

COPY

THE MAN FROM BRODNEY'S

(Continued)

"Go away and leave me here," he began hoarsely. "No, no!" she cried, turning upon him suddenly. "You could not stay here. You shall not!"

"But, dearest love, I am bound to stay. I cannot go. And, God help me, I want to stay. If I could go into your world and take you unto myself for ever—if you will tell me now that some day you may forget your world and come to live in mine—then, ah, then, I would be different. But without you I have no choice of abiding places here as well as anywhere."

She put her hands over her eyes. "I cannot bear the thought of leaving you behind—of leaving you here to die at the hands of those beasts down there. Hollingsworth, I implore you—come! If the opportunity comes—and it will, I know—you will leave the island with the rest of us!"

"Not unless I am commanded to do so by the man who sent me here to serve these beasts, as you call them." He leaned over and took her hand in his. "You do love me?"

"You know I do—yes, yes," she cried from her heart, keeping her face resolutely turned away from him. "I am sick with love for you. Why should I deny the thing that speaks so loudly for itself—my heart! Listen! Can you not hear it beating? It is hurting me—yes, it is hurting me!"

He trembled at this exhibition of released, unchecked passion, and yet he did not clasp her in his arms. "Will you come into my world, Geneva?" he whispered. "All my life would be spent in guarding the love you would give to me—all my life given to making you love me more and more until there will be no other world for you to think of."

"I wish that I had not been born," she sobbed. "I cannot, dearest—I cannot change the laws of fate. I am fated—I am doomed to live forever in the dreary world of my fathers. But how can I give you up? How can I give up your love? How can I cast you out of my life?"

"You do not love Prince Karl?" "How can you ask?" she cried fiercely. "Am I not loving you with all my heart and soul?"

"And you would leave me behind if the ship should come?" he persisted, with cruel insistence. "You will go back and marry that—him? Loving me, you will marry him?" Her head dropped upon her arm. He turned cold as death. "God help and God pity you, my love. I never knew before what your little world means to you. I give you up to it. I crawl back into the one you look down upon with scorn. I shall not again ask you to descend to the world where love is."

Her hand lay limp in his. They stared bleakly out into the night, and no word was spoken. The minutes became an hour, and yet they sat there with set faces, bursting hearts, unseeing eyes.

Below them in the shadows Bobby Browne was pacing the embankment, his wife drawn close to his side. Three men, Britt, Saunders and Bowles, were smoking their pipes on the edge of the terrace. Their words came up to the two in the gallery.

"If I have to die tomorrow," Saunders, the bridegroom, was saying, with real feeling in his voice, "I should say with all my heart that my life has been less than a week long. The rest of it was nothing. I never was happy before, and happiness is everything."

CHAPTER XXXI. THE SHIP THAT PASSES.

THE next morning was rainy. A quick, violent storm had rushed up from the sea during the night.

Chase, after a sleepless night, came down and, without waiting for his breakfast, hurried out upon the gallery overlooking the harbor. Geneva was there before him, pale, wistful, heavy eyed, standing in the shelter of a huge pillar.

"Hollingsworth," she said drearily, "do you believe he will come today?" "He?" he asked, puzzled. "My uncle. The yacht was to call for me not later than today."

"I remember," he said slowly. "It may come, Geneva. The day is young."

She clasped his hand convulsively, a desperate revolt in her soul. "I almost hope that it may not come for me!" she said, her voice shaking with suppressed emotion. "It will not come. I feel it in my heart. We shall lie here together, Hollingsworth. Ah, in that way I may escape the other life. No, no! What am I saying? Of course I want to leave this dreadful island—this dreadful, beautiful, hateful, happy island. Am I not too silly?"

She was speaking rapidly, almost hysterically, a nervous, flickering smile on her face.

"Dear one," he said gently, "the yacht will come. If it should not come today my cruises will forest all its mission. As sure as there is a sea those cruises will come." She looked into his eyes intently, as if afraid of something there. "Oh, I'm not mad!" she laughed. "You brought a cruiser to me one day. I'll bring one to you in return. We'll be quits."

"Quite?" she murmured, hurt by the word.

"Forgive me," he said, humbled. "Hollingsworth," she said after a long, tense scrutiny of the sea, "how long will you remain on this island?" "Perhaps until I die—if death should come soon. If not, then God knows."

"For my sake you will not stay long. You will come away before they kill you. You will promise me. You will come—to Paris? Some day, dear heart? Promise?"

"To Paris?" he said, shaking his head sadly. "No, dearest one. Not now. Listen: I have in my bar upstairs an offer from a great American corporation. My headquarters would be in Paris. My duties would begin as soon as my contract with Sir John Rodney expires. The position is a lucrative one; it presents unlimited opportunities. I am a comparatively poor man. The letter was forwarded to me by Sir John. I have a year in which to decide."

"And you—you will decline?" she asked.

"Yes. I shall go back to America, where there are no princesses of royal blood. Paris is no place for the disappointed, castoff lover. I can't go there. I love you too madly. I'd go on loving you, and you, good as you are, would go on loving me. There is no telling what would come of it. It will be hard for me to stay away from Paris—desperately hard. Sometimes I feel that I will not be strong enough to do it, Geneva."

"But Paris is huge, Hollingsworth," she argued insistently, an eager, impelling light in her eyes. "We would be as far apart as if the ocean were between us."

"Ah, but would we?" he demanded. "It is almost unheard of for an American to gain entree to our set in which—well, you understand," she said, blushing painfully in the consciousness that she was touching his pride. He smiled sadly.

"My dear, you will do me the honor to remember that I am not trying to get into your set. I am trying to induce you to come into mine. You won't be tempted, so that's the end of it. Beasty day, isn't it?" He uttered the trite commonplace as if no other thought than that of the weather had been in his mind. "By the way," he resumed, with a most genial smile, "for some queer, unmasculine reason I took it into my head last night to worry about the bride's trousseau. How are you going to manage it if you are unable to leave the island until—well, say June?"

She returned his smile with one as sweetly detached as his had been, catching his spirit. "So good of you to worry about the bride's trousseau! How are you going to manage it if you are unable to leave the island until—well, say June?"

He was looking eagerly, intently toward the long, low headland beyond the town of Ararat.

"The smoke! See? Close inshore too! By heaven, Geneva, there's a steamer off there. She's a small one or she wouldn't run in so close. It—it may be the yacht! Wait! We'll soon see. She'll pass the point in a few minutes."

Already the citizens of the town were rushing to the pier. Even before the vessel turned the point the watchers at the chateau witnessed a most amazing performance on the dock. Half a hundred natives dropped down as if stricken, scattering themselves along the narrow pier.

The people were simulating death! They were posing as the victims of the plague that infested the land! As he was explaining the ruse to his mystified companion the nose of the vessel came out from behind the tree covered point.

An instant later they were sending wild cries of joy through the chateau, and people were rushing toward them from all quarters.

The trim white thing that glided across the harbor, graceful as a bird, was the marquis' yacht!

It is needless to describe the joyous gale that swept the chateau into a maelstrom of emotions.

They saw the tug put out to meet the small boat; they witnessed the same old maneuvers; they sustained a chill of surprise and despair when the bright white and blue boat from the yacht came to a stop at the command from the tug.

There was an hour of parleying. The beleaguered ones signaled with despairing energy. The flag, limp in the damp air above the chateau, shot up and down in pitiful eagerness.

But the small boat edged away from close proximity to the tug and the nearby dock. They spoke each other at long and ever widening range. At last the yacht's boat turned and fled toward the trim white hull.

dock. Half a dozen glasses were turned in that direction.

The dying and the dead were leaping about in the wildest exhibition of glacial triumph.

The yacht slipped into the unreachably horizon, the feathery cloud from its stack lying over against the leaden sky, shaped like a finger that pointed mockingly the way to safety.

White faced and despairing, the watchers turned away and dragged themselves into the splendid halls of the building they had now come to regard as their tomb.

All day long the islanders rejoiced. Their shouts could be plainly heard by the besieged. Their rifles cracked sarcastic greetings from the forest. Bullets whistled gay accompaniments to the ceaseless song: "Allah is great! Allah is good!"

No man in the despoiled house of Taswell Skazars slept that night. The guard was doubled at all points open to attack. At 2 in the morning Deppingham, Browne and Chase came up from the walls for coffee and an hour's rest. They were wet and cold. They had heard Rasula's minions shouting derisively all night long: "Where is the warship? Where is the warship?"

"It will come. I am positive," said Chase, insistent in spite of his dejection. They drank their coffee in silence. He knew that the others, including the native who served them, were regarding him with the pity that one extends to the vainglorious braggart who goes down with flying colors.

He went out upon the west gallery and, utterly fagged, threw himself into an unexposed chair and stared through



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tired eyes into the inscrutable night that hid the sea from view—the faithless, moaning, jeering sea!

When he aroused himself with a start the gray, drizzly dawn was upon him. He had slept.

The next instant he was on his feet, clutching the stone balustrade with a grip of iron, his eyes starting from his head. A shout arose to his lips, but he lacked the power to give it voice. A quaint smile grew in his face. His eyes were bright and full of triumph. After a full minute of preparation he made his way toward the breakfast room outwardly as calm as a May morning.

Browne and Deppingham were asleep in the chairs. He shook them vigorously. As they awoke he said in the coolest, most matter of fact way: "There's an American cruiser outside the harbor. Get up!"

CHAPTER XXXII. IN THE SAME GRAVE WITH SEAGOS.

DOWN in the village of Ararat there were signs of a vast commotion. Early risers and the guards were flying from house to house, shouting the news.

Outside the harbor lay the low, savage looking ship. Its guns were pointed directly at the helpless town. Its decks were swarming with white clothed men.

The plague was forgotten. The strategy that had driven off the ships of peace was lost in the face of this ugly creature of war. Rasula's reign of strategy was ended.

"They will not fire! They dare not!" he was shrieking as he dashed back and forth along the dock. "It is chance! They do not come for Chase! Believe in me! The tug! The tug! They must not land!"

The crash of the long unused six pounder at the chateau, followed almost immediately by a great roar from one of the cruiser's guns, brought the panic to a crisis.

The islanders scattered like chaff before the wind, looking wild eyed over their shoulders in dread of the pursuing cannon ball, dodging in and out among the houses and off into the foothills.

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