

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 seizes herself aboard the Andromeda just before it sails for southern seas. Her uncle, who is her guardian and has commanded her to wed old Dicky Bulmer, thinks she has run away to avoid the disastrous marriage. II—Philip Hozier, young and handsome second officer of the Andromeda, discovers Miss 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 putting into a harbor at an unknown island the Andromeda suddenly is shelled by a mysterious foe on shore. V—Shot's wreck ship. Hozier is wounded and his life saved by Iris. VI—Survivors are hauled up on a cliff by ropes let down by a party of refugees, the leader proving to be Dom Corria de Sylva, deposed president of Brazil.

CHAPTER IX. THE RIGOR OF THE GAME.

In obedience to their leader's order, Marcel, the taciturn, and Domingo, from whose lips the Britons had scarce heard a syllable, squatted on the catamaran. Marcel wielded a short paddle, and an almost imperceptible dip of its broad blade sent the strangely built craft across the pool. Once in the shadow it disappeared completely. There was no visible outlet. The rocks thrust their stark ridge against the sky in a seemingly impassable barrier. Some of the men stared at the jagged crests as though they half expected to see the Brazilians making a portage just as travelers in the Canadian northwest haul canoes up a river obstructed by rapids. "Well, that gives me the go-by," growled Coke, whose alert ear caught no sound save the rippling of the water. "I say, mister, 'ow is it done?" he went on.

"It is a simple thing when you know the secret," said De Sylva. "Have you passed Fernando Noronha before, captain?"

"Many a time."

"Have you seen the curious natural canal which you sailors call the Hole in the Wall?"

"Yes; it's near the southward end."

"Well, the sea has worn away a layer of soft rock that existed there.



THE RAFT BORE SHARPLY OUT BETWEEN TWO HUGE BOWLDERS.

In the course of centuries a channel has been cut right across the 200 yards of land. Owing to the same cause the summer rains have excavated a ravine through the crater up above, and a similar passage exists here, only it happens to run parallel to the line of the cliff. It extends a good deal beyond its apparent outlet and is defended by a dangerous reef. Marcel once landed on a rock during a very calm day and saw the opening. He investigated it, luckily for me—luckily, in fact, for all of us.

Thus the minutes sped until a dim shape emerged from the opposite blackness. It came unheeded, growing from nothing into something with ghostly



subtlety. Iris, a prey to many emotions, managed to stifle the exclamation of alarm that rose unbidden. But Hozier read her distress in a hardly audible sob.

"It is our friend Marcel," he whispered. "So Domingo has made good his landing. Be brave! The sea is quite calm. This man has been to the island and back in less than a quarter of an hour."

The catamaran swung round and grated on the shingle. Marcel was in a hurry.

"Are you ready?" asked De Sylva, bending toward Iris.

"Yes," she said.

"Then you had better kneel behind Marcel and steady yourself by placing your hands on his shoulders. Yes, that is it. Do not change your position until you are ashore. Now, you Mr. Hozier."

Marcel murmured something.

"Ah, good!" cried De Sylva softly. "Domingo, too, has secured a catamaran. He is bringing it at once in order to save time."

A second spectral figure emerged from the gloom. Without waiting for further instructions Marcel swung his paddle, and the one craft passed the other in the center of the pool. Iris felt Hozier's hands on her waist. He obeyed orders and uttered no sound, but the action told her that she might trust him implicitly. When the narrow cleft was traversed and she saw the open sea on her right there was ample need for some such assurance of guardianship.

Viewed from the cliff the reef that broke on the half submerged reef was of slight volume, but it presented a very different and most disconcerting aspect when seen in profile. It seemed to be an almost impossible feat for any man to propel three narrow planks, top heavy with a human freight, across a wide channel through which such a sea was running. Indeed, Hozier himself, sailor as he was, felt more than doubtful as to the fate of their argosy. But Marcel paddled ahead with unflagging energy once he was clear of the tortuous passage, and before the catamaran had traveled many yards, even Iris was able to understand that the outlying ridge of rocks both protected their present track and created much of the apparent turmoil.

At last the raft, for it was little else, bore sharply out between two huge bowlders that might well have fallen from the mighty pile of Grand-pere itself. Pointed and angular they were and set like a gateway to an abode of giants. Beyond there was a shimmer of swift moving water, with a silver mist on the surface, though from a height of a few feet it would have been easy to distinguish the bold contours of Fernando Noronha itself.

Marcel held up a warning hand even while he brought the catamaran ashore on the shingle so gently that not a pebble was disturbed. He rose, a gaunt scarecrow, stepped off and drew the shallow craft somewhat farther up the sloping beach. Then he helped Iris to her feet and indicated that she was to come with him. At once she shrank away in terror. Though in some sense prepared for this parting, she felt it now as the cruellest blow that fortune had dealt her during a day crowded with misfortune. In all likelihood those two would never meet again. She needed no telling as to the risk he would soon be called on to face, and her anguish was made the more bitter by the necessity that they should go from each other's presence without a spoken word.

Nevertheless she forced herself to extend a hand in farewell. Her eyes were blinded with tears. She knew that Hozier drew her nearer. With the darling of one who may well cast the world's convention to the winds he gathered her to his heart and kissed her. Then she uttered a little sob of happiness and sorrow and fainted.

It was not until she was lying helpless in his embrace, with her head pillowed on his breast and an arm thrown loosely across his shoulder, that Philip understood what had happened. He loved her, and she, the promised wife of another man, had tacitly admitted that she returned his love. Stumbling through the gloom he carried her until the Brazilian left him and went on alone toward a wretched hut.

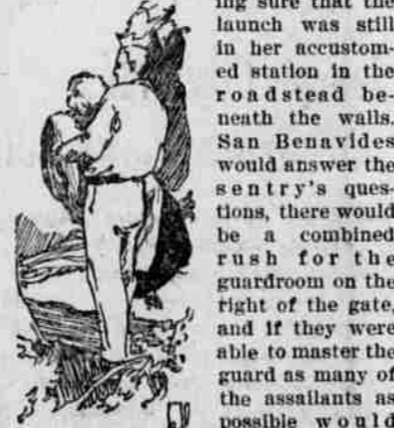
A dog barked. Marcel whistled softly, and the animal began to whimper. The Brazilian vanished. Hozier still held Iris in his arms. His heart was beating tumultuously. His throat ached with the labor of his lungs. His straining ears caught rustlings among the grass and rocks, but otherwise a solemn peace brooded over the scene.

Then Marcel came and aroused him from the stupor that had settled on him, and together they entered the hovel, where a dark skinned woman

and a comely girl uttered words of sympathetic sound when Iris was laid on a low trestle and Hozier took a farewell kiss from her unheeding lips. Two weary hours elapsed before the little army of the Grand-pere rock was reunited on the shore of Cotton Tree bay. Then there was a further delay while their indefatigable scouts brought milk and water, some coarse bread and a good supply of fruit from the hut. It was part of their scheme that they should give their friend's habitation a wide berth. If their plans miscarried he was instructed to say that he had found the English lady wandering on the shore soon after day-break.

About midnight there was a bright moon sailing overhead, and De Sylva gave a low order that they were to form in Indian file. Marcel led; the ex-president himself followed, with San Benavides, Coke and Hozier in close proximity. Domingo brought up the rear in order to prevent straggling and assist men who might stray from the path. It was barely a mile to the village, convict settlement and citadel. Some few lights twinkling near the shore showed the exact whereabouts of the inhabited section. Another mile away to the right lay Fort San Antonio, which housed the main body of troops. Watch fires burning on South point, whence came the shells that disabled the Andromeda, revealed the presence of soldiers in that neighborhood. De Sylva explained that a paved road ran straight from the town and landing place to the hamlet of Sueste and an important plantation of coconuts and other fruit bearing trees that adjoined South point.

It was inadvisable to strike into that road immediately. A little more to the right there was a track leading to the curral, or stockyard. If they headed for the latter place the men could obtain some stout cudgels. The convict peons in charge of the cattle should be overpowered and bound, thus preventing them from giving an alarm, and it was also possible to avoid the inhabited hillside overlooking the main anchorage until they were close to the citadel. Then, crossing the fort road, they would advance boldly to the enemy's stronghold, first making



HOZIER STILL HELD IRIS IN HIS ARMS.

ing sure that the launch was still in her accustomed station in the roadstead beneath the walls. San Benavides would answer the sentry's questions, there would be a combined rush for the guardroom on the right of the gate, and if they were able to master the guard as many of the assailants as possible would don the soldiers' coats, shakos and accoutrements. Granted success thus far, there should not be much difficulty in persuading the men in charge of the launch that a cruise round the island was to be undertaken forthwith.

Marcel would remain with them until the citadel was carried. He would then hurry back to bring Iris across the island to an unfrequented beach known as the Porto do Conceicao, where he would embark her on a catamaran and row out to the steamer, which by that time would be lying off the harbor out of range of the troops who would surely be summoned from the distant fort.

In the highest spirits the little band set out resolutely for the curral. Here they encountered no difficulty whatever. Perhaps the prevalent excitement had drawn its custodians to the town, since they found no one in charge save a couple of barking dogs, while if there were people in the cattle keepers' huts they gave no sign of their presence. A few stakes, eked out by three revolvers owned by the Brazilians and the dapper captain's sword, they hurried on, quitting the road instantly and following a cow path that wound about the base of a steep hill.

They met their first surprise when they tried to cross the road to the fort. Quite unexpectedly they blundered into a small picket stationed there, and the first intimation of danger was given by the startling challenge:

"Who goes there?"

It was familiar enough to island ears, and the convict answered readily:

"A friend!"

"Several friends, it would seem," laughed a voice. "Let us see who those friends are."

"Now!" shouted De Sylva, leaping forward.

There was a wild scurry, two of three shots were fired, and Hozier found himself on the ground gripping the throat of a bronzed man whom he had shoved backward with a thrust, for he had no time to swing his stake for a blow. He was aware of a pair of black eyes that glared up at him horribly in the moonlight, of white teeth that shone under long mustachios of peculiarly warlike aspect, but he felt the man was as putty in his hands, and his fingers relaxed their pressure.

He looked around. The fight was ended almost as soon as it began. The soldiers, six in all, were on their backs in the roadway. Two of them were dead. The Italian sailor had been shot through the body and was twisting in his last agony.

The bloodshed was bad enough, but those shots were worse. They would set the island in an uproar. The reports would be heard in town, citadel and fort, and the troops would now be

on the qui vive. But De Sylva was a man of resource.

"Strip the prisoners!" he cried. "Take their arms and ammunition, but bind them back to back with their belts."

"But in there, me lads," vociferated Coke, who had accounted for one of the Brazilians with an ax. "Step lively! Now we've got some uniforms an' guns we can rush that citydel easy!"

Hozier was busy relieving his man of his coat. When the prone warrior realized that he was not to be killed he helped the operation, but Philip was thinking more of Iris than of deeds of derring-do.

"Why attempt to capture the citadel at all?" he asked. "Now that we can make sufficient display, is there any reason that we should not go straight for the launch?"

"I think it is a good suggestion," came the calm answer, "provided, that is, the launch is in the harbor."

A bell began to toll in the convict settlement. Lights appeared in many houses scattered over the seaward slope. Hozier, never for an instant forgetting Iris, saw that Marcel still remained with his leader. Under these new circumstances it certainly would be a piece of folly to send back until they were sure of the launch.

Happily the launch was there, moored alongside a small quay. From the nearest building it was necessary to cross a low wharf some fifty yards in width, and De Sylva's whispered commands could not restrain the eager men when escape appeared no longer problematical, but assured. They broke and ran, an almost fatal thing, as it happened, since the soldiers whom Philip had seen from the rock were still on board. One of them noticed the inexplicable disorder among a body of men some of whom resembled his own comrades. He had heard the firing and was discussing it with others when this strange thing happened.

He challenged. San Benavides answered, but his voice was shrill and unofficer-like.

"The engines were started. A man leaped to the wharf. He was in the act of casting a mooring rope off a fixed capstan when De Sylva shot him between the shoulder blades."

"On board, all of you!" shrieked the ex-president in a frenzy.

"At 'em, boys!" gasped Coke, though scarce able to stagger another foot.

The men needed no bidding. Sheets of flame leaped from the vessel's deck as the soldiers seized their rifles and fired point blank at these mysterious assailants who spoke in a foreign language. But flame alone could not stop that desperate attack. Some fell, but the survivors sprang at the Brazilians like famished wolves on their prey. There was no more shooting. Men grappled and fell, some into the water, others on deck, or they sprawled over the hatch and wrought in frantic struggle in the narrow cabin. The fight did not last many seconds. An engineer, finding a lever and throttle valve, roared to a sailor to take the wheel, and already the launch was curving seaward when Hozier shouted:

"Where is Marcel?"

"Lyn' dead on the wharf," said Watts.

"Are you certain?"

"He was alongside me, an' 'e threw 'is 'ands up an' dropped like a shot rabbit."

"Then who has gone for Miss Yorke?"

"No one. D'ye think that this blamed president cares for anybody but hisself?"

Philip felt the deck throbbing with the pulsations of the screw. The lights on shore were gliding by. The launch was leaving Fernando Noronha, and Iris was waiting in that wretched hut beyond the hill, waiting for the summons that would not reach her, for Marcel was dead, and Domingo, the

one other man who could have gone to her, was lying in the cabin with three ribs broken and his collar bone fractured.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Track Meet To Be At Wallowa In May

High School Principals Arrange For Contests, Debates And Spelling Bees.

At the conference held by the high school principals in Wallowa Saturday, it was decided to hold the track meet at Wallowa next spring, some time in May, the exact date to be fixed later. This track meet is open to all the schools of the county.

The debate between the four high schools in the valley towns is scheduled as follows: Joseph vs. County High, and Lostine vs. Wallowa, sometime in February, and the final between the victors of the preliminaries before the first of April.

A spelling contest, by mail will be begun about the first of the new year.

Read the advertisements.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION, Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at La Grande, Oregon, Oct. 25th, 1910.

Notice is hereby given that Lulu M. Bowiby, whose post-office address is Enterprise, Wallowa County, Oregon, did, on the 14th day of April, 1910, file in this office Sworn Statement and Application, No. 07891, to purchase the SE 1/4 SW 1/4, N 1/2 SW 1/4 SW 1/4, and SW 1/4 SW 1/4 SW 1/4 of Sec. 22, and the NE 1/4 NW 1/4, S 1/2 NW 1/4 NW 1/4, and NW 1/4 NW 1/4 NW 1/4, Section 27, Township 1 South, Range 45 East, Willamette Meridian, and the timber thereon, under the provisions of the act of June 3, 1878, and acts amendatory, known as the "Timber and Stone Law," at such value as might be fixed by appraisement, and that, pursuant to such application, the land and timber thereon have been appraised, at \$350.00 as being chiefly valuable for its stone; that said applicant will offer final proof in support of his application and sworn statement on the 19th day of January, 1911, before W. C. Boatman, County Clerk of Wallowa County, at Enterprise, Oregon.

Any person is at liberty to protest this purchase before entry, or institute a contest at any time before patent issues, by filing a corroborated affidavit in this office, alleging facts which would defeat the entry.

11 c 11 F. C. Bramwell, Register.

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