

THE THREE HEARTS OF LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

SYNOPSIS—The 3 of Hearts is the "death-sign" employed by Seneca Trine in the private war of vengeance which, through the agency of his daughter Judith, he wages against Alan Law, son of the man, now dead, who was innocently responsible for the accident which rendered Trine a helpless cripple. Alan loves and is loved by Rose, Judith's twin and double. Judith vows to compass his death, but under dramatic circumstances Alan saves her life and so, unwillingly wins her love. Thereafter Judith is by turns animated by the new love, the old hatred, and jealousy of her sister. In escaping her persecution, Alan and Rose and their friend Barcus take refuge in the Painted Hills—a range of arid mountains and bordering the Arizona deserts. Judith, while pursuing, suffers a change of heart and warns them in time to avert an attempt upon their lives. In return for this she is seized by an outlaw accomplice and bound helpless to the back of a horse. Alan shoots the accomplice and the horse runs away, following a perilous trail.

1—THE MAN IN THE SHADOW.

Two hundred feet, if one, Hopi Jim fell from the lip of the cliff. Then suddenly the Thing that had been Hopi Jim Slade was checked in his headlong descent by the outstanding trunk of a tree, over which it remained, double up, limp, horrible.

The miniature landslide that had been caused by his fall went on, settling gradually as the slope became less sheer. Only part of it, a double handful of pebbles, gained the bottom of the canyon.

Its muffled impact on the ground round his feet roused the man who had compassed the bandit's death from the pose he had unconsciously assumed on the instant of firing.

He stepped back and snatched up a case containing binoculars.

Not before the glasses were adjusted to his vision did he find time to respond absently to the alarmed and insistent inquiring of his two companions, a man of his own age and a girl of some years less, who had been awakened from their sleep by the report of the rifle.

Now the latter plucked his sleeve, momentarily deflecting the glance from the object which they were following so sedulously as it moved along the heights; a wildly running horse with a woman bound helpless upon its back, both sharply in silhouette against the burning blue.

"Alan!" the girl demanded, "what is it? Why did you fire? Why won't you answer me? What is it?"

"Judith," Alan replied tersely, again picking up with the glasses the runaway horse that fled so madly along the perilous and narrow track of the hill trail.

The name was echoed from two throats as Alan swung sharply and thrust the glasses into the hands of the girl.

"Judith," he affirmed with a look of poignant solicitude. "She's roped to the back of that crazy broncho—helpless! See for yourself; one false step—suppose a stone turns beneath its hoof—she'll be killed!"

While the girl focused her glasses upon that speck that flew against the sky Alan turned to the two horses hobbled near by and seizing a saddle threw it over the back of one.

At this the other man strode to his side and dropping a detaining hand upon his arm, asked:

"What are you going to do?"

Alan shook the hand off and went on with his self-appointed task.

"Go after her, Tom, of course," he replied. "What else? That animal is crazy, I tell you."

"Even so," Tom Barcus argued, "you can't climb that hillside on horseback—and if you could, you'd be too late to catch up, much less prevent an accident."

"I know it. But suppose it doesn't fall. . . . You know what's beyond those hills—desert! And the girl is helpless, I tell you, bound hand and foot. Think of her being carried that way—all day, perhaps—face up to this brutal sun!"

"You're raving," Barcus commented in a hopeless turn. He looked to the girl. "Rose—Miss Trine—reason with this madman."

Dropping his glasses, the girl swiftly and confidently to her lover's side, lifting her lips to his.

"Go, sweetheart!" she told him. "Save her if you can!"

Then hoofs drumming on the hard-packed earth of the canyon trail struck a hundred echoes from its rugged, rocky walls.

Mr. Barcus showed Rose Trine a face almost ludicrous with its anguished smile that was intended to seem reassuring.

"Let's look sharp and follow him as quick as may be," he urged. "Lightning will never strike us so long as we stick to Mr. Law of the charmed life—but I don't mind telling you, once out of his company, I'm just naturally afraid of the dark!"

II—THE TRAIL OF FLYING HOOP.

In the still air of that fuming day the chill of night lingered stubbornly—and would until the shadow of the eastern rampart had crept slowly down the canyon's western wall, steeped upon itself and vanished, leaving in the sun to make the place a pit of torment and of burning.

Refreshed from rest and exhilarated by this grateful coolness, his horse responded willingly to the fresh light touch of Alan's spur. In a twinkling the overcast camp dropped from view behind the rounded shoulder of a hillside, meadow-landed.

Alan from its first, swift flight

the horse settled down to steady going, lengthened its stride, and ran for leagues with the long, apparently effortless and tireless lunge of the plains-bred broncho, ventre-a-terre.

Alan's departure from camp had anticipated by a round quarter-hour the appearance on the upper trail of friends of the slain bandit, to the number of four or five, who had both discovered and recovered his body, called his death murder and pledged themselves to its avengement—laying responsibility for the putative crime at the door of the man and woman to be seen in the canyon, immediately below the scene of Hopi Jim's fall.

Between the moment when discovery of the man on the ridge trail interrupted their simple and hurried breakfast and that which found Rose and Barcus mounted on the back of their own horses and making the best of their way down the canyon in pursuit of Alan, but little time had lapsed.

And even with its double burden, their horse made better time upon the broad lower level than those who followed the ridge trail. By mid-morning, when they approached the foothills that ran more than a mile in the rear and shut off to boot by a monolithic hill, while Alan was many a weary mile in advance.

He sat upon his horse, just then, at standstill upon the summit of a rounded knoll, the Painted Hills lifting up behind him, the desert before unfolding like a map.

Descending the knoll he reined his lagging mount back into the trail, following its winding course through the foothills and round the base of that monolithic mountain toward the junction with the ridge trail, miles away.

It approached the hour of noon before he gained the point where the two trails joined and struck out across the desert. And here he discovered what he thought indisputable indications that the fright of Judith's horse had persisted.

Abandoning immediately all notion of returning through the hills by the ridge-trail, he turned and swung away at the best pace he could spur from his broncho, delivering himself into the pitiless embrace of that implacable wilderness of sun and sand.

At long intervals he would check the broncho and, reeling in the saddle endeavor to sweep the desert with his binoculars.

An toward the middle of the afternoon he fancied that something rewarded one such effort; something, for an instant swam athwart the field of the glasses; something that seemed to make like a weary horse with a human figure bound to its back.

But now phenomena were discernible which, had he been more desert-wise, would have made him pause and think before he adventured farther from those hills, already beyond reach as they were.

His first appreciated warning came when the surface of the desert seemed to lift and shake like the top of a canvas tent in a gale. At the same time a mighty gust of wind swept athwart

of its father bank.

There, sitting, the pillowed his head upon her lap, and bending over him made her body an additional shelter to him from the swirling clouds of dust.

And for hours on end Judith nursed him there, scarce daring to move save to minister to his needs, bathing his fevered brow and moistening his parched lips and throat.

In the course of the first hour she was once startled by the spectral vision through the driving sheets of dust of a horse that plodded up the arroyo, bearing two riders on its back.

Wearily with the weight of its double burden, it went slowly and passed so near to Judith that she was able to recognize the features of her sister and Tom Barcus.

Be sure she made never a sign to catch their attention.

Within the next succeeding hour the coppery light lost something of its hot brilliance, took on a darker shade, and then one darker still. Twilight stole athwart the desert, turning its heat to chill, its light to violet.

Growing more intense, the cold eventually roused the sleeping man.

And hardly had his eyes unclosed and looked up into the eyes of Judith bending over him than he started up and, out of her embrace, got unsteadily upon his feet and after a moment at a pause, watching her rise in turn, strode away—or, rather, staggered—with the gesture of exorcism.

Uncomplaining, hugging her newborn humility to her with the ecstasy of the anchorite his horsehair shirt, Judith followed him patiently, at a little distance.

Not far from where he had rested there was a break in the overhanging wall of the arroyo. Through this he scrambled painfully, reaching the level of the desert only after cruel effort, the unheeded woman at his heels

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Thus an hour passed; and for all their desperate struggles neither could see that the light on the mountain-side was a yard the nearer.

Behind them other lights appeared, two staring yellow eyes that peered up over the horizon, seemed to pause a time in search of the two, then leaped out directly toward them.

Of this they were altogether ignorant; and when a deep, droning sound disturbed the desert silence, like the purring of some gigantic cat, both ascribed it to the drumming of their laboring pulses.

The two lights were not a mile behind them when, silently, without a sign to warn the girl, Alan released her, took a step apart and dropped at it shot.

Instantly she was kneeling by his side. But in the act of bending over him she drew back and remained for several moments motionless, staring at those twin glaring eyes, sweeping down upon them with all the speed attainable by a six-cylinder touring car negotiating a trackless desert.

When Judith did move it was not to comfort Alan. On the contrary, her first act was to draw from her pocket a heavy, blunt-nosed revolver, break it at the breech and blow its barrel clear of dust. Her hand went next to the holster on Alan's hip. From this she extracted his Colt's .45, treating it as she had the other. Then she crouched low above the man she loved, as if thinking perhaps to escape notice from the occupants of the motorcar.

If that were her thought, it was bred of an idle hope. Alan had chosen fall in the middle of a wide space so arid that not even sagebrush had ventured to take root there. When the glare of the headlights fell upon them it was inevitable that discovery should

follow. The motor car stopped within 20 feet. Three men jumped out and ran toward the pair, leaving two in the car—the chauffeur and one who occupied a corner of the rear seat; an old man with the face of a damned soul, doomed for a little time to live upon this earth in the certain knowledge of his damnation.

As this happened, Judith Trine leaped to her feet and stood over the body of Alan, a revolver poised in either hand.

"Halt!" she ordered imperatively. "Hands up!"

The three who had alighted obeyed without a moment's hesitation; her father's creature, they knew the daughter's temper far too well to dream of opposing her will.

In the six hands that were alighted against the headlights' radiance, three revolvers glimmered; but at her command all three dropped harmlessly to the earth.

"This, sharply, 'Stand back two feet!' she required.

They moved unobscuredly.

Daring forward, she picked up and pocketed the three weapons, then with one of her own singled out the man she named.

"Now, Marrophet—and you, Hicks—pick Mr. Law up and carry him into the car. And try to be gentle, mind! If one of you lifts a finger to harm him, that one shall answer to me."

Still none ventured to dispute her.

The two men designated, without a sign of demoralization, stepped forward. One lifted Alan Law by the shoulders; the other took his legs. Between them they bore him with every care toward the motor car.

"But now a second will manifest itself. The man in the rear seat lifted up a weirdly sonorous voice.

"Stop!" he cried. "Stop this non-

sense! Drop that man! Judith, I command you!"

"He silent!" the girl cut in sharply. "I command here—if it's necessary to tell you."

There was a pause of astonishment. Then the old man broke out in exasperation that threatened to wax into fury: "Judith! What do you mean by this? Has it indeed come to this that my own daughter defies me to my face?"

"Apparently!" she shot back, with a short laugh. "Judge for yourself!"

"Have you forgotten your vow to me?"

"No. But I take it back and cancel it: that is my privilege, I believe."

"Silence!" she stormed as he strove to gain her. "Silence—do you hear?—or it will be the worse for you!"

As well command the sea to still its voice: her father raged like the madman that he was, for the time being divested of his habitual mask of frigid heartlessness.

And seeing that there was no other way of quieting him, the girl turned to the third man.

"Now, Jimmy!" she said crisply. "Into that car—and be quick about it—and gag him!"

"If you do," her father foamed, "I'll have your life!"

A flourish of her weapon gained instant obedience.

She stepped up on the running board and shot a quick, searching glance at the face of the chauffeur.

"Straight ahead, my man!" she said. "Make for the nearest pass through those hills yonder, and don't delay, unless you're anxious for trouble. On you go!"

The car began to move. She swept the three men in the desert a mocking bow, jumped into the body of the car and slammed the door.

They made no effort to plead their cause and secure passage even as far as the edge of the desert; doubtless they knew too well the futility of that, she thought, as she settled back in a seat, chuckling with the memory of those three masks of dismay unmitigated.

It was not until five minutes later, when she straightened up from making Alan comfortable that she realized what had made them so content to abide by her will.

Then she heard their voices lifted together in a long, shrill howl that was quickly answered by fainter yells from a distant quarter of the desert, then by pistols popping and flashing some two miles away, then by a growing rumor of galloping hoofs.

The night glasses in the car afforded her a sardonic chuckle from within Trine's gag goaded the girl into a sullen fury.

Exact his utmost speed from the chauffeur, under penalty of her displeasure, she set herself to revive Alan.

With the aid of such stores of food and drink as the car carried, this was quickly enough accomplished.

Struggling with an overdose of brandy too little diluted with water, Alan sat up, grasped the conditions in a flash, and gained further information as he devoured sandwiches and emptied a canteen.

The mountain pass was now, he judged, a mile distant. The light on the hillside, according to the chauffeur, was that of a prospector who had camped there temporarily. There was nothing, then, to be feared from that quarter, but solely from the rear—where the horsemen, having picked up Marrophet and his companion, had instituted hot pursuit, and were now strung out in a long, snaking line, three horses carrying double the farthestmost—perhaps a mile and a half away—one with a single rider the nearest, well within three-quarters of a mile.

Nobly mounted, this last came on like the wind, gaining on the motor car with every stride; for his horse was trained to such going, whereas the car at best could only labor heavily in dust and sand.

None the less, it had won to a point within a quarter of a mile from the pass before the horseman got within what he esteemed the proper range, and opened fire.

His first bullet, his first shot winged wide, his second by ill-chance tipped through a new tire of the car, thus placing momentarily an additional handicap, while his third sought the south as his hands flew up and he dropped from the saddle, drilled through the body by Alan's only shot.

A long-range pistol duel was in progress before the car had covered half the remaining distance to the pass.

By the time it entered this last, which proved to be a narrow ravine with towering sides of crumbly earth and shale and broken rock, the pursuit was not a hundred yards behind, while the firing was well-nigh continuous.

Two hundred feet above the trail two men were working with desperate haste at some mysterious business—though none noticed them.

Only the chauffeur was aware of a woman remaining down the hillside at an angle to intercept the car several hundred yards from the mouth of the pass.

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of the man on the ridge trail interrupted their simple and hurried breakfast and that which found Rose and Barcus mounted on the back of their own horses and making the best of their way down the canyon in pursuit of Alan, but little time had lapsed.

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Thus an hour passed; and for all their desperate struggles neither could see that the light on the mountain-side was a yard the nearer.

Behind them other lights appeared, two staring yellow eyes that peered up over the horizon, seemed to pause a time in search of the two, then leaped out directly toward them.

Of this they were altogether ignorant; and when a deep, droning sound disturbed the desert silence, like the purring of some gigantic cat, both ascribed it to the drumming of their laboring pulses.

The two lights were not a mile behind them when, silently, without a sign to warn the girl, Alan released her, took a step apart and dropped at it shot.

Instantly she was kneeling by his side. But in the act of bending over him she drew back and remained for several moments motionless, staring at those twin glaring eyes, sweeping down upon them with all the speed attainable by a six-cylinder touring car negotiating a trackless desert.

When Judith did move it was not to comfort Alan. On the contrary, her first act was to draw from her pocket a heavy, blunt-nosed revolver, break it at the breech and blow its barrel clear of dust. Her hand went next to the holster on Alan's hip. From this she extracted his Colt's .45, treating it as she had the other. Then she crouched low above the man she loved, as if thinking perhaps to escape notice from the occupants of the motorcar.

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paused, waving both arms frantically, the head of the pursuing party swept into the mouth of the ravine.

At the same time the chauffeur noticed that the two men on the hillside were following the woman pell-mell, throwing themselves down the slope with gigantic leaps and bounds.

And then a great explosion rent the peaceful hush of night—that rill then had been profaned by the pattering cracks of the revolver fusillade.

As the roar of dynamite subsided the entire side of the hill shifted and slid ponderously down, choking the ravine with debris to the depth of some thirty or forty feet, burying the leaders of the pursuit beyond hope of rescue.

Only an instant later the motor car jolted to a halt and Alan pulled himself together to find that Rose and Barcus were standing beside the door and jabbering joyful greetings, mixed with more or less incoherent explanations of the manner in which they had come to seek shelter for the night in the prospector's shack and, roused by the noise of firing and recognizing Alan in the car by the aid of night glasses, had with the prospector's aid hit upon this scheme of shooting a landslide in between the pursuit and its devoted quarry.

(To be continued.)

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If that were her thought, it was bred of an idle hope. Alan had chosen fall in the middle of a wide space so arid that not even sagebrush had ventured to take root there. When the glare of the headlights fell upon them it was inevitable that discovery should

follow. The motor car stopped within 20 feet. Three men jumped out and ran toward the pair, leaving two in the car—the chauffeur and one who occupied a corner of the rear seat; an old man with the face of a damned soul, doomed for a little time to live upon this earth in the certain knowledge of his damnation.

As this happened, Judith Trine leaped to her feet and stood over the body of Alan, a revolver poised in either hand.

"Halt!" she ordered imperatively. "Hands up!"

The three who had alighted obeyed without a moment's hesitation; her father's creature, they knew the daughter's temper far too well to dream of opposing her will.

In the six hands that were alighted against the headlights' radiance, three revolvers glimmered; but at her command all three dropped harmlessly to the earth.

"This, sharply, 'Stand back two feet!' she required.

They moved unobscuredly.

Daring forward, she picked up and pocketed the three weapons, then with one of her own singled out the man she named.

"Now, Marrophet—and you, Hicks—pick Mr. Law up and carry him into the car. And try to be gentle, mind! If one of you lifts a finger to harm him, that one shall answer to me."

Still none ventured to dispute her.

The two men designated, without a sign of demoralization, stepped forward. One lifted Alan Law by the shoulders; the other took his legs. Between them they bore him with every care toward the motor car.

"But now a second will manifest itself. The man in the rear seat lifted up a weirdly sonorous voice.

"Stop!" he cried. "Stop this non-

UNION NEWS.

Thanksgiving was spent quietly but pleasantly by the most of our people.

The community at large enjoyed a very pleasant evening at the box party and entertainment given by the School Improvement Association on last Friday at the school house. One feature of the evening was a "Mock Wedding" along with recitations and an "old time spelling match." Much interest was shown by both the young and older people, and it is hoped that much good will be accomplished for the school and community.

Mr. Hayne Newton of Liberty was a visitor at the home of Mr. D. C. McConnell last week.

Several of the young people gave the Misses Keys a surprise party Thanksgiving night.

Messrs. Allen and Herman Opt and Sam Rollison, who are now at Anderson, attended the box party Friday night.

Mr. Robert Dye of Georgia is visiting friends and relatives here now.

The school at this place is doing nicely under the management of Prof. A. W. Attaway and Miss Nellie Newton. The following is the honor roll for the past month: Eula Gambrell, Marion Keys, Raymon Breasale, George Roberson, Maxie Gambrell, Ethel Rogers, Frank Ramsey, Hulst Burgess, Herman Brooks, Harold Campbell, Melvin Campbell, Clyde Gambrell, Glenn Knight and George Ramsey.

of the man on the ridge trail interrupted their simple and hurried breakfast and that which found Rose and Barcus mounted on the back of their own horses and making the best of their way down the canyon in pursuit of Alan, but little time had lapsed.

And even with its double burden, their horse made better time upon the broad lower level than those who followed the ridge trail. By mid-morning, when they approached the foothills that ran more than a mile in the rear and shut off to boot by a monolithic hill, while Alan was many a weary mile in advance.

He sat upon his horse, just then, at standstill upon the summit of a rounded knoll, the Painted Hills lifting up behind him, the desert before unfolding like a map.

Descending the knoll he reined his lagging mount back into the trail, following its winding course through the foothills and round the base of that monolithic mountain toward the junction with the ridge trail, miles away.

It approached the hour of noon before he gained the point where the two trails joined and struck out across the desert. And here he discovered what he thought indisputable indications that the fright of Judith's horse had persisted.

Abandoning immediately all notion of returning through the hills by the ridge-trail, he turned and swung away at the best pace he could spur from his broncho, delivering himself into the pitiless embrace of that implacable wilderness of sun and sand.

At long intervals he would check the broncho and, reeling in the saddle endeavor to sweep the desert with his binoculars.

An toward the middle of the afternoon he fancied that something rewarded one such effort; something, for an instant swam athwart the field of the glasses; something that seemed to make like a weary horse with a human figure bound to its back.

But now phenomena were discernible which, had he been more desert-wise, would have made him pause and think before he adventured farther from those hills, already beyond reach as they were.

His first appreciated warning came when the surface of the desert seemed to lift and shake like the top of a canvas tent in a gale. At the same time a mighty gust of wind swept athwart

of its father bank.

There, sitting, the pillowed his head upon her lap, and bending over him made her body an additional shelter to him from the swirling clouds of dust.

And for hours on end Judith nursed him there, scarce daring to move save to minister to his needs, bathing his fevered brow and moistening his parched lips and throat.

In the course of the first hour she was once startled by the spectral vision through the driving sheets of dust of a horse that plodded up the arroyo, bearing two riders on its back.

Wearily with the weight of its double burden, it went slowly and passed so near to Judith that she was able to recognize the features of her sister and Tom Barcus.

Be sure she made never a sign to catch their attention.

Within the next succeeding hour the coppery light lost something of its hot brilliance, took on a darker shade, and then one darker still. Twilight stole athwart the desert, turning its heat to chill, its light to violet.

Growing more intense, the cold eventually roused the sleeping man.

And hardly had his eyes unclosed and looked up into the eyes of Judith bending over him than he started up and, out of her embrace, got unsteadily upon his feet and after a moment at a pause, watching her rise in turn, strode away—or, rather, staggered—with the gesture of exorcism.

Uncomplaining, hugging her newborn humility to her with the ecstasy of the anchorite his horsehair shirt, Judith followed him patiently, at a little distance.

Not far from where he had rested there was a break in the overhanging wall of the arroyo. Through this he scrambled painfully, reaching the level of the desert only after cruel effort, the unheeded woman at his heels

dumb companionship of misery and wonder.

Thus an hour passed; and for all their desperate struggles neither could see that the light on the mountain-side was a yard the nearer.

Behind them other lights appeared, two staring yellow eyes that peered up over the horizon, seemed to pause a time in search of the two, then leaped out directly toward them.

Of this they were altogether ignorant; and when a deep, droning sound disturbed the desert silence, like the purring of some gigantic cat, both ascribed it to the drumming of their laboring pulses.

The two lights were not a mile behind them when, silently, without a sign to warn the girl, Alan released her, took a step apart and dropped at it shot.

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CHECKS GROUP INSTANTLY.

You know crop is dangerous. And you should also know the sense of security that comes from always having Foley's Honey and Tar Compound in the house. It cuts the thick mucus and clears away the phlegm, stops the straining cough and gives easy breathing and quiet sleep. Take it for coughs, colds, tickling throat, hoarseness and for bronchial and grippe coughs. Contains no opiates. Every user is a friend.

Foley's Honey and Tar Compound is sold by all druggists and is the only one that is guaranteed to cure. It is the only one that is guaranteed to cure. It is the only one that is guaranteed to cure.

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