

# "BLACK ORCHIDS" by F. V. W. MASON

## CHAPTER IX

...man who hears things in awakening, so Ian heard the light switch and, heavy sigh, he sank into his chair. He loathed the thought of the half hour. It seemed to him that this was the greatest crisis in two lives. Leonard's Leonard in the room was moving around ready for bed.

"vital." The big figure in the black silk dressing gown was very serious. He pointed to the bed with a reddened hand from which the cuff had been rolled to the elbow. "We've got to work to save two things for him."

"His life, said Dr. Crane quietly, "and what else?" "His honor. I'll tell you about it sometime. Do you think you can handle the matter all right?" "Yes, I have a competent male nurse—I'll get him here directly."

Ian's pale features took on an

open the small black satchel he had appeared with. "Now I've got to get busy. Call this number," he scratched down a message on a page torn from a little note book, "and tell Thompson to come running. And from now on I don't want to be bothered, I'll be very busy—do you understand?"

"Yes, I'll be in the next room. If you want anything you have only to call through the door."

Yet half stunned with the horror of the thing that had befallen, Ian dropped heavily into the chair be-



expression of gravity. "What are his chances?"

The doctor's bent shoulders rose in a little shrug.

"The fact that he's still living proves that the bullet missed the arteries, but he has torn his left side pretty badly. I'll give him a shade more than an even chance if," he dwelt upon the word, "if there are no complications. You see firing through several layers of fabric as he did, any quantity of germs may have been carried into the wound." Doctor Crane commenced to peel off the coat he had pulled over his pajama jacket. "Later I'll need an assistant to relieve Thompson—he's the nurse. Can you get someone who can be completely trusted."

"Yes."

"If you can get someone who means a lot to him, it will help. The will to live is very important in a borderline case, like this."

"I'll get his fiancée," said Ian quietly. "She is devoted to him and she's uncommon, level-headed."

"Get her here around noon," snapped the doctor as he threw

for the fireplace. Twice his eyes mechanically read a sheet of paper that had lain on the desk, but not one word of the scrawled message registered in his brain. He couldn't seem to think. Leonard—Leonard Holt lay nearly dead there in the next room. He could recall Leonard's dirty face grinning beneath a mud-spattered tin hat . . . at another time, his face warm with the exertion of the polo field . . . his face—his face—

"Here, this won't do," he aroused himself. "It's getting nowhere." So saying, he hunched forward, elbows on knees to concentrate on the scrawled message.

"Dear Soldier," (it read). "Don't know what happened to me—must have been insane for the last two weeks. I just came to my senses. Your look from beside the fireplace did it. I was a swine to do what I did—but you don't know how infernally beautiful and appealing Lolita is—I'd do it again probably. Blew your thousand on a ring I was going to give her. Hope this confession saves you from disgrace. She promised me everything, if I'd

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## Fines Creek News

Mrs. D. N. Rathbone

The ceiling has been partly put up at Laurel Hill church, among the giving of their time, were, Roy Green, Charles McCrary, Raymond McCracken, Bob Greene and Dave Rathbone. We hope that the work will soon get under way again.

The Young Women's League has recently been organized, and in these meetings the girls meet every two weeks in their homes for services, and will continue to hold home meetings through the winter months.

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let her cousin make a copy of Treaty X-2. Found your keys in the conservatory; she saw me pick them up. You surprised me at the office, so I only got the first part—thank God!—I'm an utter bungler, Soldat, and I'm afraid I've ruined your career as well as mine. I am taking the only way out. Please try to understand and forgive—whatever you do—Avoid Lolita! She's irresistible—unfathomable.

"Leonard."

Having deliberately forced his nerves into obedience, Ian put the letter away and prepared his campaign with the all-forseeing deliberation of a retreating general who plans one final battle in which he risks everything—a battle which will end in triumph or in utter annihilation.

Ian spent a sleepless night of pondering and listening to the low murmur of voices in the bedroom—Leonard was very low, Doctor Crane said towards dawn.

Ian, with convincing carelessness, informed the man who usually cared for the apartment that Mr. Holt was sleeping. Also that he could have the next two days off as he and Mr. Holt would both away. Then Ian stalked out and ate a substantial breakfast at a nearby restaurant; then outwardly normal he set off for the Ministry. Once there he briefly explained that Leonard Holt had been taken sick and would be out that day. Luckily it was Saturday.

His whole delicately adjusted plan of campaign hinged on one unescapable element. Would Mr. King ask to see the treaty? If he did, there was nothing for it but to come out with the whole sordid story.

(To be Continued)

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## Decorate Yule Tree To Fit Your Taste

Before trimming your Christmas tree this December, study the following ideas and decide which yours will be. The six Christmas trees described below are trimmed in amazingly new and different ways.

The "Coronado" is typically southwestern. A tree trimmed in cowboys and cactus . . . Indian relics and dazzling yellow lights.

"Colonial" is early American in

every detail, trimmed with miniature wooden churns, log cabins, candle sticks, Indians, turkeys and colonial dolls. Green colored lights and silver tinsel complete the color interest.

The "Student" does everything but say "Rah, rah." Various colored lights shine on gaudy trimmings and erasures, crayons, pencils and slates for classroom touch.

The "Maritime" is nautically trimmed with clipperships, anchors, sloops and buoys. Blue lights gleam through clouds of angel hair.

"Victorian" is brilliant with

white lights and tinsel branches and is decorated all over with unique ornaments of every shape, size and color.

The "Canine" is an amusing idea to please the canine member of the family. Decorated with bones, dog toys, fire plugs, dog biscuits and vari-colored lights . . . a real "un" tree.

Government has asked manufacturers to eliminate steel cover lids from cook stoves. A few more taxes and they may as well eliminate the stoves.

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Push Button MANTEL  
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Lots of Heat Quickly Where You Want It!  
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4-Way Heat Control

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48-Cord Reinforced HEATER HOSE 9c

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With Battery D190 . . . \$23.94

BATTERY MANTEL \$2145

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EASY TERMS

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Penetrates snow, sleet, fog and rain. 5" convex lens. For all cars. \$132

Pair . . . . . \$2.55

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Theft-proof. . . . .

### Guaranteed Electrical GIFTS

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Electric Iron Full size 550 w.c. \$153

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BASKETBALL  
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Wrestling GLOVES  
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Self-lifting top ladder. \$1.40

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Fast! Speedy! Adjustable. 7x16 1/4"

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### Relief At Last For Your Cough

Emulsion relieves promptly. Goes right to the seat of the trouble to help loosen and expel sticky phlegm, and aid nature in healing raw, tender, inflamed, mucous membranes. Tell your druggist to sell you Emulsion with the wringing you must like the way it allays the cough or you are your money back.

**EMULSION**  
Chest Colds, Bronchitis

# YOUR WIFE



She knows the answer to gift shopping problems

She's a wise, thrifty shopper every day so, of course she knows all the angles. That's the reason she planned far ahead of this Christmas to make her gifts electrical, and, confidentially, you'll find electrical things on her personal "want" list, too.

Unfortunately, because of the National Defense program, plans made several months ago may have to be changed — Electrical Dealers may not have enough electrical appliances to go around. So, here's a suggestion—instead of that Electrical Gift you wanted to give but couldn't get, invest the funds in United States Savings Bonds and Stamps and when you put them in the Christmas stockings add a little note saying that this investment is intended for an electrical appliance when production returns to normal.



### FOR DEFENSE BUY UNITED STATES SAVINGS BONDS AND STAMPS

United States Savings Bonds and Stamps are available in various denominations at many stores, all banks and post offices. They make ideal gifts for everyone.