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guish, "She's gone! Good God! she is gone!"

And so the night passed away and weary eyes sought to discover in the faint grey light of coming day, some sign of hope before them. Like a curtain being rolled aside, the fog lifted from the face of the sea, and then a soft blush suffused to a cloudy veil which still hid the awakening sun.

Never had life appeared more precious and the world more beautiful to human eyes than they did in those first moments of the new day unfolding for the little band of persons who had so narrowly escaped from death.

Fenella had an innate love for the sea—a Cornish girl, born and bred on the rugged coast near Bude, within sight and sound of the ocean, it drew her as with a magnetic influence and had always possessed a strange attraction for her. Now she told herself that this sight of the Atlantic, glistening and gleaming with a million facets under the rose-tinted dawn, was the most exquisite vision ever vouchsafed to her of its manifold beauties, and silently she offered up a prayer of thankfulness that He had preserved her from death, mingled with an appeal for forgiveness in that she had for a short space lost courage in the fight and believed herself ready to yield up life rather than face its difficulties and griefs.

These thoughts of self were dispelled abruptly by a dispute amongst the sailors. One of them blamed the purser as being personally responsible for their present condition, as it was owing to his orders entirely they had pulled hard away from the Lausanne and so missed their bearings and got lost in the fog.

ANOTHER man upheld the purser, saying, "You've never been wrecked before, maybe, sonny. I have, and I know the danger of keeping anywhere near a sinking ship. I shan't forget in a hurry the escape from the City of Birmingham when she was cut in two by a cruiser. I was down below at the time but rushed on deck only to find myself being swept down with the sinking ship. I assure you I went down and down and down. I never thought I should see daylight again, and while I was under water the strange things I saw being carried past me in the sea as if we were all in a whirlpool. There was a great hen-coop which had been full of live fowls. It passed me as if it were propelled by a motor-engine. Luckily I happened to see it was going in an upward direction, so I seized hold and was drawn away from the ship and so to the top of the water. Then someone spied me clinging to the hen-coop and came to the rescue. But take my advice; if ever you are wrecked, put as great a distance as you can between you and the sinking ship!"

After that the men talked of their various experiences by storm or disaster—but gradually the voices dropped into silence. During the early part of the day, the mist still hung over the horizon and far above their heads and shielded them from the full strength of the sun's rays, but as its power increased, the heat became almost unbearable. They were without water and languished in the boat with parched throats and stiffened tongues, tortured by the thirst which now attacked them. Little Eve had awakened and called piteously for her mother, and Fen had been occupied in trying to soothe the little one and distract her attention by whispering a fairy story of the sea. Then Tubby, urged thereto by the purser, yielded up his oar and, overcome with exhaustion, now lay in the bottom of the boat, fast asleep, his fair, boyish face bearing the sign of fatigue and something more—a look of trouble which had altered his expression, giving an aspect of resolution to the mouth which before had been lacking.

He opened his eyes while Fenella sat gazing at him, brooding over the mystery which perhaps he alone could make clear. Raising himself on one arm, he leant nearer to her. "What are you thinking about?"

"I was thinking of The Chase and all our friends there—wondering if we shall ever see them again."

"Perhaps yes—perhaps no. But that was not all your thought. There was

something else; I read it in your eyes. There was a doubt and a question and I believe I can guess what it was. Tell me. Perhaps it may be the last opportunity of our speaking openly together—and surely, as matters now stand, there is little reason for concealment or caution between us."

"I was wondering, wishing, oh, so deeply, that you would tell me the truth concerning you and Lisbeth Bainton. Mr. Mauleverer, we may not have long to live, but perhaps one or other of us might survive. Would it not be well to be quite frank with each other. By some strange freak of Fate, you and I met, only a short time before that tragedy in which we both became involved. Tell me, I implore you, the real part you played in it."

They were close to each other and spoke with lowered voices, so none heard or noticed what was passing between them. The child had fallen asleep again and the other inmates of the boat were all occupied with their own concerns and miseries. Tubby lay silent for a few moments after Fen's appeal, his head pillowed on his clasped hands, his eyes fixed on her sad face. At last he spoke.

"Confession is good for the soul—I'll tell you, and you shall be my priestess and my judge. It's true I knew that poor girl, but I never sought her—at least not at first nor at the last. There was an interim, when I went to meet her, as an idle pastime. She interested me, for she was an unusual girl, with odd ideas about life. She had lived in a different strata from us, you know; but in spite of the roughness of her surroundings there was a delicacy of feeling, mixed with a sort of passionate enthusiasm which always put me in mind of some exotic flower."

His tone expressed regret and admiration. It showed Fenella that whatever his feelings towards poor Liz had been they were redeemed from any coarseness or contempt.

"You cared for her very much?" she asked.

"No, not exactly. I admired her beauty and a naive simplicity which was very attractive; that was all. Unfortunately she mistook the position. You don't credit me with being a fatuous sort of idiot when I tell you she grew to love me. I hadn't thought of that or what the consequences might be. I just drifted into what was an anomalous position. You see, when it began, I hadn't got to know my sweet Theo so well; after she and I became such friends, I felt I must end the other affair."

"**T**HE beginning is so easy—and the end so difficult, always so dreadfully difficult," Fen sighed under her breath.

"It began in the simplest fashion, as a matter of fact. I had been for a row on the canal and saw her trying to climb over a hedge. She was in difficulties, for there were a lot of branches which had caught in her clothing. I landed and went to help her—then she told me she had lost her way, wandering in the woods, but knew if she followed the canal she would find her home all right. I offered to row her back. There wasn't much harm in that, was there?"

Fen shook her head. "And you met again?"

"Yes—too often. When I saw she cared for me, I tried to break with her—I did honestly. I stayed away. But she wrote to me and said she must and would see me again. Then I wrote back and told her to meet me by the canal. It was to be for the last time, to say good-bye, that night when she was murdered. You, who are a true, good woman, believe that there is truth and goodness in other—I know that. And, of course, you would never believe I would do the girl harm, any more than I or you could believe that Laurence Pridham would hurt a woman."

Even in the stifling heat of the day, Fen felt her lips grow cold.

"Why do you speak of him?"

"That is what I want to tell you. I met Liz Bainton and we walked by the canal and I said good-bye to her for evermore. She was excited and overwrought. I could not quite understand it, but at last parted from her