



The Stowaway

By LOUIS TRACY

Author of the "Pillar of Light," "The Wings of the Morning" and "The Captain of the Kansas."

The Stowaway is a typical Tracy story that grips the interest with the first chapter and holds it firmly until the last. A conspiracy against the safety of a ship, a beautiful girl in distress, a brave sailor who aids her and speedily learns to love her, a mysterious island which is the scene of a South American revolutionary plot—these are some of the characters and themes utilized by a master story teller in weaving a romance of life under the mystic Southern Cross.

[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER III.

WHEREIN THE ANDROMEDA NEARS THE END OF HER VOYAGE.

"FIVE bells, miss! It'll soon be daylight. If you want to see the cross, now's your time!" Iris had been called from dreamless sleep by a thundering rattle on her cabin door. In reply to her half-awakened cry of "All right!" the hoarse voice of a sailor told her that the Southern Cross had just risen above the horizon. She resolutely screwed her knuckles into her eyes and began to dress. In a few minutes she was on deck. A long coat, a tam-o'-shanter and a pair of list slippers will go far in the way of costume at night in the tropics, and the Andromeda's seventeenth day at sea had brought the equator very near. At dinner on the previous evening—in honor of the owner's niece fashionable hours were observed for meals—Mr. Watts mentioned by chance that the cross had been very distinct during the middle watch, or, in other words, between midnight and 4 a. m. Iris at once expressed a wish to see it, and Captain Coke offered a suggestion. "Mr. Hozier takes the middle watch tonight," said he. "We can ask him to send a man to pound on your door as soon as it rises. Then you must run up to the bridge, and 'ell tell me all about it."

If Iris was conscious of a slight feeling of surprise she did not show it. Hitherto the busy skipper of the Andromeda had made it so clearly understood that none of the ship's company save himself was to enjoy the society of Miss Iris Yorke that she had exchanged very few words with the one man whose manners and education obviously entitled him to meet her on an equal plane. Even at meals he was often absent. So Coke's complacency came now quite unexpectedly, but Iris was learning to school her tongue.

"Thank you very much," she said. "When shall I see him?"

"Oh, you needn't bother. I'll tell 'im myself."

She was somewhat disappointed at this. Hozier would be free for an hour before he turned in, and they might have enjoyed a nice chat while he smoked on the poop. In her heart of hearts she was beginning to acknowledge that a voyage through summer seas on a cargo vessel, with no other society than that of unimaginative sailormen, savored of tedium, indeed almost of deadly monotony. Her rare meetings with Hozier marked bright spots in a dull round of hours. During their small intercourse she had discovered that he was well informed. They had hit upon a few kindred tastes in books and music. They even differed constructively to complete understanding than the attack and defense of the shrine of some tin god of literature?

While, therefore, it was strange that Captain Coke should actually propose a visit to the bridge at an unusual time—at a time, too, when Hozier would be on duty—it struck her as far more curious that he should endeavor to prevent an earlier meeting.

"I shall be delighted to come at any time. I have often read about the Southern Cross, yet three short weeks ago I little thought!"

"You really didn't think about it at all," broke in Coke. "If you had you'd have known you couldn't cross the line without seeing it."

Here was another perplexing element in the skipper's conduct. That Iris was a stowaway was forgotten. She was treated with the attention and ceremony due to the owner's niece. Coke never lost an opportunity of dining into the ears of Watts or Hozier or the steward or any members of the crew who were listening that Miss Yorke's presence in their midst was a preordained circumstance, a thing fully discussed and agreed on between her uncle and himself, but carried out in an irregular manner owing to some childish freak on her



"YOU, MISS YORKE?" HE EXCLAIMED.

which she had heard so much could cloak the fact that Hozier was unprepared for her appearance.

"Of course it is I. Who else?" she asked. "Did not Captain Coke tell you to expect me?"

"No."

"How odd! That is what he arranged. A man came and rapped at my door."

"Pardon me one moment."

He leaned over the bridge and hailed the watch. The same hoarse voice that had roused Iris answered his questions, and in the faint light that came from the binnacle she caught a flicker of amusement on his face.

"Our excellent skipper's intentions have been defeated," he said. "He told one of the men to call him at seven bells, but not to wake you until the cross was visible. His orders have been obeyed quite literally. He will be summoned in another hour, and you have been dragged from bed to gaze at the false cross, which every forecast band persists in regarding as the real article. The true cross, of which Alpha Crucis is the southern pole star, comes up over the horizon an hour after the false one."

"But Captain Coke said he would see you and warn you of my visit."

"I can only assure you that he did not. Perhaps he thought it unnecessary, meaning to be on deck himself."

"Must I wait here a whole hour then?"

Hozier laughed. It was amusing to find how Coke's marked effort to keep the girl and him apart had been defeated by a sailor's blunder.

"I hope the waiting will not weary you," he said. "It is a beautiful night."

"I am glad of the accident that brought me on deck somewhat earlier than was necessary," she said. "You and I have not said much to each other since you routed me out of the lazarette, Mr. Hozier."

"Our friends at table are somewhat difficult. If only you knew how I regretted—"

"Oh, what of that? When I became

a stowaway I fully expected to be treated as one. I suppose, though, that you have often asked yourself why I was guilty of such a mad trick."

"Not exactly mad, Miss Yorke, but needless, since Captain Coke partly expected to have your company."

"That is absurd. He had not the remotest notion."

"Forgive me, but there you are wrong. He says that your uncle and he discussed the matter on the Sunday before we left Liverpool. His theory is rather borne out by the present state of the ship's larder. I assure you that few tramp steamers spread a table like the Andromeda's mess during this voyage."

Iris laughed with a spontaneous merriment that was rather astonishing in her own ears.

"Being the owner's niece, I am well catered for?" she cried.

"Something of the sort. It is only natural."

"But I think I have read in the newspapers that when some unhappy creature is condemned to death by the law he is supplied with luxuries that would certainly be denied to any ordinary criminal?"

"Such doubtful clemency can hardly apply to you, Miss Yorke."

"It might apply to the ship or to that human part of her that thinks and remembers and is capable of giving evidence."

She paused, fearing lest, perhaps she might have spoken too plainly. Coke's counter stroke in alluding to her dread of the proposed marriage was hidden from her. Hozier, of course, was thinking of nothing else for the moment, then, they were at cross purposes.

"Things are not so bad as that," he said gently. "I hope I am not trespassing on forbidden ground, but it is only fair to tell you that the skipper was quite explicit up to a point. He said you were being forced into some matrimonial arrangement that was distasteful."

"And, to escape from an undesirable suit, I ran away?"

"Well, the story sounded all right."

"Did myself on my uncle's ship when I wished to avoid marrying the man of his choice?"

Hozier was not neglecting his work, but he did then take his eyes off the starlit sea for a few amazed seconds. There was no mistaking the scornful ring in the girl's words. He could see the deep color that flooded her cheeks. The glance that met his sparkled with an intensity of feeling that thrilled while it perplexed.

"Please pardon me if the question hurts, but if that is not your motive and there never was any real notion of your coming on this trip why are you here?" he said.

"Because I am a foolish girl, I suppose—because I thought that my presence might interpose a serious obstacle between a criminal and the crime he had planned to commit. If one wants to avoid hateful people a change of climate is a most effectual means, and I had not the money for ordinary travel. Believe me, Mr. Hozier, I am not on board the Andromeda without good reason. I have often wished to have a talk with you. I think you are a man who would not betray a confidence. If you agree to help me, something may yet be done. At first I was sure that Captain Coke would abandon his wicked project as soon as he discovered that I knew what was in his mind. But now I am beginning to doubt. Each day brings us nearer South America, and—"

She was breathless with excitement. She drew nearer to the silent and impassive man at her side, dropping her voice almost to a whisper. She caught his arm with an appealing hand.

"I am afraid that my presence will offer no hindrance to his scheme," she murmured. "I am terrified to say such a thing, but I am certain, quite certain, that the ship will be lost within the next few days."

Hozier, though incredulous, could not but realize that the girl was saying that which she honestly thought to be true.

"Lost! Do you mean that she will be purposely thrown away?" he asked, and his own voice was not wholly under control. For he was called on to

repress a sudden temptation to kiss away the tears that glistened in her brown eyes.

"Yes, that is what he said—on the rocks this side of Montevideo."

"He said—who?"

"The captain."

"To whom did he say it?"

"Oh, Mr. Hozier, do not ask that, but believe me and help me."

"How?"

"I do not know. I am half-distracted with thinking. What can we do? Captain Coke simply swept aside my first attempt to speak plainly to him. But—make no mistake—he knows that I heard his very words, and there is something in his manner, a curious sort of quiet confidence, that frightens me."

After that neither spoke during many minutes.

"That is a very serious thing you have told me, Miss Yorke," muttered Hozier at last, not without a backward glance at the sailor in the wheelhouse to assure himself that the man could not by any chance overhear their conversation.

"But it is true—dreadfully true," said Iris, clasping her hands together and resting them on the high railing of the bridge.

"It is all the 'BUT IT IS TRUE'—more serious, DREADFULLY TRUE," inasmuch as SAID IRIS. We are helpless," he went on. "Don't you see how impossible it is even to hint at it in any discussion with the man principally concerned? I want to say this, though—you are in no danger. There is no ship so safe as one that is picked out for willful destruction. Men will not sacrifice their own lives even to make good an insurance policy, and I suppose that is what is intended. So you can sleep sound of nights—at any rate until we near the coast of Brazil. I can only promise you if any watchfulness on my part can stop this piece of villainy—Hello, there! What's up? Why is the ship falling away from her course?"

The sudden change in his voice startled the girl so greatly that she uttered a slight shriek. It took her an appreciable time to understand that he was speaking to the man at the wheel. But the sailor knew what he meant.

"Something's gone wrong with the wheel, sir," he bawled. "I wasn't certain at first, so I tried to put her over a bit to starboard. Then she jammed forward!"

Hozier leaped to the telegraph and signaled "starboard" to the engine room. Already the golden pathway behind the Andromeda had changed from a straight line to a well-defined curve. There was a hiss and snort of escaping steam as the sailor inside the chart-house endeavored to force the machinery into action.

"Steady, there!" bellowed Hozier. "Wait until we have examined the gear boxes! There may be a kink in a chain!"

A loud order brought the watch scurrying along the deck. Some of the men ran to examine the bearings of the huge fan-shaped casting that governed the movements of the rudder, while others began to tap the wooden shields which protected the steering rods and chains. In the midst of the hammering and excitement Captain Coke swung himself up to the bridge.

"Well, I'm blowed! You here?" he said, looking at Iris. "What is it now?"

He asked, turning sharply to Hozier. "Wheel stuck again?"

"Yes, sir. Has it happened before?"

"Well—er—not this trip. But it has happened just for a minute I was near it up with the night you nearly run down that blooming broker off the Irish coast. Ah, there she goes! Everything O. K. now. When daylight comes we'll overhaul theixin's. Nice thing if the wheel jammed just as we was crossin' the Recife!"

Hozier tried to ascertain from the watch if they had found the cause of the disturbance, but the men could only guess that a chance blow with an adze had straightened a kink in one of the castings. Coke treated the incident with nonchalance.

"Thought you was to be called 'wen the cross bore in sight, Miss Yorke?" he said abruptly.

"I am sorry to have to inform you that some people on board cannot distinguish between falsity and truth," she answered. "But please don't be angry with any of the men on my account. Mr. Hozier tells me they often confuse the false cross with the real one, and the mistake has been enjoyable."

"A regular 'bungus,' the Southern Cross," grunted Coke. "It ain't a patch on the bear."

Coke grinned at his own pleasantry. To one of his hearers at least it seemed to be passing strange that he was so ready to forget such a vital defect in the steering gear as had manifested its existence a few minutes earlier.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Now They Don't Speak. The Ingenue—Did you see the review of this show in the Morning Blatt? It said it was rarely beautiful. The Soubrette—So rarely they might as well say never.

Not In His Line. The Leading Heavy—Hurry with my order. I am accustomed to being served in a hurry. The Waiter—I don't doubt it; but I am no sheriff.

(Continued Next Week)

TO-DAY EVERYDAY AND



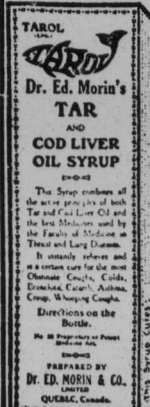
You'll Like the Flavor

TAROL

RELIEVES PROMPTLY CURES SURELY

Coughs, Colds, Bronchitis, Whooping Cough, Grippe AND ALL

AILMENTS of the RESPIRATORY ORGANS



TAROL is a scientific remedy prepared by competent chemists, according to formulas approved and recommended by the Medical profession, with choice elements, the principal being

Wood Tar and Cod Liver Oil

Wood Tar acts as a powerful antiseptic to the throat, bronchi and lungs, protecting these organs against the evil action of the microbes.

Cod Liver Oil soothes the irritated mucous membranes, eases the cough, promotes expectoration and supplies the whole organism with the energy needed to overcome the diseases and to recover strength.

Ask for Tarol and insist on getting it.

DR. ED. MORIN & CO., Limited - QUEBEC, Canada.

FOR SALE DRY HARDWOOD

In Furnace or Stove Lengths

PLACE YOUR ORDERS NOW

Can. Gear Works Ltd.

PHONE 139

LUMBER

FOR

Ship-Building

We are open to contracts for immediate delivery and also for delivery during coming winter of

Yellow Birch, Maple and Spruce

in lengths 20 feet and up, 10 inches at top end, also Spruce Knees.

Specifications Furnished by applying to:

MARITIME FOUNDRY & MACHINE WORKS, LTD. CHATHAM, N. B.

or at the Ship Yard at Nordin.

INTERNATIONAL SHIP BUILDING CORPORATION