

MISS PERFUME

By Onoto Watanna

MR. ALBEMARLE HAUG struck an attitude, his feet wide apart, his monocle fixed in his left eye. He twirled his small, incipient mustache with one hand and his cane with the other. He cleared his throat with a prolonged "Ahem!" looked knowing, and then said, "*Ohayo!*" with an unmistakable accent.

"A-a-goo-mornin'," she returned, with the slightest inclination of her small, disdainful head.

"Beautiful mawning!" continued Mr. Albemarle Haug.

"Honorably beautiful," she agreed.

"Sun shining, you know, like—ah—you!" He put the end of his cane into his mouth, and watched for the effect of his compliment.

It was wasted on her. She merely said, in a queer little subtle undertone, "You arisin' early with thad honorable sun?"

"The air, you know—" he began to explain.

"Ah, yaes, the honorable air augustly beneficial to sniff."

"To what? Oh, yes, by Jove!" and he laughed constrainedly. "That's a good one!"

She agreed with him, in a dignified fashion, that the honorable air was a good one, particularly so in this part of her insignificant country. Then she inquired as to whether his honorable nose was benefited by the honorable air.

Her question ruffled the pride of Mr. Albemarle Haug, and then, thinking better of it, he broke into noisy laughter. He told her that his nose had nothing to do with his presence there; it was in a perfectly healthy and admirable condition.

Being on the subject of health, however, she gracefully pursued it.

"Your honorable health is good?" she inquired, with extravagant solicitude.

"Fine!"

"Also, those healths of your honorable mother an' sister?" this last with affected anxiety.

"They're all right. Now, look here, Miss—er—Perfume, we'll talk of *you*, don't you know."

She turned her shoulder and looked at him over it. "I too augustly insignificant to converse about."

Mr. Albemarle Haug threw convention to the winds. "You—you little bit of Dresden——"

She backed from him as he approached her. Suddenly she halted, and stiffly faced him. She struck his outstretched hand down smartly with her fan. "Whad you honorably attempt?" she demanded.

"To kiss you," he said, "just with my fingers." He attempted to pinch her cheek, but again she stepped back quickly.

"You altogedder too kind," she said; and Mr. Albemarle Haug could not get it through his head just whether she meant this gratefully or satirically.

His hesitation lasted but a moment, and his ardor increased with the delay. He attempted to put his arm round her, but the act received a prompt and sharp punishment. Perfume suddenly opened her little purple parasol. It reached just about to the Englishman's chin. She elevated it viciously to the level of his nose. A few moments later Mr. Albemarle Haug's immaculate appearance had undergone a remarkable change. His hat

had disappeared from his head and had gone on an independent chase before a sharp little wind, which bore it toward the bay; his glass had tumbled from his eye and was dangling over his polka-dotted waistcoat; his tie had ascended above his high collar, while across his honorable nose a long red scratch added to his appearance of bewilderment and chagrin, and gave the young gentleman a ridiculous aspect. A few yards away from him Miss Perfume had closed her parasol, and was regarding him with triumphant defiance.

For his further mortification, a third party arrived on the scene to witness his humiliation.

"Hello, Haug! What's up?"

"The dooce!" said Mr. Albemarle Haug.

Bob Graves grinned approvingly. Miss Perfume unfurled her fan and placed it before her face just above her delightful little nose. Her eyes twinkled with merriment above the fan.

Bob took in the situation at a glance.

"Too bad, old man," he said, soothingly; and then added, as his eye met the defiant glance of the girl, "Serves you right, though."

Mr. Albemarle Haug had by this time regained something of his normal poise. He was regarding Perfume with a look of mingled reproach and admiration. "You were reahlly hard on a fellow," he drawled.

"Aexcuse me," returned Miss Perfume. "*Ah bah!*" (Good-bye.)

"What! You're not going already?" said Mr. Albemarle Haug; and he watched her in amazement as she went down the hill and across the rice-fields toward her home.

"Who is she, Haug?"

"Who? Why, a Jap girl, of course," returned Mr. Albemarle Haug, irritably, replacing his monocle and looking about wistfully for his hat and cane.

"She made pretty strong objections to you, apparently," said Bob, looking with critical amusement at the other's disfigured nose. "I thought you

were something of a lady-killer, old man."

"I tell you it was an accident—just a bluff the little witch made. She saw you coming, I fawncy."

"Ah, so?"

Mr. Albemarle Haug's attitude again grew uncertain. "Look here, old chap, you'll not let this story get out among the fellows, will you? It reahlly was nothing but an absurd doocid queer it would sound, and I'm not in temper for a chaffing over there." He waved his stick toward the hotel, and added, with unconcealed disgust: "A Japanese girl! It would reahlly, you know, sound ridiculous."

"It would," said Bob, enjoying himself immensely.

"You won't disgrace me, will you, old fellow?"

"I won't disgrace her," said Bob, grinning expansively.

"Her! Why, look here, she's just one of those little dolls you see everywhere here."

"Well, she had spirit to resist you, Haug."

"Fudge!"

"And she was adorably pretty."

"Ah, thanks awfully."

"What?"

"You see, I contemplate matrimony with this young person."

"You do!" Bob's sense of the ridiculous began to desert him. "How did you get acquainted with her?"

"Mashed her," said Mr. Albemarle Haug, nonchalantly.

"Oh, come now, Haug, she isn't that kind." There was a tone of resentment in the voice.

Mr. Albemarle Haug frowned uncomfortably. "Why, old chap, they're all alike—can have any of them if you whistle for them."

"Not all of them."

"Well, the exceptions don't abound round here. She's not one of them, I fawncy. She lives over there, see, in that little house. Her people are day-laborers in the rice-fields."

"How did you come across her?" Bob was quite serious now.

"Mother and Adelaide picked her up somewhere, and when I came back here they tried to hide her from me. Couldn't fool this old boy!"

"Then you met her through your people? She's a friend of your mother's?"

"Friend! Reahly, Graves, you are very funny. Mother and Adelaide detest her!"

"Oh, indeed! Why?"

"Tell you the truth, Graves—I—" He tapped his chest significantly.

"I see," said Bob, with brief curt-ness.

"I will marry her in spite of them," went on Mr. Albemarle Haug, fatuously. "Easiest thing in the world, you know—cup of tea, song, fee and the rest."

"You mean, then——?"

"Exactly."

Graves shrugged his shoulders, skeptically. "Well, if I'm not very much mistaken, you won't get that girl."

"Oh, fudge!" said Mr. Albemarle Haug, with airy confidence.

Mrs. Haug had in mind, when she brought her two children to Japan, a fixed purpose other than the usual one of the sojourning tourist. The dearest ambition of her life was to secure a position for her son in the diplomatic service. She had exhausted all that effort, money and influence could do in England, and had finally been recommended to come to Japan and attack in person the Honorable Clarence Marchmont, in whose power it lay to bestow on her son the desired position. She had a very long letter of introduction to Mr. Marchmont and her own wit and craft to assist her. Unfortunately, Mr. Marchmont, at the time of their arrival in Japan, was in Hong-Kong with his wife, while his daughter, an only child, was said to be in delicate health and unable to receive visitors. Otherwise Mrs. Haug would have made it a point to cultivate the girl's acquaintance in the absence of her father.

Nothing daunted, however, by the absence of Mr. Marchmont, Mrs.

Haug had come from Tokio to this fashionable little watering-place, and here she waited and recuperated against his return.

There was also another reason responsible for her presence in Japan. She was extremely anxious to patch up a broken engagement between her daughter Adelaide and Robert Graves. At the time of its existence, Mrs. Haug had refused to recognize it, for Bob had then nothing beyond his frank and attractive young manhood to offer Miss Haug. The mother had kept up such a persistent and relentless nagging at the girl that Adelaide, who was a revised edition of herself, with a strain of her brother's sentimentality to temper her constant haughtiness, had succumbed. On his dismissal Bob had gone out to Japan. Hardly six months later the Haugs learned of his inheritance of a large estate and fortune.

Now Mrs. Haug was very much discouraged and unhappy. Besides the fact that her plans regarding Adelaide seemed futile, in view of the exasperating attitude of indifference with which Bob met their advances, Albemarle had given her hysterical cause for alarm by his absurd infatuation for this Japanese girl. Mrs. Haug bitterly bewailed the fate that had thrown the girl across their path. In the beginning she had thanked providence for her timely arrival. Perfume had come to her assistance one afternoon in the woods, when her runners had deserted both Adelaide and herself because she had refused to pay more than the customary fee. Perfume had gracefully offered them her jinrikisha. The Haugs had offered to pay her, but she had refused to accept the money. Under the impulse of her momentary gratitude, Mrs. Haug had patronizingly invited the girl to call on them at their hotel. Perfume came, and trouble followed. Albemarle saw her and fell in love with her.

A few days after Mr. Albemarle Haug's unfortunate encounter, Bob Graves had the good fortune again to

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come across Miss Perfume. He had lately acquired a habit of strolling across the fields in the direction in which her home lay.

She was sitting on the beach, a large book spread out before her. She returned his greeting with distant haughtiness. He sat down on the sands beside her.

"I am not responsible," said he, "for the rudeness of others. Please do not punish me."

The hard little look in her eyes grew uncertain.

"Besides," he continued, seeing his advantage, "you know that, at best, we are merely barbarians, and you should make allowance for us."

As he spoke to her, his eyes traveled admiringly over her face. The sun shone on her hair, and he was startled at its ruddy glow. Hitherto he had never seen a Japanese girl whose hair was not a dense black. Perfume's was distinctly bronze red, and there was the faintest ripple in it. Moreover, just above the nape of her little white neck and about her ears and temples, the short ends that escaped curled entrancingly. Her eyes, too, though long and narrow, were quite large, and when she opened them wide he saw that they were almost yellow. Her unique beauty puzzled him, but a subtle charm pervaded his senses and made analysis of her attraction for him impossible.

From distant haughtiness the expression of her face gradually relented into an arch friendliness that was bewitching. All she said, however, was:

"English gentleman honorably per-lite to honorably insignificant Japanese girl."

"I tried to put in all the good words I could for you with the Haugs," Bob continued.

"Why?" demanded Perfume, suddenly defiant.

Bob blundered. "Why, well, I thought—you see—I thought it just possible that you and——"

The friendliness disappeared from her face in an instant. "Tha's nod business for you," she said, icily.

After this cutting reproof Bob sat in uncomfortable silence. Several times she peeped at him sidewise under her long lashes. Then she again relented, and began to confide in him.

"Thad Mr. Albemarle Haug make marry at me," she said.

"You don't say!" cried Bob, sitting up, indignantly.

She nodded solemnly.

"The impudence of the fellow!" he exclaimed, and caught her eye, whereat they both laughed, and became fast friends from that moment.

"When is it to be?" he inquired.

"Whad?" she asked, innocently.

"Your marriage."

"I dunno egsact date," she returned.

He was really alarmed now. He sat bolt upright. "Then you accepted him, after all?"

"Who?"

"Why, Haug, of course."

"Oh, silly mans, you! No, I nod accept. You ask me wen my marriage taking place. Tha's nudder madder."

He laughed joyously, with relief.

"Where did you learn to speak English?" he asked her next.

"I don' speag very well which-even," she said, "jus' liddle small bit. I live all my honorably insignificant life long ad this Japan, go ad Japanese school, speag Japanese with aeverybody all time. Mebbe some day I also go across west ocean ad English school."

"Really? You are going to England?"

"America," she said, proudly. "Ad present I only fi'teen year ole. Altogedder too young, my fadder say."

"Why, you're just a little girl," said Bob, softly. "It's remarkable, all the same, how well you do speak English. You must have lived among us?"

"I know plenty English peeble ad Tokio."

"Oh, you've lived in Tokio, then?"

"Why, tha's my home."

"I thought you lived here."

"Nonzenze. This jus' liddle bit Summer home I stopping ad. My health nod perfect. Therefore, I come stay here for liddle bit while with Madame Pine-Leaf, my ole dear servant."

"Oh, I see," said Bob, thoughtfully.

That night he listened to Mr. Albemarle Haug's angry confession. He had made the girl an offer of his soul, and she had scorned it utterly.

"So she refused you," remarked Bob, quietly.

"She said no, and left me feeling that she didn't mean it."

"She is making a fool of him," thought Bob. "You'd better go on with your mother to Tokio," he advised.

"I'll be blawsted first," said Mr. Albemarle Haug.

"Very well," said Bob. "Go in and win—if you can."

A few weeks later an embarrassing interview took place between Mrs. Haug and Miss Perfume. The former lady, in company with her daughter Adelaide, went to the little house where the Japanese girl lived, and called on her. Perfume received them with ceremonious politeness, pressing on them the hospitality of what she termed her "honorably insignificant hovel of a house."

Mrs. Haug went straight to the purpose of her visit.

"No, we don't care to eat," she said, closing her lips grimly, and shuddering disgustedly at the little Japanese lunch brought in by a maid. "I am very sorry to have to tell you that we have come on a most painful and disagreeable mission."

"Tha's vaery sad," said Perfume, sympathetically. "Mebbe I kin honorably assist madame."

"It is this. My son has told me of his intentions toward you."

Perfume inclined her head gracefully. "He mos' vaery perlite foreign gendlemans," she complimented. "Pray, you come see me for you' son?"

"What do you mean?"

Perfume smiled sweetly. "Mebbe,"

said she, "you come unto me to entreat me to mek honorable marriage with you' august son? Mebbe?"

"I did not come for that purpose," said Mrs. Haug, indignantly.

"Ah, mebbe you come unto me jus' like a *nakoda*, middlewoman, professional match-maker, to carry bag my honorable answer? So?"

"I came to say," announced Mrs. Haug, with asperity, "that it is quite impossible for my son to marry you."

"Impossible!" Perfume was puzzled. Had she not herself by her answer rendered it impossible? Why, then, had this stupid Englishwoman come to tell her it was impossible?

"Yes, quite impossible. In the first place, my son is an English gentleman, and could not marry a Japanese girl. He has important business to attend to here, and he must not be inveigled into a marriage that would wreck his career."

Perfume's face, passing from serene and polite friendliness to shocked amazement, had gradually become stonily inscrutable as the other woman spoke. When Mrs. Haug had finished, the young girl, without deigning to address one word in response, clapped her hands loudly. Instantly a maid answered the summons.

"Show these barbarian visitors to their jinrikishas," she said, and then, with a deep bow of mock obeisance, she left her infuriated guests.

November the third. The Mikado's birthday.

It had been quite an exciting day for the Haugs. They had obtained tickets for the legation tent, and had put in a pleasurable and profitable day with the many foreign diplomats and their families and friends. To add to their triumph, they had met the Honorable Mr. Marchmont; had unceremoniously and gushingly handed him the letter of introduction, and he had cordially and informally invited them to attend a large ball he was giving that evening at the Hotel Imperial, in honor of the Mikado's birthday, and to celebrate his daughter's *début* into society.

The ball was a most imposing and luxurious affair. The Haugs arrived during the crush. As they passed through the brilliantly lighted vestibule into the corridor and took their places in the procession making its way toward the little receiving line, they could catch bits of the gossip and chatter that floated about them.

One American woman was telling her tall escort, in a high nasal voice loud enough to be heard by all about her, that she had known the Marchmonts for a very long time. The daughter had been born and educated in Japan—quite an odd fancy of the father, who was just a little freaky, though so dear, as everyone knew. The girl was altogether too young to “come out” yet, but it was a charming little accident that was making them hasten it. She was to have been “finished” in Europe and America first; but she had fallen in love with someone, and her father, who doted on her, had actually consented to her early marriage. He really was such an impossible man, was dear Mr. Marchmont. His own life and marriage had been so deliciously romantic and eccentric! He had married a Japanese lady in European fashion, had taken her abroad with him, and was so proud of her and their daughter!

“Mother,” said Adelaide, “don’t you think it was shocking of Mr. Marchmont to marry a Japanese lady?”

“Certainly not,” said Mrs. Haug, adjusting her pince-nez. “It is the secret of his popularity, I understand. His wife is said to be perfectly charming. I consider it an honor to meet her.”

“You objected to *my* marrying a Japanese girl,” said Albemarle, bitterly.

“That was altogether different,” said Mrs. Haug. “Mr. Marchmont married a lady of rank and fortune, related to one of the noblest families in Japan, her own father being a count, I am told.”

“Well,” said Albemarle, doggedly,

“there’s no difference. Perfume would put any girl I ever saw out of sight.”

“A little, insignificant piece of bric-à-brac,” said Adelaide, scornfully, and Mrs. Haug added, wittingly:

“I have no patience with you, Albemarle.”

Meanwhile they were slowly advancing along the line.

“I can see them quite plainly now,” whispered Mrs. Haug. “That must be dear Mrs. Marchmont, the lady in white satin and pearls.” She lowered her voice. “I am amazed, Adelaide,” she said, “at the gorgeousness of this Mrs. Marchmont.”

“Are you sure my hair’s all right?” questioned Adelaide.

“Yes, dear. Adelaide, do you think I could possibly wear white satin and—?”

“Oh, mother!”

“Well,” said Mrs. Haug, plaintively, “she cannot possibly be much younger than I am, what with a grown-up daughter and—”

“Sh! People will hear you. Are you sure my—?”

“Yes, yes, child, your hair’s all right. Oh, there! Do you see the daughter?”

“Mother, don’t. Everybody’s looking at you.”

“What a pretty girl!”

“What nonsense, mother! You can’t see her from here.”

“Adelaide, notice the hang of that little gown. If it wasn’t so plain and simple I would say that it came from Worth’s.”

“Hush, mother, do.”

“The dear child!” Mrs. Haug’s voice rose in sympathy to the shrill note of the American woman in front of them. “I had heard of her sweet beauty. Now I see—”

They had almost reached the receiving party by this time. Adelaide saw her mother stop suddenly; the busy, important form became rigid.

“What’s the matter, mother? Why don’t you go on?”

“Adelaide,” said Mrs. Haug, in a

voice that was so peculiarly thin and parched as to be barely recognizable, "there is something wrong with my eyes."

"Why, mother!"

"Go in front of me, Adelaide. Now look at the girl—this Miss Marchmont. Tell me, does she—is she——?"

For once in her life Miss Haug's composure completely failed her. "Oh, my goodness!" she ejaculated.

"What's the matter with you two?" growled Albemarle, sticking his head forward. "Making shows of yourselves!"

"Look!" said Adelaide, faintly.

Mr. Albemarle Haug fixed his monocle securely, and stared hard.

"Wh-why," he stuttered, "th-th-that's my Perfume!"

The American woman's voice in front of them, maddeningly clear, could be plainly heard in the little hush that ensued.

"Do look at her, the dear child! Eyes for no one but him——"

Mrs. Haug touched the speaker's arm with agitation she could not repress. "For whom?" she queried, faintly.

"Why, her fiancé, of course," returned the American woman, graciously. "See, the tall young man right behind her. He adores her."

"Bob!" said Adelaide.

"The dooce!" said Mr. Albemarle Haug.



INERTIA

I NEED you so—you need me not at all;
 This is the bitterest of bitter things;
 You make my love the puny plant that clings
 To the firm granite of a mighty wall,
 Helpless to aid its strength or stay its fall.
 I would not have you weaker, yet I know
 My strength had grown in answer to your call,
 And reached its highest measure striving so.
 Now I but lean where once I might have led,
 If you had craved my helping; now I stand
 Crippled through very uselessness. I dread
 Lest some day you shall seek a guiding hand,
 And I shall tremble from you, all dismayed,
 Having at last forgotten how to aid.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



HOW IT HAPPENED

"YE whole trouble," said Elder Hornboggle, making use of the picturesque Puritan phraseology, "is that when we sentenced ye common scold, Dame Chinnaway, to receive seven ducks, we failed to particularize with sufficient accuracy. Therefore, she is now suing ye selectmen for ye fowls, and also for assault with intent to kill and drown. Verily, although a common scold, she is a most uncommonly businesslike woman, and of phenomenal width betwixt ye eyes."