# The Trey O' Hearts

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE "The Fortune Hunter," "The Brow Bust," "The Black Beg," etc Illustrated with Photographs from the Picture Production

Copyright, 1914, by Louis Joseph Van

### SYNOPSIS.

The 3 of Hearts is the "death sign" employed by Seneca Trine in the private war of yeareance which, through his daughter Judith, a woman of violent passions like his own, he wages against Aian Law, son of the man (now dead) whom Trine held responsible for the accident which made him a helpies cripple. Rose, Judith's twin and double, loves Aian, and learning of her sister's campaign against him, leaves home and joins her fortunes to his. Under dramatic circumstances Aian saves Judith's life and so wins her love; but failurs to shake his constancy to Rose kindles Judith's jealousy and settles her in her hornicidal purpose. She is largely responsible for a shipwinck in Man and Aian seage with their friend Harcus, Judith pursuing in a chartered schooner with a crew of cut-throats.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Thomas Barcus picked bimself up from the bottom of the lifeboat. where he had been violently precipiby the impact of grounding, blinked and wiped tears of pain from his eyes, solicitously tested his nose and seemed to derive little if any comfort from the discovery that it was not broken, opened his mouth . . . and remembered the presence of a lady "Poor Mr. Barcus!" she said gently.

"I'm so sorry. Do forget I'm here-and say it out loud!"

Mr. Barcus dropped his hands and dropped his head at the same time. can't be did," he complained in

embittered resignation; "the words have never been invented . ." In the bows Mr. Law (who had

barely saved himself a headlong overboard when the shoal took fast hold of the keel) felt tenderly of his excoriated shins, then, rising, compassed the sea, sky and shore with an

anxious gaze.
In the offing there was nothing but the flat, limitless expanse of the night-bound tide, near at hand vaguely silvered with the moonlight, in the dis-tances blending into shadows; never a light or shadowy, stealing sail in that quarter to indicate pursuit.

Where are we?" he wondered aloud. "Ask me an easy one," Barcus replied; "somewhere on the south shore f the cape—unless somebody's been tampering with the lay of this land.

That's a lighthouse over yonder."

Alan took soundings from the bows. "Barely two feet," he announced, withdrawing the oar from the water,

"Oh!" Barcus ejaculated with the sceent of enlightenment; and leaving which be draped himself in highly unlecorative fashion while groping unwater for the propeller.

"That's the answer," he repeated; "there's a young bale of the said celwrapped round the wheel, overboard and clear it away."

"If you've nothing better to do, my critical friend," he observed as he stooped to hack and tear at the mass eed embarrassing the propeller, you might step out and give us a



Dug Into His Money Belt. shove. Don't strain yourself just see if you can move her."

The boat budged not an inch-but treacherous mud bottom with the up-chot of his downfall; with a mighty splash his disappeared momentarily beneath the surface—and left his tem-per behind him when he emerged.

As for Mr. Barons, he suffered like as within five minutes; when, with pains and patience having freed wheal, he climbed aboard and ht to restart the motor. After w affecting coughs it relapsed into

examination at length ht out the fact that the gasoline

"It's no use." he conceded we're here for keeps."
"Why not wade ashore!" Rose Trine margated mildly from the place she mad taken in the stern in order to institut the bows. "It isn't far—and that's one more wetting?"

Shat's one more wetting?"

that's been uttered by any party to this lunatic enterprise since you hove within earshot of me, Mr. Law," said

Mr. Barcus. "Respectfully submitted." "The verdict of the lower court stands approved," Alan responded gravely

"But there's no sense in Miss Trine wading," Barcus suggested. "We're web-footed as it is, and she's too tired.

"Well, what then?" "We can carry her, can't we?"

### CHAPTER XIX.

"Gee!" he grunted frankly, when after a tollsome progress from the boat, Rose at length slipped from the seat formed by the clasped hands of the two men. "And it was me who suggested this!"

The girl responded with a quiet laugh of the most natural effect imaginable-until it ended in a sigh, and without the least warning she crum pled upon herself, and would have fallen heavily, in a dead faint, but for Alan's quickness.

"Good Lord!" Bareus exclaimed as Alan gently lowered the inert body of the girl to the sands. "And to think didn't understand she was so nearly all in-chaffing her like that! I'd like to kick myself!"

"Don't be impatient," Alan advised grimly; "I'm busy just at present, but
. . . Meantime, you might fatch
some water to revive her."

It was an order by no means easy to fill; Barcus had only his cupped hands for a vessel, and little water remained in them by the time he had dashed from the shallows back to the spot where Rose lay unconscious, while the few drops he did manage to sprinkle into her face availed nothing toward rousing her from the trance-like slumbers of exhaustion into which she passed from her fainting

'She's all right," he reported, releassnes all right, he reported, releas-ing the wrist whose pulse he had been timing. "She fainted, right enough, but now she's just asleep—and needs it, God knows! It would be kinder to let her rest, at least until I see what sort of a reception that lighthouse is inclined to offer us."

Barcus nodded. His face was drawn and gray in the moon-glare. "Thank God!" he breathed brokenly, "you're able. I'm not."

He sat down suddenly and rested his head on his knees. "Don't be longer you can help," he muttered thickly.

He had come to the headland of the lighthouse itself before the ground began to shelve more gently to the beach; and was on the point of addressing himself to the dark and stlent cottage of the lightkeeper when he paused, struck by sight of what tillhen had been hidden from him.

The promontory, he found, formed the eastern extremity of a wide-armed if shallow harbor where rode at moor ngs a considerable number of craft-pleasure vessels assorted about with fishing boats. And barely an eighth of a mile on, long-legged wharves stood knee-deep in the water, like tentacles flung out from the sleepy little fishing village that dotted the rising ground—a community of perhaps two hundred dwellings

Nor was this all-even as Alan hove in view of the village he heard a series of staccate enorts, the harsh tolling of brazen bell, the rumble of a train pulling out from a station he saw its jewel-string of lights flash athwart the landscape and vanish as its polse died away diminuendo.

Where one train ran another must. He need only now secure something the beach, and in another hour or two of a certainty, they would be speeding northwards, up the cape, toward Such thoughts us these at least

outcome proved them somewhat too presumptuous. He jogged down a quiet village street and into the railroad station just as the agent was closing up for the night.

A surly citizen, this agent, ill-pleased to have his plans disordered by chance flung strangers. He greeted Alan's breathless query with a grunt of in-

grained churlishness.
"Nah," he averred, "they ain't no more trains till mornin'. Can't y' see

"But surely there must be a tele

"You bet your life they is-right

here in this depot. An' I'm shuttin' it up, too."
"Has the operator gone for the night?

"He's going. I'm the op'rator. No "He's going. I'm the oprator. No business transacted after office hours. Call raound at eight o'clock tomor-row mornin'. Now if you'll jest step out of that door, I'll say g'd-night to

"But I must send a telegram," Alan protested. "I tell you, I must."

"Sure, young feller. It always is after kneiness hours." "Won't you open up again..."

In desperation Alan rammed a hand into his trousers pocket. "Will a dol-lar influence your better judgment?" he suggested shrewdly.

"Let's see your dollar," the other re-turned with no less craft—open incredulity informing his countenance And, surely enough, Alan brough forth an empty hand.

"Make a light," he said sharply. "My money's in a belt round my waist. Open your office. You'll get your dollar, all right."

"All right," he grumbled, reopening the door of the telegraph booth and making a second light inside. "There's blanks and a pencil. Write your message. It ain't often I do this-but I'll make an exception for you."

Alan delayed long enough only to nake a few inquiries, drawing out the information that, for one who had not patience to wait the morning train northbound, the quickest way to any city of importance was by boat across Buzzard's bay to New Bedford.

Addressed to Digby, his man of business in New York, it required that gentleman to arrange for a motor-cor to be held in waiting on the waterfront of New Bedford from 3:00 a. m. until called for in the name of Mr. Law, as well as for a special train at Providence, on similar provisions.

But now, though he was all uncon sclous of the fact, he went no more

His shadow in the moonlight kept him company upon the sands; and above, on the edge of the bluffs, anshadow moved on parallel course and at a pace sedulously pat-

He found his sweetheart and his friend much as he had left them, with this difference—that Mr. Barcus now lay flat on his back and snoring lustily.

He was wakened quickly enough, however, by Alan's news.

But when it was the turn of Rose— they faltered. She lay so still, betrayed her exhaustion so patently in every line of her unconscious posture, as well as in the sharp pallor of her face upturned to the moon, that it seemed scarcely less than downright inhumanity to disturb her.

None the less, it had to be done.

Alan hardened his heart with the reminder of their urgent necessity, and

aid of a few drops of brandy.

Between them, they helped her up

the beach, past the point, and at length

to the door of the hotel, where—reani-mated by the mere promise of food—

Rose disengaged their arms and en-tered without more assistance; while

Barcus was deterred from treading

ness, by the hand of Alan falling heav-

"Wait!" the latter admonished in

Barcus followed the direction of his

gesture—and was transfixed by the

sight of a rocket spearing into the

night-draped sky from a point invisible beyond the headland of the light

The two consulted one another with

As with one voice they murmured one word: "Judith!" To this Alan

one word: "Judith!" To this Amaded gravely: "Or some spy of

Then rousing, Alan released his

friend, with a smart shove urging him

"Go on," he insisted, "join Rose and get your supper. I'll be with you as

coon as I can arrange for a boat. Tell

her nothing more than that—that

thought it unwise to wait until every

He turned to find his landlord ap-

proaching from the direction of the hotel barroom. And for the time it

ter; for the question was barely ut tered before the landlord lifted a will

ing voice and hailed a fellow towns

man idling near by.

"Hey, Jake—come here!"

Introduced as Mr. Breed, Jake
pleaded guilty to ownership of the

fastest and stanchest power-cruiser in the adjacent waters, which he was

a the adjacent waters, wariclously keen to charter.
They observed haste religiously;
eithin ten minutes they stood upon a

oat at the foot of a flight of wooden teps down the side of the town wharf,

was abed before looking round

ed that the wind of their luck

across the threshold of the hotel

fly upon his arm.

a half-whisper.

to meet them.

Aboard and away from the wharf, the burden of Alan's solicitude seemed to grow lighter with every squeal of the greaseless carlocks, with every dip and splash of the blades which, wielded by a crew of villainous countenance, brought them nearer the handsome motorboat which Mr. Breed designated as his own. It was not until Alan looked up suddenly to find Mr. Breed covering him with a revolver of most vicious character that he had the least apprehension of any danger nearer than the offing, where Judith's schooner might be lurking, waiting for its prey to come out and

"Til take that money-belt of yours, young feller," Mr. Breed announced, "and be quick about it-not forgetting what's in your trousers pocket

In the passion of his indignation Alan neglected entirely to play the game by the rules. The indifference he displayed toward the weapon was positively unprofessional — for he knocked it aside as if it had been nothing more dangerous than a straw. And in the same flutter of an evelanh the throat of Mr. Breed.

Before that one knew what was happening he had gone over the stern and had involuntarily disarmed himself as well.

The other two men made a sad business of attempting to overpower Mr. them. Barcus. In less than a minute they were both overboard.
"And just for this," Alan said before

getting out of earshot-"I'm going to treat my party to a joy-ride in your pretty powerboat."

He concluded this speech abruptly as Barcus brought them up under the quarter of the power cruiser.

Within two minutes the motor was spinning contentedly, the mooring had been slipped, and the motorboat was heading out of the harbor. Within five minutes she had left it

well astern and was shooting rapidly westward, making nothing of the buffets of a very tolerable sea kicked up by the freshening southwesterly wind.

"My friend," observed Alan, our acqualutance ripens I am more and more impressed that neither of us was born to die a natural death.

who dislike us; but rather to be

"You have the courage of igno-rance," Barcus replied coolly: "if

you'll take the trouble to glance astern

you to suspend judgment for the time

Back against the loom of the Eliza

beth islands through which they had

milk-white sails of an able schooner.

canvas fat with the beam wind, she

footed it merrily in their wake-a sil

CHAPTER XX.

But by this stage in his history Mr.

Law had arrived at a state of mind

immune to surprise at the discovery that he had once more falled to elude

the vigilance and pertinacity of the

He viewed the schooner with no

more display of emotion than resided

in narrowing eyelids and a tightening

"Much farther to go?" he inquired resently, in a colorless voice.
"At our present pace—say, two

"And will that enable us to hold

"Just about," Barcus allowed, squint

ing critically at the chase; "she's

some footer, that schooner; and this

'How much lead have we got?"

"A mile or so-none too much."

"Nothing-but pray, if you rem

In the end they made it by a narrow

margin. The face of Judith Trine was distinctly revealed by the chill gray light of early dawn to those aboard

the power cruleer as she swept up through the reaches of New Bedford

"Anything to be done to mend mat-

our own?"

ver jet apouting from her cutwater.

Hell-Fire.

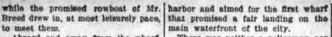
Barcus replied coolly: "if

hanged as common pirates."

Two Men Shadowed Him.

eventually brought her to with the whether abed or at the hands of those

being,



There was neither a policeman watchman of any sort in sight. Nor was there, for all his hopes and prayers, based on the telegram to

Digby, a sign of a motor car. Still, not much of the street was revealed. The docks on either hand ere walled and roofed, cutting off the

If they ran for it, they must surely be overhauled. Something must be done to hinder the crew of the

schooner from landing. "Here!" he cried sharply to Barcus. 'You take Rose and hurry to the street and find that motorcer know she's there. Digby never failed

me yet!"

"Don't waste time worrying about me. I'll be with you in three shakes. I'm only going to put a spoke in Ju-

dith's wheel. I've got a scheme!"
As for his scheme—he had none other than to give them battle, to sacrifice bimself if need be, to make sure the excape of Rose.

extent, that in turning his eye lighted on a four-foot length of stout, three inch scantling, an excellently for-

midable club.
But soon, disarmed, his case was desperate—and there were two al-ready safe upon the dock and others madly scrambling up to reinforce

Wildly he cast about for some substitute weapon, he leaped toward a small pyramid of little but heavy kegs, and seizing one, swung it overhead and cast it full force into the midriff of his nearest enemy; so that this one doubled up convulsively, with a sickish grunt, and vanished in turn over the end of the wharf.

His fellow followed with less injury But Alan had no time to wonder whether the man had trioped and thrown himself in his effort to escape a second hurtling keg, or had turned coward and fled. It was enough that he had returned, precipitately and

The keg, meeting with no resistance. pursued him even to the deck, where the force of its impact split its seams. None of the combatants, however,

Alan least of all, noticed that the powder that filtered out was black and In the same breath he heard a

friendly voice shout warning far up the dock, and knew Mar Barcus was coming to his aid. A glance over-shoulder, too, discov-

ered the cause of the warning; two men who had thus far escaped his attentions were maneuvering to fall upon him from behind. The bound required to evade them brought him face to face with JudAb as she landed on the dock.

"Oh," she cried, "I hate you, I hate you-

"So you've said, my dear, but-" His final words were not audible even to himself. In his confidence (now that Barcus was taking care of the others) and his impatience with the woman, and in his perhaps unworthy wish to demonstrate conclu-sively how cheap he held her. Alan had torsed the pistol over the end of

It was an old-fashioned weapon, and the force with which it struck the deck released the hammer.

Instantly the .44 cartridge blazed into the open head of a broken powder

doom and a mighty gust of fiame and smoke the decks of the schooner were riven and shattered; her masts tottered and fell . . .

# CHAPTER XXI.

# Anticlimax

Alan came to himself supported by Barcus—his senses still reeling from the concussion of that thunderbolt I promise you a sight that will move which he had so unwittingly loosedthe cloud of sulphurous smoke and yet dissipated by the wind.

> Judith lay at his feet, stunned; and round about other figures of men insensible, if not, for all he could say, dead.

And then Barcus was hustling him unceremoniously down the wharf.

"Come! Come!" he rallied Alan-Pull yourself together and keep a stiff upper lip. Rose is waiting the car, and if you don't want to be arrested you'll stir your stumps, my son! That explosion is going to bring the worthy burghers of New Bedford buzzing round our ears like a swarm of hornets!

His prediction was justified even before it was made; already the nearby dwellings were vomiting half-clothed humanity; already a score of people were galloping down toward the head of the wharf; and in their number a policeman appeared as if by

And while the man hesitated Aian grabbed him by the shoulder, threw him bodily from the car, dropped into threw in the clutch. The machine responded without a jar; they were a hundred feet distant from the scene of the accident before Alan was fairly

As he grew more and more calm, he congratulated himself on having drawn an excellent car in the lottery of

chance.
Yet his congratulations were premature; they were not ten minutes out of the environs of the city when Rose left her seat and knelt behind his, to

they were already being pursued.

A heavy touring car, she said it was driven by a man, a woman in the seat by his side—Judith the latter, the

man an old employe of her father by the name of Marroshat. Marrophat!

Alan remembered that one. He could only trust in his skill as driver, and skill is the lesser factor in such a race.

For his own part, he drove like an

exceptionally cunning madman. . . And then, quite clearly, he recogaixed the time and the place and the character of the road that lay before him as the car sped like a dragon-fly down a slight grade.

From the bottom of the grade it swung away in a wide, graceful curve, bordered for some distance by railroad tracks on a slightly lower level.

He had guessed the fleudish plan of the other driver only too truly.

As they approached at express



The Face of Judith Was Distinctly Revealed.

slieled the tracks Alan sought to hug the left hand side of the road, but in

paysuing car swept up and bailled him, as bringing its right forward wheel up beside the left rear wheel of his car, then more alowly forging up until, with its weight, bolk and superior power, it forced him inch by inch to the right, toward the tracks, until his right-hand wheels left the road and ran on uneven turf, until the left-hand wheels as well lost grip on the road metal, until the car began to dip on the slope to the tracks.

There followed a maniac moment, when the world was upside down. Alan's car slipped and skidded, swung sideways with frightful momentum toward the railroad tracks, caught its

wheels against the ties, and . . . The sun swung in the beavens like a ball on a string. There was a crash, a roar . . . There was nothing-oblivion

The car had turned turtle, pinning Rose and Alan beneath it. "You are not

"Alan!" she gasped. killed?" "No-not even much hurt, I faney," he replied. "And you?" "Not much-"

The deep-throated roar of the loconotive beliewing danger silenced him.

le closed his eyes, Then abruptly the weight was lifted from his chest. He saw a man drag-ging Rose from under the machine, and saw that the man was Marrophat. And aimost immediately someone lifted his head and shoulders, caught hith with two hands beneath his arm pits

and drew him clear of the machine And the face of his rescuer was the face of Judith Trine.

The crash he had expected, of the car being crumpled up by the oncoming locamotive, did not follow. As he scrambled to his feet, his first glance was up the track, and discov

ered the train slowing to a halt. His next was one of wonder for the countenance of Judith Trine as she stood at a little distance, regarding him; her look almost illegible, a curious compound of passions coloring it-

relief, regret, hatred, love His third glance descried beyond her the figures of Marrophat carrying Rose in his arms, stumbling as he ran

toward his car on the highroad. He moved precipitately to pursue. but found his way barred by Judith. "No!" she cried violently. "No. ve

shall not-!" Her hand sought the grip of a revolver that protruded from her pocket. With a short, hysterical gasp, he be-

gan to laugh.

The hot blood mantled her exquisite face like red fire. She caught her breath with a scb, then flung wildly at him:

Well, if you njust know-it's true. I can't bring myself to kill you. I would to God I could. But I can't. For all that, you shall die—I could not save you if I wou i! And this I promise you-you shill never see Rose again before you lie!"

swung from him and ran, quickly cov-ering the little distance between him and the car.

As she jumped into this and dropped down upon the seat beside her halfconscious sister, Marrophat swung the car away.
It vanished in a dust-cloud as a

throng of railroad employes surrounded and assailed tim with clamorous questions.

(TO BE CONTINUED)