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# D. GEISBERG

GOSSARD CORSETS

# The Trey O' Hearts

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

The photo-drama corresponding to "The Trey O'Hearts" may now be seen at the leading moving picture theatres. By this new arrangement with the Universal Film Mfg. Co. it is therefore not only possible to read "The Trey O'Hearts" in this paper, but also to see each installment of it at the moving picture theatres.

**SYNOPSIS**—The *Trey O'Hearts* is the private war of vengeance, which, through his daughter, Judith, a woman of violent and criminal temper and questionable sanity, he wages against Alan Law, whose father (now dead) Trine held responsible for the cripple. Rose, Judith's twin and double learning of her sister's campaign against Alan, leaves her home to aid him, whom she loves. Under dramatic circumstances Alan saves Judith's life and so wins her love; but failure to shake his constancy to Rose fixes Judith in her purpose.

(Copyright, 1914, by Louis Joseph Vance.)

lating themselves upon the approach of a respite!

The sheer insanity of the whole damnable business—!

The grim, wild absurdity of it!

To think that this was America, this the 20th century, the apex of the highest form of civilization the world has ever known—and still with the threats harried with the attempts at assassination in a hundred forms—and that by a slip of a girl with the cunning of a mad-woman, the heart of a thug, the face of a charming child—the face of a woman that sat beside him, duplicating its every perfect feature so nearly that even he who loved the one could scarcely distinguish her from the other by instinct, intuition, bling guess work.

He nodded heavy headed confirmation of a surmise slowly settling into conviction in his mind, that such cunning, such purpose and pertinacity could not spring from a mind well balanced, that the woman, Judith Trine, sister to the Rose he loved so well, was as mad as her monomaniac father, who sat helpless in his cell in the gloom and shadows of New York, day after day, eating his very heart out with impatience for the word that his vengeance had been consummated by one daughter whom he had inspired to execute it.

An hour late in the dusk of the evening, the train lumbered into Portland station, and heart in mouth, Alan helped Rose, from the steps, shouldered a way for her through the crowd and almost lifted her into a taxicab.

"Best hotel in town, he demanded. "And be quick about it—for a double tip."

He communicated his one desperate scheme to the girl enroute, receiving the endorsement of it. So having registered for her and seen her safely to the house within ready call of the public lobby and office, he washed up, gulped a hasty meal—which Rose had declined to share, pleading fatigue—and hurried away into the night back picked up hap hazard at some distance from the hotel, for his guide.

am, in pawn to the ship-chandler, desperate enough for anything."

"How much do you owe?"

"Upwards of a hundred."

"Say I advance that amount, when can we sail?"

The young man reflected briefly. "There's something so engagingly idiotic about this proceeding," he observed wistfully, "I've got the strangest kind of a hunch it's going to go through. Pay my bills, and we can be off inside an hour."

He checked with an exclamation of dismay, chaffalain: "I may have some trouble scaring up a crew on short notice. I had two men engaged, but they got tired of doing nothing for nothing and left me flat."

"Then, that's settled," said Alan. "I know boats. I'll be your crew—and the better satisfied to have nobody else aboard."

The eyes of Mr. Barcus clouded. "See here, my headstrong friend, what's your little game, anyway? I don't mind playing the fool on the high seas, but I'll be no party to a kidnapping—or—"

"It's an elopement," Alan interrupted, on inspiration. "We've simply got to get clear of Portland by midnight."

"You're on!" Barcus agreed very promptly, his face clearing. "God only knows why I believe you, but I do—and here's my hand!"

**I.—Forewarned.**

The thing was managed with an ingenuity that Alan termed devilish; it was indisputably Machiavellian.

The lovers had come down from the north in hot haste and the shadow of death. Two days of steady traveling by canoe, by woods trail, by lake steamer—forty eight hours of fatigue and strain eased by one constant relaxation from the high tension of vigilance upon which their very lives depended—wore to a culmination through this tedious afternoon on the train from Moosehead; a trip of physical torment only made possible by Alan's luck in securing, through sheer accident, two parlor car reservations turned back at the last moment before leaving Kineo station.

No matter, the longest afternoon must have its evening; the pokiest of trains comes the more surely to its destination; in another hour or two they would be in Portland free at last to draw a breath of ease in a land of law, order and sane living.

As if in answer to this thought the train slowed down with the whistling brakes to the last hill-station; and as the tracks groaned and moved anew, a lot of a boy came galloping down the aisle, brandishing two yellow envelopes and blating like a stray calf.

"Mista Lawr—Mista Lawr! Telegrams for Mr. Lawr!"

Alan had been expecting at every station a prepaid reply to his wire for reservations on the night express from Portland to New York.

But why two envelopes superscribed "Mr. A. Law, Kineo train, south-bound, Oakland sta?"

He tore open and unfolded the enclosure and grunted disgust with its curt advice, opened the other and caught his breath sharply as with-drew part of the way—a playing card, The Trey of Hearts.

Thrusting it back quickly, he cast both envelopes together, tore them into a hundred fragments, and scattered them from the window. But the scendish wind whipped one small scrap back—and only one—into the lap of a woman he loved.

Vainly he prayed that she might be asleep. The silken lashes trembled on her cheeks and lifted slightly, disclosing the dark glimmer of questioning eyes. As she clipped the scrap from her breast, she frowned and thurb, he bent forward and silently took it from her—some corner of the Trey of Hearts, but inevitably a corner bearing the figure three above a heart.

"The Pullman agent at Portland wires no reservations available on any of the New York trains in the next 36 hours," he said with lowered voice.

"Couldn't we possibly catch the New York boat tonight?"

He shook a grim head—No, I looked that up before I left. It leaves before we get in."

She said, "no big?" abstractedly, re-closed her eyes, and apparently lapsed anew into semi-consciousness—but without deceiving him who could well guess what poignant anxiety gnawed at her heart.

He could have ground his teeth in exasperation; the implicit insolence of that warning, tried so precisely to set their nerves on edge at the very moment when they were congru-

**II.—Fortuity.**

He wasted the better part of an hour in fruitless and perhaps ill-advised inquiries; then his luck, such as it was, led him on suspicion down a poorly lighted wharf, at the extreme end of which he discovered a lonely young man perched atop a pile, hands in pockets, gaze turned to a tide when upon, now black night had fallen, pallid wreaths of yachts swung just visibly beneath uneasy riding-lights.

"Pardon me," Alan ventured, but perhaps you can help me out—"

"You've come to the wrong shop, my friend," the young man interposed with morose civility: "I couldn't help anybody out of anything—the way I am now."

"Oh, sorry," said Alana, "but I thought you might know where I could find a seaworthy boat to charter."

The young man slipped smartly from his perch. "If you don't look sharp," he said ominously, "you'll charter the Seaventure."

He waved his hand toward a vessel moored beside the wharf; "There she is!" he said, "and a better boat you won't find anywhere; schooner rigged, 50 feet over all, 25 horse power motor auxiliary, two state-rooms—all ready for as long a coastwise cruise as you care to take. Come aboard."

He led briskly across the wharf, down a gangplank, then along the deck to a companionway by which the two men gained a comfortable and roomy cabin, bright with fresh, white, canvas.

Here the light of the cabin revealed to Alan's searching scrutiny a person of sturdy build and independent carriage, with a roughly modeled, good humored face, reddish hair, and steady though blue eyes.

"Name, Barcus," the young man introduced himself cheerily: "Christian Thomas, Nativity, American. State of life, flat broke. That's the rub," he laughed and shrugged, shame-faced. "I fowd myself hard up this spring with this boat—and then some—sunk every cent I had—and then some—fitting out on an oval charter with a money-wel' blighter in New York, who was to have met me here a fortnight ago. He didn't—and there I

**III.—Blue Water.**

Anxiety ate like an acid in Alan's heart. If this shift to the sea might be thought a desperate venture, he was a weathered salt-water man and undismayed; nothing would have been more to his liking than a brisk coastwise cruise in an able boat—under auspices less foreboding.

But when he reentered the hotel, one surprising thing happened that gave him heart; momentarily it seemed almost as if luck had turned. For as he paused at the desk of the cashier he demanded his bill and the elevator gate opened and Rose came out eagerly to meet him, with an eager air of hope that masked his worry. "I worried so I couldn't rest," she told him guardedly as he drew her to one side, "so I got up and ready and watched from the window till I saw you drive up."

He acquainted her briefly with his fortune.

But she seemed unable to echo his confidence even to overcome the heaviness of her spirits when the cab without misadventure set them down at the wharf.

Here, Alan had feared, was the crucial point of danger; if the influence of the Trey of Hearts was to bring disaster upon them, it would be here, in the hush and darkness of this deserted water front. And he bore himself most warily as he helped the girl from the car and to the gangplank of the Seaventure. But nothing happened; while Mr. Barcus was as good as his word. Alan had barely set foot on the deck, following the girl, when the gangplank came aboard with a clatter and the Seaventure swung away from the wharf.

Until the distance was too great for even a flying leap, Alan lingered watchfully on deck.

At length, satisfied that all was well he returned to the cabin.

"All right," he nodded; "we're clear of that apparently; nobody but the three of us aboard. Now you'd best turn in. This is evidently to be your stateroom, this one to port, and you'll have a long night's sleep to make up for what you've gone through—dear-est."

He drew nearer dropping his voice tenderly. And of a sudden, with a little low cry, the girl came into his arms and clung passionately to him.

"But you?" she murmured. "You need rest as much as I! What about you?"

"Oh, no I don't," he contended. "Besides I'll have plenty of time to rest up once we fairly at sea. Barcus and I stand watch and watch, of course. There's nothing for you to do but be completely at your ease. But—you must let me go."

Eyes half-closed, her head thrown back, she seemed to suffer his kiss more than respond, then turned hastily away to her stateroom—leaving him staring with wonder at her strange-

spinning swiftly southeast, close reeled to a snoring southwest wind—the fixed white eye of Portland head light falling astern.

IV—DOWN THE CAPE.

At four o'clock, or shortly after, Alan was awakened by boot-heels pounding imperatively overhead, and went on deck again, to stand both dog-watches—saw the sun lift up smiling over a world of tumbled blue water, crossed the wake of a Cunard liner inbound for Boston, raised and overhauled a graceful but business-like fisherman (from Gloucester, Barcus guessed when called to stand his trick at eight) and saw it a mile or two astern when—still aching with fatigue—he was free to return to his berth for another four-hour rest.

This time misguided consideration induced Barcus to let the crew sleep through the first afternoon watch. Six bells were ringing when, in drowsy apprehension that something had gone suddenly and emphatically wrong, Alan waked.

He was on deck again almost before he rubbed the sleepiness from his eyes emerging abruptly from the half light of the cabin to a dazzle of sunlight that filled the cup of day with rare-field gold, even as he passed from conviction of security to realization of immediate and extraordinary peril.

His first glance discovered that the wheel was deserted, the woman with back to him standing at the taffrail Barcus—nowhere to be seen. The second confirmed his surmise that the Seaventure had come up into the wind and was now yawing off wildly into the trough of a stiff if not heavy sea. A third showed him to his amazement the Gloucester fisherman—overhauled with such ease that morning and now, by rights, well down the northern horizon—not two miles distant, and standing squarely for the smaller vessel.

"But how did she happen to throw you overboard?"

"Happen nothing!" Barcus snapped, getting to his feet. "She did it a purpose—flew at me like a wildcat, and before I knew what was up—I was slammed backwards over the rail."

"I can't tell you how sorry I am," Alan responded gravely. "There's more to tell—but one thing o be done first."

"And that?" Mr. Barcus inquired suspiciously.

"To get rid of the lady," Alan announced firmly. "Make that fisherman a present of the woman in the case. You don't mind parting with the dory in a good cause—if I pay for it?"

"Take it for nothing," Barcus grumbled. "Cheap at the price!"

He took Alan's place, watching him with a sardonic eye as he drew the tender in under the leeward quarter made it fast, and reopened the companionway.

As the girl came on deck without other invitation, in a sullen rage that only heightened her wonderful loveliness, Alan noted that her first look was for him, of untempered malignity; her second for Barcus, with a curious lip; her third astern, with a glimmer of satisfaction as she recognized how well the fisherman had drawn up on the Seaventure.

"Friends of yours, I infer?" Alan inquired civilly.

Judith nodded.

"Then it would save us some trouble—yourself included—if you'll be good enough to step into the dory without a struggle."

Without a word Judith stepped to the rail and, as Barcus luffed, swung herself overside into the dory.

Immediately Alan cast off, and as the little boat sheered off, Barcus, with a sigh of relief, brought the Seaventure once more back upon her course.

Bewildered he darted to the girl's side, with a shout, demanding to know what was the matter. She turned to him a face he hardly recognized—but still he didn't understand. The inevitable inference seemed a thing unthinkable; his brain faltered when asked credit for it. Only when he saw her tearing frantically at the painter, striving to cast it off and with it the dory toasting a hundred feet or so astern, and when another wondering glance had discovered the head and shoulders of Mr. Barcus rising over the stern of the dory as he strove to lift himself out of the water—only then did Alan begin to appreciate what had happened.

Even so, it was with the feeling that all the world and himself as well had gone stark, raving mad, that he seized the girl and, despite her struggling, tore her away from the rail before she had succeeded in unknotting the painter.

"Rose," he cried stupidly. "Rose! What's the matter with you? Don't you see what you're doing?"

Defiance informed her countenance and accents: "Can't you say anything but 'Rose! Rose! Rose!' Is there no you? Can't you understand how intolerable it is to me? I love you no less than she—better than she ever dreamed of loving you—because I hate you, too! What is love that is no more than love? Can't you understand?"

"Judith," he cried in a voice of stupefaction. "But—good Lord!—how did you get aboard? Where's Rose?"

"Where you'll find her easily again," the woman angrily retorted. "Trust me for that!"

"What do you mean?" Illumination came in a blinding flash. "Do you mean it was you—whom I brought aboard last night?"

"Who else?"

"You wailed her there in the hotel, substituted yourself for her, deceived me into thinking you—!"

"Of course," she said simply. "Why not? When I saw her sleeping there the mirror of myself, completely at my mercy—what else should I think of than to take her place with the man I loved? I knew you'd never know the difference—at least, I was fool enough for the moment to believe I could stand being loved by you in her name! It was only today, when I'd had time to think, that I realized how impossible that was!"

A sudden slap of the mainsail boom athwartships and a simultaneous cry from the stern roused Alan from his consternation to fresh consideration of the emergency. With scant deliberation he hustled the woman to the companionway and below, slammed its doors and closed her in with the sliding hatch—all in a breath—then sprang to the taffrail, just in time to lend a helping hand sorely wanted to Mr. Barcus in his efforts to climb aboard, after he had pulled the dory up under its stern by its painter.

He came over the rail in a towering temper.

"I hope you'll pardon the apparent impertinence," he suggested acily, as soon as able to articulate coherently—"but may I inquire if that bloody-minded vixen in your blushing bride-to-be?"

Alan shook a helpless head. The thing defied reasonable explanation. He made a feeble stagger at it without much satisfaction either to himself or to the outraged Barcus.

"No—it's a damnable mistake! She is her sister—3 mean, the right girl's sister—and her precise double—fooled me—not a hair's right in the head, I'm afraid."

"You may be afraid, you poor flat!" Mr. Barcus snapped. "You know what she did? Threw me overboard! Fact! Came on deck a while ago, sweet as peaches—and all of a sudden whips out a big gun as big as a cannon, points it at my head and orders me to luff into the wind. Before I could make sure I wasn't dreaming, she had fired twice—in the air—a signal to that blessed fisherman astern there; at least, they answered with two toots of a powerful whistle and changed course to run up to us. Look how she gained already!"

For some few minutes there was silence between the two men, while the tender dropped swiftly astern, the woman plying a brisk pair of oars.

Then suddenly elevating his nose, Barcus sniffed audibly. "Here, he said sharply, "relieve me for a minute, will you? I want to go forward and have a look at that motor."

In the time that he remained invisible between decks, the fisherman luffed, picked up the dory and its occupant, and came round again in open chase of the Seaventure.

When Barcus reappeared it was with a grave face.

"The devil and the deep She," he observed obscured, coming aft, "from all their works, good Lord, deliver us!"

"What's the trouble now?"

"Nothing much—only your playful little friend has been up to another of her light-hearted tricks. . . if you should happen to want a smoke or anything hot to eat when you go below, just find a mirror and kiss yourself good-bye before striking the match. The d—cocks of both fuel tanks have been opened, and there are upwards of hundred and fifty gallons of highly explosive gasoline soshlooshing round in the bilge!"

**V.—NO QUARTER.**

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Barcus indulgently, breaking a long silence. Very interesting. Very interesting, indeed. I've seldom listened to a more entertaining life-history, my poor young friend. But I tell you candidly, as man to man, I don't believe one word of it. It's all damn foolishness!"

His voice took on a plaintive accent. "Particularly this!" he expostulated, and waved an indignant hand, compassing their plight.

"The rest of your adventures are reasonable enough," he said; "they won my credituality—and I'm a native son of Missippi. But this last chapter is impossible. And that's flat. It couldn't happen—and has And there, in a manner of speaking, we are!"

Against the western horizon a long, low-lying strip of sand dunes rested like a bar of purple cloud between the crimson afterglow of sunset in the sky and the ensanguined sea that mirrored it.

The wind had gone down with the sun, leaving the Seaventure becalmed of fuel—in shoal water a mile or so off the desolate and barren coast that Barcus, out of his abounding knowledge of those waters, named Nauset Beach.

Still another mile off-shore, the so-called Gloucester fisherman rode, without motion, waters as still and glassy. Though the gloaming, with the aid of glasses, figures might be seen moving about her decks; and as it grew still more dark she lowered a small boat that therefore had swung in davits. A little later a faint humming noise drifted across the tide.

"Power tender," the owner of the Seaventure interpreted. "Coming to call, I presume Sociable lot. What I can't make out is why they seem to think it necessary to tow our dory back. Uneasy conscience, maybe—what?"

He lowered the binoculars and ganced inquiringly at his employer, who grunted his disgust, and said no more.

"Don't take it so hard, old top," Barcus advised with a change of note from irony to sympathy. Then he rose and dived down the companionway, presently to reappear with a megaphone and a double-barrelled shotgun.

"No cutting out parties in this outfit," he explained, grinned amiably. "None of that old stuff, revised to suit your infatuated female friend: Once aboard the lugger and the man is mine!"

Stationing himself at the seaward rail, where his figure would show in sharp silhouette against the glowing sunset sky, he brandished the shotgun at arm's length above his head, and bellowed strenuously thru the megaphone:

"Keep off! Keep off! This means

what they were up to till I saw them lash the wheel, light the fuse, start the motor, and take to the dory. They've made one grand little torpedo-boat out of that lumber—"

He sprang upon the rail, standing himself with a stay. "Ready?" he asked. "Look sharp!"

By way of answer, Alan joined him; the two had dived as one, entering the water with a single splash, and coming to the surface a good ten yards from the Seaventure. For the next several seconds they were swimming frantically, and not until three hundred feet or more separated them from the schooner did either dare pause for breath of a backward glance.

Then the impact of the launch against the Seaventure's side rang out across the waters, and with a husky roar the launch blew up, spewing skyward a widespread fan of flame. Over the Seaventure, as this flamed and died, pale fire seemed to hover like a tremulous pall of phos-phorescence, a weird and ghastly glare that suddenly descended to the decks. There followed a crackling noise, a sound as of the labored breathing of a giant; and bright flames, orange, crimson, violet and gold, licked out all over the schooner, from stem to stern; from deck to topside.

It seemed several minutes that she burned in this wise—it was probably not so long before her decks blew up and the flames swept roaring to the sky.

By the time that Alan and Barcus swimming steadily, had gained a shoal which permitted them footing in waist-deep waters, the Seaventure had burned to the water's edge.

(To be continued.)

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