

NEAL OF THE NAVY

Senior," he said, opening the door and giving vent to a low whistle, "I shall be glad to throw something else with the oil stoves for Pasama." Two figures appeared in the doorway—entered the room. The insurgents gazed at one of them in amazement. Then he turned to Hernandez. "What will you throw in?" he queried. Hernandez placed one hand upon his breast and waved the other at his two companions. "My own services—and that of my good friend, Ponto—and this beast. We are fighters, senior. We would take pot luck with you." The insurrecto's eyes gleamed. "Delighted, senior," he returned. Hernandez didn't mention that he had other motives than just to help. Half an hour later the last rifle case—the last chest of ammunition—had been safely stowed away in the bottom of the last small boat. Then Hernandez, his companions and the insurrecto leader dropped into a launch and sped away.

CHAPTER XXXII. Within Four Walls. A tattered insurrecto crept up to the leader. "General," he exclaimed in his native tongue, "there is news from our outposts on the shore." "What news?" queried the leader. "A cruiser has been sighted—she is at anchor, general." "Of what nation?" "Americano," returned Hernandez, "she is of the United States—I can tell you that." "In which direction does she lie?" queried the leader. "Up the coast," returned the native. Hernandez nodded. "Then, general," he said, "your line of march

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"The Americanos—the Americanos—Flee!"

must lie the other way—past the plantation down below." The leader pondered. "I was bound the other way," he said. "The marines'll cut you off," returned Hernandez, "they're after our guns—they're after us. You'll have to go this way." "You are quite right, senior," he conceded. Hernandez beckoned him to one side. "Listen, general," he whispered, "I understand mine host of the plantation is very rich. Am I right?" The leader nodded. "He has much gold somewhere hidden," he returned, "although we have tried in vain—by peaceful means—to get it." "He has," went on Hernandez, "some woman guests—Americanos. If you find the gold, senior, you keep it. If I find it, I'll divide with you. But the American women—they belong to me." Early next morning mine host of the plantation approached his guests. "Come with me to the wharf," he said. "I have marine glasses. We shall see what we can see." Once there he handed the glasses to Mrs. Hardin. "Senora," he exclaimed, "tell us what you perceive in the dim distance." Mrs. Hardin took one look and then turned a radiant face upon Annette. "It's the Albany—Neal's cruiser," she exclaimed. Annette seized the glasses. "The Albany!" she exclaimed, incredulously. "What is the Albany doing here—the last time we heard of her she was approaching Martinique." The planter beckoned to a servant. "Horses for the party," he exclaimed. "We'll drive along the shore and visit them. I am partial to Americanos—I get along with them." But the horses for the party did not arrive—and for good reason. Half an hour before, a plantation hand, strolling to work from his hut in the hills, in the cool of the morning, was set upon by half a dozen armed and drunken insurrectos. Had they been sober it would have been all up with him. As it was, he slipped nimbly out of their grasp, leaving most of his clothes behind him, and cantered yelling down the trail. He reached the wharf more than half naked and panting for breath. He fell down at his master's feet. "Insurrectos—insurrectos!" he exclaimed. The master started. "Then it was shots I heard," he said. He turned to his guests. "Come," he commanded, "there is not a moment to lose. Follow me at once." He reached the veranda and blew three shrill blasts upon a whistle. Immediately half a hundred blacks rushed upon the scene, eyes wide with terror, but ready to obey orders. "Everybody in," he commanded. "My guests will seek the bedrooms on the second floor." Annette touched the planter on the arm. "Give me a gun," she said. "I'll do my part. When there's a fight I can't keep out, somehow."

CHAPTER XXXIII. Among the Missing. Annette sank back, gasping with the smoke. The situation, to her, seemed hopeless. Inside, the ammunition was slowly giving out. Without, the house was surrounded on all sides by insurrectos. She crept to the planter's side. "I've fired my last shot," she said. "Can I have more?" She got it, but still lingered. "Do you think you can hold the place?" she queried. The planter smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "The insurrectos—what are they?" he exclaimed. "Nothing." He peered through his loophole. "Eye-yah," cried the planter, "who is the stranger there?" Annette followed the direction of his finger. She shrank back. "Scar-face!" she cried, in despair. "He knows how to load," said the planter, shaking his head soberly, "but at any rate we can hold out—until the Americanos come." "If our messenger got through," faltered Annette. Their messenger did get through.

A quarter of an hour before a black had penetrated to the camp of the marines and had given the alarm—and the whole camp had started off on the double quick. "Boys!" shouted Neal, pressing to the fore. "American women—don't forget—come on!" In an upper room in the planter's house Mrs. Hardin shrank back in a corner with fear. Bullets were rattling the walls. Joe Welcher lay face down. Inez, with presence of mind, had placed a mattress against the wall and with Joe's aid had placed an upturned bed against the other. They were fairly safe. Besides that, just once, Inez had found a chance to wave to Hernandez, and Hernandez had kept the insurrectos from firing on that corner of the house. Inez crept downstairs—looked about her—saw Annette and the planter in close conversation—then crept back again. She plucked Joey Welcher by the sleeve. "Joe," she whispered, "go down—pass through the corridor by the kitchen—open the rear door." "Not on your life," said Joe. "Do you think I want to die?" "You'll die if you don't," she said. "Come, follow me!" Once below, Inez cocked her revolver. "Do as I say," she commanded. Joe obeyed. With terror in his eyes he tore and wrenched at the fastenings of the rear-most passageway. Finally he stepped back. "She's unlocked," he exclaimed. Inez, unafraid, stepped forward, opened wide the door and beckoned. It was a signal. Hernandez saw it and bounded forward. "Follow me, insurrectos," he commanded. A hundred men obeyed. With a shout they dashed into the huge living room on the ground floor—with another shout they fired a volley into the backs of the defenders. The planter, drawing a bead on an insurrecto without, was seized suddenly from behind, gagged and bound. A strong pair of arms seized Annette and lifted her from the floor and bore her, screaming, from the room. Three minutes later she was thrown into a far room in a secluded corner of the house. Into the same room were thrown Inez and Mrs. Hardin and Joe Welcher. With a sudden wrench Annette tore loose a board that barricaded the window. Then her eyes brightened. "Look!" she cried. "The marines—they come. Neal! Neal!" Her shout was not heard, of course, but it was accompanied with the wave of a white handkerchief. Neal, at the head of the squad, saw it—and the squad pressed forward at double speed. Below, among the insurrectos, Annette could hear the panic. "The Americanos—the Americanos—flee!" Neal reached the house—saw who waved the kerchief. With a sudden bound he leaped upon an arbor, scrambled and crawled somehow—with some naval trick—up the face of the house, rammed in the barricade and leaped into the room. "Annette," he cried. But at that instant the door of the room was burst open and Hernandez, with Ponto and the Brute and a dozen insurrectos, darted in. "Take everybody here—including him!" commanded Hernandez. "Take them—you know where. But remember—the women are mine, not yours." Neal fought like a tiger, but without success. In five minutes or less the captives, Neal and Annette included, were led through dark passageways to some underground corridor. They were driven on and on—they knew not where. An hour later the squad of marines reported to their officer. "We can't find a woman on the place, except the blacks," they said. "Are we all here?" queried the officer, anxious for his men. "Just call the roll and see." "All here," returned a marine, "but no, not all here. There's one missing—Gunner Hardin, sir." The officer nodded. "We'll find Gunner Hardin if it takes a leg," he said. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

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BAPTIST CHURCH. Sunday School10:00 a. m.

Morning Service11:00 a. m. Evening Service 7:30 p. m. B. Y. P. U. 6:30 p. m. Prayer Meeting.. Wednesday Evening Bible Study.....Thursday Evening A hearty invitation is extended to all. DAVID E. BAKER, Pastor.

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