

# The Stowaway

By LOUIS TRACY

Author of the "Pillar of Light," "The Wings of the Morning" and "The Captain of the Kansas."

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**Synopsis of Previous Chapters.**  
CHAPTER I—Overhearing a conspiracy between her uncle and the captain of his ship to sink the vessel and collect insurance, Iris Yorke ascends herself aboard the Andromeda and, before it sails for southern seas, her uncle, who is her guardian, and has commanded her to wed old Dicky Blaine, thinks she has run away to avoid the distasteful marriage. II—Philip Hozier, young and handsome second officer of the Andromeda, discovers Mia Yorke aboard. III—Iris tells Hozier of the plot to sink the vessel, and he keeps watch on Captain Coke. Mysterious defect in the steering gear discovered, causing the ship to veer from her course. Coke treats the matter lightly. IV—While pulling into a harbor at an unknown island the Andromeda suddenly is shelled by a mysterious foe on shore. V—Coke's wreck ship, Hozier is wounded and his life saved by Iris. VI—Survivors are hoisted up on a raft by ropes let down by a party of rescuers, the leader proving to be Dom Corria de Sylva, deposed president of Brazil.

## CHAPTER VII BETWEEN THE BRAZILIAN DEVIL AND THE DEEP ATLANTIC.

THERE was an awkward pause. Coke, roused though he was and confident within, was no Faustian. Rather did he suggest the present day avianism of some robber baron of the middle ages whose hectoring speech bubbled forth from a stout heart. But the rugged ex-president heeded him not. After a moment of placid scrutiny of his enraged countenance by those bright, watchful eyes Coke might have been nonexistent so far as recognition of his outburst was apparent during the sonorous discussion that ensued between Dom Corria Antonio de Sylva and the Senior Capitano Salvador de San Benavides.

The latter, it is true, betrayed excitement. At first he favored Iris with a deprecatingly admiring glance, as one who would say, "Dear lady, accept my profound regret and respectful homage." But that phase quickly passed. His leader was not a man to waste words, and the gallant captain's expressive face soon showed that he had grasped the essential facts. They did not please him. In fact, he was distinctly cowed, almost stunned, by his companion's revelations.

It fell to De Sylva to explain matters to his unexpected guests.

"My friend agrees with me that it is only fair that the exact position should be revealed to you," he said. "The situation is not so simple as you seem to imagine. The loss of your ship cannot be dealt with here. It raises issues of international law which can only be settled by courts and governments. You know, I suppose, that nothing will be done until a complaint is lodged by a British minister, and that hinges upon the very doubtful fact that you will ever again see your own country."

The ex-president certainly had the knack of expressing himself clearly. Those concluding words rang like a knell. They even called Watts back from the slumber of unconsciousness.

De Sylva continued speaking in the same balanced tone:

"It happens by idle chance that my enemies have become yours. The men who destroyed your ship thought they were injuring me. I have just pointed out to Capitano de San Benavides the precise outcome of this attack. Until a few moments ago we shared the delusion that the troops on Fernando do Noronha believed we were now on our way to a Brazilian port. We were mistaken. More than that, we know now that they have obtained news—probably through a traitor to our cause—of the Andros-y-Mela's voyage. They were prepared for her coming. They had made arrangements to receive her almost at the place decided on by our friends in Brazil. It is more than likely that the Andros-y-Mela is now lying under the guns of some coast fortress, since the presence of troops and cannon on this side of the island is unprecedented."

"I don't see what all this has to do with me," blurted out Coke determinedly.

"No. It would not concern you in the least if you were safe at sea. But since you are here it does concern you most gravely. From one point of view you served my cause well by preparing to lower a boat. You misled my persecutors as to locality at least. Of course I saw you and thought you were mad, but your action did help



to conceal from the soldiers the secret of my true hiding place. I wish to be candid with you. If my friends and I had realized that you were here by accident we ought to have taken no steps to save you."

"Really?" snarled Coke, eyeing the unruffled Brazilian much as an Andalusian bull might glare at a plebeian. A buzz of angry whispering came from the crew. Even Iris flashed a disdainful glance at the man who uttered this atrocious sentiment. De Sylva raised his hand.

"Pray, do not misunderstand me," he said. "I am as humane as most others, but it is difficult to decide whether or not mere humanity, setting aside self interest, would not rather condemn you to the speedy death of the wreck than drag you to the worse fate that awaits you here. And please remember that we did succor you, thus risking observation and a visit by the troops when the sea permits a landing. But that is not the true issue. An hour ago there were four people on this bare rock—four of us who looked for escape tonight. We were supplied with such small necessities of existence as would enable us to live if our rescuers were delayed for a day or even two. Now there will be no rescue. We are"—he looked slowly around—"twenty instead of four, but we have the same quantity of stores, which consist of a half emptied skin of wine, a bunch of bananas, a few scraps of maize bread and some strips of dried meat. Do you follow me?"

There was a sound of hurrying footsteps on the steep pathway. A figure, clad in rags that surpassed even De Sylva's, appeared in the entrance. A brief colloquy took place. De Sylva's eager questions were answered in monosyllables.

"Marcel tells me that one of your boats is drifting away with a man lying in the bottom," came the uneasy explanation.

"Good Lord!" Hozier cried. "That must be the lifeboat I was trying to clear when the ship struck. Macfarlane was helping me, but he was hit by a bullet and dropped across the thwart. I thought he was dead!"

"Dead or alive, he is better off than we," said De Sylva. He questioned Marcel again briefly. "There can be no doubt that the man in the boat cast off the lashings when he found that the ship was sinking," he continued in English. "Marcel saw him doing that and wondered why he was alone. At any rate, if he is carried beyond the reef he has a fighting chance. We have none."

"Why not? Are these men on the island so deaf to human sympathies that they would murder all of us in cold blood?"

The girl's sweet, low pitched voice sounded inexpressibly sad in that vaulted place. Even De Sylva's studied control gave way before its music. He uttered some anguished appeal to the Deity in his own tongue and flung out his hands impulsively.

"What would you have me say?" he cried, and his eyes blazed. "I might lie to you and try to persuade you that we can exist here without food or water, whereas tomorrow or next day at the utmost will see most of us dead. But in a few hours you will realize what it means to be kept on this bare rock under a tropical sun. You can do one thing. Your party, greatly outnumbered, climb to the topmost pinnacle and signal to the island. You will soon be seen."

He laughed with a savage irony that was not good to hear, but Coke caught at the suggestion.

"Even that is better'n tearin' one another like mad dogs," he growled. "I know wot's comin'. I've seen it wost."

Hozier made for the exit, where Marcel stood irresolute, apparently waiting for orders.

"Where are you going?" demanded De Sylva.

"To see what is becoming of the lifeboat."

"Better not. You cannot help your friend, and the instant it becomes known to the troops that there is a living soul on the grand-pere rock they will come in a steam launch and shoot every one at sight."

"Will that be the answer to our signal?"

It was Iris who asked the question, and the Brazilian's voice softened again.

"Yes," he said.

"Why, then, do you advise us to seek our own destruction?"

He bowed. His manner was almost numbing.

"It is the easier way," he murmured. "Is there no other?"

"None—unless we attack 200 soldiers with sticks and stones and three revolvers and a sword."

Hozier came back.

stepped a pace or two into the sunlight. Through the northerly dip of the gully he had seen the ship's boat whirled past an islet by the fierce current. Macfarlane was not visible. Perhaps that was better so.

"Attack!" he said hoarsely. "How is that possible? A deep and wide channel separates us from the main island."

The Brazilian gave a startling answer.

"We have a boat—a sort of boat," he said quietly.

"How many will it hold?"

"Three in a smooth sea and with skilled handling. It nearly overturned when I and two others crossed from the island, a distance of 300 yards."

"But we have ropes, clothes, perhaps some few pieces of wreckage. Can nothing be done to repair it?"

"Meaning that we draw lots to see who shall endeavor to escape tonight?"

"The men might even do that."

"Ah, yes—the men, of course. I think it hopeless. But try it! Yes; certainly, try it!"

A pause more eloquent than the most impassioned speech showed how this frail straw eddying in the vortex of their fate might yet be clutched at. San Benavides, trying vainly to guess what was being said, blurted forth an anxious inquiry. His compatriot explained briefly. Somehow the measured cadence of their talk had a less reliable sound than the vigorous Anglo-Saxon. They were both brave men. They had not scrupled to risk their lives in an enterprise where success beckoned even doubtfully. But they were lacking when all that remained to be settled was how best to die; in such an hour the men of an English speaking race will ever choose a fighting death.

This time it was a woman who decided.

Iris rose to her feet. She brushed back the strands of damp hair from her face and with deft hands made a rough and ready coil of her abundant tresses.

"Are you planning to send me with two others adrift in a boat while seventeen men are left here?" she asked.

The Brazilian ceased speaking. There was another uneasy pause. Hozier felt that the question was addressed to him, but he was tongue tied, almost shamefaced. Coke, however, did not shrink the task of enlightening her.

"Something like that," he said. "We can't let you out in with the rest of us, missy. That wouldn't be reasonable. But it's best to fix the business fair an' square. We ain't a-goin' to try any other way, not so long as I'm skipper," and he looked with brutal frankness at De Sylva and the anxious, but uncomprehending San Benavides.

The ex-president knew what he meant. Even in his despondency he resented the implied slur on his good faith.

"You cannot examine the boat until darkness sets in," he said. "Then you will find out how frail a foundation you are building on. It is absolutely ridiculous to assume that she can be made seaworthy. Her occupants would be drowned before they were clear of the islands."

"In any case, I refuse to go," said Iris.

"The boat that brought these men to this rock can bring nineteen men and a woman to Fernando Noronha. We must land there tonight. With those to guide us who know the coast, surely that should be possible. We have a right to struggle for our lives. We of the Andromeda at least have done no wrong to the cruel wretches who sought to kill us without mercy today. Why should we not endeavor to defend ourselves? There is food there and guns in plenty. Let us take them. Above all, let us not dream of any such useless device as this proposal to send three to drown somewhere in the sea and leave seventeen to perish miserably here. We are in God's hands. Let us trust to him, but while doing that fully and fearlessly we must seek life, not death."

"Bully for you, missy!" roared a sailor, and a growl of admiration rang through the cave.

De Sylva's incisive accents helped to bridge a moment fraught with possibilities, for it would be idle to assume that this polyglot gathering was composed of Bayards. Self preservation is apt to prove stronger than chivalry under such circumstances. Let it be assumed that three among twenty could escape that night, and it was horribly true that the field of selection might be narrowed by a wild beast struggle long before the sun went down.

"The young lady has at least given us a project," he said. "It is a desperate one, heaven knows! It offers a fantastic chance, and I can see no other. But what can we do without arms?"

"Use our heads," put in Hozier. "Bring us to the island, Senhor de Sylva, and we will make a fight of it. In any case, even if we fail, they will not deliberately kill a woman. There must be other women there who will intervene in behalf of one of their own sex. But we may succeed. It is improbable that the whole of the troops will be gathered in one spot. Why should we not take some small detachment by surprise and secure their weapons? If we can land unobserved we ought to be able to drop on them apparently from the skies. I take it that the presence here of Captain San Benavides is unknown, and the leadership of an officer in the enemy's own uniform should turn the scale in our favor. Have you no followers among the troops or islanders? Suppose we make good our first attack and seize a strong position. Isn't it probable we may receive assistance from your partisans?"

"Perhaps—among the convicts," was De Sylva's grim reply.

"No officials or soldiers?"

"Not one. They are chosen for this service on account of their animosity against the former government. How else could you account for their treat-

ment of unarmed men on a ship crippled by their first shell?"

"You spoke of a steam launch. Where is that kept?"

"At a wharf under the walls of the citadel which commands the town and anchorage."

"Assuming we have a stroke of luck and 'ush some outpost, would it be possible to cross the island before dawn and board the launch or some other craft in which we can put to sea?"

"There are only the launch and some small fishing catamarans. No other boats are allowed to exist on the island, in order to prevent the escape of convicts. The boat we possess is really a badly constructed catamaran, without a sail and minus the outrigger which alone renders it safe for the shortest voyage."

"Please, miss, an' gents all, may we smoke?" pleaded a voice.

Iris was for an immediate permission, but De Sylva shook his head.

"Not until the tide falls," he said. "There is a very real fear of a visit from the launch. It has passed this spot four times during the past two days—ever since my absence was discovered, in fact. The soldiers have searched every outlying island, but

there is food there and guns in plenty."

They have avoided Grand-pere because it is believed that a landing is highly dangerous if not quite impracticable. My friend Marcel, a fisherman, discovered by accident the only safe means of reaching the path which winds round the island. Happily, the wretch who betrayed the mission of the Andros-y-Mela did not know the secret of my refuge. And I see now that the governor must be convinced that I am still hiding among the cliffs or your vessel would not have appeared off South point this morning. No; there must be no smoking as yet. In this clear air the slightest cloud might be seen rising above the rocks from within."

Marcel reappeared at the entrance. With him was another man, whom Hozier remembered seeing when he was hauled up from the ship with Iris.

"Ah, I was not mistaken," went on De Sylva. "Here comes news of the launch! They have signaled for it across the island."

Marcel entered the cave with an expressive gesture, for long habit had almost robbed him of his native vivacity. His companion, Domingo, climbed the opposite wall of the ravine and stretched himself at full length in a niche where there was room for a man to lie. Some tufts of rough grass grew there in sufficient density to conceal his head while he peered between the stalks. They could see him quite plainly, but no one wanted to speak. Though the unceasing wash of a heavy swell against the rocks would have drowned the noise had they shouted in unison, there was no need to tell any one present that a very real and dangerous crisis had arrived.

The slow change in the direction of Domingo's gaze showed the approach and passing of the hostile vessel. It was evident that a long halt was made in the channel close to the wreck, of which some fragments remained above water. Still, curiously enough, it was impossible for those on board the launch to read the ship's name, since the word "Andromeda," twice embossed on the sharp cutwater, was hidden by the jutting rocks on both sides of the cleft.

At last Domingo turned his head slightly and gave them a reassuring little nod. He said something, which De Sylva translated.

"They have a photograph of the wreck," he said, "and are now steaming through the northerly channel to the anchorage on the west side of the island. Most fortunately, they do not seem to be aware of your drifting boat."

Then he added, with a courtliness that was so incongruous with his unkempt appearance and tattered garments: "If the senhora permits, the men may smoke now. In another hour the 'WE MAY MAKE HISTORY' channel will not be navigable. We have a hot and trying day before us, and I advise sleep for those to whom it is vouchsafed. If the weather continues to improve the next tide will bring us a smooth sea. Given that and a dark night—well, we may make history. Who knows?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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## WASHINGTON, D. C., NOTES

Congress will be urged to appropriate a sum annually for five years for restocking the Columbia river with salmon with a view of at least doubling the cannery output.

A meeting of the democratic conference to pave the way for the campaign of 1912 will be held in Washington January 9, a call having been issued for the meeting of representative democrats under the auspices of the National Democratic League of Clubs.

The United National Association of Postoffice Clerks has inaugurated a campaign whereby they hope to obtain the eight hour day in the same way that it is granted to other branches of government service.

If Champ Clark is elected speaker of the next house of representatives he will be the thirty-fifth man chosen as the presiding officer of the house and the first one ever elected from Missouri. Clark would also be the second speaker to hail from west of this Mississippi river.

## Tolstol is Dead.

Astopova, Russia—Without being received back into the Orthodox Greek church, and knowing that the end had arrived, Count Tolstol died at an early hour Sunday morning.

## High Honor Due Carter.

Helena, Mont.—Friends of United States Senator Thomas H. Carter, who was defeated for re-election at the recent election, assert that the Senator has been tendered an appointment as a member of the Supreme Court to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Associate Justice Moody.

## Oklahoma Legislature Called.

Guthrie, Okla.—Gov. Haskell has issued a proclamation calling for an extra session of the legislature to assemble November 28 at Oklahoma City. But one subject is suggested for legislation, the location of a state capital.

The 30,000 monument and statue of General James Oglethorpe, the founder of Georgia, has been unveiled in Savannah with notable ceremonies. The governors of several states took part in the exercises.

The investigation into the immigration of Chinese which has been going on at Vancouver for three weeks, has disclosed the fact that Canada has lost over \$1,000,000 in head tax and the United States has gained several thousands of Chinese residents via the underground route.

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