POOR DOCUMENT

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THE PIRATING OF THE KATRINA

BY ADÈLE AND ALBERT SHAW

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE KATRINA HAD FIRED"

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On Board The Chicola.

Somewhere off Labrador, June 19.

John says there will be no rest for the weary so long as I insist on playing nurse to the universe. But that is nonsense. Anything with a hint of adventure is dear to John Dwight. In the past we have had plenty of it. This season we meant to dawdle from harbor to harbor among the summer colonies and, as John says, exchange food and fireworks with our friends. Instead of that we are getting further and further from our friends every minute, and all because of what John calls my "fatal habit of surmise."

Sometimes I am doubtful—suppose I have been mistaken, but I won't think of that. Every time I go over it in my mind I feel more certain that I am right.

In the first place it was broad daylight. We were lying off Thirty-fourth street, in New York harbor. It was the American Memorial Day, and we had the flags out and a respectful bit of black and white bunting. The mail had come aboard and in it a letter from Kate Sears. Kate is the American girl I like best. I was thinking of her and of Clarke Irwin. I knew Clarke was in love with her, and why there was any delay—but Clarke is a leisurely fellow. He always seems to me like the Chicola with the fires banked. She is the most idle looking craft when she is anchored. There is something fairly lotus eating about her that other yachts can't show even with awnings spread and rugs all over the deck.

It is after midnight and John is sleeping like a child. It is blessed to know he is here where I could put out my hand and wake him at any minute. I hope I have n't brought him and the Chicola into danger. What possible danger can there be? Unpleasantness, perhaps, but not danger. I cannot sleep, so I am going to put down all my suspicions and the reasons for our changing our summer plans and rushing off into these wilds for a lost man, who may, for all I know, be enjoying himself after a solitary fashion of his own choosing.

"Clarke Irwin," Kate Sears said at the end of her letter, "is going to spend Memorial Day on the Yoshi, Bob Carrington's boat, and if you're in New York you may run across him." I was settled down against my cushions to wait while John finished "confabbing" with Captain Wells, but I got up and took the glasses to see if I could find the Yoshi among the boats in sight.

All at once I thought I had found her in a yacht that was under way coming toward us, but when I could read the name on the bow it was not Yoshi, but Katrina. I had never seen her before, but she looked queerly familiar.

"That's Berry Manning's boat," said John over my shoulder, "built after the model of the Yoshi and the Chicola, and named for Katharine Sears."

"Quite like the man's impertinence," I exclaimed.

"To have a boat like ours?"

"No; to name it for Kate."

"Impertinence depends on who does it!" John grinned. "I suppose you'd let Irwin name a fleet for her."

I never liked Berry Manning. Through the glasses I could see that the caps of his crew were monogrammed like those of the Yoshi's crew. Then the Catrina got directly opposite and there at a cabin porthole was Clarke Irwin's face. I saw it distinctly for a minute, then a hand came out from behind and the face tipped backward and was lost. But it was Clarke Irwin.

I told John and he laughed. "You're seeing things, Celia," he said. It is strange that though John is an American and I am an Englishwoman I am sometimes quicker than he to guess at situations. What was Clarke Irwin doing on Manning's boat when he had intended to be on Carrington's Yoshi? Was he there of his own will or had he been kidnapped? Of course it sounded absurd, for Mr. Manning is the pink of Beacon street propriety and a most respected man. John and I had often discussed his infatuation for Kate Sears.

"She will marry him yet; she likes force," John would say.

A week later we put into Boston to pick up Colonel Enderly, John's uncle (who is really a third cousin once removed), and I carried Kate off for a day on the Chicola. I knew at once something was wrong. She is less on her guard with me than with most people and I found out these things.

Clarke Irwin had disappeared. So had Berry Manning's boat. Manning was making himself oppressive by his pursuit of Kate. He professed great anxiety for the Katrina; we had been having heavy weather and he was sure she had been blown out to sea and been wrecked.

These were things that every one knew. There were some things that every one did not know. The very night that Clarke Irwin had left Boston for New York to join Bob Carrington on the Yoshi Berry Manning had also left town. Kate and Clarke had at last come to a sort of understanding. At least Kate understood. For two years Clarke had been on the ragged edge of poverty. That accounted for all his apparent indifference. There had been some bother about Western mining stocks where his father had left the whole fortune tied up, and it had been a hair's weight that had sent the scale up, not down. Clarke had expected ruin, and while that was so he wouldn't ask Kate to marry him.

She was so happy to know he loved her that she lost her head and repulsed him.

It took him terribly by surprise and he was so crushed that she was on the point of relenting, when Berry Manning was announced, and Clarke gave her no chance after that, but went away with a very sober and, she thought, cold good night. Afterward she remembered that Manning's greeting had been uncommonly warm and that she had not repulsed him. Indeed, she had been so busy thinking of Clarke and show she could get a word with him that she had hardly known it was Manning who was there. But Clarke must have believed Manning was the cause of her hesitation; the man's every word implied an intimacy that didn't in the least exist, and when she had been left alone with him she had snubbed him roundly. But that had not brought Clarke back and he had never come at all for his answer. None of his friends knew where he was, unless Berry Manning was telling the truth. He said he knew. Two or three times he had told Kate of Clarke's sudden change of plan and of some mountain trip in Oregon.

"You know him and his charmingly irresponsible ways better than most of us," Manning had said. "How irresistible he seems to everybody! The steady-going chaps like me envy him, I can tell you!"

Now, little by little, I got all this from Kate. And I told it to John. And still John wouldn't see it as I did. But finally he made a few inquiries, feeling, he said, like a pickpocket. Clarke is not in Oregon and has not been there. No one has seen or heard of him since he left Boston the night before Memorial Day. Barry Manning was on his own yacht, the Katrina at the time when I thought I saw Clarke's face at the cabin porthole, but he had gone aboard alone. This agrees with his own account.

On June 2 the Katrina was off David's Point, on the Maine coast, where Berry Manning was put ashore at midnight, walked three miles to David's Corner, took an electric car for Portland and a morning train for Boston. This does not agree with his own account.

Our information came from Morton Wilkes, of the Coast Survey. He is an old friend of John's father and a careful man. John told him of the disappearance of the Katrina. The next day Mr. Wilkes lunched with the Thompsons in Portland and before he left their hotel the man who used to be farmer on the Thompson homestead dropped in to see his old employer. He had given up farming and was the conductor on the car that had brought Manning to Portland. His wife's brother is keeper of the light at David's Point. The man at the Point had been interested in the midnight landing; the conductor had been puzzled by his passenger. When Mr. Wilkes mentioned the lost boat he pricked up his ears. He had seen Manning in other seasons as a guest of the Thompsons and was certain of his recognition. So he told his tale. It seemed sufficiently curious to Morton Wilkes to induce him to write to John before he slept.

Till now John had been impatient, but amused. Now he appeared a bit uneasy, and it ended in our starting out to find Clarke Irwin. Kate is with us, and knows why we are going. She is terribly in earnest about the few people she cares for, and unless I have lost my power to observe she cares more for Clarke Irwin than for all the rest of the world put together. And Manning is with us. That was John's work.

"Why?" I asked.

"It's safer," said John. But I don't like it. And he makes me wretched, he is so horribly in love.

Of course he accepted our invitation with Kate in the party. But the thought of the Chicola seemed to give him a pang.

"My poor Katrina," he sighed.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," answered John. "We'll go hunting your Katrina."

"I wouldn't permit that for an instant." Manning fairly jumped at John with his refusal. "Captain Waley will do all a man can—we mustn't be thinking of shipwrecks all the time. It would ruin the cruise." He spoke so naturally and glanced with such concern at Kate and me that it seemed scarcely fair to be suspicious of his protest.

John is stubborn. "Stuff and guff, Manning," he said. "It will give us an object. We'll scour the seas for the Katrina. If your worthy Waley has turned pirate and run off with her we'll bring him back in irons." He laughed.

For a second every line in Manning's face said, "Officious fool!" but John was gazing carelessly at the Colonel as he made his offer, and I was sure Manning suspected nothing worse than a meddlesome interest.

John's reason for having the man along broke through my dullness in a rush. Of course our only excuse for boarding the Katrina would be the presence of her owner aboard the Chicola and if Manning was all right we were doing him the biggest sort of favor in giving him this chance with Katrina and in hunting up his boat. If he was not he would deserve whatever happened. In the end he came aboard, knowing that we meant to find the Katrina.

Before we started we had news. The Katrina had appeared in the harbor at St. Johns, repaired her propellor, cleared for Boston and gotten away to sea before the storm had passed. No one but the skipper, Captain Waley, had been ashore.

So here we are, ten hours out from St. John, and going north because the Katrina went north. One of the Newfoundland fishermen met her steaming directly away from Boston. She had two full days the start of us. We appear to be out of the track of everything living and it is cold.

John is still sleeping like a boy. I wonder where the Katrina is tonight—and Clarke Irwin. Or have I discovered a mate's nest.

June 20, two in the morning.

It is very cold and a bit ghostly. I keep thinking we may come to the edge of the world and drop off. John and I seem to have changed places. He has seen something I have not in Manning's treatment of Kate.

"I guess you're right, old lady," he said tonight when we were shut in here with the doors closed. We have two little connecting cabins where we can safely think aloud.

"About Manning and Clarke Irwin?" I asked.

"Hmp!" said John, as if some discovery bothered him. "A man like Manning won't shy at anything to get what he wants."

"What he wants, of course, is to make Kate fair in love with him," I groaned. "And sometimes I am afraid she will. She seemed absorbed in what he said at dinner and he talked well."

"Nonsense," said John. "What he wants is possession. He'll risk the love if he can make her marry him. But your Katharine is playing him; she means to make him talk a good deal more!"

June 22.

We have sighted a speck beating west by northwest. By her speed she must be using steam. The Katrina is an auxiliary like the Chicola. There is some special virtue in our engines; Perkins, the engineer, has often explained to me our superiority, but I never understood explanations about machines. At any rate we are gaining on the speck. If Manning has any secret why does he show no uneasiness?

Kate came still more out of her shell today and kept the Colonel and Manning hanging on her words all the afternoon. The Colonel chaperons her so well that I feel less anxious. He has adored her ever since she was in sashes and ankle ties, if babies of her generation wore such things. Manning thinks him an old dotard. He never saw the Colonel roused.

Berry Manning's eyes look at you with a kind of aggressive intimacy. To many women he is attractive. Is Kate beginning to like him? Some one—

Later.

"Some one," I was going to say, "seems as wakeful as myself." It was Captain Wells. He was talking with Mr. Manning about the weather!

The Captain and, by the Captain's advice, McCleod the second engineer, as well as Perkins his chief, and Dr. Bellew, are entirely in John's confidence. With the help of the carpenter in the daytime and a little change of hours at night they have managed not to let Manning out of their sight. It must have been cleverly done, for not even I suspected so much precaution.

Late tonight after we sighted the boat and the excitement of the unacknowledged chase was keeping me awake, McCleod was on duty in the engine room, when he heard steps. They were too soft, and the young fellow, who quite fancies relieving the monotony of the cruise by a bit of Sherlock Holmes work, pretended to be asleep. It was amusing to see him illustrate for us how he did it, tipped back against the wall, one knee sprawling to the floor, his mouth open, his attitude showing the most limp and unconscious length of legs and arms. Through his squinted yellow eyelids he could see Manning with moccasins and pajamas visible under a long coat, and for a minute he was afraid he would have to wake up, he was so closely inspected. Then the visitor wandered about while McCleod slept nobly, even, he boasted, emitting a slight snore. "I wouldna say I could do that again, Mem," he confided as he told his tale. Then Manning moved over to the engines. His position did not please the engineer.

At once McCleod began to wake, and with the first yawn and stretch Manning's hand disappeared into the pocket of his great coat.

"A pretty companion for a sleepless man you are," he reproached the apparently stricken McCleod. "Have a tigar, it may keep you from dozing."

June 23.

We have gained on the boat. She is a yacht. I should think her the Chicola if I weren't aboard our own boat.

June 24.

We pitch so I don't suppose I can write a legible word, but the attempt may keep me from a panic. I wouldn't have believed I could be made so miserable with the Chicola between me and the sea and John here beside me—only at this moment he is on deck getting the drench of the waves. This storm is either worse than any we have ever weathered or I am made anxious by our being in such far-off waters. We must be north of Labrador. For two days it has been impossible to take an observation.

If only we got safely out of this I will never get John into such—

"Oh yes, you will," said John over my shoulder. This diary is always as much his as mine, and after we are at home he stretches himself at ease to listen to it. That is the way we have lived over more than one of our adventures. "Oh, yes, you will," repeated John. "And you'd not be Celia if you didn't, and my wife! What do you suppose I married you for if I wanted a fireside pussy!"

Steam makes little impression on this cold. It's a chill that eats away every protection. I ache with the struggles of our plucky Chicola, banged and wrenched and throttled by these seas—pounding in their awful convulsions at one small atom.

My pencil goes up and down leaving a word only on some of the pages. Yet writing keeps me busy and I forget my battered body and the horrors ahead. Heaven save us from floating ice! I am not an infant and I have laughed through so many storms it never occurs to any one to keep the truth from me. So I know we're being driven—no one knows where.

Of course we long ago lost sight of the other boat. But she is surely being flung before us in the same direction.

Kate has been here, wrapped in furs, her eyes glowing, her breath so quick I could see how excitement was setting her heart hammering at her ribs. She spoke as quietly as if we were on the piazza at Malobran. She will not talk—of anything real. Sometimes I believe our words in Boston harbor were all moonshine and mirage.

Morning, though it's all the same.

I shall never think of future punishment again in the old way. We are in it now and its worst horror is motion—wild, ungovernable motion that wrings and shakes and hurls and batters in gigantic buffoonery the earth howls to see your helplessness. I gave up trying to put words on paper. No one undressed; no one slept. And Kate came back to me. If we live out this storm and do not find Clarke Irwin I cannot bear to think of her future, for she loves him as not many of us can love—as I have sometimes thought no one but John and I have ever loved. And she fears they may maroon Clarke. What could any one prove even it his dead body were found on one of these thousand shores? Excepting in this awful time, on the very edge of death, I don't believe she will in all her life give her confidence to any one. If only he could have heard—and seen her.

June 27. Nine at night, but broad day.

I broke off in the worst of the storm because I thought we were going down, and I wanted to be with John if the end had come. He was on his way to me. The last crashes had been terrible. He wanted me to know that we were doing well! And I suppose it was "well" when one thinks that we're alive and only a few sails gone and a rail smashed for damage.

The other boat may have gone down. No sign of her anywhere.

Yes there is! We have just picked her up with the glass. Kate has been here to tell me. The sea is wallowing horribly.

If this boat we're pursuing is the Katrina, she will hardly get away from us now, unless she dodges through some strait where we cannot follow. There are too many islands about, but it is light both day and night, for the little darkness we get is hardly night.

Kate scarcely leaves the deck. Manning is close beside her whichever way she turns. She no longer tries to gain his confidence. She sees now that he is too shrewd to believe she would be flattered by the confession of the lengths to which he may have gone to win her. He asked Kate today if a woman would be justified in marrying a man she did not love to save the life of the man she did love. It was one of those apparently casual discussions that idle people are always thrashing out. "That depends entirely on the circumstances," Kate answered. She too, appeared casual. What had the man in mind?

We are very near the other boat. She is the Katrina. She is using both sails and engines and seems not to have suffered at all from the storm.

"Waley can handle her, the old pirate," Manning said with pride, as he watched her.

John and the Captain have decided to follow wherever the Katrina leads. We're fairly safe in that, for she draws but little less than the Chicola and will risk no great speed among these islands. To hesitate is to lose her.

Noon, June 28.

We are aground. In a narrow strait where the Katrina led the way without a sounding. Reversing the engines has done no good, but the boat lies on an even keel at low tide. High tide will float her, Captain Wells is sure.

Meantime the Katrina will escape. To lose her so is maddening. The Colonel wants to follow in the launch. The Captain objects, but—

Evening.

After all we had the Katrina penned. When we struck she slowed down to take soundings. Three miles away we could see her stop and finally swing about and go nosing the width of the strait. Evidently there was no passage and she turned. She meant to slip by us and get away toward the open sea while we hung there helpless waiting to be floated off. It was a good plan, but the breadth of the strait at point where we were aground was deceptive; the shallows were wider, it was exactly there that the channel proved narrowest. She must come close to the Chicola in passing.

"We'll board her," said John.

Captain Wells made ready.

Manning overheard. He interposed with decision. "I'll not have you run that risk," he said. "Give me a boat and a couple of men and I'll bring the old pirate to reason."

"The last plan on earth!" John was quite decided. "You're the very man they want to avoid."

"I'll get aboard. Turst me. Waley'll stop for me." I don't think Manning meant to say that, it escaped him in his eagerness.

John did not answer, only turned away to hurry the start. Manning deceived by his manner, insisted. "I won't have her boarded."

John faced him sharply. "Don't you want your boat?"

"Certainly I want her. But not enough to risk your lives," he added, with a glance that appealed to my anxiety.

The boats were already in the water. John dropped in the first. "Tumble in man—if you're coming," he commanded.

Manning obeyed, barely in time to fall into the second boat. The colonel was there to receive him. Both boats were moving—before we knew it they were around the bow, in full sight of the Katrina.

She was no more than a quarter of a mile from us. In spite of the excitement my heart was in my mouth. It was not of Clarke Irwin I was thinking. I knew John would be in the thick of any fighting. And who knows what a single blow may do!

Then I saw with the glasses that our boats were being watched from the deck of the Katrina, and that two of her officers had rifles. Her crew were ready. She came closer and closer as the channel narrowed.

In our boats I could see John and the Colonel. But I could not see Manning. Was he concealing himself?

In the few minutes that followed everything was frightful and confused to my eyes. I saw the captain of the Katrina with his rifle leveled at John. John was standing erect in the bow of his boat and shouting through his hands. Our boats went on. The Katrina's captain yelled and again John answered. And still the boats went on. Then the life went out of me, for the captain of the Katrina had fired. The sickness of terror got hold of me. With a flash a figure hurled itself upon the Katrina's commander. The two fell. The mate turned. Thank God! John was still standing. I heard the Colonel's voice. He needs no megaphone.

"Come out of there! Show yourself, Berry Manning!" he yelled. It brought the eyes of the Katrina's crew upon him. In the instant of their surprise our men were up and at the rail, clinging on anchor chains and even apparently on nothing, meeting the fists above with wild assurance. They had been battered about in these miserable desolations too long to spare the enemy. The Colonel's yell had twisted the Katrina's mate about as if he had been clutched by a Titan. He saw Manning.

Manning signalled. What his signal said none of our men knew. It did not stop the fight. Then Captain Waley, again on his feet, howled an order and I saw knife blades that caught the sunlight and blinded me.

The Katrina was near. We could hear and see everything. The strange figure that had struck down the captain of the Katrina was Clarke Irwin. Even then, in the midst of my horror at the knives, I was amazed that I had been right. The yelling and the hard breathing came over the water plain as the motion of the writhing, pounding, clubbing bodies.

Then, without a warning, the fight stopped. The men fell apart. The Chicola's people dropped into her boats and rowed quietly away. What did it mean?

As the boats came on I could see Clarke Irwin. Manning was not there. Clarke was talking to John. I had forgotten Kate. I had thought of no one but John, save for that instant of shock when I had recognized Irwin. Now I realized that the girl stood beside me.

It was not like Kate to stay where Clarke's first sight of her would be in the presence of others. She had forgotten the others. In her face I could see the radiance and thankfulness, the fear that it was a dream, which comes to us when our prayers are answered.

The boats were close to the Chicola when Clarke glanced up. No one had told him Kate was with us. The sailors, quick to guess the meaning of her look, turned their heads toward him as his eyes found her. From the boats and the deck burst a shout that must have rocked the Pole.

On Board the Chicola,

Only a Day Out from St. Johns.

Before the tide, that came rushing to a terrible height in that strait, had torn the Chicola from the place where she had thrust her nose Manning's luggage had been transferred to the Katrina and he and his boat were gone.

It was in an absent minded daze that Clarke had walked aboard the Katrina that day in New York Harbor. He was thinking of Kate, I suppose. The Katrina's launch had been waiting at the pier, the crew seemed to expect him, he noticed the monogrammed caps so like the Yoshi's; he did not discover his mistake till he was on Manning's deck. He suspected nothing till he found the boat was moving. So far all had been most plausible. Manning had expected Carter Jenckes, but Jenckes must have failed him. The courteous surprise of the man's welcome had been convincing. Now he merely refused to interrupt his cruise to set Irwin ashore. If a man walk on to your boat uninvited it is not kidnapping to carry out plans not suited to his convenience. However, Manning would consider this—if Irwin would promise absence and silence for six months as far as Kate was concerned his involuntary host would land him.

There was no locks, not at first, no unlawful restraint, so long as Manning remained aboard. But if Clarke attempted to go on deck he was confronted with an order for passengers to stay below; if he tried to force half a dozen sailors passively opposed him. Beyond St. Johns the deck was free to him, and during the storm he might come and go as he chose, so long as he did not speak with the crew. At the last he had been hurriedly penned in a cabin and the lock turned. There had been no time to secure him better, or they had no fear. If Kate had suffered for her evasion at their last meeting he had endured no less, carried about the north seas helpless, ridiculous, like a box or a bale, while Kate waited for him to claim his answer and his rival profited by his absence. In his rage, grown with every moment of the voyage, he could have burst heavier locks than broke under his blows.

The Colonel says Manning's face when Clarke appeared on the Katrina's deck it pleases him to remember. Even then the man hoped for concealment, but when it grew certain that Clarke had been seen by John and by the Colonel there was no longer hope. If the Katrina were to get away we should still know that Clarke was there. It was then that Manning had called off the fight.

The Colonel advices John to sell the Chicola and live a peaceful life. "If Celia were confined to land," answers John, "there would be international complications; we might end our days in Siberia."

Really, the blessedness of Clarke and Kate fills us all with a wonderful content. The whole ocean seems to glow with the happiness of these days.

NAMING A RACE HORSE.

(Toronto Saturday Night.)

There isn't much love lost between Mr. A. M. Orpen, the well known racing man, and Rev. Dr. Chowan, who is the energetic secretary of the moral reform movement of the Methodist church in Canada.

The feeling between them is said to be aptly illustrated by a little incident that occurred not long ago when Mr. Orpen was watching his horses being tried out on the track. He noticed one beast which did not seem too speedy, and asked the trainer about him.

"Oh, that chap," remarked the man of the stable, "he wouldn't win a turtle race."

Mr. Orpen enquired for the name of the slow racer.

"Haven't given him a name yet."

Instantly came the command: "Then call him 'Dr. Chown!' "

And the horse bears the honored name of the Methodist moral reformer.