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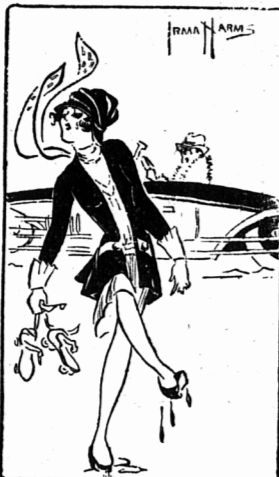
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### SMILES



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EXPECTING A LOT "Say, cabby, this change you gave me is a dollar out of the way. Can't you count?" "Say, what are you expecting of the company? A chauffeur and an accountant too?"



IN WHAT "She says she's all in." "She can't be returning to the photos, can she?"

### Blue Murder

BY EDMUND SHELL

#### INSTALLMENT SEVEN

Dighton's brain was working very quickly now. The Lizard and Emile Daudot were two distinct entities. Daudot, driven to desperation by the fruits of his own extravagance, had become the tool of the masked assassins, had engaged in some gigantic robbery and gone to London to dispose of the spoil.

Hearing of his intended visit to Taverner, the Lizard had suspected a scheme to double-cross him. Somewhere between Paris and London Daudot had met his death, then Corlitt, who had been a visitor to the Rue des Acacias, and now this Laroche woman. He had many motives for removing Corlitt and it was possible Daudot's mistress knew too much.

He waited for some seconds for that door to open, waited with his finger on the trigger and every muscle in his body tense.

A revolver shot would disturb the entire building, bring the concierge flying up the outer stairs, send a score of shrieking tenants to their windows, but Dighton had no intention of holding his hand for that. He knew only too well the temper of the man he had to deal with, and the value of getting his round in first.

Still keeping his eye on the door, he stepped backward across the room and threw open the French windows. They opened on to the same balcony as those of the next room, overlooking the main thoroughfare. His action gave a second point by which he might be attacked, but the fumes that filtered in through every crack had to be dispersed by the first means available.

In a little while his hiding place was wrapped in a blue mist . . . pungent . . . asphyxiating. Driven to the outer air, he hazarded a glance in at the next window. His first attempt, screened by lowered curtains and volumes of tinted vapor revealed little. A second look assured him that he had witnessed a repetition of the Park Lane tragedy and that, save for the prone figure of Mlle. Laroche, the room was empty. Something attracted his attention to the street. A figure was in the act of leaving the building—a dapper man in a gray hat and dark, belted coat. He glanced upward as Dighton peered over, so swiftly that the adventurer felt that he must have seen him. Crossing the road, he made off in the direction of the Avenue de la Grande Armee.

Dighton fought his way back to the bedroom, dipped a towel in the water jug and tied it over his face. A minute later he had invaded the death chamber by the inner door and staggered, smarting, into the passage.

He left the towel inside and let himself noisily out. On the first floor landing he encountered the concierge, casting his eyes around him and sniffing suspiciously.

"A strange smell, M'sieur," he complained, "but not chemicals."

Dighton, itching to get away from him, sniffed too.

"Something passing in a cart outside," he suggested. "It would go up these stairs like a flue."

Leaving the other still pondering over this possible solution of a mystery, he hurried into the road. His quarry was no longer in sight. He followed the trail into the avenue, strained his eyes seeking for the gray hat in the crowds that thronged the pavements and gave up hope altogether at the Etolle station.

The thing that was uppermost in his mind as he reached his hotel was the importance of leaving Paris as soon as possible. He had left the morning hot on the track of those fumes. From his brief conversation with the fellow in the hall he had adjudged him a prying busybody, ready to jump to a conclusion at the least suspicion. If the police were not already in Mlle. Laroche's flat, the discovery of the crime was only a matter of hours. Late editions of the evening papers would have it in glaring headlines, together with descriptions of himself and the other visitor.

Wearing Daudot's hat, he had left nothing incriminating in the apartment. He made a kind of hasty inventory to assure himself that this was so. The paper with which he had wrapped the hat was a plain piece taken from Taverner's study. The memory of his interview with the hatter's manager was rather unsettling. He would read of the tragedy in the papers and remember—

Dighton breathed again. He had given him the other address—the address of Daudot's home. It would never occur to him that he knew of the ex-detective's liaison with the dead girl. The police would soon discover—even if they were ignorant already—that the rent was paid by Daudot. The presence of a hat with his initials would not suggest anything.

Dighton packed the hat and coat, had worn and substituted a cap and Burberry. It was not until he glanced in the mirror over his dressing table that he noticed that his hands and forehead were tinged a delicate shade of blue!

In the little office on the first floor he found a railway timetable. The De Luxe train was due to depart at 5:10. Glancing at his watch, he discovered he had barely twenty-five minutes to reach the Gare de Lyon. In a little more than twelve hours he would be across the frontier. He decided to bolt for it.

The crowd at the booking office seemed endless. He looked at his watch a dozen times before he reached the gullet and bought a first-class ticket, with supplement, from a leisurely booking-office clerk.

It was the porter, however, who caught him that train. A little sturdy fellow, blue-smocked and numbered, with pieces of baggage hooked all over him which he applied to the crowd by the barrier after the manner of a battering-ram.

Five minutes later Dighton, gulping for breath, was standing in the corridor of a swiftly moving train, surrounded by suitcases that had been pushed on somehow. Blue-smock had trotted from one end of the platform to the other to achieve this miracle, not omitting at the very limit of the course to shout his thanks for the handsome tip that had been passed to him in a kind of farewell handshake.

"Bon voyage, M'sieur!" he had yelled, and the smile which accompanied this utterance was expansive.

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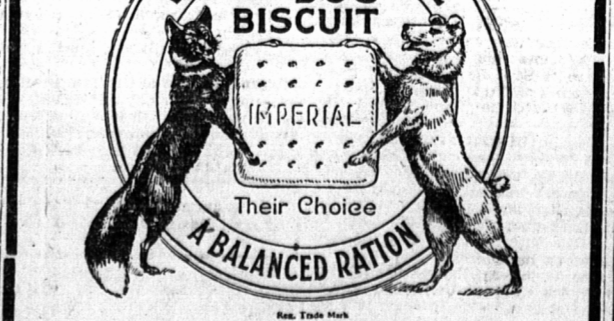
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pieces and consulted Dighton's ing had provoked a myriad of tiny blisters which encouraged by the application of warm water, set up an itching sensation that was the result. There were not many people traveling, and Dighton had a two-berth compartment to himself, of which was hidden fortunately by down. Rinsing his hands ten minutes later, he discovered that the color-

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