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## THIS MORTAL COIL

By Margaret Sutton Briscoe

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afterthought, she tied it to dry land with a rope of knotted boulders. Thus created, Brace's Rock has stood for centuries in the first, but slowly clothing itself with a spare growth of golden-rod in its crevices, some stunted bay-

mood, twisted off a great careless lump of red rock and flung it into the

ery grass. There the gaunt rock stood on a certain September afternoon, the sweeping sea-line spread. ut before its face, while at its back, in a pond-like

out before its race, while at its back, in a pond-like shelter, gathered hundreds of sea-gulls, looking like pads of white pond-likes and futtering their white wings as, perched on the little brown rock islands, they fought the waves of the rising tide, white-tipped as they. In all Septembers this shove revels in colors that shade back from the gray sandbeach and the spring green of the sand-grass to moors warm and rich with color that seems to fairly dash up the sides of the gray-peaked inland rocks, galashing high among them red-leaved bushes and my glowing prown or purple-plank grasses.

Lawrence Goodhue, on this Septembe at on the topmost ledge of Brace's Rock, his elbo. In his knee, his chin in his hand, his artist eyes garnering the scene into the storehouse of his brain, and so absorbed was he in details of color that when at last his gaze dropped to a spot not ten feet from him he sat staring at if with a sense of confusion. What he saw was an artist's painting, still wet and fresh with all the shaded colors of the landscape, but for the moment it was to him almost as if his vision had collected the widespread colors, as a anism might, and thrown them together on the rock. landscape, but for the moment it was to him almost as if his vision had collected the widespread colors, as a prism might, and thrown them together on the rock.

Sending his eyes wandering again in search of the fellowartist who must have preceded him, Goodhue finally discovered a figure climbing among the rocks below. It was plainly a woman, though as he peered down at her a large, mushroom-like hat concealed from him everything but a white skirt and an identifying artist's

everything but a white skirt and an identifying artist's equipment hanging from the climber's shoulder.

Not an hour before, Goodkue had been over every inch of that lower ground, and he now watched the progress of another with peculiar interest. At what he felt to be the risk of life and limb, he had crawled down not only to the base of the rock itself, but under a jut-ting boulder overhanging the water, and there discovered

weritable jewel-casket.

The waters, lapping in and out twice dally between The waters, lapping in and out twice daily between the crevices, had formed somehow a great oblong basin, and this the sea had filled with its own wonders. It had first draped the gray sides with long, weeping seaweeds, or crusted them with tawny barnacles and black mussels dashed with silver. There spongy anemones of every soft tint stretched down thirsty necks, while the floor below was a rich mosaic formed of muki-colored smalls, with here a blasing orange starfish, there another of pink or royal purple. The approach to this treasuratiouse lay down a sharp descent, slippery with wet weeds and black with barnacles, and it was a recollection of the difficulties of the climb, not unwillingness to see another share his discovery, that brought Goodhus to his feet and made him look down anxiously as the stranger artist process.

when plan there same an Ton-the to the work of the control of the

closely that despite her self-control her color rose slowly and hotiy. As he saw it mounting to her throat, her cheek, her brow, he spoke, slowly:

"Hester, can't you fergive me?" For a moment she did not reply, then answered, with effort, "I had forgiven you—until I saw you."
"I understand. I am going now. But one word, one moment first. It was, believe me, for your sake more than for my own that I acted as I did. I know you

cannot judge, not knowing what I do."

She turned to him suddenly, hotly. "I can know that I am profoundly grateful to you for what you saved me from. I know now it would have been a living death to me. You saved me from that, and for that favor but how can you think I should ever wish to see your face again?"

"I do not." he answered, gravely. "I am going now.
But remember, I know
nothing, I have heard not

a word since we partednot even that I spared you all I could. I told your father that you found the man of my letters, the man yeu had promised your-self to, not at all the man I was. Was it accepted?"
"If it gives you any com-

fort, it, was accepted. You generously gave me the hon-ors of war and I accepted them. But why should I play out the part with you,

play out the part with you, who know those honors were thrust upon me!"

Goodhue stood with bowed head, repudiating nothing. He half turned away, then looked back. "Before I go," he said, simply, "you need not prepare for what I am going to say. It seems very prosaic to mention this at all, but let land to this rock, I noticed

giancing with a smile at the orangey heights above. "A rise of tide that submerged this rock would flood all the mainland as well, but the causeway is manch lower."

rocke was no longer a flat drapery, the waves were litting their droopling heads on strong crests to toss and tangie them roughly.

Hester started as shower is the control of the rock only it is very steep. If you would let me help you'he healt addingt to the healt offered, and breathlessly tolled after him on the steep ascent which they at once began. In many places and half offered, and breathlessly tolled after him on the steep ascent which they at once began. In many places and change for speach, even had either desired it. Hester collmbed with a feverish haste, and Goodnue, yielding to her mood, husfied the ascent as rapidly as he dared. The mood, husfied the ascent as rapidly as he dared. The control of the rock is the place of the rock is the shadows of its the distant sealing. The sum, now almost level with the world, was behind the rock, and cast the shadows of its her mood, husfied the ascent as rapidly as he dared. The control of the rock whole body wis trembling, and he looked up at her whole body wis trembling, and he looked up at her whole body wis trembling, and he looked up at her whole body wis trembling, and he looked up at her whole body wis trembling, and he looked up at her whole body wis trembling. As if seeking for warmth, they restricted the second of the rock crevices, flew past her, almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be almost brushin with a sharp chirp from some crevice, flew past her, almost brushing her with its wings in its hurry to be off. Turning involuntarily to watch its dipping flight, her eyes caught a glimpse of Goodhue's figure standing on a rock far out in the yeasty waters.

Brace's heights rose solidiy between her and the inland when she stopped again and stood tooking out at the distant sea-line. The sun, now almost level with the world, was behind the rock, and cast the shadows of its peaks in longer and longer reflections at her feet. The descreted waste of waters lay cold and gray. Two finger-like lighthouses on a distant island were pointing upward, their straight lines already blurring and purpling in the withdrawing light. The air seemed suddenly cold, and Hester shivered involuntarily. As if seeking for warmth, she nestled down in one of the rock crevices, leaning close against the stone's rough side as she waited, watching the waves that came dashing in, throwing their spray almost to her feet. The roaring of the waves was so monotonous and continuous she heard nothing, until at last, at a step close behind her, she turned with a start to see Goodhue.

meant what you said. It was a case of conscience only. Good-bye, I don't ask you to peply. You were right. We should never have met, and now we must part as quickly as possible. Good-bye."

Before she could speak again, had she wished to do

so, he had left her side, and was leaping from rock to rock out into the waters. Hester turned sharply away back to the higher sand of the beach. There, where they for the last time, she saw the marks of Goodhue's foot steps and her own distinctly printed. The ripples that left the rushing waves behind to break on the sand in wrinkles soft as a baby's frown were yet strong enough

"The tide is full, I think," he said, finally. "We have only to wait for it to fall." Hester's eyes also were fixed in the distance, he believed on nothing.

to plunge in at once. When we parted, had you no idea of what parted us? Did you never"—his gaze dropped to her hands which lay clasped in her lap—"suspect another woman?" He saw her fingers tighten suddenly, ward her with a word of protest on his lips; but before it found utterance she had moved back, still facing him and meeting his eyes so fully and collectedly that he

caught his breath.

"Go on," she answered simply. "It was the first cut only that hurt. I had suspected this among other things.

was fot the perfume of the violet. That was all, but it was enough to reveal you. Hester, when I laid your letter down, I could smell roses! Later, perhaps then, I knew I loved you, and when at last I wrote you so, you answered—you know what you answered—you know what you answered—you know what to cross to you—and then I stood in your home waiting for you to come down to me, and I could call up, as I think only an artist can, every feature of the woman I had seen but once and learned to love by letter only—remember that. How shall I tell you? Your eyes are violet, your hair is dark. The face I saw so vividy as I waited there for you had soft brown eyes and the hair was fair, and—it was Anme's face I saw, Hester."

"Anne—my own sister, Oh, no—no! She has been with me night and day through all this—she could not—"
"She knew nothing—knows nothing new."
"Oh, speak plainly—my own sister!"
Goodhue laid his hands strongly on hers as they lay trombling on her knees.
"Try to listen calmiy. It is hard to explain at best.

almost to her feet. The roaring of the waves wan of the standard to her feet. The roaring of the waves wan of the standard to see Goodhon. On come? "the cried rising and facility of the standard to see Goodhon. On come?" the cried rising and facility of the standard to see Goodhon. On come? "the cried rising and facility of the standard to see Goodhon. On come?" the cried rising and facility of the standard the standa

Her hands were still in his, and she made no effort to release them, but he knew it was for no tenderer reason than pity as she looked up and answered: "There is nothing to forgive you, but there isn't anything left to give, either. As I told you, all that is over and burned

broast. Goodhue caught the hand back to him, urging her by pressure and voice.

"Hester, try to see it differently. Today, as I passed over the moor, I saw what you might have called a destroyed field of grass, burned out, nothing but cold ashes. Yet I knew because of that burning the verdure there will be doubled in the spring. We have both suffered cruelly, both been through the fire, can't we make that help us to a closer life?"

She moved restlessly, releasing both her hands the fire has been too figree. It has destroyed. We can meet only for this hour in this world apart and on the terms we agreed upon. You are letting the earthly Goodhue's eyes turned to the causeway, forgotten

the nearer question. "Forgive me if I thought it the heavenly." he answered; "and my promise was that the earthly should not enter while we were in the world.

alimply. "It was the first out sected this among other things."

"Something I caracely dare put into words. Do you remember nothing strange in our first letters"

"Nothing," she answered, and a uncovered the narrow, we backbess of red-reak ridging across from the main-dark active systems. The secans you have not the key yet. When I first wrote you from my Paris studio, you 'remember it was about some unimportant detail of color which we had discussed together. To urcollect that?"

"Yes, and I replied, thanking you. It all seemed unimportant."

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"Yes, a



"He was leaping from rock to rock out into

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