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The Blood Pearl

By ALBERT DORRINGTON

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"The thief must be punished," Sas-
shino intimated blandly. "It was a
gem of strange orient and milkiness.
I am told it had a blood mist. There
are men here who saw it!"

The crew of Japanese shellers must-
ered silently on the oyster-strewn
deck of the Three Moons. The sea
was as still as a sleeping child. In
the far south a few ragged palms
marked the limit of the Vanderdecken
bank, where the cheeping sun birds
drowned over the mile-long fleet of
working luggers.

Sashino was captain of the Three
Moons, and he resented bitterly the
frequent thefts of pearls from his lug-
ger. The tricks of the average dia-
mond thief become ludicrously appar-
ent when compared with the almost
superhuman evasions of the Japanese
shell opener. Captain Sashino had
grown subtle with experience, but his
smiling patience gave out before the
constant pilferings of almost priceless
gems.

Four coolies appeared from the for-
ward hatch escorting a naked Japanese
diver. A stern silence awaited him.
For a few moments he remained sul-
lenly irresolute, cigarette in mouth,
his bare toes kicking scraps of opened
shell across the deck.

Captain Sashino regarded him con-
tempuously from his station near the
main hatch.

"You steal my pearl, Insumi, the one
you found on the Black Lip bank. I
am willing to hear you. Say what!"
Insumi hunched his reef-scarred
shoulders, cast furtive, sidelong
glances at the crew, and was silent.

"What made you steal?" Sashino re-
peated. "The German buyers or your
sweetheart in the town? Say quick!"
Insumi frowned.

"I work hard, Captain Sashino, for
small pay. Only once or twice have I
taken a little pearl. My sweetheart
does not ask me to steal."

He turned again to the crew, as
though expecting a friendly demon-
stration on his behalf. There was
none.

A windlass-hand, wearing a coolie
loin-cloth, was holding a baited line
over the port bow. Incidentally, a pair
of tiger sharks drifted from the
shadow of the lugger's keel, and re-
mained motionless within a few yards
of the bait.

The pearl thief folded his arms sub-
missively, as one expecting punish-
ment swift and unannounced. The si-
lent wrath that moves Japanese le-
gions to impossible assaults flowed
from the captain's gestures. He turned
to a diver at his elbow and whispered.
The crew, catching his meaning, be-
came suddenly alert. A volcanic rage
swept over them. Oaths of strange
origin and dialects filled the air. Cap-
tain Sashino nodded twice, and called
to the windlass-hand with the baited
line.

Three men caught Insumi by the
shoulders, and fastened the line about
his waist and hips, leaving his arms
free.

"Over!" shouted the captain. "Let
him keep his knife."

Insumi was dangling over the bows,
his breast and feet nearly touching the
water. The tropic sun pierced almost
to the sandy floor of the straits. A
tiger shark does not always swoop to
the object in sight, but will sometimes
inspect it for a short period, then van-
ish for a brief space and return with
the speed of a hawk.

The thief lay suspended within an
inch of the water, his knees slightly
updrawn. The knife in his right hand
was held point out from his face.
Above him leant the crew of the lug-
ger, telling him in fluent Japanese that
thieves and sharks were the spawn of
devil men.

An inquisitive snout appeared under
the lugger's bow; a pair of swinish
eyes began to regard the suspended
Insumi with patient interest, then,
moving slowly in a straight line,
flashed suddenly under his chest. In-
sumi's back arched as the gray belly
swept beneath; a quick, grunting stab
followed, and the water grew crimson
for several yards. He breathed hoarse-
ly and wagged his bullet head.

"Fool!" sneered the captain. "The
scent will bring others, and they will
hustle him to death like Americans!"

A loud thrashing was heard near the
beum. The strong tide swept the red
stains clear of the lugger. For a period
that seemed like eternity the suspend-
ed man looked eagerly into the water
as though listening. Then, with a sud-
den frantic movement, he tried to turn
toward a torpedolike shadow that
rushed from the shelter of the lug-
ger's stern. A gash, wide as a sabre-

cut, appeared on his naked hip.

"A fin-stroke!" chuckled the cap-
tain. "The old shark has got him now.
It will be a slow fight, my children."

A hot stillness hung about the
straits. The Jap lay motionless, and
ear almost touching the water, his
glance fixed immovably on the trowel-
shaped fin that stayed within gunshot
of the vessel. Neither the tide nor the
shouts of the divers could urge it on.

"The big fish is playing with him,"
smiled the captain. "Do not make too
much noise, my children."

Then an unexpected commotion hap-
pened in the water; a school of small
sharks began to sport about the thief's
ankles. With a rippling movement of
the wrist he slashed into them right
and left, dispersing them like a shoal
of mullet. One blue-snouted invader,
more cunning than the rest, tore at
his ribs as it escaped under the lug-
ger's stern.

Within thirty seconds the school re-
turned and the fight began again. The
watching pearlers screamed excitedly
over the lugger's rail, while the baby
sharks grew clever and harassed In-
sumi on the off side. They clung like
leeches, eluding his knife thrusts, re-
treating and attacking with the speed
of torpedoes.

Breathing stertorously, he held up
an appealing hand, once, twice. A cold,
unresponsive silence followed, while
the captain lit a cigarette.

Then, as if by a signal from the
outer deeps, the swarm of sharklets
drew off. Some one pointed to the
trowel-shaped fin moving once more to
its quarry. Many of the pearlers knew
if for one of the oldest monsters that
inhabited the great reef-passage. Do-
zens of treping fishers had attempted
its capture without success, but the
human bait now offered was more than
it could resist.

There was no deviation from the
line of attack; it flashed straight un-
der the Jap's ribs. With the strength
and fortitude of his kind the suspend-
ed man thrust his left hand into the
open jaws. A second later his knife
arm was slashing at the upturned
throat.

For a moment it seemed as though
the rope would break under the strain.
With lunatic strength he appeared to
be holding the shark at arm's length
beneath the water. Then, with a cry,
he stabbed downward again and again
until his head dropped forward.

"Heave up!" shouted the captain.
Slowly they hauled him over the
rail, and they saw that his left arm
was torn and shredded where it had
entered the gaping mouth.

The captain surveyed the hurt man
calmly. There was no trace of emo-
tion in his voice as he addressed the
assembled crew.

"Fear will not make him speak. The
pearl is somewhere and we may yet
find it. Take him below and see that
his hurts are attended to. There is an
English doctor in the town."

Late in the afternoon, when the
sun's rays lay in streaks of fierce red
across the straits of Torres, a dead
tiger shark drifted under the lugger's
stern, past the bobbing heads of the
naked divers. Around it swarmed a
ravenous shoal of black bream and
yellow-tails guzzling, flashing their sil-
ver scales near the wide gash under the
upturned throat.

Incidentally a dory pushed off from
a tiny pier at the inlet's mouth, and
rowed slowly in the wake of the dead
monster. A Malay diver and a Japa-
nese coolie sat at the oars.

The dead shark drifted beyond the
great oyster bank where the long sea
grass swayed and rippled in the out-
going tide. Leaning from the dory the
Malay thrust a boat-hook under the
shark's dorsal fin, and drew it with
much labor under the lee of a palm-
sheltered promontory.

"Sashino's glasses cannot follow us
now," he panted. "There will be no
need to hurry with our work."

The shark was beached, and, after a
careful survey of the surrounding
scrub, the Malay drew a long sheath
knife and passed his thumb gently
over the point. Then with a dozen
deft strokes he laid bare the huge gul-
let while the Jap coolie plunged his
fists inside.

The two men grunted on their knees
beside the dead shark, searching and
probing with the craft of deep sea fish-
ermen. The surf rippled and screamed
over the low sand dunes as the tide re-
ceded beyond the mangrove belt.

The Malay's head came up with a
sudden jerk. Drawing his hand from the
bared throat of the monster, he
held it aloft exultantly.

A pearl of peculiar luster and orient
gleamed between his finger and thumb.
The sun rays seemed to illumine it
with supernatural radiance as he held
it up for the Jap's inspection.

"If a thief cares not where he puts
his arm, comrade, there are always
good hiding-places for a ten thousand-
dollar pearl!"

A chuckling sound escaped the Jap
as he leant forward to inspect the pearl
which the desperate Insumi had thrust
into the monster's throat.

"Insumi was born with a crease in
his palm. I saw Sashino look into his

hand before they swung him to the
shark. I could not hide a bead in
mine!"

A few days later Insumi, his left
arm swathed in bandages, met his two
conferrers at the house of a Chinese
pearl buyer near Deliverance Inlet. Af-
ter much haggling and delay Insumi re-
ceived \$50 for his share in the deal.

The Most Beautiful Queen.

Queen Helena of Italy, who played
such a big part in the entertainment
of President and Mrs. Wilson on their
visit to Rome, has been called the
most beautiful queen in the world, and
the most cultured and gracious as
well. She speaks French, German,
English and Spanish fluently. In ad-
dition to Italian and Latin. She knows
Greek as well and is familiar with the
literature of all ages. She is a great
lover of flowers, fine old lace and rare
jewels. In Rome she takes interest in
the social life of the court; in her
country home at Monza she is a coun-
try woman; in the Alps she is as
hardy a climber as the Tyrolese, going
over glaciers, along narrow paths or
to the edge of a precipice with charm-
ing indifference.

Airy About It.

"Where are you going, John?"

"To raise the wind."

"What for?"

"To meet a draft."

It is usually safe to say that when a
child is pale, sickly, peevish and restless,
the cause is worms. These parasites
range the stomach and intestines, causing
serious disorders of the digestion and
preventing the infant from deriving
sustenance from food. Miller's Worm
Powders, by destroying the worms,
corrects these faults of the digestion and
serve to restore the organs to healthy
action.

Aerial "Jitney" In Toronto.

The first Toronto aviator to make
use of his flying experience for finan-
cial gain is Lieut. L. R. H. Holmes,
formerly an R.A.F. man, who has
bought a Curtiss 80-horsepower bi-
plane and proposes conducting a spe-
cies of aero joy-riding business dur-
ing the summer months. He is ad-
vertising his amusement for the
benefit of those who have never ex-
perienced the sensations of aerial
flights and wish to be taken up for
a fifteen-minute straight flight at an
altitude of over 3,000 feet at a fixed
charge.

Those who request to be treated to
the thrills of looping the loop, the
spinning nose dive and the other
stunts which make the uninitiated
shiver to think of performing, Lieut.
Holmes says he will willingly ac-
commodate, but only on request. He
is out to build up a business this
summer and say that he intends
taking no chances on spoiling it by
dangerous exploits in the air.

Lieut. Holmes' charge will be in the
neighborhood of \$15 for the same
number of minutes of straight
flying, which means that for that
charge the passenger will be in the
air about half an hour, as it takes
nearly ten minutes to ascend and to
make a landing. Lieut. Holmes
thinks the amusement will be very
popular in the summer months, and
he is laying plans for an extensive
business.

The progressive young aviator is
a fully-qualified airman, being the
possessor of a regular aviator's
license and pilot's certificate. He
was engaged as an instructor at
Leaside and Camp Borden for a
year prior to last fall, when the
training of the R.A.F. was at its
highest efficiency, and he has the
unusual record of never having had
a crash or an accident of any kind
during his period as an airman. His
trips with passengers are to be taken
from Armour Heights, where his
plane is housed in its hangar ready
for use.

Sow Fasted Three Months.

That a pig can retain life for three
months without nourishment has
been demonstrated to Uriah Pendle-
ton of Mulmer. Last December Mr.
Pendleton was puzzled over the mys-
terious disappearance of a sow. He
had ceased to think of his loss when
a couple of weeks ago the sow re-
appeared in the barnyard. She
weighed 450 when she vanished, but
came back a skeleton, every bone
being discernible. The sow had forced
her way into a small passage be-
tween the remains of a stack which
had been cut down sheer and the
new stock built over it, and was un-
able to get out. There she remained
for three months and six days with-
out anything to eat or drink other
than what nourishment could be ob-
tained from the straw within reach.
The animal is picking up and has
already put on considerable flesh.

Dorothy Was Puzzled.

"Mamma, have I any children?"
asked six-year-old Dorothy. "Of
course not, dear. What do you
mean?" "Well, the preacher spoke
in church this morning about chil-
dren's children, and I wondered if I
had any."

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women in the
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for others it can
do for you.

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to lift up wear-
tired, over-taxed
women—that's
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Prescription. It gives you just the help
that you need. To be had in liquid or
tablets. Tablet form, 50 cents, at all drug
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It is a medicine that's made especial-
ly to build up women's strength and to cure
women's ailments—an invigorating, re-
storative tonic; soothing cordial and
bracing nerve; purely vegetable, non-
alcoholic, and perfectly harmless.

You can procure a trial pkg. by send-
ing 10c. to Dr. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

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about two years. Had doctored but did
not seem to get cured of the ailment. At
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tion and it did me more good than any
medicine I ever took. It built me up and
I felt better in every way than I had for
two years previously."—Mrs. L. HEATH.

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