

**CHANCE IN
CHAINS; A STORY
OF MONTE CARLO**

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Chance in chains; a story of Monte Carlo by Guy Thorne

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GUY THORNE

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A STORY OF MONTE CARLO

BY

GUY THORNE

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CHAPTER I

It was nine o'clock at night, and the thirty huge dynamos of the Société Générale Electrique of Paris were nearly all at work. In the great glass-roofed hall of the Mont Parnasse Central Power Station blue-bloused workmen moved quietly over the shining floors of white concrete, pausing now and then by this or that purring, spitting monster, scrutinising the whirring, glittering copper drums, listening with experienced ears for the slightest variation in the deep wasp-like hum, touching a lever here, adjusting a screw there, or oiling a bearing with tin cans beaked like a snipe.

Huge arc lamps hanging from the ceiling cast a steel-blue radiance over the hall, a radiance so cruel and intense that the shadows of the machinery which were thrown upon the floor were as black and sharply defined as fretwork of ebony.

The incandescent lamps which showed above each of the three great switchboards of brass and vulcanite, although they were burning at full power, glowed orange in the stupendous light from above.

The monster dynamos were making light for half eastern Paris. The Gare Mont Parnasse, from where trains were running every two minutes with late business folk to Meudon, Sèvres and Versailles, was lit from this room. The dinner tables of the foreign Ambassadors on the Quai Austerlitz were illuminated by favour of these serene, relentless marvels, and, across the Seine, many a glittering café upon the heights of the pleasure city Montmartre were switching on hundreds of fresh lights in the expectation of their supper custom—even as a new dynamo was started to cope with the extra strain.

At one side of the hall a few concrete steps led into the little glass-fronted room where the superintendent engineer on duty always sat.

The room was some twelve feet square, walled with white tiles like a model dairy, and from where he sat at a deal table the engineer could look out

into every part of the hall. In the hall itself it was cold, though the electricians felt but little of it owing to the fresh ozone constantly liberated from the dynamos into the air. Outside, in Paris, it was bitterly cold—a damp and foggy cold of late November. But in the room of the superintendent engineer an electric stove burned brightly and warmed it.

Two people were in the room now, Emile Deschamps and Basil Gregory, both of them employed by the Société Générale.

Deschamps was a young man of about twenty-six. His jet black hair, closely cropped to a rather large and well-shaped head, together with the swarthy tint of his complexion, proclaimed him of the South, a veritable son of the Midi from Orange, Avignon, or Marseilles. He wore a small black moustache, and his long-fingered right hand was deeply stained with the juice of cheap cigarettes.

The man who sat opposite to him, at the other end of the table, was unmistakably English. He was smoking a briar pipe, and though his clothes—neither new nor fashionably cut—were dis-