see zee Crown Prince?" She sat up. Eddie's heart thumped like a trip-hammer.

A month in France had given Eddie a pretty fair idea of the local crop of beauties. They were plenty spiffy, all things considered. But this gorgeous creature, French or Alesian (whatever that was!) had the Parisian cuties backed off the map for class.

"Er—yes," Eddie mumbled. "I—I'd like to see His Highness."

The girl swung her shapely legs off the divan.

"Your name, Monsieur?" she

queried, rising.

For a long moment Eddie found it difficult to reply.

"Your name, Monsieur?" she repeated, a faint smile playing about her voluptuously encarnadined lips.

"Edward Quince," Eddie managed.

She undulated out of the room. svelt hips swinging. Eddie felt the palms of his hands beginning to moisten. If, a bare half hour before, someone had told him he was going to rest his eyes on a brunette Venus he would have laughed in that someone's face.

Anxious moments went by. Eddie, possessed of a swell plan for getting into the Bal, almost forgot the purpose of his visit. Now, with the stunning femme out of sight, it returned to mind. Everything would depend on whether this high-mucky-muck from Alesia was anywhere near Eddie's size and build. If he happened to be short, fat and roly-poly or tall, gaunt and angular, it would be just too bad.

The curtains separating the drawing room of the suite from the one adjoining parted and the beautiful brunette returned.

"I am sorry, Monsieur," she said, "but His Highness cannot be disturbed. He is resting in preparation for zee ball tonight. I am his sister. Can I help?"

Eddie licked his lips. He made a mental note to find out where in hell Alesia was. If this beauty was any sample of the feminine Alesians, that was the place for Eddie Quince!

"Er—yes, it's about the Bal," Eddie gulped. "I just wanted to ask him about his costume and—well—and get his viewpoint on things in general. You know, we do that with visiting celebrities."



She nodded. "Oui, I am aware of zat, Monsieur. I am sorry I cannot help you. Zee costume is zee secret. As for anything else, I do not know."

Eddie backed to the door. He was reluctant to leave, but in a case like this it paid to be prudent. If luck was with him he would have ample opportunity to meet this Venus on an equal footing.

"Thank you very much," he gasped. "Goodbye."

She followed him to the door.

Out on the street, Eddie glanced at his watch. Five o'clock. If anything was to be accomplished he had very little time in which to accomplish it. He looked into his wallet. Almost two thousand francs. That was \$120. in American money. A hell of a lot to pay for admission to a masked ball, but he was determined to crash the gates of the exclusive shindig, no matter what the price. And now, too, there was an added incentive. A dark-haired incentive.

Eddie doffed his thinking cap for the time being, stepped into a cafe for an absinthe frappe. It was six-thirty when he returned to the lobby of the Vendome, slumped down in a chair behind a potted palm, kept his eyes glued on the elevators. An hour of watchful waiting brought reward. The gorgeous brunette, swathed in an ermine wrap, came out of the elevator on the arm of a man approximately Eddie's height and build. He, too, was wearing a voluminous opera cloak, but Eddie could see the striped trousers of a colorful uniform and a gold braided military collar. Both the girl and the man had black dominoes over their eyes.

Eddie quivered with excitement. He was certain this was His Highness, the Crown Prince of Alesia. He mem-

orized the gold spinach on the mans' patent leather peaked hat. It had an old rose crown and was festooned with garlands of braid. A second man in uniform, not as gaudy as the Crown Prince's, followed the royal couple through the lobby.

Eddie watched them all get into a cab and drive off. He grinned and rubbed his hands in gleeful anticipation. Now it was all up to him!

It is too well known a fact to warrant undue explanation. The Parisian taxi driver will sell his soul and the soul of each member of his family for the almighty franc. Acting on this truism, Eddie sallied forth from the hotel, picked a likely-looking driver and engaged him in conversation.

"For how much will you rent me your uniform and your cab?" he questioned.

The driver's bushy eyebrows arched. "For how long, Monsieur?"

"All night."

"Five hundred francs."

Eddie computed rapidly. That would be \$30. "No, too much. I'll give you 300 francs."

"Ah, but, Monsieur, it is against zee law! Supposing I am caught, eh What zen?"

"I'll get you out. Three hundred francs. What do you say."

It was five times what the cabbie would earn. He knew it and Eddie knew it. A little more bantering, back and forth, and the deal was closed. A bare half-hour later, Eddie, in the driver's gray uniform, slipped behind the wheel of the cab.

"You will return it to 22 Rue Sabien by dawn, Monsieur?" the cabbie questioned anxiously.

"Maybe before then, Frenchie. Toodle-oo." With a great clatter of meshing gears, the ancient, squeaking

vehicle rolled away.

Narrowly missing a traffic policeman and a lumbering omnibus, Eddie reached the Maison of the Legion of Honor, drew up before the canopy stretching to the curb. An epauletted doorman hurried to the cab. Eddie leaned out. He pressed a folded hundred franc note into the doorman's hand. Speaking low and rapidly, he described the Crown Prince of Alesia's uniform, height, weight and general appearance as best he could.

"Tell the gentleman there is someone to see him. Make it clear that it is important. If you succeed in bringing him out I will give you another hundred francs."

The doorman, blood brother to all other doormen in every part of the world, knew his onions. For cash in hand he would perform miracles. He nodded and vanished into the maison.

Eddie stepped out of the driver's seat, put the collar of his coat up around his face. He opened the back door of the cab, waited anxiously.

Sure enough, out came the Crown Prince in full, glittering regalia, three rows of medals shimmering on his chest. He paused uncertainly under the canopy.

"Zis way, Monsieur," Eddie said. His heart was in his throat.

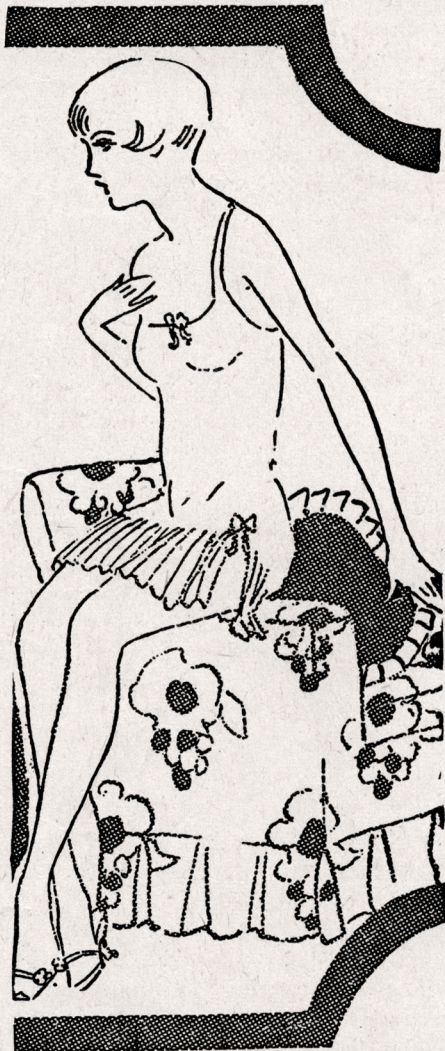
The Crown Prince stepped forward. He looked around, puzzled. "Who wishes to see me?" he questioned.

"A gentleman inside zee cab, Monsieur," Eddie blurted.

The Crown Prince stooped, entered the open door. Eddie, using his body as a shield against the doorman, jerked a leather-covered black-jack from his pocket swung it, tapped the unsuspecting Crown Prince on the back of the head. He slumped into the seat without a sound. Eddie slammed

the door shut, hurriedly gave the doorman his second tip, wrove off.

He stopped the cab on a dark street. Ten minutes of work and the Crown Prince was bound hand and foot with stout rope, his mouth ef-



factively gagged. Eddie stripped him of his resplendent uniform, ran the cab to the bank of the Seine, rolled the still unconscious Crown Prince into the grass behind a thick bush. It was a warm night and he was certain

the royal visitor would suffer no ill effects.

That done, he raced to 22 Rue Sabien and routed out the cabbie who had rented him the hack. Before the astounded eyes of the man, he removed the driver's uniform and substituted the outfit of old rose and braid, even to the black dominoe over his eyes.

"Now, drive me to the Maison de Legion d'Honneur and I will be through with the cab."



The unsuspecting doorman bowed Eddie in to the exclusive Bal. No sooner had he stepped into a room thronged with brilliantly costumed people and alive with the rhythmic strains of music, than a hand fell on his arm. He turned to look into the bright masked eyes of the gorgeous brunette. She was wearing the cos-

tume of a ballet dancer, tight and scant.

"Where have you been, Hugo?" she whispered. "I was worried."

Eddie's lips smiled. He made no reply, preferring to take no chances of detection. He eased her into his arms and danced her away.

Suddenly a chilling thought came to him. She was the Crown Prince's sister! If he attempted to make love to her she would know something was wrong!

"Hugo." She placed her lips close to his ear. "Francois will be ready soon. Had we not better go to zee lounge?"

Eddie nodded. The girl slipped her arm in his. Together they walked off the dance floor into the palm-strewn lounge, seated themselves in an overstuffed love seat.

She leaned towards him, offered her parted red lips.

Eddie had always been taught to act first and ask questions after. He acted, kissing her.

"You still care for Marie, don't you, Hugo, darling?" she murmured.

So that was her name—Marie. Eddie disguised his voice and managed a faint "oui." He was about to continue where he had left off when another man in uniform hurried up, dropped something in Marie's lap and beat a hasty departure.

The girl tensed. "Come! We must go!" She pulled the bodice of her costume away, slid something into the aperture, and rose hurriedly. Eddie caught a gleam of white; the sheen of which looked like pearls. Why was she secreting pearls.

There was no time to ask questions. Marie fairly dragged him out to the coatroom. Before Eddie knew it he was alone with her in a taxicab and



she had ordered the driver to go to the Vendome.

Once the cab moved away from the Maison de Legion d'Honneur Marie breathed a deep sigh of relief. "Ah, sucre, I am glad zat is over. I was so nervous, Hugo."

Before Eddit's gaping eyes, she shrugged off her wrap, lowered the straps of her costume. Eddie got goggle-eyed when he saw what was nestling in her bosom. Marie held it up. It was a stunning pearl necklace, shimmering with all the pure fire of its dozens of big pearls.

"Not bad, Hugo eh?" she questioned. "Is it not worth at least one million francs?"

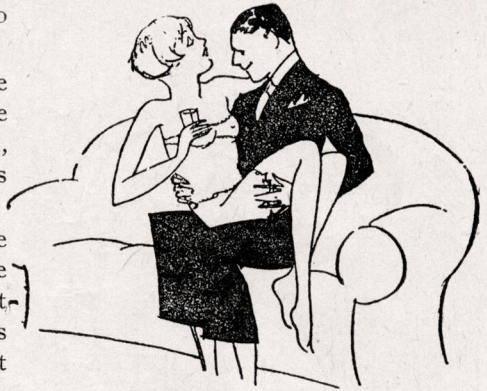
Eddie's mind whirled. He hadn't the faintest idea what this was all about, but he had a premonition he was getting himself into plenty of hot water.

"Francois will meet us at zee train," Marie said. "We must get rid of zese costumes immediately. It will not be long before zee gendarmes will be looking for us."

Jewel thieves! It hit Eddie smack in the nose! Jewel thieves! They weren't members of royalty at all! They were crooks, posing as members of royalty. Right now some wealthy dowager was missing that necklace at the Bal!

Eddie had half a mind to stop the cab and get out. Another look at Marie's voluptuous beauty changed his mind. And anyway, the cab was drawing up before the Vendome. Still masked, they both walked through the lobby, took the elevator to the phony Crown Prince's suite.

"We must hurry, cheri," Marie said, once they were behind locked doors.



Eddie caught her in his arms. If he was taking the chance of being nabbed as a jewel thief he had to get something out of it. He bent her back, kissing her full on the lips.

Timeless minutes later, Eddie removed his mask. The girl's face drained of color. She sat and stared like one transfixed.

"I'm a detective," Eddie lied. "It's too bad you had to get mixed up with that gang of yeggs."

Open-mouthed, Marie gaped. She could not utter a sound. Eddie crossed to a phone. He called police headquarters, reported the recovery of the pearl necklace, told them where they could find the fake Crown Prince and his henchman. That done, he turned to Marie.

"As for you—"

She threw herself at him, pleading. "Please, Monsieur! Do not have me arrested! Hugo forced me to do it!"

Eddie held her close. "Shut up," he said quietly. "There's only one way I can save you."

"How, Monsieur?"

"By marrying you. Then we can tell the police that we worked together to capture those thieves. Otherwise—"

Marie said nothing, but her actions shouted her answer!

## LAUGH AND WE'LL LAUGH WITH YOU



I must admire girls who know  
Enough to keep on saying NO!  
But for a date, I must confess  
I like the girl who murmurs Yes!

Why must women always wear  
Funny gadgets in their hair?  
Metal curlers scratch like heck  
Little boys who want to neck.

“How come simmering Sally slapped the sculptor she was posing for?”

“He wanted to get into the feeling.”

Bessie: “You’d better watch out when you go auto riding with that sheik—he’s a live wire!”

Tessie: “Oh, that’s okey—I’ve been insulated.”

The best way to honor our dead soldiers is to shoot the survivors a living wage.

America shouldn’t have to worry about where all the soldiers are coming from to be used for the next war. There ought to be several million former prohibition agents still available who were trained to shoot at the drop of a hat and who would look just dandy in a trench.

Cutie (in hotel lobby): “They tell me that you sometimes walk in your sleep?”

Sheik: “I do—why do you ask?”

Cutie: “Don’t you dare mistake Room 215 for your quarters.”

**"FIRE"**



**RESCUED—**"I'm Hedy Lovelorn the movie star."

**RESCUER—**"Yere—so I feel."

**"LIVE AND LEARN"**



**HE—**"Do you think you could ever learn to like me a little—baby?"

**SHE—**"Well—I learned to eat carrots."