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THE ANGEL CHILD WHO "SAW HELL"
AND CAME BACK

The Heartfelt Confessions of the London
Art Model Who Turned Apache and Took
to Drugs, and How a Genuine Vision Re-
deemed Her at the Brink

By W. B. SEABROOK.



- Betty May Loveday as a Very Young Girl, When Artists Raved Over Her Angelic Face.
- Betty May Wearing the Robes Prescribed for Her During Her Stay at the Demonist's "Abbey."
- As She Looked After Dope Had Got Her—Haggard, Dishevelled, Savage and Worn.
- Her Come-Back—TODAY, Clear-Eyed, Serene and Girlishly Buoyant.

LONDON.

"And at that moment, I saw—Hell!"

The girl who sat opposite me at the little tavern table in So-ho raised eyes to mine that belied her words. Their gaze was as direct and innocent-looking as that of a child, with a child's unparalleled candor.

There were faint lines in the face, which was still comely, although the spiritual battles waged thereon had left their mark. Handsome as it was, this face was traced with a delicate hag-

gardness—the sort of worn quality that may be due to saintliness of thought, or physical indulgence, or both.

It was the face of Betty May Loveday, artists' model; one-time amazon leader of a fierce Apache band in Paris; widow of a student of mysticism and the Black Arts and the "angel face" of Limehouse who went the pace, nearly wrecked her life, and had just come back.

As she sipped her wine—bought legitimately, with an advance royalty on a book which she had just sold—she told me in straight-forward phrases the story of her checkered purple-and-drab career. It was an amazingly outspoken account, from which nothing was withheld, and in which no one but herself was blamed for her personal tragedies.

"I was born Marlow Golding," she said, "in the slums of this city. My parents were nothing to brag about; they were shiftless and now and then they drank. It was a handicap for me that was balanced on the other side of the ledger, by a real asset. I was beautiful. The adjective is not my own choice, but was applied to me by several famous artists who, wandering around Limehouse and Soho in search of local 'local color,' encountered me as I threw mud balls at my companions or stole rides on buses.

"One day, I remember, a handsome, dark, bearded man stopped me on the street. 'A real beauty,' I heard him say to his companion. 'The genuine face of an angel.' That man was the celebrated portrait painter, Augustus John.

"He took me to his Chelsea studio; perched me on his knee, gave me tea and cakes, persuaded me to pose for him. His patronage gave me a sort of borrowed, second-hand fame of my own. Other artists began to hear about me, and to use me in their pictures. The sudden jump from Limehouse rags to Chelsea comforts 'got' me. I started to run wild. First it was champagne; then absinthe; then cocaine and morphia. I was growing up—or down, as you choose.

"Tired of London, I slipped across the Channel to Paris. On the outskirts of Montmartre I met up with an Apache gang, whose leader I eventually became. People will tell you the Apache is a myth; don't believe them. I hunted with that particular pack for months. There was one young fellow in the crowd who fascinated me. He was called 'The White Panther,' because of the extreme pallor of his skin and the vicious speed with which he attacked in a fight.

"I grew to love the Panther, and when, one night, a former sweetheart of his tried to claw my eyes out in a jealous rage, I

sank my talons in her face till she yelled for mercy. Other Apaches who witnessed the fight applauded me. They nicknamed me the Tiger Woman., and I was proud of the distinction.

"The nickname followed me home, as such things usually do. When I returned to London and began to haunt the artists' studios in Chelsea they would whisper: 'There goes that tiger girl.' Jacob Epstein, the radical young sculptor, heard about me, sent for me, and offered me a job as model. He modeled his now-famous 'The Savage' after me. It naturally gave me a lot of notoriety.

"The next sequence of events in my life was painful. I had married a young British poet and mystic, named Raoul Loveday—a dear boy he was, too. But he, with his impressionable mind and poetic sensitiveness, had come under the spell, the written word of a man whom I learned to loathe, though I admit he was a person of remarkable powers.



TRAGIC MATE.

Raoul Loveday, Aristocratic Young English Mystic and Poet, Whose Married Life with Betty May Was Cut Short by His Untimely Death.

"This was Aleister Crowley, so-called king of demoniac cults, who had left his native England for Cefalu, Sicily. There he established an 'abbey,' in which he lived with his 'disciples,' women and men, and practised black magic.

"Raoul had read some of this Crowley's verses in the Oxford Book of Mystical Verse, and had entered into correspondence with 'Beast 666,' as Crowley signed his letters and documents.

The upshot of this odd long-distance friendship was that we set out for Cefalu, where Raoul planned to study with Crowley and perfect himself under the 'master's' instructions in mystical practises.

"This man, Crowley, whom I regard as a thoroughly bad person, had no interest whatever in having me at his 'abbey.' It was Raoul in whom, as a student of mysticism, he was interested. I was excess baggage, invited merely because I happened to be Raoul's wife.

"Crowley, who at one time had a considerable reputation as a seer, big-game hunter and painter, has, in recent years, come a terrific cropper.

"No longer the imposing, metallic-eyed 'prophet' who used to thrill and hypnotize impressionable young girls in the Latin Quarter and New York's Greenwich Village, he is today, they tell me, a fattish, bald, rather ridiculous old fellow who is not taken too seriously by even the people who denounce him.

"Friends of mine in Paris, recently returned, told me with laughter that Crowley's attempts to impress the younger generation have been a complete fiasco. Times have changed, you see, and the 1928 girl, brought up on the newer psychologists, has no time for 'old-fashioned' black magic.

"But in those days at Cefalu, he seemed a really abhorrent and masterful person, with some secret power over human beings all his own, to such disciples as Raoul.

"Raoul, I must explain, was not just an eccentric 'nut.' He was a graduate of Oxford University; his poetry had attracted critical attention, and he came of a family of real social distinction. I think, today, that his Sicilian journey was a fatal mistake, because he was physically frail and he ought to have stayed away from that nasty place.

"I will never forget the night of our arrival. The weather was thunderous and sinister. As we knocked at the door of the 'abbey,' it was opened to us by a girl named Jane, who had been an American movie actress, but who had deserted a promising career for a life at Cefalu. She called loudly: 'Beast, Mr. and Mrs. Loveday are here.' Then our strange existence really began.

"Crowley paid little or no attention to me. Raoul spent most of the days playing chess with the 'Beast' in his study, or poring over books on magic. There were various magical incantations, including the killing of a cat because it was an 'evil spirit,' and the 'Beast' would on state occasions, appear for some ceremo-

ny clad in gorgeous robes and wielding a sword or colored wand.

"I thought it all very foolish, and nothing more up to the time that my husband fell ill. Enteritis was given by the medical people in attendance as the official cause of his death; they said that he had been eating too many oranges, and that the climate hadn't agreed with him.

"I don't charge Crowley with causing Raoul's death; that would be silly. But I do think that the 'abbey' at Cefalu was a grewsome and sinister place, from which I was glad to escape.

She stopped for a minute to take a long, refreshing draught from the thin-stemmed wine glass in her hand. I could see that, while she was getting tired of going over all these episodes in her life, and that the memories were growing more painful as she progressed, still she wanted to press on and reach what, to her, was the climax of her own "return from Hell."

"When I fled from Sicily to England," she continued, "I thought I might find some sort of homey peace and try to forget Raoul's tragic end. But things got worse and worse for me. Believe it or not, there was some sort of curse on me; there was no blessing on anything I attempted to do. Just black despair.

"I took to drugs, this time seriously. I was practically in the gutter." She reached inside her handbag; pulled out a clipping from a British newspaper, and handed it to me.

"See?" The angelic eyes were untroubled, but the hand suddenly shook.

I read the press cutting. It said: "For years (it was an interview with Betty May) I was a dope fiend. I was enslaved to such an extent that I was a physical and mental wreck. It is not an occasion for pride that one has been one of the biggest dope fiends in London. Yet I did this thing, as Scotland Yard knows full well."

She then gave a short sigh which was not at all mournful. "How did you manage to pull yourself out of the ditch?" I asked her. She gave me a curious look, half-inquiring, but with a queer kind of honesty in it.

"It was drugs that sunk me," she replied, "and it was a sort of accident connected with drugs that started me uphill again. I had got so low and depressed that I was thinking of suicide. A friend of mine said: 'A sniff of Amyl-M is what you need.' I thought I knew all about drugs, but this was a new one on me. 'All right,,' I told her. She got me some. It was in a little glass

tube, like an iodine tube, inclosed in a silk wrapper surrounded with absorbent cotton. You break the tube inside the wrapper. The stuff—a liquid—spills out on the cotton inside the wrapper. Then you press it to your nostrils and inhale, hard.

"The effect was overpowering. I learned afterward that the drug's real name is Amyl Nitrate Five-M. They use it in hospitals to restore life to the dead. By that I mean, to revive people whose hearts have stopped beating. As I sniffed, it rushed through my whole body like electricity. And then a strange thing happened.

"My whole life came panoramically past me, like a drowning person's. I saw that my life had been futile, stupid and wrong. I knew that, even when I had thought myself happy, intoxicated, I had been in Hell. I remembered an engraving that had made a terrible impression on me as a little girl. It was one of the Dore engravings depicting the brink of a pit in Hell, and while you couldn't see beyond or below the crevasse, you could smell the hot sulphur and hear the groans of the damned. And at that moment I knew that was what I had been through, figuratively, and I said: 'I'll pull myself together NOW. And I have.'

Betty May Loveday, artists' model, tiger girl of Paris and reclaimed drug-eater, looked at me to see whether I believed her. The amazing part of it was that I did. I thought of what some friends of hers had said: "She is a bad girl with a beautiful face and a good heart." It seemed to me a pretty fair summing up.