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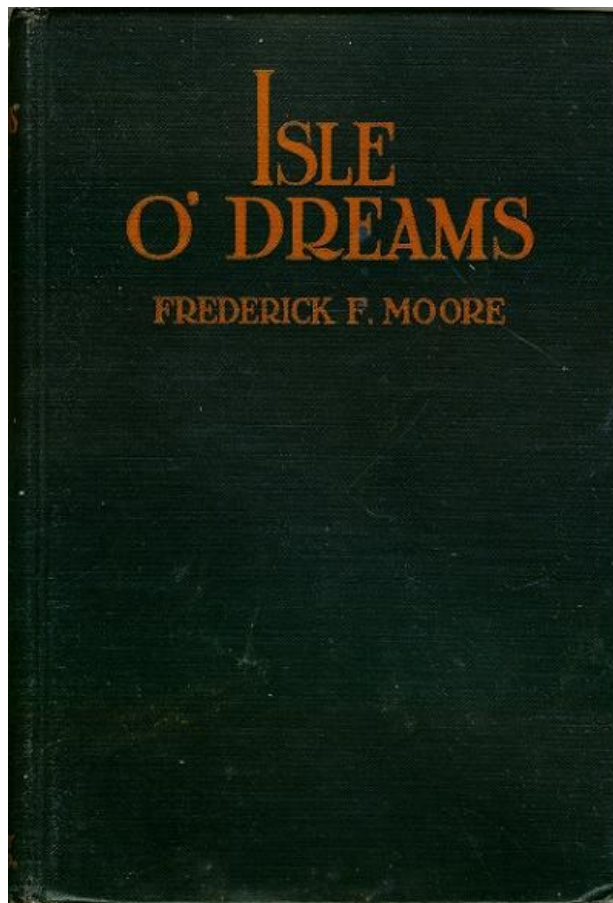
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ISLE O' DREAMS ***



ISLE O' DREAMS



*"Come up closer so I can look into the
boat,"
commanded Trask*

ISLE O' DREAMS

BY
FREDERICK F. MOORE

*Author of
"The Devil's Admiral," "The Sailor Girl," Etc.*



FRONTISPIECE
BY
RALPH PALLEN COLEMAN

Garden City New York
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1920

To
MARJORIE

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ISLE O' DREAMS

ISLE O' DREAMS

[3]

CHAPTER I

ROBERT TRASK ARRIVES IN MANILA FROM AMOY

As the tubby little China Coast steamer marched up Manila Bay, Trask stood under the bridge on the skimpy "promenade deck" and waited impatiently for the doctor's boat to come alongside. He was the only white passenger among a motley lot of Chinese merchants and half-castes of varied hues, and he was glad the passage was at an end.

He had made the trip with a Finnish skipper, disconcertingly cross-eyed, a Lascar mate who looked like a pirate and had a voice like a school-girl, a purser addicted to the piccolo late at night, and fellow-passengers who jabbered interminably about nothing at all in half a dozen languages. So Trask regarded the spires and red roofs of Manila with the hungry eyes of a man who has been separated from civilization and his own kind too many days to remember.

[4]

Before the steamer anchored, Trask saw the *Taming* passing out for Hong Kong, white moustaches of foam at her forefoot and her decks alive with men and women. She was as smart as a big liner.

But he looked away from her to the Luneta and the villa-like Bay View Hotel, white and stately, at the lip of the bay. That was his goal, for he had promised Marjorie Locke he would be in Manila the day before, and he was now a day late.

The customs boarding officer took him ashore with his bags and graciously allowed him to depart in a *quilez*, after holding his baggage for examination. Trask went whirling up Calle San Fernando, through Plaza Oriente, Calle Rosario, Plaza Moraga, over the Bridge of Spain and into shady Bazumbayan Drive, skirting the moat of the Walled City. It was a roundabout way but the quickest, for the *cochero* made his ponies travel at a good clip for a double fare.

The rig shot across the baking Luneta, and ere it had come to a full stop before the Bay View Trask was out and into the darkened hall of the tourist headquarters of the Philippine capital.

[5]

The place appeared deserted except for a sleepy *muchacho*, who staggered out from some palms, looking for the new guest's baggage.

"Have you got an outside room?" demanded Trask of the drowsing English clerk behind the railing, as he pulled the register toward him and scanned the open page.

"I say! Mr. Trask!"

The young man looked up. "Correct," he said. "Where did we—?"

"I'm Wilkins, sir, G. O. H., Colombo. You were there last year, sir, in from Singapore. You had an argument with a 'rickshaw man. I was managing the bar at the time."

"Sure enough, Wilkins! How d'ye do!" and Trask extended a hand which Wilkins shook with fervour, striking a bell with the other for the Chinese bar-boy.

"Two stone gingers with a finger of Scotch," said Wilkins. "Fine room on the bay-side, Mr. Trask. And you'll find it quiet enough."

"It does look quiet for you," said Trask, as he wrote his name in the register and took off his helmet. It was plain that the tropics had put their mark upon him, for in contrast to the deep tan of burnt umber over cheeks and chin, the upper part of his forehead showed a white band of skin, the helmet line of the veteran traveller in low latitudes. His black eyes were embedded in nests of tiny wrinkles, the "tropical squint," which no mere *griffin* ever has as a passport.

[6]

"Yes, sir," said Wilkins. "The China boat cleaned the place up this morning. Not a tripper left."

"No?" cried Trask, with sudden concern. He turned to the register again and flopped back the pages. "You must have a man here named Locke, an American, travelling with his daughter."

"Gone," said Wilkins. "Left on the *Taming* to catch the Pacific Mail at Hong Kong."

"If that isn't my blooming luck!" moaned Trask, shutting the register with a slam and turning his back to the desk, a picture of limp despair.

"Yes, sir," continued Wilkins, coming out from behind his barrier, "the Lockes left here Friday for Dagupan, to be back in time to sail this noon. They must have caught the *Taming*. I sent their spare trunks down this morning to be held for Mr. Locke. He wasn't to come back here, but go right aboard from the morning train. Friends of yours?"

[7]

"Yes. We were shipmates from Honolulu coming out, three months back."

"Very respectable people," said Wilkins. "I understand Mr. Locke's quite wealthy."

"I imagine so," replied Trask, despondently. It was hard luck, for he had managed to take a month's vacation for no other purpose than to meet Marjorie Locke for a few days in Manila and here he was, like a man marooned, with nothing to do, and the Lockes out in the China Sea, bound for the "States."

"But why shouldn't they go?" thought Trask. The fact that he was secretly in love with Marjorie Locke, and had allowed himself to believe that she rather liked him, was no reason why she should wait in Manila merely because he had told her that he

expected to be in that city on a certain date.

"Oh, that reminds me!" said Wilkins suddenly, as he ran in behind the railing again. "Look here! I've a letter for you. Been here a couple of days, never struck me at the time it was you, never dawned on me until I saw you at the desk, then I remembered your name."

[8]

"Mail for me?" asked Trask. "Why, nobody knows I'm in Manila. I'm supposed to be up in Korea."

"Not mail, precisely, sir. It was left here a few days ago."

"Who left it?" Trask was suddenly hopeful.

"Can't say, sir. I found it on the desk. Rather mysterious, you know. I'd say it was —" He paused, to rifle the letter-rack.

"Was what?"

"If you don't mind, sir, I'd say it was queer, rather extraordinary circumstance. Now where could I have put it?"

"How was it queer? Don't keep me on the grid. What about it?"

"The fact is," said Wilkins, "I'd consider it a bit irregular. The backing was done with a typewriter, but the paper—I'd say the envelope was business, but not house stationary. It struck me that way, if you don't mind my saying it. Quite involuntary on my part, but natural, sir, considering the name looked familiar. Of course, I never remembered you in connection with Colombo until I'd seen your face—"

[9]

"Certainly, certainly," said Trask, impatiently.

"Stupid of me not to think of it before," went on Wilkins, musingly. "We hotel men get to notice things, and I shouldn't like to be so slow as a usual thing with— Ah, here it is! Got in among the steamer guides."

Trask reached across for the letter. It was a large, square envelope of a bulky woven paper. On it was typed in purple:

*Mr. Robert Trask. Consolidated Mines Syndicate.
To be called for.*

The letters of the words were topped by a faint and blurry purple line, showing that the heavy envelope had undergone troubles by being rolled into a typewriter.

"Excuse me," said Trask. He tore it open just as the bar-boy appeared with a tray decorated with stone ginger jars and glasses. The letter read:

DEAR MR. TRASK:

[10]

Thank you so much for the flowers you sent me at the King Edward in Hong Kong. They were lovely. So sorry we shan't see you again. I remember you said you'd be in Manila the tenth of this month. Dad has changed his plans and wants to get back home, so we leave Manila by the *Taming* on the eleventh. We are going up to Dagupan by train and will reach Manila to sail by noon. So, if you do get to Manila on the tenth, I think it would be jolly to see you on board. We'll go directly from the station to the tender. I'll address this on the machine, so it'll look most businesslike, for Mr. Wilkins, the clerk, is prone to gossip. Thank you again for your kindness in Hong Kong and your many kindnesses to Dad and me on board the *Manchuria*.

Sincerely,
MARJORIE LOCKE.

Trask, smiling broadly, put the letter into his pocket.

"That must be good news, sir. Hope it is. Shall we go out on the big veranda for our nip? Cooler out there."

"What? Yes, certainly," said Trask, reminded of where he was as he looked up to see the bar-boy standing beside him and Wilkins waiting. In spite of the fact that the letter was ample proof that Miss Locke was gone, it had put his head in a whirl. At least she hadn't forgotten. He followed Wilkins.

[11]

"You look quite bucked up now," said Wilkins, as he pulled out a chair beside a marble-topped table.

"I do feel better," admitted Trask. "Just the same, I'm bitterly disappointed. No doubt I'm ungrateful, but I've played in rotten luck."

"You expected to meet the Lockes?" suggested Wilkins. "Too bad."

"Yes," said Trask, and taking a glass from the bar-boy, sat down.

"Here's luck and a long stay, sir," said Wilkins.

"Thanks." But Trask was rather listless and tired, frankly bored by the clerk. He stared out over the sickle curve of the bay along the Cavite shore, where a line of white beach made a barrier between the water and the green jungle. The red-roofed buildings of Cavite lay out on the end of the sickle like a clutter of bleached bones cast up by the tide.

The bay lay like a great shining shield before him, blazing with millions of mirrors that danced on the shoulders of the sleek and lazy swells, lifting in the sun-dazzle from the entrance, some twenty-five miles away.

Trask looked at his watch. It was well after one, the hour when men take shelter from the sun in cafés to talk over prolonged tiffins and wait for the heat of mid-day to wane. [12]

A hush had fallen over the city, like the lull which precedes the breaking of a typhoon, a panting sort of hush. Heat waves rose from the bare expanse of the Luneta like siroccos from the nether regions, and the palm trees of the Malecon Drive, seen through the shimmering air, appeared to dance like souls in torture.

Beyond the Luneta the tawny walls of the city fairly cracked with the heat, and over them could be seen the sea of roofs of the intra-mural section, the heart of Manila, inside its ancient bastions. Spires rose from the ruck of low buildings like dead trees denuded of their branches. Down the bay a streamer of smoke hung over the Bataan hills, the last vestige of the outward-bound *Taming*, a sort of farewell pennant left behind to tell that she was driving jauntily toward Hong Kong.

"It'll be cooler in an hour," ventured Wilkins.

"If you'll order a rig for me," said Trask, "I'll roll down to the customs house and see about my baggage." [13]

"How about tiffin, sir?"

"Good idea. I'll have it with you. Never mind the rig now. By the way, I heard some gossip coming down. Did you ever hear of a man named Dinshaw? A sailor?"

"Looney Dinshaw? Raw-ther! He's a joke."

"How a joke?"

"Oh, the poor old blighter, he sells pictures which he paints himself. They're pictures of an island he says he was wrecked on, that's full of gold. Comes up here and sells 'em to trippers."

"But the island?" persisted Trask. "There was a Swede yarning with the skipper, but they wouldn't let me hear."

"Dinshaw's *loco*," said Wilkins. "Lost his ship on this island three or four years ago. It's somewhere up the north coast. He was taken off by a Jap fisher crew blown down from the Rykukus. He lost his ship right enough, and his mind with it. To hear him talk you'd think it was solid gold."

"Solid gold is what I'm hunting for when I'm working," said Trask with a smile. "I'd like to look into this business." [14]

"There's plenty who's looked into it, sir, but they can't get anything but babble out of the old fellow. He thinks everybody wants to cheat him."

"Where can I find him?"

"In the Sailors' Home, kept by Prayerful Jones in Calle San Fernando, a charity place for sailors on the beach. I say, you're not serious?"

"Indeed I am. Not that I expect to find a solid gold island, but if it's off the coast of Luzon it might give me a lead to something up in the mountains. The Igorrotes find some gold up in the rivers and I've heard the rocks were mighty heavy. May be iron pyrites, or it may be the real thing."

"I can have him up here," suggested Wilkins. "Just drop a word over the 'phone to Prayerful Jones. Nobody need know what it's about. I'll hint he may sell a picture."

"Shoot!" said Trask. "I've got a month to kill, and some money to gamble on my own hook. I may take a flyer on it, if I can get anything definite out of this Dinshaw."

"You'll have half the waterfront on your heels if you let it out that you're taking Dinshaw to his island. Plenty would go if he'd tell 'em where it is, but they want to skin him." [15]

"Then we'll keep it mum! Hello! Who's coming?"

He heard the rattle of hoofs and looked across the Luneta to see a victoria whirl out

of Bagumbayan Drive. It was occupied by a man in a pongee suit and a young woman in white with a blue parasol which rose above the rig like a porcelain minaret.

"The Lockes!" cried Wilkins.

"Hush!" said Trask. "Don't say a word about me. I'll surprise 'em!" He picked up a copy of the *Cablenews* from the table and hid himself behind its ample pages.

"We'll stick right here until the next boat," he heard Locke saying as the victoria stopped. "I'd like to see somebody pry me loose from this porch."

Trask looked over the top of his paper to see Marjorie Locke, in duck skirt and linen coat, climb down from the victoria. Her hair was as yellow as her wide-brimmed "sailor" and her eyes as blue as her parasol. She was laughing gaily as she mounted the stoop.

[16]

"You missed the boat!" exclaimed Wilkins, as he came out.

"Missed it forty miles!" said Locke, taking off his floppy Bangkok hat and using a handkerchief on his face as though it were a blotter. His nose was peeled from sunburn, but his round and rubicund face fairly oozed good humour.

"Your luggage—I sent it, sir," said Wilkins.

"Hang the luggage! I'll have a soda bath right away. I've got the prickly heat so bad I feel like a human pincushion!"

"Yes, sir," said Wilkins.

"Be game, Dad! You always told me you liked the tropics."

"So I do—at home in the winter time. I believe you knew we'd miss that boat, Marge. I'm wise! You want to see where Magellan landed and where Legaspi gasped."

"I can't say you're a born tourist," said his daughter.

"Yes, I am. Just now I'd start for the North Pole. Wow! Those Spanish fellows sure liked a hot climate when they went out to take up land! Whoof! I'd give a lot for ten cubic feet of 'Frisco fog right now! Turn the blowers on in our rooms, Wilkins, and say, aim mine at the bath water. Well, look who's here! If that isn't Trask I'll——"

[17]

"Mr. Trask!" cried Miss Locke. "How jolly! Fancy meeting you!"

"Fancy meeting him!" exclaimed Locke, derisively. "It's a frameup, that's what it is, a frameup on me and my prickly heat!"

Trask climbed out from behind his paper and stood up, bowing and grinning.

"I'm sorry you missed your boat—almost," he said.

"Oh, shucks!" said Locke, taking his hand and pulling him forward. "I don't give a whoop. Marge, I'll bet forty dollars you knew that Dagupan train wouldn't catch the *Taming!*"

"Don't be absurd, Dad. We're so glad to meet you again, Mr. Trask. We were stupid about the train, but——"

"You'll have to excuse me," said her father, "I hear the bath going. Wilkins! Feed us tiffin till we're blue in the face," and he disappeared into the *sala*.

[18]

"And there isn't a boat to connect with the Pacific Mail for twenty-six days," said Trask. "I'm on a vacation."

"You know so much about Manila, too," she said. "But we may go on the Thursday boat."

"The Thursday boat?"

"Yes."

"If there's a Thursday boat, I'll wreck it," said Trask, and clapped his hands for the *muchacho*.

CHAPTER II

[19]

DINSHAW TELLS OF HIS ISLAND

"Here," said Locke, "comes Rip Van Winkle—without his dog."

"A beggar!" whispered Marjorie, looking past Trask. "Poor old man!"

Trask turned from the table, and saw at the end of the veranda an old man approaching with a package under his arm. He looked like a vagabond, in khaki trousers with the bottoms fringed by tatters through which showed his bare ankles; pitiful old cloth shoes; a patched coat of white drill with frogging across the front such as Chinese mess boys wear; and a battered, rimless straw hat. He drew near the table with weary feet, hesitatingly and dazed, as though he had lost his way, peering about like an owl thrust into the light of mid-day from a darkened belfry.

"Why, it must be Captain Dinshaw!" said Trask.

The old man stopped ten feet from the trio and lifting his head like a hound who has taken scent, gazed at them suspiciously. Then he smiled toothlessly and swung off his bowl of a hat with a grand air. [20]

"Aye, sir," he said, in a weak but shrill voice. "Cap'n Dinshaw, late of the bark, *James B. Wetherall*, lost in a typhoon an' Lord ha' mercy on us!"

"This is a shame!" said Locke, in a cautious whisper to Trask, as he leaned back in his grass chair to light a cigar. "I hate to see a white man like that in this country."

"He looks hungry," said Marjorie. "Dad, call the boy!"

"It's an interesting case," said Trask. "I want you to hear him. Wilkins had him up so I could talk to him. He's got an island."

"Would the lady buy a picter?" inquired Dinshaw, with a little bow. "Hand painted by myself, out of my head, from my own recollections. A good suvverner." He began to unwrap his flat parcel.

"Come over here and sit down," said Locke, rising, and pushing forward a chair. "You ought to have something to drink and a bite to eat. Shouldn't be out in sun like this with that sort of headgear." [21]

Dinshaw muttered a thanks, and dropped into the chair, his thin, wrinkled face drawing into a queer smile. He let the package fall across his knees, and his hat dropped from his trembling fingers. He stroked a tuft of whisker under his chin.

"I don't mind the heat, but the soup's bad," he remarked.

"Here's the boy," said Trask. "Now what's it to be?"

"Eh! Oh, Ah Wing! That boy knows me. A tot of gin with a stinger, and thank you kindly. A master should go with his ship," and he touched his sparse white hair which showed his scalp, and nodded his head, staring out over the bay as if in a reverie. The colour was bleached out of his failing eyes and they had a habit of roving about unsteadily, a quality common in old sailors and probably acquired in a lifetime of watching heaving seas.

"Bring some more of the fish, and a big cup of coffee," said Trask, as Ah Wing grinned and turned to go.

"So you sell pictures," encouraged Marjorie. "And paint them yourself!" [22]

"Aye, ma'am. All hands lost but myself—piled up on a reef of this island. A master should go with his ship." He clutched at his parcel and began tearing off the string.

"Picters o' my island. I allus was a painter," he continued, "if I did foller the sea. Why, in my bark, the *Wetherall* it was, I had fancy picters on the bulkheads an' gold linin' over the white but she got in a twistin' jimmycane, such as we have in these waters. Thar's my island!"

He held up one canvas, a foot high and two feet wide, tacked over a piece of board. It was a gaudy representation of an island wrought with pathetic lack of skill. There was a conical peak at the left end smeared with a slash of purple, and over it a very red and very round sun. The land sloped away from the peak to the other end of the island, and was lost in a white streak extending seaward, the the bony finger of a skeleton, marking a reef clothed with fuzzy breakers. A rocky ledge ran down to where the reef began and a big gray stone stood up abruptly, giving the island the appearance of a bluff-bowed vessel, and under it, a triangular patch of beach. Near the rock were four palm trees. One bent over at a sharp angle, as if it had been partly uprooted, and its moppy fronds almost trailed in the still water of a pool formed by a second reef, not so clearly defined, which ran parallel with the land. Except inside this natural basin the whole shore of the island was wreathed by white rollers and behind the shore line was a fringe of vividly green jungle. [23]

"Oh, isn't that splendid!" exclaimed Marjorie.

"It's a work o' art, that's what everybody says," remarked the old man with a show of pride.

"What do you call the island?" asked Locke.

"The name don't matter, sir. 'Dinshaw's Island' they call it hereabouts, in honour o' the fact I was wrecked on it. Blown off my course in a typhoon at night and went smash into this reef ye see here. I was washed out o' the rigg'in', an' when I come to I was on the beach here, wreckage all round, an' the sun shinin' bright as a whiffet, an' me all beat out an' water-logged. Right there it was," and he put his thumb on a spot near the rock.

"Is it a big island?" asked Trask.

[24]

"Not in the way ye might think. Big enough as it goes, but it ain't the size what counts," and he broke into a cackling laugh, wagging his head, as if he held the secret of a great joke.

"Where is it?" asked Locke.

"Thar's lots as would like to know, sir," said Dinshaw, gravely. "But I ain't in the way o' tellin', not until I can see my way clear to go myself."

"It is near the mainland of Luzon?" asked Trask.

Dinshaw turned quickly and peered at him suspiciously, pursing his lips.

"It is," he said, finally.

"I don't see any other land in the picture," ventured Trask, scanning the canvas with more care.

"Ye bet ye don't!" snapped Dinshaw, with sudden asperity. "I left that out so they can't find it. Lots as would like to find Dinshaw's island, young man, but I'm savin' it for myself. Jarrow said he'd take me, but he never did. He wants to go steal it himself. I know. I know. They can't fool me, if I am old."

"Steal your island?" asked Marjorie. "Why, how could anybody steal an island?"

"What's on it?" whispered Dinshaw.

[25]

"Oh, ho," said Locke. "Then there's something on it, is there? Now we're interesting! Treasure, I suppose."

"Gold on it," piped Dinshaw, with childish simplicity. "Gold enough to make us all rich. Gold enough to ballast a hundred ships!"

"Ye see that reef? Well, I lay in that bight thar, an' the sun come out. The eye o' the storm it was, and after awhile it come on to blow again, as is the custom with twisters. When the weather cleared again, I don't know how long it was, I crawled down and overhauled the flotsam. There was part of Number One boat, with a beaker o' water an' a ham from the cabin stores. Later, I found my mate, Seth Colburn. He was dead. He'd sailed with me all his life, come from down Eastport way, and a smart man he was, too, at figgers. I dug his grave with my bare hands in this patch o' sand, right there under the ridge, and it was all yaller, shinin' in the sun, as it run through my fingers. All glittery an' soft, like corn meal. That island's full o' it, I'm tellin' ye! It'll make us all rich!" His voice rose, and quavered with excitement.

Locke looked at Trask questioningly.

[26]

"Here," said Trask, passing Dinshaw the glass which the bar-boy brought. "Drink this."

"Jarrow said he'd take me," gasped Dinshaw after he had drunk.

"Who's Jarrow?" asked Trask.

"Oh, he's got a schooner," said Dinshaw.

"So your island is full of gold," said Locke, with a skeptical wink for the benefit of Trask and Marjorie. "And you sell pictures of it, eh?"

"Aye, gold. An' Seth Colburn's buried in it. He'd laugh if he knew. But Jarrow'll take me some day, an' when he does, I'll go back to Yarmouth an' build a big house, all snug an' shipshape, with a piazza like the quarter-deck of a frigate, an' a garden with petunias, an'—an'—have good soup for supper. I fed my crew better'n Prayerful Jones does, an' I tell him so every day. Them that sailed with Cap'n Dinshaw had duff twice a week with raisins in it, sir, an' Wes' Injia m'lasses."

Marjorie passed Dinshaw a plate of sandwiches and served him with a cup of coffee. Trask drew aside, and Locke followed him.

"This is right in your line," said Locke.

[27]

"I've a mind to investigate it," said Trask. "Heard some talk about it on my way down from Amoy."

"Sounds fishy to me," said Locke. "I believe he's off his head."

"That's what they say here. Wilkins was telling me about him."

"You think there's gold there?"

"Possibly. The formation of the ledge looks promising. He may have run into a deposit washed out by the sea, merely a pocket, but significant. You see, if the ledge in the picture is a continuation of a crest from the mainland, I might follow up the lead on Luzon. There is gold out here but the country hasn't been properly prospected, owing to the troubles with the natives. I'd like to look things over on my own hook. Of course the company would go in on it with me. I've always wanted to come here but my chief never thought much of it. So I'm on a vacation, and what I find for myself I'll be able to swing. If Dinshaw would split——"

"You'd get yourself into a tangle with him," said Locke. "He'd most likely go around telling folks you wanted to steal his island if you talked with him about it."

[28]

"I'll go slowly and I may get his confidence after awhile."

"Well, I wish you luck," said Locke. "I'm going to make the Thursday boat."

"I wasn't thinking of going on this trip for a couple of weeks," Trask hastened to say.

"Hong Kong for mine," said Locke.

"Dad! Come here, please," called Marjorie. "Captain Dinshaw wants to go to his island. It seems to me that you men who are looking for something to do might help him out."

"I'll give him ten *pesos* for one of those pictures," said Locke.

"The other for me at the same price," said Trask.

"Stingies!" cried Marjorie. "If I were a man, I'd go find his island."

"Perhaps I will," said Trask.

"None of this Count of Monte Cristo stuff for me," said Locke, as he laid down a bill before Dinshaw. "Say, captain, I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll pay your passage home first class if you'll go so that you can get back to your relatives. Now you can't say I'm a piker, Marge."

[29]

"Ten *pesos*!" whispered Dinshaw, staring at the bill. "Thank ye kindly, sir. I'll make ye all rich."

"But how about going home?" said Locke. "I'll fix you up with some clothes. This is no place for an old man like you."

"Home!" said Dinshaw. "I'm at the Sailors' Home."

"But you ought to be back in the States."

"I'm goin' back to my island, that's what," insisted Dinshaw. "Jarrow said he'd take me."

"Dad, you said I could go anywhere I wanted on this trip," pouted Marjorie.

"Where do you want to go, Miss Trinkets?"

"I think it would be gorgeous fun to find this island. I've never done anything romantic in my life, and I've always wanted to elope, or something. I'll run away with a drummer in a band—or something like that, if I have to go home without finding an island—a tropical island, with a wreck, too—and sailors buried on it—and gold! I'm for it, strong."

"Not so strong as I am for a touch of cool weather," laughed Locke. "That reminds me, it's time for another soda——"

[30]

"Dad!"

But Locke disappeared into the hall, laughing, saying something about Timbuctoo and other places he would not care to visit.

"And he's finding fault about having to live in tourist hotels and listen to bored guides! And here's a chance to get off the main stamping ground, as he calls it, and help a poor old man."

"We don't like to get far from the comforts of civilization, after all," said Trask. "But I don't know of anything I'd rather do than take you and your father cruising."

"I wish there wasn't any old Thursday boat," wailed Marjorie. "We might argue him into going if we had more time."

"You've got to miss that Thursday boat," declared Trask. "We ought to be able to kidnap him or something."

"What's the name?" asked Dinshaw, rising from the table and putting on his hat.

"Locke," said Marjorie. "Mr. Locke. You come up again to-morrow and see us."

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"I'll have to paint another picter," said Dinshaw.

"Here," said Trask. "You take this one with you, and bring it back to-morrow, when I'll pay you twenty *pesos* for it. That'll give you an excuse for coming back. And don't say a word to anybody."

"Locke," murmured Dinshaw. "Mr. Locke."

"You ought to eat some more," said Marjorie.

"Can't stop," said Dinshaw, gathering up the other picture, which he had not unwrapped. "Can't wait for the tide. I'll go see Jarrow. He said he'd take me."

"Now look here," said Trask. "Don't you say a word to anybody. Understand? Don't tell anybody!"

"I'm a clam, sir, a clam," said Dinshaw, solemnly, and blinking his eyes at the sun which assailed him from the bare Luneta, he hurried down the steps and hastened away.

"Poor old duffer," said Trask.

"We've got to help him find his island," said Marjorie. "I'll tell you what to do. Dad wants to get up to Hong Kong because there's a man at the King Edward he can beat at billiards."

"What's that got to do with it?" asked Trask, vaguely.

[32]

"You're a regular man!" she retorted. "Can't you see? Can you play billiards?"

"A little," admitted Trask.

"Come up to our rooms and have tea," she said. "Then you get Dad into a game of billiards, play as well as you can and—lose."

"A whale of an idea!" exclaimed Trask.

"And don't say anything more about the island," warned Marjorie. "Dad's stubborn, but he's easy to handle. We'll act as if we didn't care a whoop about this Dinshaw business—until we miss the Thursday boat. Then we'll give him no rest. But remember, I'm for the Thursday boat. That's just to throw him off his guard. He's a dear old Dad, but sometimes he's balky."

CHAPTER III

[33]

CAPTAIN DINSHAW PULLS A LONG BOW

Below the customs house in Manila, close to the embankment of the Pasig River, on the Binondo side, opposite Fort Santiago and the Walled City, there is an ancient adobe building thatched with *nipa*. Its narrow door opens on the waterfront. High and narrow windows, devoid of glass or shell, are mere slits cut through the walls. Seen from the river, they have a striking resemblance to the gun-ports of an ancient battleship.

This place is known to sailormen the world over as "The Cuartel" and probably takes its name from the fact that it was a sort of block house used by the Spanish, to hold the approaches to the river. It stands at the head of a narrow little street which twists back into the native quarter of Tondo, and affords a haven for the mixed population which labours on the Mole—coolies, seamen, Chinese mess "boys," Tagalog *cargadores*, Lascar *serangs*, stalwart Sikh watchmen from the hemp and sugar *godowns*, squat Germans in white suits with pencils stuck in their sun helmets and wearing amber-coloured spectacles. British clerks with cargo lists, customs brokers, barking mates with blasphemous vocabularies, Scotch mechanics with parched throats, and all the underlings who have to do with ships and their freights.

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Here they all gather for their tippie and gossip, easy at friendships and quick at quarrels. They babble of things which their employers would have kept secret, their tongues limbered by drams from square-shouldered greenish bottles, Dutch as dykes, which line the shelves behind the bar.

The Cuartel is owned by a black man from Batavia who calls himself Vanderzee. His mother was a Kling. He was berth-deck cook of a gunboat, by his own report, and "Jack o' the Dust" in a river monitor up "China way." That's all anybody seems to know about him, and it is suspected that he has his own reasons for keeping a clove

hitch on his tongue about himself.

There are legends about fortunes which have been made out of bits of news gleaned from conversations before the bar of the Cuartel. The lampman of a Blackpool tramp remarked over his peg of rum that his skipper liked smoked eels for breakfast and was taking on a cargo of best steaming coal for Kamrangh Bay. This knowledge enabled Togo to destroy the Baltic fleet in the Tushima Straits. And a stevedore made something like a million dollars out of a cargo of canned salmon by hearing some cockney give his theory about how the blockade could be run to Port Arthur.

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Vanderzee made some of his profits out of a little room at the far end of his bar, where a man could sit hidden by tawny *tapa* curtains rove on a bamboo pole, and have privacy while he heard what was being said at the bar. The room had a marble-topped table and two chairs.

Two men were inside of an afternoon, playing at cribbage. One was short and heavily built, with powerful shoulders threatening to break through the seams of his white drill jacket. His black hair was clipped close to his skull, making his ears appear to stick out amazingly. He had black moustaches which grew down over his mouth, masking it. His face was brown and rough hewn. A straw hat, curled up into a grotesque shape, lay at his feet like some distorted bivalve. Its owner had an air of authority about him, even a touch of dominance in the way he scanned his cards or moved the pegs in the board. When his arm went out to the table, it moved with a ponderous steadiness. His brown and hairy hand had the slow, powerful sweep of a derrick-boom.

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His companion was thin and angular, quick-eyed and nervous in his movements, as though he moved on a gear of higher speed than his opponent in the game. He crouched over the table when he shuffled the cards or played them, without lifting his elbows from the table, in the fashion of a jealous dog with a bone. He wore a blue cap with a polished black visor, tilted back on his head, giving him a rakish, devil-may-care aspect. His long and lean face, cut with wrinkles, was twisted into a sly grin, as if he thought he had the advantage of the other man.

The *tapa* curtains were closed. The alcove was lighted from two of the narrow windows, cut so high in the wall that they gave no view of the Mole and the street outside unless a man were to climb on a chair and get his shoulders on a level with the bamboo rafters, where the tiny lizards prowled in the dust and hunted flies.

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The roar of the docks surged through dull and confused, a medley of clanking hatch-covers, complaining tackle, deep-throated protests of donkey-engines, outlandish commands from stevedores, and the yelps of high-strung little tugs bossing the lighters.

Vanderzee potted at his books behind the bar, smoking a china pipe. His watchful eye was on his Chinese boy polishing the brasswork of the taps. The last of the noon idlers had gone, and the door leading to the Mole was shut against the hot breeze lifting from the sun's glare on the river.

Then a beam of light whipped across the floor with a shuffle of feet on the stone steps outside. Captain Dinshaw tottered in, gasping for breath and shaking with excitement.

"Van!" he cried, weakly, making for the bar. "I'm rich!"

The black man grunted, and put his pipe in his mouth, staring past Dinshaw at the door as if he expected to see a pursuing party burst in and attack the old man, who seemed spent from running.

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"Who's der drouble?" he growled. "For v'y you roon?"

"I've hauled the wind!" cried Dinshaw, dropping his parcel on the bar, and throwing up his hands in a gesture of wild delight.

"My luck's turned! I'm a rich man, I tell ye!"

"Vell," remarked Vanderzee with stolid calm. "If you puy a monkey in some oder blaces, don'd pring him here to me. You vant me droubles to haff der bolice mit, hey? A few trinks you get, der sun your het in, und—dronk der Cuartel in und my license I loose maype."

"I'll make ye rich!" persisted Dinshaw, in his high-pitched, quivering voice, and giving no heed to the admonitions of the black man and not in the least disconcerted by the lack of welcome. "I'm goin' to my island!"

"Der more kvicker, der more petter," said Vanderzee, and humped his shoulders up with a convulsive shrug. "Maype you prink it back und anchor it off der lighthouse, hey?"

[39]

"Jarrow'll take me in the *Nuestra*," continued Dinshaw, now as if talking to himself. "I'll be rich and have good soup for supper. I've got the tide this time, an' no mistake."

It's turned for me, as I allus said it would, and Jarrow'll head out for my island. I tell ye, man, it's all settled. Have ye seen Jarrow?"

"Charrow petter nod see you. Crassy you iss."

"He'll want to see me, an' don't forget," said Dinshaw, wagging his head. "Jarrow's the man for me and——"

The *tapa* curtains were thrust aside violently, and the short, squat man with clipped hair stood between them, glowering, one hand gripped into a fist, and the other holding the swaying fabric.

"What's this of me and the *Nuestra*?" he roared. His moustaches puffed out at each word, and his jaw lifted to a pugnacious angle as he threw back his head. He screwed up his eyes into a sort of malevolent grin which did not extend below the bridge of his nose.

Dinshaw blinked at him for a minute, taken aback by the picture of this man, who seemed about to charge into the room after him.

[40]

"You said you'd go," said Dinshaw.

"You lay off this blasted chin-chin about me and my schooner!" raged Jarrow. "I've heard enough of it!"

"But I'm in soundin's, cap'n. We're bound out in the *Nuestra* for the island! We're goin——"

"Git out!" snapped Jarrow, and clumping out into the room, lifted a hairy fist at the old man. But Dinshaw held his ground, and as Vanderzee cried out to take care, the captain merely pushed the old man back with a snort of rage.

"But it's all settled, I tell ye!" insisted Dinshaw. "Hard and fast. We're to go——"

"Then go!" snarled Jarrow. "Go jump off the Mole, and give me some rest and quiet. I got other things to 'tend to. How'm I to git a charter for the *Nuestra*, with you and yer slack jaw runnin' wild up and down the waterfront tellin' all hands and the ship's cook I'm goin' to yer blasted island in my schooner? Hop in the river, but keep clear o' me and mine! Won't have it from ye!"

"Der sun his het in," said Vanderzee, with a significant nod toward Dinshaw. He wanted to avoid trouble. "He iss crassy."

[41]

The tall, thin man now parted the curtains and came out, his long legs moving stiffly across the floor. He glanced at Dinshaw with a sneering, wicked eye and sniffed contemptuously. He gave the twisted straw hat to Jarrow, who pulled it open and clamped it over his clipped skull. They both turned to the bar.

"Ye said ye'd go," piped Dinshaw. "Ye allus said ye'd take me, an' now's the chance. I ain't goin' to stay with Prayerful Jones no more. I'm goin to pack my dunnage an' take it aboard the *Nuestra*."

"There ye go!" cried Jarrow, swinging toward him, and extending a brawny arm wrathfully. "Ye make fast to me like a devilfish! That's the tune ye've been singin' for years! '*Said ye'd go!*' Same old story! Why, I——"

He paused, as if at a loss for words to express his disgust, and pulled a cigar from his pocket. He bit the end from it with a twisting motion of his head. The tall man sighed wearily.

"Ach!" said Vanderzee. "No harm. Who iss to giff mind to vat he say? He iss crassy."

"There's a-plenty to give mind to it," snarled Jarrow. "Didn't I lose a charter last dry season to bring wood from Mindoro? What with this booby-bird goin' round Manila with word I'm to take the *Nuestra* to his fool island, who's to want my boat? Here I am now, lookin' to sign up a gover'ment hay charter, and he'll put me high and dry if this word is passed along again. I won't have it. I'll see the police."

[42]

"Can't ye let me tell——?" began Dinshaw.

"Come along of me, Peth," said Jarrow. The angular man, who had arranged the upper part of his body in such manner that the bar afforded possibilities for rest, unfolded himself and moved toward his companion.

"I'll make ye all rich," wailed Dinshaw.

"You'll cost me a pretty penny, that's what!" exploded Jarrow, turning back from the door. "I never said I'd take ye, and ye can git that out of yer fool head! Here I am, kickin' my heels around port and my schooner feedin' barnacles off the breakwater, all 'cause ye've got somethin' chafin' yer top-hamper. I won't stand for it no more."

"But I got a man to take us," pleaded Dinshaw, going after him. "A man said he'd charter the *Nuestra* and we'd all go. Two men and a lady it was, up at the——"

[43]

"Oh, I've heard enough of yer cock-and-bull yarns," retorted Jarrow, who was not averse to freeing his mind on Dinshaw. "What the devil do ye want to make fast to me fer! I don't want ye traversin' round charterin' my schooner and me. Makin' jokes for the loafers up on the canal. Ye done that once before, and ye'll do it again. I'll have the police on ye! It's about time Prayerful Jones was shut of lettin' loose his bums and lunatics on us folks with property."

"No harm," said Vanderzee, soothingly.

"I say it is harm! I'm hailed whurever I go about this business of the old un's island, Van! Just 'cause I've got a schooner, it's Jarrow, Jarrow, Jarrow! I'd look fine and smart cruisin' round for a P. D. island, wouldn't I? Now tell me that?"

"It's a lie!" cried Dinshaw. "Them geodetic youngsters didn't look for my island, an' what's more, they wouldn't know it if they found it. That's why they come back with a 'Position Doubtful' report. Think I'm goin' to let them young whippersnappers know about my island so they can find it? Find it! I can find it with a bone quadrant and —"

[44]

"Find Tophet!" yelled Jarrow, and turned to the door.

"Look here!" shouted Dinshaw, reaching into his pocket and fishing out the bill he got from Locke for his picture. "I can prove it! Here's money, planked down, and more where it comes from. I'm to go, I tell ye, an' if ye don't want none of it, I'll see Hood about a boat. I thought ye was a friend of mine, Jarrow, so I come to ye. This man I got could buy your old schooner and a hundred like her, an' never miss the money. He asked for a boat and I said Jarrow, an' when the young lady asked who's to skipper it, I said Jarrow's the man, an' Peth for mate, an' he sung out for me to bring ye up to the tavern an' sign the charter. I'll say no more—I'll see Hood."

"What's this?" demanded Jarrow, turning back to stare at the bill. Vanderzee leaned over the bar, and Peth craned his neck forward, maintaining his eternal grin. They had never seen Dinshaw with so much wealth before.

"Money!" piped Dinshaw, triumphantly.

[45]

"Has he gone plumb *loco*?" asked Jarrow, looking at Vanderzee.

"Dot money ain'd crassy," said the black man.

"Where'd ye git it?" asked Jarrow, reluctantly gentle.

"A rich man at the Bay View—with a young lady and a young man in a helmet. I told 'em about the *Wetherall* and they give me this money to buy clothes, and sent me on the run for you. They want to go to the Golden Isle. I better see what Hood's got for charter."

"You better stay right here," said Jarrow, pushing Dinshaw back toward the bar. "I'm goin' to look into this."

"I'll see Hood," persisted Dinshaw.

"Luff!" commanded Jarrow, holding out his arms to head Dinshaw off from the door. "You'll see me! You've been usin' me and my schooner long enough, and if there's anything in this yarn of yours, it's mine. Who's this man?"

"He's a rich man, and he'll take us," said Dinshaw.

"I'd believe ye sooner if ye said ye saw pink elephants," said Jarrow. "Git down to cases. What's his name?"

[46]

"Money talks," suggested Vanderzee.

"Moonshine!" declared Peth.

"His name's Locke," said Dinshaw. "Will ye go, Jarrow? I'll make ye all rich."

"Now what did this Locke man say?" demanded Jarrow. "I don't want any ravin's. I want facts, straight out, so you come up into the wind. What'd he say?"

"He said to look sharp about it," said Dinshaw, blinking at Jarrow, a trifle confused at being questioned. "Stores and crew—right away, and be ready to sail in a day's time. We don't want no soldierin' on the job. It's to be up hook and away and look lively. You'll have to move navy style, Jarrow. You know me."

"Thinks I'm foremast in his brig," said Jarrow, with a leer at Vanderzee.

"You better cut over across the river," said Dinshaw, "and tell him you're ready and you'll have the *Nuestra* alongside the Mole by dark to take on stores, or he'll have another boat. He said somethin' about knowin' a man out here who had a yacht, comin' down from Japan."

[47]

"Smoke," said Peth.

"I wonder," remarked Jarrow, scratching his head. "Sure ye didn't lift that ten-*peso* bill from Prayerful Jones? I'll be bugs myself if I listen to you."

"Hood'll listen," said Dinshaw, crisply, and made a new effort to reach the door.

"Vhy don'd you to der Pay Few go?" suggested Vanderzee.

Jarrow looked at himself. "I'd have to shift my duds," he said, "and I ain't for huntin' sharks' eggs on Looney's say. What ye think, Peth? Shall we fill up that way?"

"I ain't no hand for them swells," said Peth. "You go, cap'n, an' I'll stand by down here with Dinshaw."

"Vait!" said Vanderzee, holding up a black hand. "Vot's der name? Locke!" He stepped into a tiny office behind the bar. They heard him asking the clerk at the Bay View if there was a man named Locke staying there. In an instant he was back again, grinning.

"Iss!" he exclaimed. "So soon I know, I hang opp."

"Well," said Jarrow, who was still in doubt as to what he should do, "that's somethin' to know. Maybe some rich tourist did fall for Looney's yarn." [48]

Peth went back to the bar and leaned against it as if he had made up his mind not to move until Jarrow reached some decision.

"By the Mighty Nelson, I've got a twist in my chains to take a run over to the hotel!"

"Shoot," said Peth, displaying more interest than he had at any time since Dinshaw had arrived.

"Come along, Peth," said Jarrow. "I'll git into some fresh duds, and you brail yerself up to look smart, and we'll drift over in a *carromata*. Will you wait here, Dinshaw?"

"I'll wait, Jarrow, I'll wait. Tell him I sent ye, and he'll know. It's all settled right enough if you lay alongside and make fast, and no time lost."

"See that he don't git away," Jarrow whispered to Vanderzee. "I can't take no chances with this—and keep him quiet—in there."

Pointing to the alcove, Jarrow slipped out through the door, followed by Peth, close at heel, like a well-trained dog behind his master.

"It's this way," said Jarrow, as they made their way between the bales and barrels among the workers on the Mole. "Maybe Looney give 'em hot shot about this island and they're keen to go, thinkin' there's bunches of gold there, which I know ain't so. But it don't matter if we git a charter at fifty a day or so, and drag it out into a couple of weeks." [49]

"We'll want our own crew," suggested Peth.

"Bevins," said Jarrow.

"Shope," said Peth.

"And Doc Bird for steward, and Shanghai Tom ships as cook."

"Right. Ye leave it to me, and if there's anything in it, I'll have all hands come dark."

"I ain't hatchin' no chickens on what Looney said," cautioned Jarrow, "but if there's a man who's lit up on Looney's island-o'-gold yarn, it ain't my way to throw sand in his eyes. And if we do find gold that's two tails to the cat. We'll take things as they lay."

CHAPTER IV

 [50]

CAPTAIN JARROW GOES CRUISING IN STRANGE WATERS

Captain Jarrow and Mr. Peth were driven across the Bridge of Spain and up Bagumbayan Drive past the Walled City in a *carromata*, and disembarked from the native rig at the edge of the Luneta, whence they proceeded to the Bay View Hotel.

Jarrow wore a new white suit, squeaky French shoes of yellow hue, and an aura of perfumed soap. Mr. Peth felt uncomfortably respectable in blue serge and a shirt with a starched collar.

"I might ha' stayed back," grumbled Peth, as they mounted the stoop of the deserted veranda.

"You lay a course for the bar while I brace the gent at the office," said Jarrow. "Don't have nothin' to say."

Mr. Peth measured the veranda with his long legs and disappeared into the bar, while Jarrow squeaked his way into the palms and velvet grandeur of the *sala*, waving away the boy who came to inquire about his baggage.

[51]

"Yes, sir," said Wilkins, rising from behind the railed desk.

"You got a man here named Locke," asserted Jarrow, seizing the railing as if to brace himself against a shock.

"Right-o," said Wilkins. "Name, please?" He reached for the room telephone.

Jarrow was taken aback at the thought of being so abruptly thrust before a stranger he could not see. He had no plan for a telephone conversation as preliminary to a meeting and was averse to having his name bandied about by the clerk.

"You can say," he suggested, "it's a friend of Captain Dinshaw's, who's come to have a word with him—strictly private."

Wilkins pressed a button, and after a few seconds announced: "Mr. Locke, there's a gentleman here to see you from Captain Dinshaw. He wants to speak to you privately."

"Put him on the wire," said Locke. "Hello! I guess you've got the wrong party."

[52]

"No, sir," said Jarrow. "I was sent to see you. I'm from Captain Dinshaw."

"Don't know him," said Locke. "What's it about?"

"The island," said Jarrow, still cautious.

"Island! Oh, yes, the old fellow with the picture. All right, come on up."

Jarrow was soon before the door of the Lockes' suite and was ushered into a room which overlooked the bay, the windows open and the awnings down. He saw a young woman seated before a small table covered with tea things, and a tall young man standing near by. Mr. Locke stood just inside the door, but what warmed Jarrow's heart and bolstered his courage was a picture of Dinshaw's island which lay on a divan. There was the proof that the old captain had talked with these people.

Locke regarded his visitor with a puzzled air, but concealed his surprise. The stranger seemed to him to be strangely furtive and sinister, standing in the half-light, ears twitching, a clipped skull thrust forward on a short neck like the head of a turtle pushing out from a shell.

[53]

"I didn't get your name, sir," said Locke, in a friendly way, to save his guest embarrassment.

"Jarrow's my name. I got a wreckin' business. You ask anybody in Manila about me."

"And you say Dinshaw sent you?"

"Yes, sir. I take it you've had a talk with him."

"So I have."

"Then it's all right. Understand he mentioned me."

"You are Captain Jarrow? And you have a schooner?" asked Trask.

"Jarrow!" exclaimed Marjorie. "Of course! Don't you remember, Dad? Captain Dinshaw told us about Captain Jarrow."

"Oh, yes, yes," said Locke. "You're the man he said would go to his island. This is my daughter, Miss Marjorie—and Mr. Trask."

Jarrow ducked his head. Locke had introduced the others more for the purpose of gaining time to study this hulking, limp-kneed man who stood before him like a gorilla crouched for a spring and squeezing a soft straw hat into a shapeless lump in his hands.

"Won't you sit down?" asked Locke, and took his hat. Jarrow allowed himself to sink carefully into a gold-backed chair of doubtful strength and capacity.

[54]

"Perhaps you'll take a cup of tea," suggested Marjorie.

"No, thanks, ma'am. I don't eat nothin' much between meals. See you've been buyin' some of the old cap'n's pictures. He's a oddity, but there's gold on that island of his, right enough."

"Think so?" asked Trask.

"Know so. Scads of it. He brung back samples in his pockets. I've told him time and time again I'd go to his island, and what's more, I would ha', only I don't own all my schooner. It's been busy up to now with gover'nment work—hay for the cavalry posts down south. But now I'm ready, and if I can arrange a charter, I'll cut the rate to the

bone, just to help Dinshaw—say sixty-five a day, gold." He looked at Locke inquiringly.

"I don't know much about such things," said Locke, vaguely.

"Well, a hundred a day is the usual rate," went on Jarrow, "but I'll make it special just to help the old man."

[55]

"I hope you're well repaid," said Locke. "If there is gold——"

"Gold!" exclaimed Jarrow. "Mr. Locke, ye're in on a good thing, if you'll let me say a word about it."

"I'm a little bit mixed up on this thing," said Locke, with an amused smile at Trask. "You know more about the proposition than I do, captain. Of course, Captain Dinshaw talked with Mr. Trask——"

"I hope I ain't put my foot in anything," broke in Jarrow. "I thought from what Dinshaw said Mr. Trask here knew all about it."

"Mr. Trask knows as much about it as I do, and more," said Locke. "Say whatever you like."

"Then it's all right," said Jarrow, obviously relieved. "'Tain't a piece of business I'd want to tell Tom, Dick, and Harry, if I had the weather on it like you have. I'm above board in my dealin's. You ask anybody in Manila about Captain Jarrow, the wrecker. But I thought for a minute I'd let the cat out of the bag."

"No damage done," said Locke. "As I understand it, you intend to go to this island of Dinshaw's."

[56]

"We're so glad to hear it, Captain Jarrow," said Marjorie. "It will surely make the old man happy."

"Thank ye, ma'am. I want to kind o' apologize for jammin' myself in like this, but I'm a frank man."

Jarrow paused, and throwing one foot over a knee, stroked the seams of his new French shoes with the tips of his fingers.

"Of course," he resumed, "Captain Dinshaw and me, we're thick as three in a bed. Ask anybody in Manila if I ain't been doin' my best to go to his island. I've offered to take him to his island, time and time again, but he wouldn't hear it, 'cause he knew I was makin' money with the *Nuestra*—that's my schooner, the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*—me and Peth, my mate, we own it with others. In the wreckin' business it's touch and go. You got to be on the spot, and there ain't been any too many wrecks out this way lately. Let me go away for a week or two on this island business, and I'd likely lose somethin' good. But with somebody to kind o' go in on the deal, I'd split even at sixty-five dollars a day. I'd be some out of pocket, if there wa'n't much gold there, but I look for findin' it in a big way. It's a open and shut proposition."

[57]

"It sounds interesting," said Locke, getting more puzzled as to why Jarrow should call on him to take him into his confidence regarding plans about Dinshaw's island.

"There's big money in it," said Jarrow.

"May I ask why you think so, Captain Jarrow?" inquired Trask.

Jarrow turned to Trask in surprise. The question was appallingly direct, and Trask's tone was crisp and business-like.

"I know it," said Jarrow, uncomfortably aware of being pinned down to definite information.

"But I don't understand why you should take the trouble to tell us about your proposed trip," said Locke.

"How?" Jarrow's head snapped up suddenly and his eyes opened in a wide stare at Locke.

"What is the purpose of this interview?" demanded Locke. "There seems to be some sort of mistake."

Jarrow put his foot down slowly and sucked his moustache in between his lips. His ears twitched and his head ducked forward as he made a swallowing movement with his throat.

[58]

"How's that again?" he whispered, as if he had lost his voice.

"From what you've said, captain, I gather you believe I have something to do with the matter of the island."

Jarrow blew his moustache and gave a suppressed sigh of agony.

"Why—why, Dinshaw—he told me you wanted me and my schooner to go to his island!"

Trask laughed outright in spite of his effort to keep still, and Marjorie gave an exclamation of amazement. Locke could only stare at Jarrow.

"Told you I wanted your schooner! He certainly is crazy! Most absurd thing I ever heard of!"

"Mr. Peth, my mate, he's below now," said Jarrow.

"Then you are going?" asked Trask.

"Am I goin'?" retorted Jarrow. "No! I can't go on my own hook. I thought you folks was goin'—that's what I'm here for."

"It's all a mistake," said Locke. "We had no intention of misleading the old man." [59]

"It will be a terrible disappointment to him," said Marjorie. "It's a ghastly mistake if poor old Captain Dinshaw really believes we told him we'd go."

"We bought his picture out of charity," said Locke. "Mr. Trask here is a mining man, and was interested in his story, but we haven't any more idea of going to this gold island than we have of going to the moon. My daughter and I are leaving the day after to-morrow for Hong Kong to connect with the Pacific Mail. We were going this morning, but missed the *Taming*."

"This'll just about kill old man Dinshaw," said Jarrow.

"He's so pathetic," said Marjorie. "I'm sorry if we've done anything to disappoint him. I'll always feel guilty about it. Just what did he say, Captain Jarrow?"

"Why, ma'am, he comes runnin' down to the Cuartel not an hour ago, all excited up about you people. 'Jarrow,' he says to me, 'I've got a party who'll go to my island if they can git your schooner—and yours is the only one to be had for love or money. I know you'll lose on it, seein's you got a new gover'ment hay charter comin' your way, but can't you strain a p'int for an old friend? If you don't stand by me, the chance is gone.' [60]

"'Cap'n Dinshaw,' says I to him, 'I'll stand by if I can be any help, lose money or no. If me and my schooner's what you need, why, she's lyin' off the breakwater, and I'm your man.' And Peth, my mate, he speaks up, and says to him: 'Dinny, don't you fret none, but leave it to Jarrow. He's the man to tie to if ye need help.'"

"So we lays a course for up here. When he hears of this, it'll just about kill him dead, sure. Happened the same way once before, and he was laid up in the Civil Hospital for a month with brain fever. He ain't as strong now as he was then, neither. If I had the capital, I'd go in on my own, but I'm up to my ears in debt, and as I said, I'd just about split even at sixty-five dollars a day. But I can't go it alone. The old man he'll just fade away and die, if you don't mind my puttin' in my oar about it. When he gits these idees about somebody goin' to his island, and then it falls through, he moans and moans——" [61]

"Oh, Dad, I wish something could be done!" cried Marjorie. "I'll never forgive myself if we go away from here and leave that old man grieving!" She looked at Trask and caught a twinkle in his eye.

"Well, I'll send him back to the States if you feel that way about it," said Locke.

"He won't go," said Jarrow. "We've all tried to send him home. I offered to buy his ticket some time back, but he's got this island on the brain."

"Where is the island?" asked Trask. "I understand it isn't far."

"Oh, up the coast a piece," said Jarrow. "Take a week, say, to go and come back."

"A week!" said Locke. "I had an idea it was a long way off."

"Shucks!" said Jarrow. "No great shakes of a ways. With favourin' winds, a week would do it easy. Of course, if a man wanted to spend a lot of time there, diggin' around, that's a cat of another colour. But with a couple of days to look the place over in good shape, ten days would do it easy."

"Dad, why can't we go?" asked Marjorie. "Just to make Dinshaw happy! You said I might go any place I wanted to on this trip." [62]

"You mean to tell me you want to go schooner around out in this country, Marge?" Locke was astounded.

"It would be great fun."

"Great guns!" said Locke. "Don't you know a schooner isn't what a liner is? You can't have suites and stewards and fancy things to eat."

"You'll find it comfortable enough on the *Nuestra*," said Jarrow, his hopes rising. "A good Chink cook, a coloured steward, all hands a room to theirselves. All Cap'n Dinshaw needs is a mouthful of sea-air an' a deck under his feet. There's a whallopin' lot of gold there, too, or I miss stays. I know nobody believes him, but they didn't believe Columbus. I can't guarantee——"

"I'll go," said Trask, "if we can make the right sort of a deal."

"If you go, I'm in on it," declared Locke.

"Oh, Dad, you're a brick! I knew you'd go!"

Trask took Locke aside, to confer privately. "I want you to come, Mr. Locke," he said, "but I don't want to have you stand an expense which may be a dead loss——"

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"I won't go unless I can stand half," said Locke.

"Very well, but I'd rather not appear in the matter as the leader, because if I did, the newspapers would find out who I am and make it appear that my company was backing Dinshaw. I haven't authority to go on this trip, and if it turned out badly, a failure would be credited against the Consolidated, and it's a very conservative company. Here's a thousand dollars. Will you draw checks against it at your bank? And I'll go as your guest?"

"Certainly," said Locke. "I have an account current at the Chinese bank, which was to be transferred to Hong Kong, but I'll hold it here."

"All right. You give Jarrow a check as an advance and to buy supplies. We'll close the deal right now."

CHAPTER V

[64]

JARROW DOES AND SAYS QUEER THINGS

Mr. Peth was slinking about the bar like a leopard on a still hunt when Captain Jarrow returned from his conference which resulted in a tentative charter of the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, with himself as master and Peth as mate.

Jarrow was in a state bordering between exhaltation at his success and collapse over the narrow margin by which he had put through a deal which at one time appeared as elusive as a chimera.

"Give me a Picon, and make it strong," said Jarrow to the bar-boy, disregarding Peth, while he scrubbed his face with a handkerchief.

"Hook up?" asked Peth, edging along the bar until he had an elbow against Jarrow's side.

"Mighty Nelson!" whispered Jarrow. "It was a lee shore, and no mistake. Looney lied."

"Lied!" whispered Peth.

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"They never told him they wanted us," continued Jarrow, with due caution, glancing about the deserted bar. "But I put it through. They're swells and no mistake."

"Then it's a go, skipper?"

"We get out in the morning. It's to be quiet. We clear for Vigan with passengers. Take rock ballast this afternoon, and git stores aboard. Locke give me free rein for everything needed, and I'm to draw on him at the Hong Kong-Shanghai bank. We ought to clean up. Pipe down, here's the dude clerk."

"You saw Mr. Locke?" asked Wilkins, with a genial air, as he came in from the office, consumed with curiosity.

"Oh, yes," said Jarrow. "He's a nice man."

"Raw-ther," said Wilkins.

"I hear he's rich," said Jarrow.

Wilkins smiled knowingly. "Millions," he said.

Peth looked at Jarrow quickly, and whistled faintly through his teeth.

"I guess you know me," said Jarrow. "I been up here a few times now and then on business."

"You're a Manila man, aren't you?" asked Wilkins. "I don't place your name but your

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face is familiar."

"I'm Captain Jarrow, head of the Inter-Island Wreckin' Company. I got a big business, in a way. Everybody knows me in my line. I'm the man who done the divin' for the gover'ment."

"Oh, yes," said Wilkins.

"I'd like for you to say a good word for me, if it falls your way, to this Mr. Locke—and Trask."

"Sure," said Wilkins.

"Who does this Mr. Trask happen to be?" asked Jarrow.

"Mining man," said Wilkins.

"Oh."

"Yes, he was talking with Looney Dinshaw. Seems he came out here from China to look after the island. I knew him down in Colombo, when I managed a hotel."

"Lookin' for the island!" exclaimed Jarrow. "That's news to me."

"I thought maybe that's why you called," said Wilkins.

"Well, maybe I didn't and maybe I did. I have to keep a closed mouth. But if you'll say a word for me to these people—reliable and all that—I may put somethin' your way sometime."

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"I'll have a gin," said Peth.

"Glad to do what I can, sir," said Wilkins. "Support home industry, that's always been my motto. If I'm asked, I'll say the right sort of thing."

"Good for you," said Jarrow. "This is Mr. Peth, my mate. We got to slide," and waving his hand at Wilkins, Jarrow walked toward the veranda while Peth gulped his gin and trailed after him with alacrity.

The mate overtook the captain as the latter headed across the Luneta toward Malecon Drive, where the great king palms offered shade from the blinding sunlight.

Jarrow marched along, with head down, staring at the gravel. He gave no heed to Peth, who overtook him and fell in beside him.

"Millions," said Peth, presently.

"You ain't got the brains of a goose, Peth."

"What's the row?" demanded Peth.

"Can't you hear millions spoke of without actin' like a blasted whistlin' buoy?" demanded Jarrow, savagely.

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"I was took aback," said Peth.

"Took aback! This ain't no business for a man who's got to blow off steam in public the minute he sniffs somethin' good! Things like that might bust up the whole business—and sixty a day in it!"

"I don't see what I done, skipper," whined Peth.

"You done enough. Couldn't you see what I was drivin' at? You ain't got half an eye. That dude clerk, he can fix us solid with them people. What if he got an idea we was out to make money off 'em? This Locke'll go askin' that feller, so I had to prime him. Lucky he didn't notice your fidgets when he spoke of millions."

"You go make a mountain out of it," said Peth, as they turned into the Malecon and proceeded toward the river.

"Peth, you better not cross the bows of these people till we're ready for sea."

Peth turned his sharp face toward the captain and looked down on him with searching eyes, a trifle startled. He turned away and spat viciously. "I won't bite 'em," he growled.

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"They might bite you. We can't reckon on what these swells'll cotton to in a deal like this."

"Aint I big enough dude?"

"You ain't got no diplomacy."

Peth gritted his teeth gently. "Don't ye want me for mate?" he demanded, with a poor attempt to conceal his wrath.

"What's the matter of you?" asked Jarrow, looking at him in surprise.

"You that's sayin' it. You talk like I'm a horned toad or somethin', to set folks on the run the minute they clap eyes on me."

"Have sense," cautioned Jarrow. "We got a lot to do come sundown. Have sense. I'm the brain's, ain't I?"

"So you say, cap'n."

"I got my own meanin's. What if this Trask and the girl come down aboard this evenin' to look things over, and they don't like your looks first off?"

"What's my looks got to do with it? Ain't I dressed up?"

"Yes, good enough for me, but maybe not for them. They'll put a hole in our copper plates, charter or no charter, if they take a dislike to you. We can't take no chances."

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"Might as well see me first as last."

"Oh, no. Plenty of reasons for 'em comin' about on the whole business and leavin' us high and dry, except for the advance. They hop aboard a liner—what then?"

"Got to see me some time."

"Sure! Once to sea, they'll take things as they find 'em. But it's touch and go with us until we clear the bay, and don't forget that for a minute."

"What they want? Sody water gents for a crew?"

"Whatever they want, they'll have it, them swells."

"Then I ain't gallant enough for the likes o' you and this charter party, I take it," said Peth, his anger rising.

"I ain't findin' no fault with you myself, Peth. All I'm gallied about is what the others'll think. You're goin' mate, of course——"

"Thanks," said Peth, curtly. "You talk like I was ship's boy, not owner of an eighth of the *Nuestra*. Who helped you salve her? Who like to broke his back doin' of it? Peth did, that's who. Now he ain't good enough, once ye make fast to a millionaire."

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"You talk like an old mitten with the thumb brailed up," said Jarrow.

"Where was this millionaire feller when ye wanted a man to stand by and raise the *Nuestra*, I'd like——?"

"Belay that!" said Jarrow. "I'm talkin' for yer own good. There's money in this cruise for both of us. I got my own reasons, and that's enough. I'd look smart cuttin' you out of things, wouldn't I?"

"Well, all I can say, cap'n, ye don't need to take me mate if ye don't want to."

"Steady as she goes," said Jarrow, taking him by his arm. "You're mate, and I never had it my mind ye wouldn't go mate."

"All right, all right," growled Peth, shaking himself free. "I ain't goin' to fuss none. I don't want to be gammin' around with swells, no ways. But if I thought ye wanted to beach me——"

"Oh, git that out of yer head. You've got to git the crew together and I got to see Prayerful Jones afore Dinshaw gits back. Then I'll git the old man aboard and keep his jaw close to the wind. We got to run this thing on some basis. You'll find Doc Bird cookin' in a civilian mess out Malate way. We got to have him."

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"Will Doc cut loose from a shore berth for what looks like a v'yage to Vigan?"

"He'll cut loose from anything if he knows I want him," said Jarrow, in a tone significant of no doubts about the matter. "He's to be aboard in the mornin'—to-night would be better. When we git our ballast we'll lay out in the stream again. It's safer from talk."

"How safer?"

"From folks nosin' around. We can't have none of the crew hangin' 'longshore, ginnin' up. I'll fix the clearance myself, and see the commissioner."

"But I'm to have who I want for'ard," said Peth.

"That's it. You know who we want."

They hailed a *banca* and were rowed across the river, making a landing over a tier of *cascos*.

"I'll go over to the Cuartel and pass the word for the men and do a little lookin' myself," said Peth.

"Keep Dinshaw there half an hour," suggested Jarrow.

Peth looked at him suspiciously.

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"What's the game?"

"Never mind me or the game."

"I seem to be kind o' out on the aidge o' things," growled the mate.

"You keep Dinshaw from shootin' off his face, that's all you got to do, and don't let Van know how things swung at the Bay View. I'm goin' to keep this business under gratin's."

"You don't need to fret," said Peth. "I ain't fixin' to break nothin' out," and he tracked away to the Cuartel, weaving in and out among the litter of goods on the Mole.

Jarrow stood and watched him disappear into the Cuartel. "I ain't never had no luck with him," he remarked. "I hope he breaks his fool neck, that's what I hope. He'll mess things up for me yit."

CHAPTER VI

[74]

MR. PETH IS PARTICULAR ABOUT WHERE HE SLEEPS

Early in the morning, when Manila was turning over for another nap, a victoria from the Bay View took Locke, Trask, and Marjorie over the Bridge of Spain and through Plaza Moraga to the landing steps, where the tug which was to take the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* to sea was waiting to put the voyagers aboard the schooner. The *Nuestra* was at anchor down the bay.

As they got out of the carriage a black man hopped ashore from the tug and made for their baggage.

"I'm Doc Bird, the steward," he said. "I reckon yo' all is fo' Cap'n Jarrow's packet?"

"We are," said Locke. "Is everything ready?"

"Never gon' be no readier, sir," said the steward, who looked smart in a suit of white and a jaunty cap. Instead of a shirt, he wore a gaudy cotton sweater with stripes running athwart his body, red and blue, after the manner of a convict's clothes.

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"Then we're off," said Locke, as he helped Marjorie aboard, while Trask superintended the job of getting their bags aboard, at which task the native crew of the tug assisted the steward.

In a minute they were heading down the river. As they cleared the old transport docks they made out the *Nuestra* well off the breakwater, her brown, bare masts rising like spires from her black hull, and the morning sun glinting from a strip of brass on her taffrail. They could see busy figures aboard, and as they drew nearer Captain Jarrow appeared on the poop-deck smoking a cigar. He was all in white, his queer cockle-shell straw hat fastened to a button of his coat by a cord.

They had visited the schooner the night before, under the pilotage of Jarrow, before Locke had signed the agreement which was practically a charter, at sixty dollars a day. She had six rooms in her main cabin in addition to the galley and lazarette, and while they were small, they were comfortable enough and satisfactory.

No one was aboard during the brief visit, but Mr. Bevins, the second mate, and one man of the crew. Bevins's manners were ingratiating and he wore a constant smile, due more to some defect of his facial muscles than chronic geniality. The other man was a big fellow with much tattooing on his hands and wrists. Captain Jarrow summoned him to the cabin door and introduced him as "Shope, who was to go b'sun."

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"There's Captain Dinshaw!" cried Marjorie, as the *patron* steered the tug to come alongside.

Dinshaw had popped up over the starboard bulwark, and watched the tug maneuver with critical eye.

"And all dressed up," said Trask, smiling, as he observed that Dinshaw wore a white suit and sported an official-looking cap with a white top.

"The old man shore thinks he's the skipper," remarked Doc Bird.

"How's that?" asked Locke.

"He's a-bossin' everybody," replied the steward. "Thinks he's in his old brig what he

lost on his island."

"The old dear!" said Marjorie. "Isn't he pathetic? He looks thoroughly happy!"

Dinshaw stood with his hands on the bulwark, and looked down at the tug, his head askew like an observant fowl.

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"Don't scratch the paint!" he shouted to the *patron* of the tug. "Mind what ye're at!"

"Paint!" laughed Locke. "Couldn't hurt that paint with a crowbar."

"Glad to see ye in good time, Mr. Locke," called Jarrow, and then stepped back to escape the smoke from the tug's funnel, calling to Peth to see that the ladder was put over.

After a deal of fussing and bawling on the part of the tug's crew, she was nestled alongside the schooner, and Jarrow was at the rail to assist them over the side.

"I told ye I'd go," said Dinshaw, proudly, taking off his cap to Marjorie as she jumped down to the deck. "This lady knows, and she wanted to go to my island. Thank ye, ma'am! Good mornin'."

"Indeed I do want to go," laughed Marjorie. "And I hope we'll find your island, too, captain."

"Thank ye, ma'am. We'll find it right enough," and with a hasty bow he waddled forward importantly, to oversee the getting of the anchor and the passing of the towing hawser.

But the tug remained alongside after Locke and Trask had climbed over into the waist and the baggage was transferred by Doc Bird.

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"Oh," said Jarrow, as the *patron* mounted the ladder and grinned at them, hat in hand, "this boy wants his towage."

"How much?" asked Locke, taking out a large roll of yellow American bills.

"I'd give him a check," advised Jarrow, "if you've got your book."

"All right," said Locke, and he followed Jarrow into the cabin while Trask and Marjorie went to the poop-deck. The *Nuestra* looked clean as a pin and fresh as a maker's model. Her decks had been scrubbed until the caulking in the seams looked like lines of black paint on old ivory. Her standing rigging had been newly tarred, her bright work polished, and the water casks lashed in the waist had their hoops painted a bright yellow, not yet dry. New hemp hung in the belaying pins. The roof of the cabin, covered by a tarpaulin, gleamed with oil and yellow paint. She had been scrubbed and freshened until she had quite the aspect of a yacht.

"This beats waiting around Hong Kong," said Marjorie, as they stood looking forward. She looked quite nautical in a suit of white duck and a yachting cap pinned to her flaxen hair. Trask thought she appeared entrancingly healthy and "out of doors."

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"It's going to be a jolly fine trip," said Trask. "I hope you'll enjoy it one hundredth as much as I do."

"But gold-mine hunting is no novelty to you," she said.

"It's the first time I've actually gone to sea in search of a gold mine. And there are other reasons which make this trip unique."

"You are absurdly reticent, Mr. Trask."

"Under the circumstances it would be unfair to state the facts in their blunt simplicity," he retorted, with a smile.

"You mean father and me?"

"Mostly you," and he moved forward abruptly to tell Doc Bird to put his bags in his room.

Locke and Jarrow came out of the main cabin and paid off the *patron* of the tug.

"Well, we're off," said Locke, coming aft, as Jarrow went forward to oversee the getting of the anchor and the passing of the hawser. Bevins came aft presently and took the wheel, and in a few minutes the *Nuestra* started down the bay at the end of her leash.

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Well under way, Jarrow called Peth to the main cabin and introduced him to Marjorie, Locke, and Trask, who had been summoned below for the assignment of their rooms.

Peth stood in the doorway and bowed, looking quite smart and respectable in clean dungarees, and though he said nothing but "How de do," he gave the impression of affability mixed with shyness. He missed no detail of Trask's clothing, and seemed to

measure the young man's strength as he looked him up and down.

"Now, Miss Locke, you'll have this room aft, to port, next is Mr. Locke, and then Mr. Trask. Then comes the cabin stores. I'll be aft to starboard, Mr. Peth and Captain Dinshaw next, the cook and the steward, and the galley——"

"If ye don't mind, cap'n," interrupted Peth, "I'd not want to bunk with the old man. I got to be up and around nights."

"All right," said Jarrow. "There are two bunks in Mr. Trask's room here. Maybe you wouldn't find it out of the way if Mr. Peth took the lower?"

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"Not at all," said Trask. "I'll sleep soundly enough."

"My gear's in there now," said Peth, and he went out on deck.

"I'd git my stuff all opened up and stowed while we're in the bay," suggested Jarrow. "There may be a swell on outside, and then it's goin' to be hot below as the sun climbs. Tom! How's that coffee comin' on?"

The fat Chinese cook looked out from the galley, a white cap on his head and an apron tied about him. He grinned pleasantly, and replied that the coffee was on the fire.

"We had breakfast," said Locke.

"I'd take a nip of coffee," said Jarrow. "Now then, here's Doc Bird to help open your gear. Anything you want, ask for it, and you, Doc, keep an eye out to make all hands comfortable. I got to go up now."

Trask followed the captain up the companion and left Marjorie and her father below, until he was called to have his coffee. When they went on deck again Corregidor Island was astern, rising out of the channel like a derelict battleship.

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To starboard, close aboard beyond the stretch of sun-dazzled sea, was the coast of Bataan, with the brown fuzzy mountains behind Mariveles shouldering into the sky. Point Luzon marked the limit of the land over the starboard bow, and on the port side the shining China Sea reached away to the horizon.

The jib and foresail were already set although the tug had not cast off. Soon they began to fill, and as Peth bawled to the tug, the hawser was dropped, and tooting a farewell, the little boat swung in a wide arc and headed back for Manila.

Peth came aft and routed Doc Bird from under the mainsail boom where the steward sat peeling potatoes. Dinshaw kept moving about, repeating the orders of the mate, or talking to himself.

The crew were all white, in accordance with the orders of Locke, who had declared that he did not want to undertake the voyage with natives forward.

The breeze from landward died as the main was being set, and the *Nuestra* began to roll gently as she fell off. For a few minutes she threatened to follow the tug back to Manila, with many lurches and angry snappings of blocks.

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"We'll git a clinkin' good breeze from the south'ard when we're off the land," said Jarrow, glancing aloft to the windvane on the mizzen truck. It was flopping about like a dead fish on a gaff.

Before long the foresail began to fret its sheets, and Bevins got her head to seaward. Then there came from astern a hot, puffy breeze, and the schooner stood out on a port tack, curvetting prettily as her sails were trimmed and filled.

One of the crew, hailed as Pennock, now came aft and took the wheel, and Bevins went forward. Captain Dinshaw went into the cabin, and looking down, Trask could see him bent over the table, sucking a stub of a pencil and studying a sheet of paper.

"What's the bearin' and distance of Point Luzon?" he called up the companion.

Jarrow looked at Locke and smiled.

"Northwest, five miles," called Jarrow, after a look at the compass and the land.

"What course ye steerin'?"

"Nor'wes'bywes'."

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"Variation, one degree east," remarked Dinshaw, and went back to his figuring, talking to himself and scratching his head. From his conduct since sailing it was obvious that he intended to hold himself aloof from the rest of the party.

"Thinks he's navigatin'," whispered Jarrow, with a wink to Trask.

"He looks a lot better than he did," said Locke. "Has more colour and walks with more vigour."

"Good eatin'," said Jarrow. "He perked right up the minute he come aboard. Acts like he's master. Don't do no harm, only Mr. Peth gits rubbed the wrong way sometimes. I say, if the old man gits any fun out of thinkin' it's his own schooner, what's the odds?"

"How did you come out on getting anything certain about the position of his island?" asked Locke. "From what you said last night it was a sure thing."

"Oh, we know where we're goin' right enough," said Jarrow.

"Then he's given you some more data?"

"We ain't goin' on his say-so. He give me the leaf out of his old log, with his noon position the day before he was lifted off his course by the typhoon."

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"Is that enough?"

"We ought to run slap into his island. It's one of the Capones, off the Zambales coast. There's a whole flock of 'em, but the one I figure on stands out from the rest, from what I've worked."

"Wilkins, at the hotel, was telling me the geodetic people couldn't find the island."

"Wilkins?" Jarrow turned and looked at Locke intently. "Oh, yes. Did he say anything about me?"

"Yes, he spoke very highly of you."

"Well, it's this way," said Jarrow, after a thoughtful pause. "The old man didn't give 'em the right position. He said he'd piled up near one of the Sisters, just to the south'ard of the Little Sister, to be exact. But that's more'n sixty miles north of where the *Wetherall* struck. Ye see, the old man didn't want nobody to find the island if he couldn't go himself. But he's all right now."

Peth came up the weather side of the poop, and seeing the trio with the captain, turned abruptly to go forward again.

"Did you want to see me, Mr. Peth?" called Jarrow.

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The mate stopped, and pushing his cap to the back of his head, grumbled an assent.

"What about?" asked Jarrow, leaning his elbows on the top of the cabin trunk.

"I wanted to speak private," said Peth, grumblingly.

"Well, sing out," said Jarrow.

"Thought I'd speak to ye about where I'd bunk, sir," said Peth.

"Didn't we settle that?" demanded Jarrow, with considerable surprise.

"Not to my tastes," said the mate.

"What's the trouble?"

"I thought I'd take my gear out, if it's all the same to you, sir."

"Out where?"

"Out of that room, sir."

"Where'd ye want to bunk?"

"I thought I'd bunk for'ard. Bevins is with the men——"

"Well, you're the mate," said Jarrow. "Ye don't want to be with the crew, do ye?"

"I thought mebbe if I moved for'ard I wouldn't be in the way."

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"Nobody's said anything 'bout ye bein' in the way," said Jarrow, with rising temper.

"I'd be a heap more comfortable, sir," insisted Peth.

"I won't be at all disturbed," said Trask, getting out of his deck chair so that he could see Peth.

"I reckon I'd rather be for'ard," repeated the mate, doggedly.

Captain Dinshaw came up through the companion, and started toward Peth, glaring at the mate.

"What's this? What's this?" cried Dinshaw.

"Better keep quiet, sir, and let me handle it," said Jarrow in a low tone. Then to Peth: "If ye think ye'll be more comfortable for'ard, Peth, why, that's your lookout. We'll let it stand that way till we talk it over and——"

"Bad for discipline to have the mate for'ard with the crew," shouted Dinshaw. "Ye'll

stay with the afterguard, Mr. Peth. I'm master here. That's all."

"Who is skipper, anyhow?" demanded Peth.

"I'm skipper," said Jarrow. "No use of gittin' excited up this way. Captain Dinshaw, ye'll please me if ye go below. Now we'll go for'ard and talk this over, Mr. Peth. I won't have no disputin' aboard me." He hurried after Peth, and they went forward of the foremast, talking in low tones. [88]

"Captain Dinshaw!" said Locke, as the old man started to descend the stairs to the cabin.

"Dad!" warned Marjorie. "Don't hurt his feelings."

"Yes, sir," said Dinshaw.

"Don't you want to go to your island?" asked Locke, gently.

"Yes, sir."

"Then we can't have this sort of thing, or I'll turn back to Manila. Captain Jarrow is in command."

"I know now, sir," said Dinshaw, rubbing his forehead with his hand, as if to brush away something which affected his vision. "It's all clear in my head, sir—I git kind o' dreamy, sir."

"All right," said Locke. "You'd better go down and keep out of the sun. It's all right this time, but you know we must not have a division of authority. Captain Jarrow is master."

"Very good, sir." And Dinshaw, somewhat crestfallen, went below. [89]

"I merely wanted to take a hand in things," said Locke. "Better for me to chip the old man and keep him quiet than for Jarrow to give him fits."

"And I'm as well satisfied that Mr. Peth is going to live in the forecabin, if that's a measure of his temper," said Trask, who was more annoyed by the mate's request than he allowed the Lockes to see.

"I didn't like his looks from the first," said Marjorie.

"Oh, things'll get shaken down," said Locke. "But I'll give Jarrow to understand that we don't want to hear any more quarrels."

Trask and Marjorie left their chairs on the lee side of the poop, and leaned against the rail, the better to see what was taking place forward, where they could hear Jarrow and Peth in quiet argument. From their gestures it was plain that in spite of Jarrow's pleas Peth was still obdurate.

Pennock, the man at the wheel, gave no sign that he had heard any of the conversation aft, but stared over the top of the cabin trunk, glancing aloft now and then at the sails, and watching the compass. The crew were busy wetting down the decks, having swept them after clearing a litter of rope and boxes. [90]

Soon Captain Jarrow came back, looking red and flustered, his cigar out and badly chewed. He made an attempt to light it, but gave up the attempt and threw it over the side.

"I'm sorry to see this happen, Mr. Locke," said Jarrow finally, as if he felt that he must say something to restore a pleasant status.

"You know I've half a mind to put back to Manila and throw him ashore," said Locke, severely. "We're here for pleasure, Captain Jarrow, and we can't have any such scenes. My daughter's worried."

"Oh, Mr Peth's all right," said Jarrow. "His bark's worse'n his bite. He feels a little awkward with you folks aboard, that's all. It was the old man scraped him."

"I've already chipped the old man about it," said Locke. "I wish you'd let the matter drop. What did Mr. Peth decide to do?"

"He's set on bunkin' with the men," said Jarrow.

"All right, then, he can mess with the men," said Locke. "We won't have him aft at all."

"All right," said Jarrow, and fell to pacing the weather side of the poop, his hands clasped behind his back. [91]

In a few minutes Peth came clumping down the waist and, calling two of the crew, went into the main cabin. There was a banging of doors, heard above the clatter of Shanghai Tom's chopping tray, and then Peth went forward, carrying clothes under both arms, followed by two men with his sea-chest.

The schooner was bowling along now at a good rate, marching away from the land steadily, and making little leeway. Trask went below, ostensibly to have his bag unpacked, but really to have a talk with Doc Bird. Also, he had an automatic pistol which he thought he would get out and clean. He suspected that it would do no harm to have it known that there were weapons among the "passengers."

CHAPTER VII

[92]

TRASK HAS A TALK WITH DOC BIRD

Calling Doc Bird from the galley, Trask set about putting his things in order in his room, and sent the steward inside to open the biggest bag, which was secured with straps.

"I reckon we better take this out, sir," suggested Doc, as he made an effort to get the straps loose. He found it hard to work in the narrow little room.

"No," said Trask, "open it in here." He stood in the doorway, and let the door rest against his back, holding it partly closed with one hand. It was his purpose to keep Doc shut in, and so be able to question him without being overheard.

"Mighty hard to open," said Doc, down on his knees, struggling with the straps. It was hot in the room, and rather dark, as the deadlight to the poop-deck was fogged by sea water.

"You're new to the schooner, aren't you?" asked Trask.

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"Yassir. I jus' shipped fo' the roun' trip."

"How long have you known Mr. Peth?" Trask kept his voice low, and bent down to Doc.

"Yassir. I know Mr. Peth. I know him fo' a long time."

"Have you sailed with him before?"

"Yassir. I been along with Cap'n Jarrow an' Mr. Peth off an' on six years. Got a key fo' this hyar satchel?"

"It isn't locked. Just press the lock to the left."

"You mighty ca'less with yo' possessions," said Doc with a chuckle.

"What sort of a man is Mr. Peth?"

"Catch me with my stuff sailin' around loose. Some o' these hyar native trash go'n walk off wid you, bag an' baggage, if you don' watch out, man."

"Why do you suppose Mr. Peth wanted to move out of here?"

"Oh, he's just kind o' techy."

"How do you mean?"

"Kind o' uppish. He don' git along wid nobody, nohow, Mr. Peth don't."

"He's been with Captain Jarrow a long time, hasn't he?"

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Doc turned his head sidewise and looked at Trask, and then looked out into the main cabin, as if to make sure no one was listening before he went on.

"A lion an' a lamb," he said, in a scared whisper.

"And Peth's the lion?"

"Yassir, you got it. Peth, he'd fight with his own gran'mother, that man. Argue en argue en argue. He ain't fixin' to hurt nobody when he talks, but when he stops talkin'—excuse me!"

"What does he do when he stops talking?"

"If ol' Doc Bird's on the lan'scape, he hunts a hole an' he crawls in when Mr. Peth he begins to act up."

"You mean you're afraid of him?"

"Not exac'ly what you'd go an' call 'fraid, but I don' take no chances." He chuckled again, and wagged his head. He could not manipulate the lock to get the bag open, and Trask reached down and showed him how it was done.

"Then you consider Mr. Peth a dangerous man?"

"He sho' is."

"How is he dangerous?"

"Well, Mr. Trask, I don' lak' to go an' say nothin' agin a man, 'specially when he's matin' round a boat what I'm in." [95]

"Oh, I suppose he's rough with a sailor if it suits his fancy," said Trask, convinced now that Doc was merely making talk, and telling a yarn simply to impress him.

"He wouldn't look twice to hang somethin' on a man's haid, Mr. Peth wouldn't. I done saw him stab a man once, not no sailorman, neither, stab him right in the back o' the neck with one o' these hyar Sweden knives with a ring on the handle. He was a planter down Zamboanga way, an' a genelman like you, in white clothes. He come sassin' round Mr. Peth on the pier. He won't sass 'round no mo', mos' certain."

"Fol-de-rol," said Trask. "You're trying to make him out a bad man. I want to know something about him."

"Ain't I tellin' of ye?" asked Doc. "Who all can tell ye, if I don'? Reckon that Zamboanga planter's gwine come back to life jes' fo' talkin' purposes, Mr. Trask?"

"But he and Captain Jarrow must get along if they've been together for several years." [96]

"Git along, man! Them two don' git along, not the way we-all say it. Mr. Peth an' de cap'n? Huh! Them two git along smooth as a houn' dawg in a brier patch."

"They quarrel a lot, eh?"

"Fight ain' no name fer it. Mr. Peth he owns part of this hyar schooner, an' Cap'n Jarrow he wants fer to git him out. I look for him to drap Mr. Peth over the side some fine night—if Mr. Peth don' drap him fust."

"Then that's why Mr. Peth didn't want to sleep aft here?"

"Mos' doubtless. He pick up his traps an' go. Mr. Peth he done ship de crew. Yo' don' reckon he picked out Cap'n Jarrow's Sunday friends, does ye? No, suh. Mr. Peth, he knows what he's a-doin' of. He looks to be with his own friends when he goes for'ard."

"Well, that's a nice arrangement, to have the mate in with the crew and opposed to the captain."

"Won't do no harm thataway," said Doc with much assurance.

"Why not?"

"I reckon Cap'n Jarrow's got some friends along." [97]

"I suppose you side with the captain, eh?"

"I mos' certain do. Old Doc Bird knows whar his bread is buttered, an' he keeps right close alongside de skipper."

"Mr. Peth knows that?"

"Mr. Peth never gits no chance to fergit it. An' the cook, he ain' got no use fo' Mr. Peth."

"I see."

"He better not go argufyin' with Shanghai Tom."

"Why not? What could the cook do?"

"Do?" Doc looked up and rolled his eyes, listened a second to make sure the cook was busy in the galley, and then went on: "Do? He'd let a meat axe in him. Yo' jes' want to stand clear if yo' see Mr. Peth an' Tom lookin' crossways at each other. My goodness, Mr. Trask, yo' sho' got a powerful lot of stuff in this grip-sack!"

"Yes, it's tightly packed. Take the stuff out and put it in the upper bunk. I'll use the lower. So Peth and Jarrow fight. Do you mean to tell me there's always fighting? That it amounts to anything more than arguments?"

"Fight! Lord-amighty! Them two! They'd rather fight en a yaller dawg likes fo' to worry a hambone. Not out an' out strakin', but jes' kind o' pickin' en a pickin'; insultin' like. But Mr. Peth he's makin' to do somebody hurt some time." [98]

"Let 'em fight," said Trask, and he began to help Doc hand out the clothing from the bag which the steward stowed above. When the bag was partly empty Trask opened a leather pocket that was fitted to one of the compartments. He gave an exclamation of surprise as he found it empty. It was in this pocket that his automatic revolver was ordinarily carried.

"What's the matter?" asked Doc.

"Oh, nothing. I've misplaced something, that's all."

"Yo' don' reckon Mr. Locke'll go an' git skeered 'count o' Mr. Peth's carryin' on, does ye?"

"I don't believe anybody in this party is very scared of Mr. Peth."

"Now, Miss Locke, she's a powerful nice lady. I knows quality folks the minute I comes across 'em. Now yo', Mr. Trask, is all off yo' cou'se."

"What do you mean?"

"Yo' all ain' no business fo' mixin' in with a ship full o' low-down rakin's an' scrapin's like we got aboard hyar."

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"You mean Captain Jarrow and Mr. Peth?"

"Crew," said Doc.

"What about the crew?"

"Bad lot."

"You mean the crew can't be trusted?"

"Honest enough, sho'ly, but they ain't in yo' all's set. Now I know quality folks, an' when I sot eyes on yo' all, I like fo' to throwed a fit. Huh! 'Ristocrats ain' no business hoppin' along in a boat like this. I go fo' to know 'ristocrats when I sees 'em. I was a pantry man in a Suezer."

"But this isn't any tea-party to which the crew are invited."

"Huh! Don' yo' go fo' to fool yo' self."

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" said Trask. "What are you trying to do? Make me afraid of everybody in the schooner?"

Doc scratched his woolly head and rolled his eyes.

"I ain't got nothin' mo' fo' to say," he declared, with an air of mystery.

Doc was getting a trifle too chummy to suit Trask, and he thought it high time to bring the discussion to a close. While he felt Doc might be valuable as a friend and an ally, the garrulous steward might prove to be dangerous as a gossip. Trask feared that he had made a mistake by discussing the ship's affairs with him, so he gave the black man a generous tip and dismissed him with a caution against repeating anything that had been said.

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"If yo' go to need any advice, Mr. Trask, jes' yo' call on me," he whispered as he went out. "I don't let nothin' what might come in handy slip by me."

"Thanks," said Trask, who realized that this was a direct offer to turn spy against Captain Jarrow and Peth. He did not care to enter into any sort of an arrangement yet felt that it would be wise to retain friendly relations with the steward.

"If I pick up anything, Mr. Trask, I'll put a bug in yo' ear."

"All right," said Trask. "But I don't favour your spying on anybody for my sake. You're merely to let me know in case anything goes on that I should know, which relates to the safety of all hands."

"Oh, I ain' go'n to do no snoopin'," said Doc, with one of his peculiar chuckles. "But I looks fer carryin's on."

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"I don't want you gossiping," said Trask. Doc was promising to become something of a nuisance.

"Yassir," said the steward, and went away to the galley.

Trask now gave his complete attention to emptying the bag which should have contained the pistol. He made a careful search. But the pistol was gone and he was sure he had packed it that morning at the hotel, together with two boxes of ammunition.

So he ransacked every possible place where the pistol could be misplaced among his effects. But after going through two smaller bags, and shaking out every bit of clothing, even to folding up the sheets and blankets on both bunks, he was sure the pistol was gone.

So far as Trask knew, the only person besides Doc Bird to cross the threshold of his room was Peth. But the mate had been there only a few minutes. Whoever the thief was, he apparently had gone through the bag looking for arms, for nothing else had been disturbed. And it must have taken some time to open the straps and put them

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back in place, for the leather was stiff and the buckles difficult to manage. Trask had found the ends of the straps tucked in under the leather bands, just as he had fixed them himself at the hotel.

Besides, to get the pistol and ammunition the leather pocket had to be opened, and Trask had found the flap back in place and buckled down. Likewise, the bag had been opened before his own eyes by Doc Bird, and he had stood over the steward while it was unpacked.

Doc couldn't have known the pistol was there, for immediately the bag was opened he stood up and let Trask pass out the contents. Peth had been in the room probably fifteen minutes, and part of that time two of the crew were with him.

Trask knew it would be unfair to charge Peth with the theft of the pistol, or to question the mate about it, and to report his loss to Jarrow might precipitate more trouble on top of the ill-feeling which had already cropped out aboard the schooner.

So he decided to wait and take the matter up at a time more convenient for an investigation. [103]

Trask left his room and went out on deck as if nothing had happened to arouse his suspicions against anybody in the vessel. But he had an idea that Peth might know what had become of the automatic pistol.

CHAPTER VIII [104]

HOW THE SCHOONER ARRIVED OFF THE ISLAND

Trask found Captain Jarrow pacing the weather side of the poop-deck when he went up. The captain seemed to be in ill-humour, as if his tilt with Peth had not been settled to his liking, and his attitude that of shame for having lost his face so soon with his "passengers."

He nodded pleasantly to Trask, who observed that his bronzed face appeared flushed with anger. There was a savage glint in his eye in spite of his silent geniality.

Trask leaned against the taffrail, waiting to see if Jarrow would speak, and if the captain's mood warranted it, intended to report the loss of his pistol.

Locke and Marjorie were in deck chairs around the cabin on the lee side, sheltered from sun and wind to some degree by the sail over their heads.

But Jarrow said nothing, continuing to pace from the break of the poop and aft, ignoring Trask, but keeping a watchful eye on the man at the helm and the sails. His manner indicated that he did not wish to engage in conversation, but preferred to consider matters which required careful thought. [105]

Dinshaw was standing at the port bulwark abreast of the mainmast, gazing out over the sea in a reflective way, and looking quite forlorn and chastened. The crew, in skylarking style, were drawing water over the side with buckets and throwing it down the deck from forward, so that Dinshaw frequently had to pull himself up on the bulwark to avoid having his feet wet.

This gaiety forward was in striking contrast to the sense of gloom which had come over the after part of the schooner. Not that any one was suffering any discomforts from the fact that Jarrow had clashed with the mate, unless it were Jarrow himself, but Peth's irascibility had checked the holiday air with which the schooner's company had put to sea. But the crew had suddenly become gleeful, as if the quarrel between master and mate had provided a great joke.

Peth was walking about forward, in bare feet, growling out a word now and then, and obviously going to great pains not to look aft. When his back was turned from them the sailors indulged in grins and back-slappings and other rough demonstrations of their knowledge that the "afterguard" were not on agreeable terms. [106]

This prankish mood of the crew was shown in their efforts to make Dinshaw uncomfortable. It was plain to Trask that they wanted to arouse the old man's ire, or pick on him in a sneaking way, to let him know that he had lost his previous standing with them. It was all undoubtedly meant to have petty revenge on him for the way he had been lording it about before Peth had quarrelled with Jarrow. They seemed to have an idea that because Peth had come forward, they could show the old captain disrespect.

In a way it was all harmless enough, yet Trask felt that neither Peth nor Jarrow should allow such lax discipline. Dinshaw belonged aft, and for that reason to treat him with contumely was a reflection on everybody aft. But Trask thought that it was

no time to call the captain's attention to what was going on, partly because Dinshaw should have remained aft while such work was being done, and partly because a criticism from Jarrow would undoubtedly cause a renewal of the row that should be allowed to blow over.

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The crew's jeering attitude was soon brought out in another manner while Trask remained near the captain. Doc Bird went to the lee side to throw over some refuse from the galley, and before he could make his escape back to the galley one of the men, whom Trask knew to be Shope, hurled a bucket of water in such fashion that Doc's legs were wet.

The steward said something which Trask did not understand, but which must have been suitable to the occasion, for Shope took anger at once, and advanced on the negro threateningly. But Doc ran back to the galley, and his voice, raised in remonstrance, could be heard as he expressed opinions to Shanghai Tom about Shope.

If there had been no trouble in the schooner Trask would have thought nothing of the incident, and might have enjoyed it as a harmless joke. But he saw that the crew seemed to be openly antagonistic to all hands aft, for the others joined in open laughter at the discomfiture of the steward. And what was more significant, Peth and Jarrow saw what happened, but both ignored it. The crew were evidently taking advantage of the relations between master and mate, and seemed bent on stirring up fresh discord.

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In a few minutes Jarrow went below, without looking at Trask, and from the set of his jaw Trask knew that his anger was growing. Presently he heard Jarrow talking in a gruff way to Doc Bird, and the latter's whining and conciliatory voice in argument.

"I don't want no back slack from the likes o' you," Jarrow said, and Doc subsided.

Trask went around to where Locke and Marjorie were sitting, and with his back against the side of the cabin trunk, sat and chatted.

At lunch time Captain Jarrow joined them at table, and made special efforts to renew the good-fellowship of the schooner, chiefly by a careful avoidance of any mention of Peth. He made jokes and told stories and except for a wicked look now and then at Doc Bird, was very jolly and agreeable, so that he made a decidedly good impression on Locke and Marjorie. But Trask had some doubts of his natural affability and was inclined toward the belief that Jarrow was hardly so angelic as he painted himself.

Dinshaw did not appear at table. On investigation it was found that the old man was in the waist boat taking a nap and he was not disturbed.

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Peth came aft shortly, and while Marjorie, Trask, and Locke played cards at the cabin table, Jarrow and the mate had a long, low-toned conference, which ended by Jarrow's coming down and going to his room.

"Everything's all right," he said to Locke, with a vigorous wink, and pointed up the companion with his thumb.

"You mean he comes back?" asked Locke.

"No, sir, he stays for'ard, but it's all smoothed out. He ain't a bad sort when ye rub him the right way," and thereupon disappeared for his afternoon sleep.

When the card party broke up, and the trio went to the poop-deck, Peth was all smiles, and arranged their chairs on the starboard side. But Locke practically ignored him, except to be officially pleasant, as it had been agreed that unless the mate asked permission to come aft again his status should be exactly like that of the crew. So far as Trask could judge, Peth seemed perfectly agreeable to that arrangement, and once he had given formal assistance, went back to the weather side, and kept to himself.

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Dinshaw crawled out from his nook in the waist boat, rubbed his eyes, and looked about him in a dazed sort of way, and then went into the cabin to wheedle Doc Bird out of a meal after which he hid himself away in his room and remained there until dinner.

"Well," said Jarrow, as he watched Doc Bird light the cabin lamp. "We ought to raise the island some time before noon if this breeze holds."

"Good enough," said Locke. "But I can't say I'm in any particular hurry to get anywhere. I've had the best rest and loaf to-day I've had in a long time."

"We've certainly walked along," said Trask.

"Oh, the old gal can go," said Jarrow, proudly. "Mr. Peth has kept her diggin' along. We've logged near ten knots steady. I never looked to march like we have. If we keep it up through the night, we ought to have supper the next time at anchor."

"Then Captain Dinshaw and I'll be able to start our prospecting early," said Trask,

with a nod at the old captain.

"I can take ye right to the place," said Dinshaw, eagerly. "Ye won't have no trouble to find gold with me along."

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"You people better draw up an agreement as to who's to have all this gold," said Locke, with a waggish smile. "Suppose we fill this schooner up with yellow stuff? Who owns it?"

"Share and share alike," suggested Dinshaw. "I'll make ye all rich."

"You mean me and all hands?" asked Jarrow. Trask looked to Dinshaw for a reply, a trifle surprised at Jarrow's question, for of course the schooner's crew could claim no share of anything, as Jarrow was being paid for his part in the expedition and was taking no chances of being out of pocket if the island proved to be a fiasco.

"No, sir," said Dinshaw, a little ruffled. "What's you and all hands got to do with this v'yage, outside of doin' yer duty?"

"Can't ye take a little joke?" demanded Jarrow, with a wry grin. "Think we're goin' to run away with yer island?"

Dinshaw became confused at this, and stared at the others helplessly. Marjorie spoke up and reassured the old man that no one wanted to cheat him out of what was his, and he went on eating, content.

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But Jarrow's sharpness put an end to the pleasant relations which had been resumed. In a few minutes he found an excuse to leave the table and did not come back.

"We certainly have joined a happy family," said Locke. "If it wasn't that we were so near to this island, I'd be for turning the schooner around and——"

"Oh, Dad!" said Marjorie. "Don't take it so seriously! I want to see the island."

"So do I, but I hate to hear everybody aboard barking at everybody else. First it's Mr. Peth, and now the captain's on his high horse. They're not being paid to perform like a box of wild-cats, and I'll inform Captain Jarrow to that effect before long if things don't change."

"He wants to steal my island!" whispered Dinshaw.

Doc Bird, who was serving the coffee, started visibly, and looked at Dinshaw in amazement.

"What's that?" asked Locke, and Trask and Marjorie turned to the old captain.

"Jarrow and Peth want to steal my island and have all the gold," insisted Dinshaw, his face tragic.

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"Steward, give my compliments to Captain Jarrow and tell him I'd speak to him," said Locke.

"I wouldn't do that," cautioned Trask. "Let's see what this is about. I don't think it's wise to jump at conclusions. What makes you think they're going to steal your island?"

"Call the cap'n, sir?" asked Doc, on his way to the companion.

"Never mind," said Locke.

"What reason have you for believing that Jarrow and Peth want to steal your gold, captain?" asked Trask, gently.

"I know," said Dinshaw, wagging his head.

"How do you know?"

"I—I dreamed it. I was asleep out there in the long boat and heard 'em talking."

"We can't very well blame Jarrow for what you dream," said Locke, relieved that there was nothing more substantial to Dinshaw's charges than a dream.

"I didn't dream it," said Dinshaw, with sudden conviction. "I heard 'em talk. Jarrow said if there was gold on the island, he and Peth was to have it for themselves."

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Doc chuckled, and showed his teeth in a broad smile, with a sly wink at Trask.

"He talks in his sleep," whispered Doc into Trask's ear, as he bent over to remove a plate.

"Don't you worry," said Locke. "Nobody's going to cheat you, and I'm here to see that they don't. But I'd keep quiet about my dreams, if I wanted to go on to the island, or we'll be back in Manila in three shakes of a lamb's tail."

"Very good, sir," said Dinshaw.

Trask was between two minds to tell Locke that his pistol had been stolen, for while he placed little credence in what Dinshaw had said, he began to wonder if there wasn't something going on aboard the schooner that promised trouble. What if Dinshaw had not been dreaming after all? Suppose Peth and Jarrow were plotting to play all hands double?

But it would be silly to abandon the voyage just as they were about to arrive at the island, and while undoubtedly there had been gossip and conjecture about the island, it was quite possible that if Dinshaw had overheard some light talk, he had misinterpreted its import.

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Trask knew that Locke's attitude was now such that if he reported the theft of the pistol, Locke would decline to go forward another mile, an idea which Trask could not bring himself to consider for various reasons, the most important being that he did not want to say farewell to Marjorie Locke and see her sail away to the United States.

And as there being any actual danger from Jarrow and Peth, other than such as might result from a serious quarrel between the two, he considered a piece of absurdity.

As Trask thought the thing over later in the evening, however, he realized that his own deductions and desires were selfish, and that after all he could not assume the entire responsibility for Marjorie's safety. He knew it was only fair to take Locke into his confidence regarding what had happened.

So, getting Locke below in the cabin while the others were on deck, Trask told Locke that his pistol was missing. But Locke treated the matter lightly, and said he did not believe it could have any significance. It was his opinion that the weapon had been stolen by some of the crew, and he rather suspected Doc Bird. He said he would speak to the captain about it after they arrived at the island, and that the steward's quarters should be searched and Doc questioned, but he doubted the advisability of making what he called a rumpus about it now, especially as Marjorie might be worried and he wanted her to get a good night's sleep.

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Trask let the business rest there and went up with Locke again to enjoy the brilliant moonlight and listen to the impromptu concert which the crew had begun with a mouth organ and a flute.

Even Peth joined in the fun, and unbent to the extent of whistling some popular airs of the sad and sentimental variety with many trills and flourishes.

Doc's part in the evening's entertainment was a buck-and-wing dance of a most violent sort, and when he had finished, Jarrow told him to serve all hands with a tot of rum.

Everybody went to bed in the best of spirits, and for the first time since leaving Manila it appeared that the whole ship's company was contented.

Trask left his room door open, and was awakened several times during the night. It seemed to him that the wind had shifted, and that there was much tacking, for all night there was running about on deck, and thumping of blocks. At least a dozen times he heard Jarrow bawling to "Go about," and Peth's voice from the bows yelling "Hard alee," and the jibs being handled to the accompaniment of shivering sails and the lurch of the schooner as she stood on a new board.

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All aft slept late, and were not about for breakfast until well past eight o'clock, when they found Doc Bird grinning like an ebony monkey.

"What the devil was all the stock-yards noise about last night?" demanded Locke, as he came out of his room and went to the door to look forward, searching the horizon ahead.

"Shorely broke my bones, sir," said Doc. "We been a sawin' up an' down all night, but the old man he kep' on his close spite o' wind an' high water."

"I thought we were turning over several times," said Marjorie, as she took her place at table.

"Blowed lak' she never blowed befo'," opined Doc. "But we done come home."

"What do you mean?" asked Locke.

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"Didn' yo' see the islan'?"

There was an exodus to the deck at this, but although the trio searched the rim of the sky they could not make out a sign of land. The schooner was sailing close into the wind, which had abated into a steady though stiff breeze, and she was pitching over the swells with an even, rocking movement.

Doc grinned and pointed over the port bow, and Jarrow came down from the poop, smiling proudly.

"There's our island," he said.

Trask managed to pick it up, but the others could not see it, and went back to breakfast. Trask soon followed, observing that Shope was in the fore crosstrees studying the distant speck with a glass.

"We ought to be up to it by night," said Jarrow.

"Night!" said Trask, surprised.

"Perhaps before dark," said Jarrow, a trifle disconcerted at Trask's manner. "I don't look to hold this wind all day."

"But we seem to be making good time," said Trask.

"Not so good as ye'd think," replied Jarrow. "She's kickin' up her heels and makin' a great fuss about it, maybe six knots now, and enough leeway to choke an ox."

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With that he went up and in a few minutes put the schooner on the other tack, but this time she was not sailing into the wind nearly so closely as she had been, and was now headed so that if she held her course, she would clear the island by several miles and leave it to starboard.

Trask said nothing, but suspected that Jarrow was killing time, especially as the schooner did not go about for a couple of hours, and then on such a sharp angle with her former course that but few miles were gained in approaching the island.

Dinshaw spent the morning pottering over a chart in great excitement, and his manner indicated that he wanted to be left to himself.

All day they tacked up and down, Jarrow explaining that there might be reefs about, although there wasn't a spot of broken water in sight even with the heavy sea that was running after the night's blow.

At one time Trask thought the delay in getting on was due to Peth, for the mate was most deliberate in going about, and it was half an hour after the order had been given to put the schooner on a new tack before Peth got down his jib and shouted for a lee helm.

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It was near sundown before they had the island within three miles, whereupon Jarrow so manœuvred that they ran straight in for it, and came to anchor in its lee, behind a reef which ran to the south of and almost parallel with it.

By this time it was apparent to all that the island was the one they were seeking. It stood up out of the sea, green and fresh, except for the single peak, which was dun brown.

Dinshaw declared that this was it, and pointed out the reef which he had painted into his picture, which showed like a white ridge over the greenish water.

"It was here the *Wetherall* struck," he said.

"But the four palm trees, and the big rock," said Trask; "I don't see them."

"Ah ha!" said Dinshaw, slyly. "I put them in to fool folks. There ain't no palm trees like them I painted."

Jarrow looked disgustedly at him, and gave orders to Peth to have the dinghy lowered.

"Are we going ashore now?" asked Marjorie.

"No, ma'am," said Jarrow. "We can't trust the weather in a hole like this. May have to wear and git out. All hands stick close aboard to-night."

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"In the morning," said Trask.

"In the mornin'," echoed Dinshaw, but he seemed disappointed and scarcely able to wait for the time of going ashore.

Trask got out his prospecting bag, and after supper they all sat on the poop and talked and joked about what was in store for them the next day—all except Dinshaw, who, like a child, had gone to bed early, that morning would come the quicker.

Then Jarrow followed suit. Locke, Trask, and Marjorie remained for an hour's chat in the darkness after which Trask was left to himself to finish his cigar.

"Good luck, Mr. Trask," Marjorie had whispered, as she went down the companion, and he touched her hand playfully.

He remained in his deck chair for some time, with only the friendly glow of his cigar to keep him company, wondering how it would all end. For all his impatience to get to the island, now that it was lying there within stone's throw behind the whisper of the waves washing its beach, he was sorry they had arrived so soon. For if there

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should be no gold on the island, it would be a case of turning back, and a couple of days more would see them in Manila, and Marjorie Locke homeward bound with her father. But if there should be gold! Well, that might give this voyage a new aspect, it might alter his own fortunes in such way that he could tell Marjorie Locke that he loved her.

Of course, if Dinshaw's discovery proved to be only a pocket, or no gold at all, that would put an end to things. But if there was gold in quantities that would pay for mining it, his own share might be a good stake in life. His future hung on the old man's story, that is his future considered with Marjorie Locke, and Trask had now come to the point of not being able to consider his own future alone, although he did not realize that wholly. It was a thought he kept in the back of his mind for fear it might turn out to be only a dream.

He threw his cigar into the sea, and stood up suddenly. There was a queer noise from the break of the poop. It sounded as if someone who had been startled had fled. He did not move for several minutes. Then it came back to him that there were other things to consider besides the success of this venture in gold and his future with Marjorie Locke. [123]

The schooner was quiet, ominously quiet. The queer noise had jarred his nerves, and now he began to wonder if there was not some menace about the decks.

He heard the main shrouds creak as if someone were going aloft and then a rustle like a whispered caution.

Without a warning, he turned and stepped abruptly into the shaft of light which came up through the companion, and went below to his room, where he shut himself in.

Whatever he did, he knew it would have to be carried on with all caution. He would have to meet sneaking and spying with the same tactics, but he was determined to keep watch throughout the night.

CHAPTER IX

 [124]

TRASK UNDERTAKES A PRIVATE INVESTIGATION

Trask was more worried than he liked to admit, even to himself. While he had nothing tangible in the way of suspicion, he disliked the manner in which events had shaped themselves, or had been shaped by Jarrow.

From the time they had raised the island, Trask had seen on the part of Jarrow a decided reluctance to arrive at anchorage before dark. There was no doubt about it. He had allowed the schooner to lag when she could have been driven ahead. Whether this was due to Jarrow's deliberate contrivance, or was the result of a tacit acceptance of Peth's dilatory ways in seamanship, Trask had no means of determining with accuracy. He could only draw conclusions.

It might have been that Jarrow was willing to overlook Peth's delays in order to avoid bringing on a new argument with the mate. And Jarrow might have been wise to avoid a resumption of trouble, for, as Peth had been openly insolent and had carried a chip on his shoulder all the way from Manila, it was just as well that the captain did not give him the satisfaction of a row. [125]

But Trask blamed Jarrow for being too complacent in small things, which had encouraged Peth to insubordination. It would have been far better if the mate had been brought into place with a sharp and short encounter which would determine just who was master, than to continue strained relations which only allowed Peth to smoulder and feed his rising anger with growls and grumbles in the hearing of the crew.

There was no doubt that Jarrow was trying to smooth things out and avoid a direct clash. He dreaded unpleasantness in the presence of Locke. But to Trask the obvious delay in coming up to the island was only a small part of his growing fears that the situation aboard the schooner was worse than a mere temporary ill-feeling between the captain and the mate.

A decided change had come over the crew. They were strangely quiet, and when Trask or Locke or Marjorie came in sight, the men were full of covert looks and signals to each other with their hands for caution and whispers. [126]

There was a feeling of tension, a sudden stiffening of demeanour once the anchor was down. It was not so much expressed as shown by repression. There was a soberness of purpose in the most trifling details of their duties, as if a crisis long expected had arrived.

This change in manner was best exemplified by Doc Bird. Trask had noticed that when serving the table he had a way of looking over his shoulder suddenly, or taking on a look of scared intentness at any unexpected sounds from the deck or in the cabin. Doc had become strangely alert, watchful of everybody, and nervous to the point of sudden shivering attacks. Trask ascribed Doc's actions to an unexplained coolness which had sprung up between the steward and Shanghai Tom, although it was quite possible Doc was aware of something of the nature which had given Trask a sense of disquiet, this undercurrent of insincerity, of hidden meanings, of an evil spirit lurking under the friendly relations of Jarrow and Dinshaw with the trio who had come seeking the island.

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Considering these matters, Trask undressed and put on his pajamas. Then he opened the door of his room, and rolled into his bunk, purposely accentuating the creaking of the boards under his mattress so that any listener might be assured he had turned in for the night.

The hole cut in the upper part of Jarrow's door was open and dark. The captain, to all appearances, had gone to sleep, but Trask had plans for the night and did not care to take chances at having them upset.

There was a mild snoring from Dinshaw's room and despite the chafing of the schooner's gear and the patter of the water under her counter, she seemed deathly quiet after the interminable groaning of her timbers during the passage from Manila.

The swinging lamp over the cabin table was burning dimly, waves of its light washing into Trask's room like the lifting of a lazy tide, and whirling grotesque shadows up and down the bulkhead.

The lighted lamp stood in the way of Trask's carrying out his plan. He wished he had found some excuse for putting it out earlier. But he had not realized that it was to be left burning. He wanted to go out and do a little reconnoitering, but as the door of the main cabin leading forward was open, he had no way of leaving the cabin without being seen from the forecabin.

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It was from the forecabin that he hoped to get some inkling of how the crew was getting on. Immediately after the anchor was down Trask observed that the crew had gone below, and, except for an occasional gruff call, or a joking sally, nothing had been seen or heard from them.

Trask was confident they had not turned in to sleep. There had been sounds of rough gaiety, promptly subdued, and a few bars of music on a mouth organ, checked abruptly. The scuttle had been closed, and Trask thought it queer that there should be a desire to shut themselves up, for while the evening was cool enough in the open, the temperature arose in a stifling way at any shutting off of the air currents.

Trask would have thought nothing of it if the crew had openly quarrelled, or engaged in skylarking, or had sat around and smoked and chatted quietly. But they appeared ominously furtive. And Trask knew that if there was anything sinister behind their skulking, Peth must have a hand in whatever was going on.

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The lamp must be disposed of in a manner not to attract the attention of either the crew or those aft. He first thought of calling softly to Doc Bird and asking him to put out the light. But if Doc demurred, or declared that the light could not be extinguished except by order of Jarrow, Trask would have called attention to his own wishes and his plan would be balked.

Besides, Doc would undoubtedly want to talk, and Jarrow would thereby be disturbed and become watchful, and all hands aft be roused. If the light were put out at Trask's request, and later he was found prowling on deck, he could no longer maintain his character of being a person without suspicion of anything amiss aboard.

But if he put the light out himself, he could offer the plea that it prevented him from sleeping, and the same excuse could be given if he were later found outside for a little fresh air. If any of the crew did resent his presence forward, he would have proof that they were wary of being spied upon. That, if nothing more, would indicate to him that his suspicions were well founded.

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He got out of his bunk with great care and struck a match. Then he stepped boldly into the cabin and turned down the lamp until the wick snuffed out the flame. With the match still burning in his hand, he went back to his room, thus establishing for any watcher the fact that he had returned to bed after the lamp was extinguished.

Waiting a while to make sure there would be no investigation as to why the light went out, he crawled out over the coaming of the door of his room. It was necessary that he keep low, for he was not sure whether there was one of the crew on watch aft. To any one looking through the cabin from the companionway Trask would be visible against the lantern hanging from a forestay if he walked erect in crossing the cabin.

Gaining the outer deck, he stood clear of the doorway and hugged the forward

bulkhead of the cabin trunk, taking care not to mask the forward port-hole of the galley with his back. If Doc Bird had heard him crawling out, he might be of an inquiring turn of mind, in his present panicky condition, and explore with a knife through the open port.

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Trask had in the jacket pocket of his pajamas matches and cigarettes, so that in case he were challenged he could assume a careless manner by preparing to have a smoke, and at the same time illuminate the face of any one he encountered.

He moved forward along the starboard bulwark, feeling his way with his bare feet, taking great pains not to stumble over any obstacle. He could make out the loom of the island over the starboard quarter, a black spot focussed in the all-pervading blackness of the night. Everything seemed to give promise of secrecy for him. The rasp of the boom-jaws, the swishing of coiled ropes on the pin-rails, and the chirping creak of the shrouds as the schooner bobbed and rolled on the lulling swells, concealed the slight sounds of his advance.

He stopped and looked aft every few steps, listening for noises in the cabin. He could see the faint outline of the mizzen boom and the upper edge of the cabin. His eyes, better adjusted now to the gloom, saw a black shape over the cabin roof. It startled him for a second, for he thought it might be Jarrow peering toward him, until he knew it for a roll of canvas which had been left there to spread as awning.

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He went on, stopping when he felt the well of the deck rise as he approached the forecastle. Presently he saw a tiny point of light flare up and die away. Then he caught the spicy aroma of a native cigarette in the soft air charged with the acrid smell of new hemp, the resinous odour of the deck seams, the sweet reek of opium smoked by forgotten crews and the earthy flavour of the jungles close at hand.

The thought came to him that perhaps it was he who was exotic in the schooner. It might be for this reason that he was too ready to mistake normal things as evidences of a menace which did not exist. He wondered if this fact might not well account for the formless fears he had felt about Peth and the crew. Like a person who wakes in the night, to find the windows where they shouldn't be, his judgment, too, might be at fault, and affairs far better than he thought them.

Trask had no worries for himself. The pursuit of gold in untrammelled parts of the world was his business, and at times danger was but the thrill which went with the game. He knew that if he were the only passenger in the schooner he would very likely be in his bunk asleep instead of hunting trouble.

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But he felt a responsibility. This wild project of taking a young woman in a schooner, with a crew of men who had all the outer aspects of rascals, and a mild madman, to hunt an island, was largely his own fault and Trask now realized it.

Locke was far too credulous, or rather incredulous. Like most Americans who have lived quiet lives and attended to their own business, he lacked imagination for dangerous possibilities in the motives of others. Such adventures as he had had were out of books, and he had taken it for granted that what he read was always improbable and impossible. Such people never believe in danger until they have a revolver thrust into their faces. And Locke had come aboard the schooner with a roll of yellow-backed bills so big that he could hold in his hand more wealth than all the ship's company together could earn in a year of honest labour.

Trask almost wished he had declined to go in with Locke on the trip to the island. He had been quite too easy-going about it all himself, neglecting to take precautions about Jarrow and the crew because he had been reluctant to forego the pleasure of Miss Marjorie's company. Trask had been exiled so long in far corners of the globe that he was strongly averse to giving up a single hour to business details which he might have with the American girl.

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Then he knew that to tell Locke he did not care to go to the island and later to go by himself would have been sneakingly selfish. Now that they were embarked on the venture, he felt that he must do all he possibly could for the protection of his companions. He wished that he had demanded an investigation when he found his pistol missing. He moved forward with careful steps, knowing that there must be a man sitting on the forecastle head facing toward him, else he could not have seen the light from the cigarette.

The foremast and the boom were faintly visible in relief against the lighter shade of the sky, and knowing he might be seen above the bulwark, Trask moved away from the edge of the schooner, and drew near the base of the foremast, which offered better concealment. He was now but a few feet from the forecastle scuttle and could see it outlined by a dim pencilling of light. Voices reached him, but he was not able to distinguish any words.

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Presently he heard wary footsteps ahead, and saw a figure rise up and go into the bows, marked by a faint, comet-like streak of light which must be the man's cigarette. The spot of light disappeared for a second and reappeared again in a swift,

descending arc cut off by the bows. The smoker had thrown away his cigarette.

For several minutes Trask watched and listened. The man on the forecastle head coughed gently, and then came clumping aft, dropped to the main deck with a smack of bare feet, and drew the scuttle aside, to put his head and shoulders down.

"It's all right!" Trask heard him whisper, hoarsely. He recognized him as Shope. The light coming up through the scuttle illuminated the foremast above Trask's head in a manner disconcerting. Trask ducked down under the boom.

All was silence below, and then the creaking of the steps leading up, and the light below went out. There were sounds of men coming on deck, known to Trask by the rattle of the scuttle as incautious shoulders rasped it coming out, making the board rattle in its grooves. [136]

There was a conference in guarded whispers, and someone started aft along the starboard side. Trask could make him out as he passed, and after he had disappeared against the blackness made by the fore bulkhead of the cabin there was a peculiar rattle along the deck in his wake.

Trask was now thoroughly alarmed. The crew could not be out on deck whispering and moving about with such secrecy with any good intent toward those who had made the voyage possible.

The rattle along the deck continued, and dropping to his hands and knees, Trask crawled to the starboard side. He encountered a small, hard line, like a lead-line, being paid out from the forecastle and carried aft by the man who had passed. Trask put his hand upon it and let it run through his fingers for a second.

There came a slight patter of rain and Trask made his way toward the cabin, not so much to avoid a wetting, as to be where he could alarm Jarrow and Locke if there appeared to be any necessity to investigate the actions of the crew. [137]

It was all rather absurd, he thought. There was nothing especially sinister about sailors carrying a line aft. To demand what it was about and make himself known would only serve to make him ridiculous if the explanation proved to be the carrying out of some legitimate duty. Being quiet, with the vessel at anchor, was hardly to be condemned. And if it turned out that the crew were preparing trouble it was no time to show that they were being watched unless the danger were imminent.

He stepped into the galley and felt along the bulkhead for the row of knives he had seen in their leathern pockets. He pulled out a large one, judging its size by the thickness of its handle. It was a formidable weapon.

Dinshaw was still breathing musically. So far as Trask could tell, all hands in the cabin were asleep. He passed through with great care, smiling at the figure he would cut if he were challenged and found with a great knife in his hands sneaking about the cabin. He, rather than the crew, would be held guilty of some dangerous intention against the safety of the schooner. [138]

The rain was now striking the cabin roof with sweeping gusts. It was not a heavy downpour, but a threat of more to come, the weak advance guard of an approaching deluge.

Ascending the companion, he put his head out far enough to see a shape moving at the taffrail, evidently a man bent over some task. Then it moved away to starboard, slowly, and Trask heard a gentle blowing, as one might make in clearing the nostrils of rain.

Trask now felt rather ashamed of himself. Instead of an attack on the cabin, the man who had come aft had gone about his business and departed. There was nothing to be alarmed about in that, surely.

So Trask went to the forward door and looked out on deck, putting the knife away in the galley without, however, attempting to insert it in the leather sheath. Then he stood in the doorway, and listened.

The man could be seen moving along the starboard side slowly. Trask caught a foreign sound, a gurgle which he at first mistook for rain water running from the scuppers. But the deck was scarcely wet and, besides, the sound was to starboard. Water running off would go to port, for the schooner was heeled a little in that direction. [139]

Soon there was a rasping along the hull, and emboldened by the fact that the man who had brought the line aft was now well forward, Trask stepped to the bulwark and looked over the side.

At first he could see nothing in the blackness below, but a new flurry of rain came, and the drops striking the water hissingly made it slightly luminous, outlining a dark, formless mass close to the side of the schooner. It moved forward slowly, its progress coincident with the movement of the man going along the rail. Trask could see his

head and shoulders against the fog-like sheen of the water over the bows.

At once the whole affair was made plain to Trask. The dinghy, which had been lowered from the after davits when the *Nuestra* anchored, was being stolen! The crew were pulling it forward by the line which the man had taken aft, and this man was keeping the boat clear of the schooner's side. The line evidently had been made fast to the dinghy's painter.

Here, indeed, was something which gave every appearance of being underhand work. With the Golden Isle only a few hundred yards distant, and all hands to go ashore in the morning, there could be no other reason for stealing the dinghy than a plan to visit the island under cover of darkness. The plan foreshadowed treachery. The crew sought some knowledge which they wanted before the other members of the expedition could be aware of conditions on the island. [140]

Trask saw at once the purpose of the crew, although he had no way of knowing how they intended to gain any advantage to themselves unless they contemplated abandoning the *Nuestra*, or destroying it and those remaining aboard. He had no doubt the scheme was to learn whether or not there was gold, and so to act, in the event they found it in great quantities, that they would be assured of having it for themselves.

It was a wild idea, this going out in the night to hunt gold. But it was plain that the cupidity of the crew had been aroused by the prospect of a shining, yellow beach. But what was to Trask far more important, and fraught with danger to Marjorie, Locke, Dinshaw, Jarrow, and himself, was the knowledge that Peth, if not the leader of the enterprise, at least must be aware of what was taking place. [141]

The rain came on now with steady, monotonous force, turning the sea into a boiling cauldron. Trask, drenched in the first minutes of the downpour, remained where he was, crouching under the bulwark with his head high enough to get the bulwark forward against the gray luminosity of the beaten water.

So concealed, if it could be called concealment, in the darkness of the schooner, he saw four figures go over the side, and heard them fumbling in the dinghy. They pushed off gently and rowed away in the direction of the island, amid the muffled click of oars. Before proceeding but a few yards the boat was lost to him in the welter of steaming water and all-enveloping blackness.

Trask suffered from a chill, but he remained where he was, wondering what could, or should, be done. Jarrow must be warned. The sky now turned lighter, being relieved of its burdened clouds, and the rain began to fall off, until it was merely a gentle trickle.

Dripping like a water spaniel returning to the shore, Trask turned in to the door of the main cabin, planning to rid himself of his wet clothing, get into some dry garments, and call Jarrow. [142]

As he felt his way into the deeper gloom he heard a movement close at hand, and stopped, leaning against the bulkhead, just abaft of the galley. He saw that the light from outside marked the cabin door as a great rectangle in which a moving form could easily be seen from the inside.

"Who's that?" came a whisper.

"Who are you?" demanded Trask, whispering, but more boldly, and with something of defiance in his tone.

"Doc Bird, Mr. Trask," came the answer. "Fo' the lan' sake, what yo' all doin' out in the rain, man?"

"Keep quiet," said Trask, unpleasantly aware of rivulets racing down his heels. He followed the bulkhead straight aft, conscious that Bird was in the doorway of the cook's room, past Dinshaw's room, to the door of Jarrow's, which he opened softly.

"Captain Jarrow!" he called, in a low voice. "Captain Jarrow!"

There was no reply. He listened for the regular breathing of the sleeping captain. Then he went inside and felt along Jarrow's bunk. The sheet was rumpled and thrown back but Jarrow was not there. [143]

CHAPTER X

 [144]

CAPTAIN JARROW ADMITS HE IS SUSPICIOUS OF PETH

Trask went to his room at once, and stripping off his wet pajamas, dressed hurriedly.

His discovery that Jarrow was missing seemed to verify his suspicions that the captain was not playing fair. His absence from his room was the most alarming thing which had happened yet aboard the *Nuestra*, and, as Trask saw it, the fact pointed to a betrayal of trust.

But the young man decided he would withhold any decision regarding the captain until the latter had a chance to explain why the crew should put off in a boat in the night, and why Jarrow was not in his cabin. There might be a reason for it all which would be perfectly plausible, if not convincing of the captain's good intentions.

Doc came to the door of his room, and whispered: "Yo' all want the lamp goin', Mr. Trask?"

"No," said Trask. "You go to bed and keep still." He felt that the steward was inordinately curious about the visit to the captain's room and why Trask was walking about outside. [145]

"Cap'n Jarrow, he's gone for'ard," offered Doc, still standing in the frame of the door, barely perceptible.

"Forward!" whispered Trask, surprised. This news meant one of two explanations for what he had seen—the business was legitimate, and under the direction of Jarrow, or Jarrow was involved with the crew in whatever treachery was afoot.

"Yassir," continued Doc. "He's got all hands messin' 'round at somethin'. I reckon the old man he looks for it to come on to blow."

"I see," said Trask. "Well, I'm going out. Maybe I can be of some help. Keep quiet, or you'll wake everybody up."

Doc withdrew from the door, and Trask heard him shuffling to his own room, expressing some opinion in a whisper which Trask could not make out, except that it was to the effect that he hadn't started this "walkin' round like ha'nts in the middle of the night."

Trask went on deck and moved forward boldly. The squall which had passed left the air fresh and cool, and the sky was not so black, although the schooner was still in gloom. But her bulwarks were more clearly defined against the water, and Trask could see a figure on the starboard bow which looked like a man standing and peering in the direction of the island. [146]

"Who's that?" came Jarrow's voice as Trask drew near. His voice was low and cautious.

"Mr. Trask."

"Oh."

"Can't sleep," said Trask. "What's going on?"

"Storm wake ye up?"

"Not exactly. I've been wakeful since I went to my room."

"Guess we woke ye up."

"Well, I've heard considerable movement, and it made me curious."

"How long ye been out?"

"I was out when it first rained."

"Oh, then it was you!"

"I? I don't understand."

"Loafin' along the rail." [147]

"Yes, I stood there for awhile."

"Thought you was one of the men soldierin' on the job."

"I saw a boat put off."

"Yes," said Jarrow, as if neither the boat nor the fact that Trask had seen it was of any interest to him.

"What's up?" asked Trask.

Jarrow made no reply, but stepped off the forecastle head with a noise of wet, swishing oilskins, and fumbled for a minute. Then the lantern in the forestay bobbed down and up, and he came back to where Trask stood.

Presently the captain struck a match, and twisted his head to one side to light a cigar, his eyes peering at him over the flame.

"Didn't do much good to keep quiet so you could sleep," said Jarrow, grinning into the flame. Then he puffed hard at the cigar.

"Naturally, I'm filled with expectation about the island," said Trask. He knew Jarrow was none too cordial, and seemed bent on showing disapproval of Trask's being abroad.

"You better git some sleep," said Jarrow.

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"Do you look for bad weather?" asked Trask.

"Yes," said Jarrow, with sudden heartiness. "I look for anything in these latitudes at this season. At ten o'clock the barometer showed a disturbance of the diurnal range. It's below maximum."

"Typhoon?"

"Maybe. But I'm takin' no chances. I've got the crew out with a kedge anchor, up in that channel behind the reef, to haul in there if things look bad. Lie snug as a bug in a rug. That reef's a natural breakwater."

"Then the boat took out a kedge?"

"Yes."

"Did Mr. Peth go, too?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Peth he's out there. He's got an anchor laid out in the boat, to buoy it. He's sounding along inside the reef. We'll take a hawser out in the mornin', but if the weather falls, we can make fast right away. He'll run a heavin' line from the buoy so we can find it in the dark. I take it you're satisfied, Mr. Trask?"

"Satisfied? Certainly." Trask was surprised at the sharpness and obvious animus in Jarrow's question. His tone, despite the fact that he spoke scarcely above a whisper, carried a sneer. Trask was on the point of asking Jarrow if he had ever questioned his methods of navigation or seamanship, but he held his tongue for it was no time to precipitate a quarrel.

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Trask suspected that Jarrow had overheard him in some remark about the delay of the schooner getting up to the island, or had caught disapproval in his manner that afternoon. It was natural enough for a sailing master to resent the slightest implication that he was not efficient, and Trask was not so much concerned with Jarrow's hidden meaning on that score as with his covert acknowledgment that he had been watchful of Trask's attitude. It was something to know that Jarrow was keen enough to divine the fact that Trask was secretly critical.

"I guess you thought we was slow in makin' anchorage," suggested Jarrow.

This abruptness in reaching the very subject which Trask was considering made him wary of the captain. It was plainly a bid for an expression of Trask's ideas. Jarrow was angling for Trask's opinion to learn whether he might be easily misled, or perhaps ascertain if Trask's coming out to investigate now was part of his general feeling that Jarrow was not to be trusted.

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"Well, naturally," said Trask, after a moment's hesitation, "we were anxious to get here as soon as possible, yet we realized that you had to take precautions."

"Can't take no chances with this kind of a bottom," said Jarrow. "Might be easy to git in through them coral patches, but I've got to know how to git out, and how to git out under the worst conditions. Some of them patches probably break with the least little sea on. If I had to beat out against a head wind in the dark, I don't want to pile up on breakers with——"

Jarrow stopped to listen. The sound of oars came to their ears off toward the black shape of the island.

"You better git some sleep," said Jarrow.

"All right," said Trask. "Good-night, captain."

"Good-night, sir. And don't you be worried none about noises out here. I'm a-lookin' after things."

"Did you think I was worried?" asked Trask, stopping.

This was apparently a poser for Jarrow, who took his cigar out of his mouth, and was a full minute in framing a reply. Trask would have given a good deal to see his face.

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"I didn't take you that way," said Jarrow.

Trask went back beside him. The young man felt that it was a mistake to allow Jarrow to dismiss him as he had, with the curt suggestion that he go back to bed.

"Then I want to assure you," said Trask, speaking slowly and in a tone intended to

carry conviction of just how he felt, "that I'm not the worrying kind, Captain Jarrow. And if Mr. Peth gets to acting up, I'm prepared to deal with him myself."

"Oh, hush!" said Jarrow, in a low whisper. "We can't have any talk like that for'ard here."

"I don't care who hears me," went on Trask, determined to carry out his bluff. "I've been out on deck for quite a while, and to be frank, I didn't like the idea of a boat going off this way. If it's your plan to kedge, and you think it is necessary, all right. I'm not a sailor. But I do know you haven't got Mr. Peth or the crew very well in hand, so if——"

"Hush up, Mr. Trask, for God's sake!" implored Jarrow, stepping over to Trask and putting his hand on his arm. "There is trouble brewing, but I don't know what it's about. I'm holdin' things off till the mornin'. I don't look for nothin' to come of it." [152]

"Trouble? What sort of trouble?" demanded Trask, amazed at the captain's revelation.

"I don't know," admitted Jarrow. "May be everythin' and nothin'. It's that Peth's too thick with the crew, and it's bad when a mate gits to standin' out with the fo'c's'le agin the master."

"Do you want me to understand that it's—mutiny?"

"I said I don't know what it is, Mr. Trask."

"How about Bevins? Is he in on it, too?"

"All hands. They're off there in the dinghy now, and I don't know what they're up to."

"So you're not putting out a kedge?"

"No, sir. That was to git you back to your bunk. I was out on deck before you was, and Peth sneaked the dinghy. I suppose they've got some fool idea that there's a lot of gold on the island, and——"

Jarrow broke off and said no more. Trask thought he had heard something and waited for him to go on, but after a long pause the captain did not seem inclined to say anything more, but took long pulls on his cigar, which he kept shaded from the sea behind his hand. [153]

Trask's mind worked rapidly. If anything, the truth from Jarrow that there was danger from Peth and the crew had steadied him, and while he realized his helpless position if Jarrow were deceiving him, he at least had proof of a desperate situation aboard the schooner.

"What do you think they would do if they found gold on the island, captain?"

"Don't ask me. Might come back and burn the *Nuestra*."

"Sounds interesting," said Trask.

"Mebbe you think I'm jokin' of you?" said Jarrow.

"Not at all. I wouldn't put murder beyond that lot. There's something I've wanted to tell you since we left Manila, but I didn't want to do anybody an injustice."

"What's that?"

"Somebody stole one of my automatic pistols before I'd been aboard a quarter of an hour."

"No!"

"Yes. It was taken from my bag in my room." [154]

"Mighty Nelson! You should ha' told me, Mr. Trask! Who do ye think got it?"

"I've every reason to suspect Mr. Peth. It was missing right after he moved his stuff out of my room. The bag had been opened and closed again very carefully, strapped and buckled. The man who took it had plenty of time and wanted to make sure he wasn't suspected right away. At least, he didn't want the loss noticed at once."

"So Mr. Peth's got an automatic gun, eh?" said Jarrow, rather in a musing way, and drawing a deep breath.

"I might not have missed it for days," went on Trask, "but I had two, and——"

"Two!"

"I had a pair of them."

"And Peth got away with both of 'em!"

"No, only one. I have the other, and Mr. Locke has two. I went down to oil mine after

Peth moved out, and found one gone when——"

"Then we're all right," said Jarrow. "If you and Mr. Locke brought guns we don't need to worry. I've got a couple, myself. I guess we can handle anything that carries away for'ard here."

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"Why did you move the lantern?" demanded Trask.

"Oh," said Jarrow, "I had a mind to take it down so they couldn't find their way back to the schooner till mornin' unless it cleared up in good shape. But it won't clear. Smells like more rain."

"I think it's a good scheme," said Trask. "Let 'em stay off in the boat. Then we'll put Peth in irons when he comes aboard in the morning if we think he's been up to mischief, or plans trouble. We can handle the others. We can't take any chances with Miss Locke aboard."

"You're right!" said Jarrow. "I'll douse the glim and let 'em stay. If they want to cut up any didoes we can work the *Nuestra* back to Manila ourselves and the government'll take care of 'em for us."

Jarrow clumped down off the forecastle head and lowered the lantern, clapped his sou'wester over it, and snuffed the flame out between his fingers. Trask observed the grimness of his face as the light played on it during the brief instant the lantern was coming down and the determined set of his jaw as his teeth gripped the cigar.

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They stood in the darkness, silent for a few minutes, listening, and caught again the rattle of oars in locks at quite a distance. The boat seemed to be moving about cautiously, feeling its way in behind the reef.

"I can't make out what the devil they're up to," said Jarrow in a grumbling sort of whisper. "Peth never did have much sense. Sometimes I've thought he was clean out of his head."

"Then you've had doubts about him since we left Manila?"

"No, can't say's I have. I don't pay no attention to his tantrums gene'llly. He's up and he's down, just how he feels. But he picked this crew from a lot of his old shipmates so they'll stand by him if he's set on makin' trouble, and he knows it. I didn't like the looks of things to-day, so I kept my weather eye peeled. He lowered the dinghy on his own, without sayin' a word to me, and I smelled a rat, so I kept watch. I didn't want to git you folks scared up, so when you come out I thought I'd pass it off and wait to see what their game was. I wouldn't say nothin' to Mr. Locke 'bout it, and I'll see what's to be done come daylight."

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"Do you think they'll make a fight if you don't let 'em aboard?"

"Wouldn't do no good if they did. We can keep 'em off, now that you and Mr. Locke have guns. They can't live on air. You ought to try to git some sleep."

"I'll stick it out with you."

"Ain't no use of us two standin' watch all night. You'll be all beat out to-morrow night, and with things like they are, you won't git no chance to sleep to-morrow. If they come back, I'll call you in time to have the weather on 'em."

Jarrow's advice sounded sensible enough. With the crew out in a boat there was little imminent danger, and Trask felt that it would be wise to remain aft, for if the crew suspected their game was known they might attempt to board the schooner from the stern. They would probably interpret the disappearance of the riding light as discovery aboard the schooner that they were missed and their treachery revealed to the heads of the expedition.

So Trask decided to go back to his room, even if he did not sleep, and being assured by Jarrow that immediately there was any sign of the boat he would be called, he made his way aft and went to bed fully dressed except for his shoes.

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He had scarcely rolled into his bunk before he heard cautious footsteps in the cabin, and Doc Bird came scratching at his door.

"I reckon somethin's powerful wrong, Mr. Trask," he whispered.

"You get out of here and go to bed," said Trask. "And don't show a light for any reason until you have orders to."

"I got to be up early to make flapjack batter fo' yo' all," was Doc's reply. "I reckon I'll have to have a light in the galley and the fire goin' right smart long befo' the chickens is crowin' fo' day."

Trask knew it would do no good to get out of patience with Doc, for he was incorrigibly persistent and friendly in the face of any rebuff.

"Don't make any fire or light any lamps until you're told to," Trask reiterated. "And

for heaven's sake, let me and everybody else get some sleep. Get some for yourself. Run along."

"Oh, don't yo' fret none fo' me, Mr. Trask. I'm a regular squinch owl," and he chuckled audibly, as if his ability to do without sleep were a rare joke. [159]

"I'm not," retorted Trask, and rolled over significantly.

"You don't reckon Mr. Peth he's actin' up none, do ye? The skipper he goes walkin' 'round like he had somethin' wearin' down on his mind."

"You better ask him, Doc," said Trask.

"Huh! Ketch me goin' out and confabbin' around with the ol' man! He'd shore hang somethin' on mah haid. Mr. Trask, 'fo' God, I can't git no sleep when I'm a-worried. It all kind o' makes my skin go all crawly when there's somethin' projectin' around and I don't know of it. Yo' shore there ain't nothin' bad nohow?"

"There will be, if you don't get out of that door! Go bring some water."

Doc gurgled with a suppressed chuckle, and went to the galley, where he could be heard pulling a cork in the dark. He was back in a minute, and handed a glass in to Trask, who sat up to take it and drink.

"If somebody hadn't a-swiped that gun o' yourn, I would take no bother of it if Mr. Peth gits contrary with——" [160]

"I've got another gun," said Trask. "And Mr. Locke has two."

Doc was silent for a time, as if he were pondering the matter.

"Yo' all shore come a-lookin' for b'ar," he opined, taking the glass which Trask thrust out at him. "But yo' all don't need to be squirmish about Mr. Peth. If he goes to act up, I'll settle his hash."

"How's that?"

Doc chuckled again.

"I know how to handle that low-down trash," he whispered, tragically. "I'd drap somethin' in his tea. Good-night, Mr. Trask."

"Good-night, Doc. Don't make a light."

"No, sah," and the steward crept away to his bunk, leaving Trask staring up into the dark, turning over the situation in his mind, and waiting for the dawn.

CHAPTER XI

 [161]

MR. PETH DOES MOST AMAZING THINGS

Trask was up at dawn, and slipping out on deck, saw Jarrow sitting on the forecastle head, drinking coffee, a plate of biscuits beside him, while he kept watch on the island.

Doc stuck his head out of the galley. "Coffee, Mr. Trask?" he called, cautiously.

Trask went back and stood in the door while he scanned the shore of the island. The sun had come out of the sea, red and bleary, and from the jungle came the calls of birds and the shrill cry of a parrot evidently in distress about something in the brush.

There was not a sign of the dinghy. The schooner lay still in a pool of colourful water, the coral and weeds on the bottom in plain view, some of the swaying plants magnified by refraction. There was no air stirring, and from the far end of the island a morning haze was rising like smoke from flats which appeared to be salt marshes. [162]

Trask filled the basin at the water butt and washed his sticky face. Doc, who evidently was astir before the cook, became emboldened by the fact that Trask was up, and rattled the dishes in the galley with recklessness. Trask cautioned him when he came out with the cup and proffered the impromptu breakfast.

"Have you heard anything?" he asked, as the steward stood beside him, loath to go back to his duties.

"Me? Lordy, no, Mr. Trask! We been just lak' a buryin' ground! It gives me the creeps to have things so daid."

"Seen anything of the boat?"

"Boat?" Doc rolled his eyes, puzzled.

"Go in and get breakfast," said Trask, passing the cup back, and went along forward to learn what Jarrow had to report.

"Not a sight of 'em," said the captain, who appeared to be as fresh as if he had slept all night.

"That's queer," said Trask. "I thought they'd try to sneak back during the night. What can they be up to? You don't think they've abandoned us entirely?"

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"Now ye got me," said Jarrow. "I guess Peth's crazy in his head. He's got 'em all buggy on this gold business, far's I can see. All right, let 'em stick to Peth."

"But they'll starve," said Trask. "Suppose they did find gold in piles? What good would it do them? They'd have to beg to be taken back aboard here, wouldn't they?"

Jarrow blew into his coffee, gulped some of it, and raised his eyes in utter dejection to look over at the island. The schooner lay with her head to the northeast in response to a current that came around the northern end of the island and almost parallel with it.

"When people are out of their heads, no knowin' what they'll do," declared Jarrow. "Peth, he's always for makin' money in heaps. He can't see beyond his nose. Now I'm for goin' safe and sure. You ain't got no idea how he's bothered me off and on for the last couple years. But I had to humour him—he owns an eighth of the *Nuestra*."

"He can't have much sense if he thinks gold's to be sacked up and carted away," said Trask. "Here's Mr. Locke."

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"Looks like this ought to be a good place to fish," said Locke, coming forward. He was wearing an old suit of white, but had on tan shoes, as if he expected to go walking, and a shirt open at the neck. His nose was peeled from sunburn, and he stroked it gently.

"What's going on?" he demanded, seeing that Jarrow and Trask were serious-faced, each waiting for the other to speak. He looked about the decks questioningly.

"The devil to pay," said Jarrow.

"Crew's gone," said Trask.

"Crew! Gone! Where?"

"Jumped the ship in the night with the dinghy," said Jarrow.

"Say, what's the joke?" inquired Locke, blankly. "You two look as though there was to be a hanging. Come on—spring it!"

"I wish it were a joke," said Trask.

"The truth is, Mr. Peth and the crew left last night with the small boat."

"Gone to a dance, or something, I suppose," said Locke, still in doubt about the motives of the captain and Trask.

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"Maybe," said Jarrow, wearily rising, to yawn into the sun's face.

Locke stared at Trask, and finally realized that he was serious. "Gone to the island?" he asked.

"Mainland's over there," said Jarrow, turning and pointing over the starboard quarter. "You got two guesses. I'll bet on the island."

Trask now looked in the direction indicated by the captain and saw a low-lying ridge, barely perceptible in the morning sun, lifting out of the horizon. It was merely a dark streak against the edge of the sea's brilliance, dividing sky and water.

"Well, that's a fine note," said Locke. "What do they think they're getting paid for? To go away on marine picnics?"

"If they come lookin' for pay, we're lucky," said Jarrow.

"Now, captain, let's get down to cases," began Locke, with a look at Trask which indicated that he was done with temporizing with Jarrow. "What are you going to do?"

Jarrow looked at him quickly, as if surprised, and made a grimace.

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"What do ye expect me to do?" he demanded, with a show of temper in his voice.

"We'll start for Manila in an hour unless the crew's back aboard. Can't you give 'em a signal of some sort?"

"Sure," said Jarrow. "I can run the Blue Peter to the fore truck. I'm ready to go now—if you'll start whistlin' for a wind." He wet the tip of his finger on his tongue and held it up.

"You take it all-fired calm," said Locke. "What's the idea? Are you going to sit down and wait for the crew to make up their minds to work?"

"They've probably gone to the island to find gold," said Trask, who realized that Locke had not grasped the situation fully. "It looks as if they won't attempt to come back."

"Oh, that's the game, is it?"

"Looks like it," said Jarrow.

"Very well," said Locke, grimly. "I'll look to you, Captain Jarrow, to carry out the terms of our agreement."

"What ye drivin' at?" demanded Jarrow.

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"This: Your pay by the day for schooner and crew is for a definite purpose—to visit this island for exploration purposes, and to have in our employ a certain number of men. If we have to go back to Manila without accomplishing the business, or lie around waiting on the crew, it'll be out of your pocket. It's up to you, captain."

"You say I don't git no money at all if we have to go back?" Jarrow's colour heightened, and his eyes flashed angrily, but he held a certain restraint over his voice.

"What I say and what I mean."

"There ain't no law that compels a master to guarantee against mutiny," said Jarrow, and began to chew a biscuit reflectively.

"Mutiny!"

"My mates have jumped ship with the crew. That's mutiny."

"You expect them to make trouble for us?"

"I look for anything with that gang," said Jarrow. "Peth he's a bad one when he gits started. So are all them chaps with him. But as I see it, they'll be back here in no time. If they don't find gold we'll have 'em back on our hands. So there ain't no great hurt done."

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"But if they do find gold?" suggested Locke.

"They might walk on gold and not know it," said Trask. "If they are looking for a fortune in fifteen minutes, I doubt if they'll find it, and they'll like the looks of this schooner pretty well."

"My idea exactly," said Jarrow, with a grin. "We might as well take this as a joke. If they ain't back by the time we have breakfast, I'll take a run over to shore in the long boat and see 'bout huntin' 'em up. You folks go aft, and let me handle it. I'll see it smoothed over. We don't want to start back for Manila short-handed if we can help it. What's the odds, if they are a passel o' fools?"

"Perhaps you're right," said Locke. "It wouldn't look very well for us if we went back to Manila and left them here."

"I'll tell you what you do, captain," said Trask. "Take a run ashore, as you said, and bring me back a bucket of that sand."

"I thought you'd like to go over with me," said Jarrow.

"No, I'll stick by the schooner until this hitch with the crew is straightened out."

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"Maybe Mr. Locke'll want to go?"

"Not for me," said Locke. "Marjorie'll want to go when I do, and I don't want to have anything said about what's turned up. You take Dinshaw."

"I'll need two men to row," objected Jarrow. "I might take the old fellow and the cook."

"We'll keep the cook," said Trask. "We can spare Doc Bird better."

Jarrow agreed, and suggested that he start at once, so Doc Bird was called and told to summon Dinshaw, and they set about throwing off the gripes of the waist boat and got it over the side with jury tackle in short order.

"I'll take a look about and see if we can find where they made a landin'," said Jarrow.

"You'd better come right back, this trip," said Trask. "It's important that I get some of that sand under the microscope or cook a little of it."

"Cook it?" asked Jarrow, puzzled.

"Certainly. I'll be able to tell in fifteen minutes whether there's a sign of gold on that

beach."

Dinshaw came out, in great glee over an immediate landing on his island, and could scarcely be restrained from climbing over the side and into the boat long enough to have his coffee.

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As the final preparations were being made for the departure of the boat, Marjorie appeared, clad in khaki, with a short skirt and heavy shoes.

"I'm all ready," she cried, thinking that everybody was embarking.

"We're not going yet," said Locke. "The crew's ashore, and the captain's going to do a little reconnoitering before we leave the schooner. We'll go right after breakfast, though, if everything's all right."

Doc was all agrin, and regarded the early trip ashore in the nature of a lark, and cast aside his white coat, to help row in his resplendent sweater, while the cook went about laying the table for breakfast, his round yellow face devoid of any interest in what was going on.

It was decided that Dinshaw should steer, which tickled him mightily, and Captain Jarrow plied an oar himself.

"Keep a good look-out," warned Jarrow, as they shoved off and began to pull toward the land.

"You bet we will," said Trask, gaily. "Don't go above high-water mark for that sand, but fill the bucket from any dark spots you can find."

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"Captain Dinshaw'll simply die of joy," said Marjorie. "I'd hoped we might all go together and see him land."

"You'd better put your hat on, Marge, or you'll have a skinned nose," said her father. "We'll be right in to breakfast."

"There's some hocus-pocus about this," whispered Trask, as he and Locke moved forward for a private talk.

"What do you make of it?"

"Jarrow's in on the deal with the crew. That's why I wanted him out of the way for awhile so we could figure things out. I believe that Dinshaw did hear them say they intended to steal his island. Peth or Jarrow got my gun, but Jarrow thinks we've three more between us. I told him last night you had two. He wants to get us separated."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Locke, aghast. "You can't mean they want to put us out of the way!"

"I wish I knew what they wanted to do," said Trask, speaking rapidly, and keeping his eyes on the boat which was making good headway toward the shore. "But I believe we're in serious danger, and I don't see now what's to be done."

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"Jarrow is a fool," said Locke.

"More of a rogue. He's far more clever than we realize. I'm sure now he signalled to Peth last night with the lantern, when I was out here trying to see what the crew were about with the dinghy."

"Then you knew it last night?"

"Yes. I found Jarrow out here on the forecastle head. First he lit a cigar, which I suspect was a caution, then he shook the lantern, probably to indicate that their absence was discovered, and then he put the lantern out. He said it was so they couldn't find their way back in the dark, but now I'm sure it indicated that not only was the party known to be gone, but that their motives were suspected. What's more, I'm sure he's had Doc Bird spying on us—at least on me. Just as sure as I move that black is at my heels, as full of questions as a rose is of thorns. We want to be mighty careful with the cook, too."

"We're sure in a pickle," said Locke. "If there were any wind I'd be for getting out now and leaving Jarrow and all hands."

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"My idea, too. But you'll notice he has the schooner well in behind the barrier reef, and unless we had a ripping good breeze, we'd pile up, or one of the boats would overtake us before we'd have the jib set. Of course, if we got out, it would be easy enough to make for the mainland, or with good weather keep down the coast until we reached some town or came up with some vessel. But as it stands, we've got to play the game out with Jarrow."

"What the dickens he expects to do, or make out of this sort of performing is beyond me," said Locke.

"Probably find a lot of gold and send us back to Manila in the hope of cheating

Dinshaw out of it. I expect they'll be disappointed if it's gold in any great quantity they're after."

"But why should he and Peth be plotting together when they're at outs?" asked Locke.

"It may be that Jarrow favours Peth's scheme, and now wants to get in with him. I don't doubt they could make up their differences if it came to a question of hoodwinking us."

"Oh, sure. I don't know whether this is all funny or dangerous but we seem to be in the hands of a lot of fools, and that's no joke. If it wasn't for Marge, I wouldn't worry."

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"Dad! Aren't you two coming to breakfast?" Marjorie called from the door of the cabin, and then seeing the boat approaching the shore, went to the bulwark and watched them make a landing.

They saw Doc jump out and pull the boat up on the shingle a few feet, and Jarrow hopped out after him. Dinshaw could be seen crawling forward, and went into the water up to his knees and ran up the beach to fall forward and plunge both hands into the sand in an ecstasy of joy. Those in the schooner could hear his high-pitched voice as he cackled gleefully.

Then they saw him talking with Jarrow, and pointing to seaward over the reef, and evidently going over the details of how he came ashore from the *Wetherall*, and where the bark struck.

Doc stood near by, listening, and kicking the sand with one foot. Jarrow made a gesture to him, and the steward went back to the boat and brought a bucket, which he began to fill with sand close to the water's edge.

Jarrow put his hands up to his face, to make a trumpet, and called loudly for "Mr. Peth" several times. His voice was thrown back from the hill over the water in long-drawn echoes that died away in the murmur of the gentle surf breaking on the other side of the point and along the backbone of the main reef.

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"For all the world like paging a gorilla," chuckled Locke. They went aft and stood by Marjorie, and Shanghai Tom looked out from the cabin door, white-capped and white-aproned, and a trifle bored.

Jarrow moved up nearer the rim of the jungle, and was rendered almost invisible to those on the schooner against the glittering white sand.

Doc put his bucket in the boat, and stood by the bow, looking after the captain. Once he turned toward the schooner, and waved his hand. Dinshaw was moving toward the point slowly, head bent, making a careful examination of the shore, stooping now and then to pick up a handful of sand and let it run through his fingers.

"Look—over beyond Captain Dinshaw—in the brush!" said Marjorie, pointing.

A figure in blue emerged cautiously from the tangle of green shrubbery some hundred yards to the right of Jarrow—Peth, in a suit of dungarees. He stepped out into the sand and stood with his arms akimbo, watching Jarrow, who was looking in the other direction.

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Presently Jarrow turned and saw Peth, and started toward him slowly, apparently in some doubt as to the attitude of the mate toward him. When he had advanced to within twenty feet of Peth he stopped, and from his gestures, he seemed to be talking. At times he looked over his shoulder toward Dinshaw, and pointed out to the schooner as if ordering the mate to return on board.

Peth kicked the sand but made no move to obey. Jarrow drew nearer, and his hands became more eloquent, as if he were arguing with Peth to bring the crew back and return to duty. Dinshaw, now well up to the point, went on with his explorations, and gave no heed to Jarrow and Peth, if, indeed, he had seen them at all.

Jarrow turned to the shore and called something, and Doc went across and stood near by while the pair continued their conversation. Dinshaw heard the summons, and looked back, but had no interest in what was going on, for he resumed his trudging, stopping frequently to look about him as if searching for some landmark.

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The parley between Peth and Jarrow lasted several minutes, and then other heads and shoulders appeared in the brush, peering out. Jarrow's voice, raised threateningly, reached those in the schooner in a rumbling sort of growl, although they could not distinguish his words. He appeared to be exasperated that his crew should stand about in the jungle and refuse to obey his orders.

Finally Jarrow waved his hand to Doc, and turned to follow the steward, when Peth ran forward, and stepped between Jarrow and Doc. He whipped out a pistol and pointed it at the captain.

The others came out of the brush at this, and Doc took to his heels, running for the boat like a deer.

Jarrow put his hands up, and roared out something angrily to the effect that he'd "settle this business if it cost him his life," and as the crew closed in around him he shouted wildly toward the schooner: "Mutiny! Mutiny!"

Doc reached the long boat and making frantic efforts to push it off finally got it afloat, and with an oar shoved it into deep water and began to scull it out rapidly, making a zigzag course for the schooner. [178]

"Can you beat it?" demanded Locke. "They've taken Jarrow prisoner! Now we are in for it!"

CHAPTER XII [179]

TRASK MAKES A DISCOVERY

"The crazy fools!" exclaimed Trask, as he saw Jarrow being hustled into the jungle by the crew. "What sort of game do you suppose this is? Have they all gone mad?"

"Mutiny!" said Marjorie. "Why should they mutiny?"

"Search me," said her father, disgustedly. "We seem to have brought a fine pack of maniacs with us."

They could see Dinshaw exploring the beach, apparently oblivious of what had happened, or careless of the quarrels which Jarrow and Peth might have, so long as he was on his beloved island.

So the watchers in the schooner gave their attention to Doc, who continued to drive the long boat ahead jerkily, working as though he expected to be pursued from ashore and prevented from gaining the *Nuestra*.

"What was that all about?" demanded Trask, as the steward, breathing hard and to every appearance terror-stricken, brought the long boat alongside the schooner. [180]

"Lordy me!" he gasped, his eyes white and rolling. "They shore messed up things this yer time!" He quit sculling and stood up in the stern of the boat, allowing it to make the distance which separated it from the schooner by its own momentum.

"But what did they say?" demanded Locke.

"It's Mr. Peth," said Doc, and turning, looked ashore. "He's got the skipper up a tree. Ah tell yo' all that man Peth, he's a danger! Yassir!" He made the boat fast, and scrambled up the ladder and over the side.

"Now," said Trask, "tell us everything that you heard."

"Mr. Trask, fo' Gawd, if you'll slip me a gun, I'll go back en blow dat man's haid off'n his neck! Mr. Peth he don't need to think he's goin' do no foolin' round with me, no, suh! I'm jest as mean as anybody when I'm stirred up, en I'm mad to mah marrer! If I'd had a gun——"

"You're more of a sprinter than a shooter, if I'm any judge," said Locke. "Never mind what you'll do. What did you hear?" [181]

"Well, suh," said Doc, scratching his head, "I was a just sort of circulatin' 'round when I filled that bucket. I wanted to see what Mr. Peth was projectin' about wid the skipper, so I jest aidged up, closer en closer, when the cap'n he call me to shuffle along.

"They was a-talkin', kind o' low lak'. Mr. Peth he was a-sayin' how they all been fooled 'cause there ain't no gold on the island nohow. How they done dug en dug, but nary any gold. And Mr. Peth he 'lowed he was there for gold, and not a-gitten' any, he was goin' to be paid, en paid big, en all hands wanted a batch o' money. He said nobody comin' back here nohow, en how Jarrow'll have to stay there with 'em until they was paid.

"De old man he 'lowed he ain't no bank on wheels, and Mr. Peth he say back he don't care whar de money come f'om, he's gwine have it, en he slash up wid a gun en say to come along, en come quick. Then the others come out o' de woods, lookin' mighty mad, en I says to mahse'f, 'Doc Bird, this ain't no place for you to be circulatin' 'round, not if yo' wants fo' to die of old age,' so I jump fo' de boat." [182]

"So it's a hold-up," said Locke, looking at Trask.

"You've got it," said Trask. "They set out to get gold, and can't find it. Now they think

we'll pay them a good price to get out."

"We'll get out without any help from them," said Locke.

"You better not go pullin' up no anchors in this pocket," advised Doc, as he saw Locke look over the bows speculatively. "Yo' all would go smack on that yer reef, the way the tide's got a set."

"How much do they want?" asked Marjorie, who was more amused than worried at the way things had turned out.

"You'll have to ask Mr. Peth," said Doc.

"You get in the boat and go back ashore and get Dinshaw," said Trask. "If you see any of the crew, simply say we'll take the matter of paying them extra under advisement when we know what their idea is."

"Mr. Trask," said Doc, solemnly, "I'll go back if you give me a gun. I ain't 'fraid of no man what stands on two laigs if I got shootin' things. But I ain't goin' back with my bar' hands, for Dinshaw nor the 'Postle Paul, no, suh!"

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"Oh, you want a gun, eh?" said Trask. "I'll bet you couldn't hit the island from here with a gun."

"Show me the gun," said Doc, eagerly. "I was in the army, if yo' all want to know. I got medals, yes, suh!"

"All right," said Trask. "Go in and serve breakfast and I'll give you a gun. Then we'll see what you can do."

Doc made for the cabin, and Shanghai Tom followed him, to whisper in the galley about what had happened.

"We'll be in in a minute," said Trask, and with a knowing smile Marjorie left the deck. Trask and Locke strolled forward.

"What do you think of it?" asked the older man.

"It's a mad scheme on the face of it," said Trask. "That's why I wouldn't undertake to say how it will turn out. But there's one thing I'm sure of."

"What?"

"The steward is crooked. He's too anxious to find out how many guns we have and too anxious to go back ashore. He's a spy."

"Then we wouldn't be wise to attempt to get the schooner out with his help," suggested Locke.

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"He doesn't want us to try it, that's plain," said Trask. "I've an idea to test him out. It'll take a little time, but we might as well set out to see who's who in this crowd."

"That gang ashore'll try to get back here," said Locke, looking over at the island. "They can't live on sand and water."

"Come to breakfast," said Trask. "Just leave things to me, and talk about our guns. We've got to give the impression that we're a young arsenal."

They passed into the cabin, and Trask took the occasion to slip into the galley while Doc and Tom were absent, and lifting out an old rat-tail file, which the cook used to sharpen his knives on, slipped it up the sleeve of his jacket.

They sent Doc out on deck to keep watch and Trask ordered him to get the bucket of sand out of the boat.

"Don't you feel worried about this, Miss Trinkets," said Locke, as Marjorie looked up doubtful.

"Do you think it's serious, Dad?" she asked.

"Serious! Not at all! We'll get out of here as soon as there's a breath of air, and leave that wild lot to themselves."

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"But poor old Dinshaw," she said, "and Captain Jarrow—what's to become of them?"

"We'll have to get Dinshaw, of course," said Trask. "I'll take Doc and go for him at once with the boat." He drank his coffee hastily, and went out on deck. He disappeared into the forecabin and was below for several minutes.

"Do you think you ought to risk going ashore?" asked Locke, when Trask returned with the bucket of sand.

"I don't believe they'll bother me," said Trask, and calling to Tom to bring him a frying pan, he measured out two or three cupfuls of sand and spread it carefully in the pan.

Then, to the amazement of all of them, he put the pan on the galley fire, and calling Doc, told him to watch the sand, and when it got well heated, to call him.

"Cookin' sand!" exclaimed Doc, with a suspicious look at Trask. "Ah never did hear of such a thing! What fo' yo' doin' it, Mr. Trask?" He made no attempt to conceal the fact that he doubted the young man's sanity.

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"I believe there's gold in it," said Trask, simply. "And if there is, we'll find it by heating the sand and then cooling it with water quickly. See those dark grains? The heat will melt the gold which you can't see, and run it together, and then the cold water cracks away the shell of sand, and your gold particle can be washed out."

"Beats me!" declared Doc, scratching his woolly head, but he went to the galley with renewed interest to watch the strange dish which Trask had prepared.

"Don't stir it," said Trask. "Let it get good and sizzling."

"Yo' goin' cook de whole islan' in a fry pan?" asked Doc.

"If there's a hundred dollars' worth of gold in a bushel of sand, don't you think it would pay?" asked Trask, as he went out.

"Some cookin'!" declared Doc.

Trask now searched Jarrow's cabin in the hope of finding some sort of firearm, but there was neither pistol nor rifle. So he took the captain's spy-glass, a cumbersome, old-fashioned tube, and went on the poop deck to look the island over.

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But the only living thing in sight was Dinshaw, busy scooping up sand with his hands, and building what appeared to be sand forts. The old man was working out near the point, close to the water's edge, piling up sand like a harvester getting ready for the work of gathering a crop. Mound after mound he made, in a long furrow on a line with the shore, just above the rim of the tide.

"I believe he is crazy," said Marjorie, as she looked through the glass. "Can it be possible he thinks that sand is gold?"

"That's been my suspicion for quite awhile," said Trask.

Locke began to laugh. "We are the prize boobs," he said, "if we've come here because a cracked old man thinks a beach is solid gold. We might have known he was out from the way he talked."

"Anyway, it's lots of fun," asserted Marjorie. "Think of it! A real mutiny, a lunatic, sand that's supposed to be gold——"

"Marge, you're a hard-shell optimist," chided her father. "Don't you realize that we're in danger? That a storm, or a dozen things would——"

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"I rather enjoy it, Dad. I've always wanted to do something that was more exciting than playing tennis. I'm glad I came."

Trask looked at her and grinned. As she stood against the rail, spying out the land through an ancient glass, seeking some sign of a crew of piratical tendencies, he couldn't help thinking that this slender young woman with the yellow hair coiled under a canvas hat really was thrilled by the possibility of danger.

"By George! You do like it!" he said, admiringly.

"I'm only a little bit scared," she confessed.

"Mr. Trask, yo' better take a look at this mess," Doc called up the companion. He betrayed his suppressed excitement in his voice, and when Trask went down, followed by the others, the steward's hands were trembling and his eyes snapping with the spirit of discovery which possessed him. He might have been a scientist making a test which promised to realize lifelong dreams and labours.

"Fine! It's fairly glowing!" said Trask, as he passed a hand over the dish of sand.

They all pressed around him as he took a bottle of water from Doc and dashed the liquid into the sand. There was a cloud of steam and a terrific hissing.

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"Now," said Trask, "pass me that wooden chopping bowl," and he dumped the wet sand out into the bowl, and laid it on the cabin table.

"Bring me another pan," he called, "and more water."

He began twisting the bowl with a rotary motion, and when Doc arrived with the pan, nursed the sand out into it, and as the last of the sand went over the lip of the bowl, ran out on deck into the sun, and examined the bottom of the wooden bowl.

"Lordy me!" gasped Doc, leaning over Trask's shoulder. "Look at the sparkle!"

The wet bowl was shot with tiny points of yellow, which caught the sunlight.

"Gold!" exclaimed Marjorie.

"By thunder!" cried Locke. "Dinshaw's right!"

"Gold without a doubt," said Trask, and turned to see Shanghai Tom staring into the bowl, his eyes fairly popping out of his head at this magical cookery which transformed a sea-beach into glittering wealth.

Trask resumed the washing, and in a few minutes had as much of the yellow powder as he could hold in the hollow of a palm. [190]

"Man alive!" remarked the gleeful Doc. "I reckon we better take this yere island apart, right down level to the water!"

"There's millions on it," declared Trask. "When four cups of sand will assay that much gold, consider what's in a mile of beach like this."

"It's a new one on me," said Locke. "I never saw such a thing in my life and— Hello! Here's the boat coming out!"

They ran to the rail, and looking shoreward, saw the dinghy, with two men rowing it, and Peth and Jarrow sitting in the stern sheets. They were heading straight for the schooner.

CHAPTER XIII

 [191]

WHAT HAPPENED TO DOC AND THE DINGHY

Those aboard the *Nuestra* watched the dinghy for a minute as it came on, the sunlight flashing from the oars. Two men were still on the beach, far up to the left, with their hands to their eyes, watching the progress of the boat.

"Now what's the game?" asked Locke.

"It looks like a boarding party," said Trask. "If they wanted to come back and behave themselves, they'd all come. Get those dishes out of sight. They may manage to get aboard in spite of all we can do, but we've got to bluff 'em."

"We can't let 'em aboard," declared Locke.

Trask moved forward and mounted the forecastle, followed by Locke.

"Hello, you!" called Trask.

The rowers ceased their work, and with suspended oars allowed the dinghy to drift on.

"It's all right," said Jarrow. "They want to put me aboard for a talk." [192]

"You can't come alongside," warned Trask. "We'll shoot if you attempt to come close," and he put his hand to his hip pocket and pulled out his silver cigarette case, taking care that the sun hit the upper edge.

"But they want to put me back aboard for a talk about how things stand," insisted Jarrow. "You'll let me come, won't ye?"

"Not with that gang," said Trask. "Let 'em take you ashore, and get up the beach. Then I'll come for you with the long boat."

Jarrow made some suggestion to Peth, but the mate shook his head.

"He says I come aboard now, this way, or not at all," said Jarrow. "You better let me tell you how the land lays."

"Nobody gets aboard here until Captain Dinshaw is brought back," said Trask. "And I'll take one man of the crew. The rest of 'em can stay here and starve for all I care. It's their own funeral. They had no business deserting the schooner."

"But I'm master, and that's my schooner, and I'm to say what's to be done," said Jarrow. "If you try to do that, it's piracy. I can't help it if the men refuse duty. All I can do is the best I can for the safety of my passengers, and if you don't let me do that, I wash my hands of ye." [193]

"You'll find your schooner in Manila," declared Trask. "I've told you how to go about getting aboard."

"I can't do what they won't let me," whined Jarrow.

"What do they want?" demanded Trask.

The boat now had no way on her, and had swung broadside to the schooner, about a hundred yards off.

"They want a bonus," said Jarrow.

"What sort of bonus?"

"Extra wages to work the schooner back to Manila."

"We won't have 'em work the schooner back to Manila at any price."

"You can't git back yourself, Mr. Trask. Can't git out of this place. It's dangerous. You'll lose her."

"We'd rather take the chance of losing the schooner than have that cut-throat crew back here, I'll tell you that. They've made their bed, now they can sleep in it." [194]

"Be I goin' to lose all I got out of this?" wailed Jarrow. "If you'll let 'em put me aboard, it'll come out all right."

"They can have the island. We don't want it," said Trask.

"There ain't no gold," said Peth.

"I know it," said Trask. "Could have told you in fifteen minutes, if you hadn't wanted to cheat Dinshaw out of it."

"We wouldn't a-come if we'd knowed this was a sell," said Peth.

"Weren't you paid to come?"

"He ain't got no gun," yelled Doc. "The island is full o' gold, cap'n. Yo' got to cook it an'——"

Trask turned to see the steward waving his hands at the rail, and ran toward him in rage, telling him to be still.

"Don' you lay han's on me!" yelled Doc, backing away to where Shanghai Tom stood. Behind the pair was Marjorie.

"So you're in with 'em, eh?" sneered Trask.

"I'm in fo' mahse'f!" declared Doc, lowering his head and regarding Trask from under his brows. He put his hand in his pocket. "Keep away, w'ite man, or I'll do yo'all hurt!" [195]

Trask walked straight for the steward, who pulled out a pistol.

"My gun!" cried Trask, stopping. Marjorie uttered a cry of dismay as she saw the steward raise his hand.

"I can shoot," warned Doc. "Come on! Come on!" he yelled, waving his hand to the dinghy. "I got 'em!"

Trask heard the splash of oars, and saw out of the corner of his eye that the boat was coming ahead swiftly. He was about to hurl himself at the steward when he saw Shanghai Tom reach over Doc's shoulder and grasp the weapon. Doc turned to resist the cook, but Tom bent him sidewise, wrenched the pistol from his hand so that it fell to the deck, and lifted Doc against the bulwark. Then catching the steward's legs, he threw him over, head first, into the sea.

"Good for you!" shouted Trask, and leaping forward, grabbed up his revolver and aimed it at the boat. "Stop!" he shouted. "Stop this minute or I'll fire!" [196]

The rowers looked over their shoulders, and seeing that Trask had them covered, backed water furiously despite the shouts of Peth to go on.

Doc came up blowing, and began to swim toward the dinghy without further ado. Jarrow now yelled to the rowers to keep backing, and when Peth roared at him to "shut his head," the captain, taking advantage of the confusion, stood up and leaped into the water and began swimming to the schooner quite as fast as Doc swam away from it.

"Let me aboard!" cried Jarrow.

"All right," said Trask. "Come on!" and he came, with an awkward, splashing, overhand stroke, like some queer fish with one curved fin out of the water.

The rowers stopped backing and watched the two swimmers, as if not sure just what to do. Peth seemed inclined to wait and see how things turned out before making for shore. He evidently had abandoned any desire he had to get aboard the schooner by force.

Jarrow came floundering along, and managed to reach up and grasp the stern of the long boat, when he pulled himself up and climbed in. He stood dripping, dashing the [197]

water out of his eyes, and regarded the dinghy.

"Get out!" he bawled, shaking his fist. "Ye can go to the devil, the whole lot of ye!"

Peth made no reply, but spoke to the rowers, and the dinghy turned slowly and headed for the island, but waited for Doc to get alongside, when they helped him aboard, and made off rapidly.

"Them blastered scoundrels!" raged Jarrow, as he rubbed his hands down over his shirt to squeeze out the water. "I lost my hat."

"Better come aboard, captain," said Trask. "Have you a gun?"

"I wish I had," declared Jarrow, wrathfully. "I'd a-let daylight through that fool of a Peth! See the game they run on me ashore?"

"We did," said Locke. "You were lucky to get away."

"By the Mighty Nelson!" declared Jarrow, as he clambered over the side and hurled a shower of water around him like a halo as he landed on the bone-white deck. "I never did see such a passel o' fools! Plumb bugs on gold! They think 'cause there ain't any we're to put a young fortune in their hands! I'll have the coast guard on 'em, that's what, and land every man of 'em in Bilibid for life!"

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"Then you're for getting out?" asked Trask.

"You bet I am! Think I want to hang around and palaver with a set of pirates that'd stick a gun in my face and tell me where I git off? Not much! What's that Doc pulled on you?"

"A gun," said Trask. "And my own. He had it all the time."

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" declared Jarrow, staring at the weapon which Trask still held in his hand. "He's a nice one!"

"A smooth article," said Trask. "He fooled me, all right. If it hadn't been for Tom——" He looked around, but Tom had disappeared into the galley.

"I'm sure the steward would have shot you," said Marjorie, who had regained her composure, and now stood beside Trask.

"Looked like it was all off to me," said Locke. "We'll have to square things with that Chink."

"What's this?" asked Jarrow, looking at the pan and bowl, and the sand on the deck. "Been lookin' for gold?"

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"Tried some of it," said Trask.

"Find any?" asked Jarrow, with quick interest.

"No," said Trask, and Locke appeared startled, but said nothing.

"I better git into some dry duds," said Jarrow. "As soon as there's a capful of wind, we'll see what we can do about gittin' out of this hole, unless you want to go prospectin' ashore, Mr. Trask."

"Not with those fellows there," said Trask, looking over to where the boat was making a landing far up the beach. The other two men came down to meet the boat's crew, and there was a lively conference.

"But we can't go and leave poor old Dinshaw," said Marjorie.

Jarrow looked at Trask questioningly.

"How about it?" he asked. "Are we goin' to hang around and take chances just to pick up the old un?"

"We can't leave Dinshaw," said Trask. "We've got to get him before we think of leaving."

"You can suit yerself," said Jarrow. "I'm for gittin' out. They won't hurt him. Soon's we're gone, they'll all make over for the mainland. They've got some canned meat and hard bread. They took a lot of stuff with 'em last night."

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Jarrow departed for his room, leaving a wet trail behind him.

"He's all right," whispered Locke. "If we can get Dinshaw, we're fixed up to leave."

"We'll keep an eye on the captain just the same," said Trask. "I rather think he's had all he wants of Peth and the crew, even if he was going to stand in with them at one time."

"Oh, I guess he's straight enough," said Locke. "But you didn't tell him about that gold."

"He was keen about what you'd found," said Marjorie. "I suppose he didn't understand what the steward said."

Trask laughed, and leaning over to Locke, whispered: "There wasn't any gold in the sand."

"No gold?" said Locke, staring at him.

"No. The 'gold' was just some brass filings I made in the forecastle out of an old brass cleat that was hanging on a nail in my room for a clothes hook," and he took from his pocket the piece of metal and displayed the groove he had cut in it with the file.

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"What the dickens did you do that for?" asked Locke.

"To see if Doc would stand in with the crew, although I didn't expect it would result in his pulling a gun on me. I thought that if he was against us, he'd try to get back ashore with the news. Now if they think the island is full of gold, they'll be content to stay there and not bother us. But I didn't want to fool Jarrow. He might not be so anxious to leave, if he had what he thought to be proof that there was plenty of gold."

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Marjorie. "I'd hoped that Dinshaw's dream had come true."

"Had me going all right," said Locke.

Before long Jarrow came out, in dry clothing, smacking his lips after a drink, and lighted a long cigar.

"Now," he began, "how're we to git Looney Dinshaw back?"

"Go for him with the boat," said Trask.

"You come along?" suggested the captain.

"I'll stick by the schooner," said Trask.

"Then I'll take the cook."

"Not unless the cook wants to go of his own accord," was Trask's reply. "I'm not going to ask Tom to do anything."

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"Want me to go alone?" asked the captain, in surprise.

"I suggest that you row up toward the point, and call Dinshaw down to you. You can get him easy enough, and I'll stand watch here to see that you're not headed off by the dinghy."

Jarrow said nothing to this, but went aft for his glass, and studied the group far up the beach. The sailors were gathering wood from the jungle, and making a pile about halfway between the edge of the forest and the water.

In a few minutes a curl of white smoke was rising from the pile they had laid.

"Gittin' a meal ready," was Jarrow's comment, and he went into the cabin where Shanghai Tom was setting the table.

"Doc is making a fire to melt some gold on his own account," said Trask to Locke and Marjorie. "I wish him luck. Dinshaw is still piling sand into little dunes up near the point."

CHAPTER XIV

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WHAT JARROW WANTED AND WHAT HE GOT

Captain Jarrow spent an hour or two loafing about the schooner and swearing under his breath as he regarded the shore, where the crew was going through mysterious incantations.

But Trask understood that Doc was initiating them into the mysteries of smelting out gold from sand. To all appearances, it was utterly devoid of anything approaching gold.

Finally, after a conference with Locke and Marjorie, Trask put before the captain the matter of bringing Dinshaw back. But Jarrow was inclined to be sulky about it. He objected to having "it put up to him to bring the fool aboard," as he expressed it.

"None of us will leave the schooner under the circumstances," declared Trask.

"But I want the cook," said Jarrow. Trask had joined him on the forecastle and the others remained in the cabin.

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"The cook stays right here with us," said Trask. "I don't intend to take a chance at losing another man."

"You don't seem to look on me as worth much," said Jarrow, as he gazed at the column of smoke which rose straight in the air and hung over the island like a volcanic vapour, spreading out into a funnel-shaped cloud.

"If Peth was willing to put you on board, I don't see that he'd interfere with you if you went ashore," said Trask. "As I see it, you can pull over, get Dinshaw, and come back. You don't need to go near that gang on the beach."

"Can't ye let me have the gun?"

"No." Trask walked away from Jarrow, satisfied that the captain would take no action so long as there was a possibility of continuing the argument.

Not long afterward, while the three in the cabin were playing cards and Tom was preparing lunch, Jarrow came shambling aft, and without a word went over the side and into the long boat. When Trask went out on deck the captain was pulling slowly for the shore, making a course to land near where Dinshaw was toiling in the broiling sun at his sand piling. [205]

All hands deserted the cabin to see what would happen. As the boat approached the beach, Doc was seen to leave those about the fire, and proceed toward Dinshaw, with the avowed purpose of heading the captain off.

Jarrow made his way leisurely, and ran the boat on the shingle. He stood watching Doc and waiting for him, and when the steward had come close and stopped as if in doubt as to what the captain's attitude would be, Jarrow beckoned him on with a peremptory gesture.

There was a parley, which ended with Doc returning to the fire, and then Jarrow approached Dinshaw. The old man looked up and waved his hand as if pointing out the result of his labours.

Jarrow kicked the sand, and got down to examine it. Then he said something to Dinshaw, and the latter got up and followed him obediently to the boat. Soon they were heading back for the schooner, Dinshaw serving an oar.

"What's the news?" asked Trask, as the boat drew near. [206]

"They want to come back," said Jarrow. "Peth sends word that if you'll take 'em, they'll return to duty if you'll call it square. Seems like they've tried a wrinkle of burnin' the sand to git gold, but it won't work, an' they're plumb disgusted."

"We won't take Peth's word about anything," said Trask.

"I guess they got a belly full o' this business," was Jarrow's comment as he brought the boat alongside. "You make a mistake not to take 'em up. We'd be in a bad hole here if it come on to blow hard. Ye better let me signal 'em back."

Trask said nothing to this, but helped Dinshaw over the side. The old man seemed utterly spent, and appeared to be in a daze from the sun. He looked about as if he had seen none of them before, and smiled, whispering something about gold, holding up his hands and looking at them.

"He thinks the sand is gold," said Jarrow. "I looked it over and it's no more gold than I am."

Marjorie spoke to Dinshaw, but he merely blinked at her, and she took him away to the cabin and gave him food and drink. [207]

"What's this Doc said about you cookin' gold out of sand?" asked Jarrow.

"Brass filings," said Trask, promptly, and took some of the particles from his trousers pocket and dumped them into Jarrow's palm. "Had my suspicions of him, and wanted to see if he'd give me a double cross. And he has the nerve to want to come back!"

Jarrow grinned and examined the grains of brass, and with a remark that it was all a crazy business, announced his intention of getting some sleep.

"Call me, Mr. Trask, if this calm breaks, and we'll git out. I'm disgusted."

Dinshaw had suffered a sort of collapse, or coma, and he was put to bed likewise. Trask managed to get up an awning, and out on deck, where they could keep watch on shore, they lunched in comparative comfort.

Locke, now satisfied that the whole venture was a mad sort of lark, took it all in jocular mood, and chaffed Marjorie about her desire to go adventuring in the tropics. But Trask knew that he had been much more worried than either himself or Marjorie, and that his sallies were the result of his relief from strain about how things would turn out for them. [208]

Shanghai Tom had become the pet of the trio, and while he maintained his outward imperturbability, it was evident that he was quite proud of his exploit in overcoming and disposing of the treacherous Doc Bird. Trask had promised him a reward on their return to Manila, at which he had remarked, "Me no catchum for cash," and shook his head. The Chinaman either from pique at the crew's total disregard of him in their plans or from a real liking for the passengers themselves had lined himself up on the side of the Lockes and Trask.

The crew deserted their fire and took to the jungle, leaving a pile of smouldering ashes on the sand, and during the afternoon there was nothing to be seen of them. The dinghy was in plain sight, pulled up on the beach, just beyond where they had essayed their attempts at reducing ore by the "cooking" method.

Trask managed to get a nap lying in a steamer chair under his improvised awning, for it was agreed that if they had to remain at their anchorage for the night, he would have to share a watch with Jarrow. [209]

In spite of the captain's evident desire to abandon the crew to their fate, Trask still had a lurking suspicion that Jarrow was more in sympathy with Peth's demands for extra money than his heated language against the mate implied. And the young man was determined that he would not relax his vigilance once Jarrow was on deck again. So while he slept, Locke sat in the doorway of the cabin and read while Marjorie played solitaire under a corner of the awning and kept a watch toward shore.

Jarrow appeared late in the afternoon, and was rather morose and silent. He went out on the forecastle and smoked, scanning the sea and sky and complaining to himself that there was no wind. The sea was as smooth as a field of liquid metal, great glassy swells extending to the horizon all round, glinting in the sun. The heat was oppressive until the sun dropped to the sea's rim, when dark wind patches made their appearance to the southward on the surface of the ocean. But still the calm held.

While the sky and sea were yet suffused with crimson from the sun's afterglow Jarrow came aft, and without a word to any one, or even a look, went on the poop, going up the port side. [210]

Marjorie went in and peeped into Dinshaw's room. The old man was sleeping, breathing gently, but lying like a man utterly exhausted, flat on his back in his bunk.

As she came out on deck, where Trask and Locke sat watching the sea and reconciling themselves to another night aboard the schooner in the bight of the reef, Jarrow's voice came over the cabin trunk in a low growl as he cleared his throat.

"We better talk this thing over," he suggested.

"All right, captain," said Locke. "Suppose you come down here."

Jarrow appeared at the starboard break of the poop, his hands on his hips, a cigar aslant in his mouth. He gave the trio a critical glance, and turned his head toward the island.

"Not much chance to get out to-night," began Locke. "Do you look for a breeze?"

"I don't look for nothin'," said the captain, without looking at Locke. "I been thinkin' this thing over," he said presently, chewing his words with his cigar. "I'm out of pocket on this deal." [211]

"How do you mean?" asked Locke, with a startled glance at Trask. He had detected a belligerent note in the captain's voice.

"Just this," said Jarrow, with sudden vehemence, slapping his hand down on the cabin roof, and turning a savage visage at the three sitting below him: "I come on this trip lookin' to make a piece o' money. I figured there'd be a couple of weeks here at the least—you'd go lookin' for gold, an' maybe find it, an' I'd git a look-in. Now ye want to skip out for Manila again. Where do I git off?"

Trask sprang to his feet, his face scarlet with rage.

"You sit down, young feller," said Jarrow, holding up a hand for attention. "Don't go off half-cocked."

"What's the meaning of this?" demanded Locke. His back was to Jarrow, and he did not get up.

Trask stood glaring at Jarrow with trembling lips and set jaw. The captain pushed his cap back on his head and puffed a couple of times at his cigar before he spoke.

"I mean you can't git out of here, wind or no wind, without me. And what's more, ye won't go when I do but ye'll pay me for my time, and I'll make it fair enough." [212]

"You're in with Peth!" exclaimed Trask, and made a move toward his pistol pocket.

"I'm in with Peth," admitted Jarrow. "He didn't work it just the way I wanted, but now it's come to a show down. This schooner is for sale for twenty thousand dollars. I guess that's fair enough, seein' the jam ye're in, and the young lady along."

"I've half a mind to take a shot at you," said Trask.

"Go ahead and shoot," said Jarrow. "That's my chance. I'll risk it. But you've got to handle the rest of the crew before mornin', don't forgit that."

"Twenty thousand dollars," said Locke, musingly, and looked at Marjorie, who stared at Jarrow as if she could not believe her ears.

"My price," said Jarrow. "I thought I'd say somethin' about it before the boys come out. They'll be makin' along out this way in a few minutes. It'll save messin' things up to reach a bargain before they come."

"The first man that tries to come aboard——" began Trask.

"You can't kill 'em all," said Jarrow, grinning. "Oh, it's cheap at the price. You'll find it a lot more comfortable to see this thing the way it lays. You shoot me, and it's all off with ye. The boys'll just have to boat off down the coast and say ye was lost with the schooner. That's easy enough."

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"You're a murderin' scoundrel," said Locke, quietly.

"I'm out for the coin," said Jarrow. "Work with me, and it'll be all right."

"Sit down, Mr. Trask," said Locke. "We might as well go about this in a business way."

"Now ye're talkin'," said Jarrow.

"What's your proposition?" asked Locke. "Tom! Bring me my cigar-case."

"I'm sellin' the schooner for twenty thousand. I left word in Manila at your bank that you had a mind to buy, an' you'd pay ten thousand. That's a fair price. My bank thinks ye're goin to buy, too, so that's another ten. I won't have no trouble cashin' two checks on you. I cashed your checks in both banks before we left, and they're sort o' trained to it."

"You're playing a dangerous game," said Locke. "Do I understand you're to put us down in Manila and then go up to the banks and cash checks on me?"

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"No," said Jarrow. "You stay here on the island, hid away. If I don't git the money, it's you who's playin' a dangerous game."

"But how are we to get away from here?" asked Locke.

"We'll send the schooner back, after we've had time to git clear of Manila. May be five or six days after we git our money, but I'll send it right enough. Of course, I could ask more, an' take a wide chance, but I ain't hoggin' things. It ought to be worth gittin' out without trouble for you folks. And ye'll git some of yer money back out o' this old wagon. Say the word, an' I'll signal the boys to come back, all peaceful, an' no shootin'. If ye don't want to take it my way, I'm done talkin'. The others look for fight, an' Peth's got my gun's well's his own. So, if you want fireworks, it ain't my funeral."

"I'll take you up," said Locke, as he reached for his cigar-case. "You'll let us have Tom—and what we need?"

"Everything ye want," said Jarrow, with satisfaction. "Only don't come no didoes with me or the checks. If I ain't here to tell Peth it's all right when he comes alongside, he'll cut loose on ye in the dark."

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"I'm giving you my word that we'll play fair, as you call it. You'll get your checks, and all I ask is fair play in return."

"My way o' lookin' at it," said Jarrow. "I thought you'd find it a open an' shut game, an' I spoke as I did so's you'd have time to pack an' stow the boats, if ye don't want to stay aboard to-night. But there ain't no call for you leavin' here 'less we git a wind."

"We'll take that up later," said Locke.

"I'd like a letter from you, as how ye've bought the schooner," said Jarrow. "Ye can say's ye've decided to remain here, and I'm to attend to some things in Manila, so's it'll look natural like."

"As you say," said Locke. "If you'll fetch my coat, I'll write out a check—the checks. And my pen's with the book."

"I'll bring some paper," said Jarrow, with a glance at Trask. "If you don't mind, unload your gun, and give me the ca'tridges. I'll turn 'em over to ye when ye leave for the island. How's that?"

"I'll compromise," said Trask. "Suppose Miss Locke keeps the gun? You'd hardly expect Miss Locke to shoot you in the back, would you?"

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"I'll take the ca'tridges," said Jarrow, coming down and holding out his hand. "I ain't figurin' on anybody changin' their mind, but it'll be better to make sure."

"Give him what he wants," said Locke. "We'll play the game as the cards run."

So Trask took out the magazine, and removed the cartridge from the chamber of the pistol and surrendered the ammunition.

Jarrow went into his room for the paper, and they heard him fumbling in the little bulkhead desk.

"No use arguing with a man when he's got the drop on you," said Locke. "If it wasn't for Miss Trinkets, here, it might be different. But I'd rather pay up than see anybody hurt."

Trask sat with his empty pistol across his knees, thoroughly dejected, staring out over the blood-red sea. Already a star, close to the horizon, had popped out, and the top of the island was gathering gloom.

"I was a fool ever to take you people on such a wild-goose chase," said Trask. "I'll have to pay you back every dollar of this, Mr. Locke."

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"Pay nothing," said Locke.

"I'm the one to blame, Dad," said Marjorie, laying her hand on his arm. She was quite white, but she smiled faintly. "And you can't blame yourself, Mr. Trask. It was all my plan from the first, Dad. We plotted to inveigle you into coming to the island, at least I abetted Mr. Trask, and I'm glad I came."

"I'm satisfied——" said Locke, with a whimsical smile, and before he could go on he was interrupted by a scream of rage inside the cabin.

They all sprang up as Tom dashed from the galley and looked into the captain's cabin. They saw the white form of the Chinese against the dark interior, and heard a terrific struggle going on, with the sound of shoes being hammered against the bulkhead.

As the three pressed in to look over Tom's shoulder Dinshaw leaped from the deck of the captain's cabin, and yelling like mad, ran up the companion and dived over the taffrail.

Trask ran after him in time to hear him splash into the water, and turning to come through the cabin for the long boat, heard Jarrow sobbing on the deck, and crawling about, or so it seemed, for the captain's arms were moving like a swimmer's although he was making no progress forward. And as he struggled, he gave gasping cries.

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"What's happened?" cried Locke.

"He killum cap'n," said Shanghai Tom, and stooping down, picked up a knife. It was a long knife from the galley rack.

Marjorie ran from the cabin, overcome with horror, and Trask followed, with the intention of getting the long boat away to save Dinshaw. But as he paused, poised on the bulwark to jump down into the boat, he looked aft. There was no trace of Dinshaw.

"Go to the taffrail and look," he called to Marjorie. She hastened to the poop-deck while he got the boat off, which swung with the tide, and drifted aft as he paddled with the big oar, standing in the stern.

For an instant there was a white object visible against the dark water, as if a fish had broken the surface. Whatever it was, it was being swept away swiftly by the tide. Before Trask could reach the spot where it had appeared, the water was smoothed out in a steely sheen. Dinshaw had been whirled away to the coral depths below.

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It was growing dark as Trask rowed back. As he came alongside the schooner he saw Locke standing beside Marjorie.

"Dead," said Locke.

From shore there came a confused chorus of cries. Trask listened, and across the darkening waters he saw a white spot drifting out slowly, and then in the evening hush heard the clatter of oars.

"The cartridges!" he cried. "They're coming out, Peth and the others. With Jarrow dead, we've a fight on our hands!"

He leaped over the bulwark, and dashed into Jarrow's cabin, to regain the ammunition he had surrendered. A blazing match revealed Jarrow lying on his back, his face distorted and spotted. Trask found the cartridges loose in the captain's coat

CHAPTER XV

[220]

AN END AND A BEGINNING

A red moon rose out of the sea, and threw a fiery trail over the heaving wastes that reached to the schooner's side. Her hull and masts stood out in bold relief like a vessel in silhouette before the glare of a volcano.

Trask, Locke, and Shanghai Tom stood on the starboard side abreast of the foremast where they could see over the bows and still be in a position to resist from either side when the crew attempted to board. Locke had a pair of iron belaying pins, and while Tom had a similar weapon, he also had a galley knife. Marjorie stood just outside the cabin door, where she could retreat inside and protect herself against bullets.

The boat came forward slowly and cautiously, now only a dark spot on the water, still covered by the gloom of the island. The crew apparently hoped to get close without alarming those aboard.

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"We'll let them come on, and then give it to them without warning," said Trask. "I'll hold my fire until they're right under us. Keep low, so they can't see our heads."

Watching over the bulwark, Trask saw the boat come out of the island's shadow into the moonlight. He expected a dash once the boat was exposed, for it would be useless to attempt to sneak up on the schooner if any watch were kept.

But the rowers came on leisurely. It might be that they supposed Jarrow would be the only one on watch and would allow them to get alongside before their proximity was suspected by Trask and Locke.

"I can't see but three," whispered Locke.

"Others may be hidden," said Trask. "Or they've decided to cut their party in two, to intercept anybody who got away to the island."

"We can handle three, all right," said Locke, with some relief. "They'll walk right into a trap."

"They probably figured Jarrow would have things fixed for them by the time they arrived, by having some of us out of the way. It isn't possible that they could know what's happened to him," remarked Trask.

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The boat came on slowly and silently, the oars working steadily but with little noise of locks. It headed for the starboard side, and came up within a dozen yards of the bow abreast of it. Then the oars were held, backing slowly.

"Aboard there!" came a low, hoarse voice. Trask and his friends remained silent.

There was an exchange of whispers. Then the oars backed water quietly, to check the way and overcome the tide.

"Aboard there!" This time it was louder, and Trask knew it was not the voice of Peth.

"Hello!" he answered, gruffly, speaking as he thought Jarrow might if he were waiting for his treacherous crew to seize the schooner.

"Who's that?" asked the voice. It was more cautious, and apparently worried. After a pause: "Is it Mr. Trask?"

"Yes," replied Trask boldly. There was something hopeful in the tone of the other. If it had been Peth, Trask would not have admitted his own identity.

"Then it's all right," said the other. "I'm Bevins. Where's the skipper?"

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"In his room asleep," answered Trask, still cautious, and not to be fooled into telling the truth. If they expected Jarrow, it would puzzle them to be told the captain was not there to meet them.

"Look out for him," said Bevins, hastily. "He's fixin' to do for ye. We've run away from Mr. Peth. Shope and Pennock are here with me. We don't want no trouble. We want to come back aboard for duty. But have an eye out for the skipper. He's lookin' for Mr. Peth to come out, but we got the dinghy."

"We stood in with him for gold," said another voice, pleadingly. "But when it come to makin' trouble for you folks, we ain't for it."

"Come up closer so I can look into the boat," commanded Trask.

"You better lock the skipper in his room," said Bevins. "We don't want to come aboard if he's going to make a row. He's a slick one, and he thought we stood in with him—thought we'd come out with Mr. Peth to put you ashore, but we give 'em the dish—Mr. Peth and the nigger. You better git the skipper or he'll be down on ye."

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They pulled the boat in, and under Trask's orders walked about the bottom, to prove that there was no one lying hidden under their feet.

"You may come aboard, Bevins," said Trask finally. "But the others stay where they are a few minutes. If they attempt to rush, they'll get shot."

"Git the skipper before I come," begged Bevins. "Git him while he's asleep. Don't take no chances. He's up to maroon ye all."

"We've got the skipper," said Trask, grimly. "Don't worry about him. He is dead."

There were exclamations of surprise and joy from the boat.

"Ye done for him? No foolin'?" asked Bevins.

"No doubt about it. Come aboard and see for yourself."

"Ye won't make no trouble for us for what we done if we come for duty?"

"Not if you help us get back to Manila, and make no more trouble."

"We don't want no trouble, honest to Gawd!" said Shope.

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"Mr. Peth he got us to go ashore just for fun," said Bevins. "I know we had no call for doin' of it but he said we'd be back in the mornin'. Said the skipper give orders for it."

"We'll call it square if you men turn to," said Trask. "But if there's any more trouble the first man to start it, follows Jarrow. You'll have to understand that before you come aboard. We're all armed and you'll have to be searched."

"That's fair," said Bevins. "I'll come first. I ain't got no arms."

They worked the boat aft to where the pilot-ladder was and Bevins came up. Trask searched him from head to toe while Locke and Tom kept watch on the others in the dinghy.

Trask believed that Bevins was telling the truth. His warning about the captain and his reluctance to come aboard until he was assured that Jarrow could do no harm were convincing. If the three in the boat had been in league with Jarrow, it was improbable that they would tell Trask that the captain was a menace.

Bevins then asked to see Jarrow. So Trask sent him aft and gave him matches to examine the captain's room. He came back presently, and with considerable satisfaction assured his companions that they need have no further fear of the skipper.

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Marjorie came forward to her father, and finding that instead of a battle they were safer than ever, she began to cry softly.

Bevins now advised that it was necessary to keep a sharp lookout toward shore. He was afraid that Peth and Doc would make some attempt to get out to the schooner.

Shanghai Tom went to the galley and prepared a meal for the three who had returned. After shutting the door of Jarrow's room the cabin lamp was lighted, as if in defiance of the two ashore and to prove that all was well aboard the schooner.

Shope was given coffee and a cigar and put on watch, while all hands joined in a meal in the cabin. Bevins went over the whole story of how Mr. Peth had held up the captain ashore, but that it was all to mislead those in the schooner, and how after taking to the brush the captain had told them his plans for "making a nice pot of money" out of the expedition, they having found no gold.

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Doc had been in with Jarrow and Peth from the first. He had been told to play the spy, but he had kept secret his theft of the pistol from Trask's bag, a circumstance which puzzled Jarrow. The captain taxed Peth with having made a blunder so early in the game, and it was not until Doc had declared himself as the dinghy approached the schooner with Jarrow and his men that the secret of who had the pistol came out.

Doc had been told to return with the long boat after Jarrow was held up by Peth, and announce the captain's capture. When the captain came out again it was with the intention of getting aboard the schooner and putting Trask, Locke, and Marjorie ashore.

Jarrow had planned that the party which went ashore in the night would get back in the morning before they were discovered, but when Trask learned of the secret departure, Jarrow had signalled them to remain ashore, by means of the lantern in the forerigging.

If the crew had got back aboard the schooner without having aroused any suspicions, it was Jarrow's intention to get his three passengers on the island, and then demand checks, leaving them there while he took the schooner back to Manila and got the money.

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Bevins, Shope, and Pennock had no idea of what had been planned until Jarrow told the whole plot ashore. Then it came out that Peth's refusal to sleep aft was arranged by Jarrow and Peth to make it appear that they were at odds. The demand for money was to be made ostensibly by Peth, Jarrow always pretending that he was in the power of the crew.

Doc's report of how Trask had "cooked" gold out of the sand had set them all to burning sand, but when they found no gold after cooling the sand, Peth and Doc had quarrelled, the mate calling the steward names and charging him with being as crazy as Dinshaw. Peth doubted Doc's story of Trask finding gold at all. Doc had been chased by Peth, and in escaping from the mate's fury, the steward, being barefoot, had burned his feet so badly that he couldn't walk, having run into some of the red-hot sand.

So Doc was to have been left behind in the night attack on the schooner, and it was due to his disability that the trio was able to steal the dinghy. Bevins said that Doc had once killed a man, and Jarrow knew about it, with the result that the captain held the Negro under his control.

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During the night they heard Peth halloing to the schooner, calling for Jarrow, but they gave no answer. Peth continued to call, like a dog baying the great moon which wheeled overhead, until along toward dawn, when the fire on the beach flared up for a while and then died.

Before daylight there was a nervous stir of air, and the sun rose on a cloud from the north. The breeze freshened, and Bevins, now in command, got the anchor, and under jib and reefed foresail they headed out for the sea.

Jarrow's room having been cleared early in the night, and the captain wrapped in old canvas, the body was dropped overboard as they passed clear of the reefs, Trask saying from memory as much as he could remember of the service for burials at sea.

Through the glass Trask saw a white figure watching them from the edge of the jungle as they drove southward for Manila before a steady wind from the northeast.

Marjorie, who had slept after midnight, leaned against the taffrail with Trask, watching Shope and Pennock trimming the sails. Bevins had the wheel but Locke was asleep below, having remained up all night.

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"Poor old Captain Dinshaw," said Marjorie. "He'll never have his big house with good soup for supper."

"Perhaps it's just as well," replied Trask. "He was too old and pitifully crazy ever to enjoy anything. It's likely he would have suffered more if he'd never come to his island. And he might have killed somebody not so deserving of the fate he meted out to Jarrow."

"I suppose you'll come back and really look for gold when we're gone," she said.

He looked at her.

"No more of that island for me," he said. "The government will most likely send a boat to get Mr. Peth and Doc but I wouldn't come back here if the island were all gold."

"Why not?" she asked, somewhat surprised.

"Because it meant great peril for you. I would not care to have those terrible dangers recalled. I want to think of you as safe and happy. But there's one thing about it all which gives me satisfaction."

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"What's that?"

"You'll never forget me!"

"Why, Mr. Trask, of course I won't! What a silly thing to say!"

"You might if it hadn't been for what we've been through in this schooner." He looked out over the sea.

"I hardly think so," she said, smiling at him. "Of course, you didn't understand what a joke Dad was going to play on Jarrow about the checks."

"What joke!" demanded Trask, turning to her.

"Dad's balance at the International in Manila is only about four thousand dollars."

"Then it might have been anything but a joke if Jarrow had come on for the money

and didn't get it," said Trask. "But I suppose the bank would have allowed an overdraft."

"There couldn't be any overdraft. That four thousand is all the cash we've got in the world. Dad's supposed to be rich, but he isn't. We have only a little fruit ranch in Southern California. We've been saving up for ten years for this trip around the world, since mother died. Jarrow would have found himself in trouble if he had attempted to cash those checks."

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"I thought your father was a millionaire?"

"There is a man named Locke who has millions in California, but he is not a relative of ours."

"Glad to hear it!" cried Trask. "By George, I'm glad to hear it!"

"Glad that we're not rich! Why, Mr. Trask!"

"I'm—I'm going back to the States," he announced. "On the same boat you do, if you don't mind."

"You've changed your plans?"

"Yes. I'm going to quit mine-scouting out in these God-forsaken ends of the earth, and get back to where there's civilization. I think I'll buy a fruit ranch in Southern California. I've got enough capital. And what mining I do, I'll do it in California."

She scanned his face, amazed at what he was saying, and startled at his seriousness.

"Come below, and I'll tell you about it," he said, and she went down before him.

"Marjorie," he said, seeing that Shanghai Tom was out of sight in the galley, and her father's door was closed, "I've been in love with you since that first night in the *Manchuria*. But I thought—well, I thought you had millions!"

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"Wilkins told everybody we were rich." She put her hand on his arm so gently that he could scarcely feel its weight. "I—love you. I was sure of it when Doc aimed that revolver at you."

He swept her into his arms.

"Thank God you missed the Hong Kong boat," he said.

"I really wanted to see you again," she confessed.

"But you were going home."

"It was I who made Dad miss the *Taming*. Anyway, I didn't tell him we'd have to get the morning train from Dagupan."

"For that I'm going to kiss you again," said Trask. And he did.

Immediately on the arrival of the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* at Manila the coastguard cutter *Candelaria* sailed for Dinshaw's island. Peth and Doc Bird, seeing the steamer approaching, attempted to leave the island on an uncompleted raft, which broke up with them, and both were drowned, Doc clinging to the mate when they were thrown into the water.

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The next Hong Kong boat left Manila with Mr. Locke and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Trask among the passengers.

Shanghai Tom opened a Chinese restaurant in Manila with the capital provided by Locke and Trask as a reward for his bravery in disarming the steward.

Trask declares that his days of hunting gold are over. Locke says that there is no longer a lure for him in tropical islands, and Mrs. Trask vows that all the romance there is between Cancer and Capricorn can be claimed by any one who wants it, for she is happy enough on the west coast of the United States of America, with the picture of Dinshaw's island hanging in the Trask bungalow.

THE END

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected; however, hyphenation inconsistencies appear as in the original text.

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