

# 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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## CHAPTER XI ON THE HIGH SEAS.

**A** GAIN did that awe-inspiring wand of light describe a great arc in the sky. But it was plain to be seen that it sprang from an altered base. The warship was in motion. She was about to steam around the group of islands.

Boat and catamaran raced at once for the launch. A babel of strange oaths jarred the brooding silence. Alarm, almost panic, stirred men's hearts and bubbled forth in wild speech. Under pressure of this new peril the instinct of self preservation burst the bounds of discipline.

"Me for the tall timbers, mates. It's each one for himself now."

"Aye, aye!" came the chorus. "Shove her ashore! Give us a chance there. We've none at sea."

Dom Corria, being something of a fatalist, did not interfere. He drew San Benavides aside.

"All is ended!" he said quietly. "We shall never see Brazil again, Salvador men! Carmela must find another lover, it seems."

It was left to Hozier to solve a problem that threatened to develop into a disastrous brawl. Danger sharpens a brave man's wits, but love makes him feeble. To succor Iris was now his sole concern. He swung a couple of the excited sailors out of his way and managed to stem the torrent of Coke's futile curses.

"Give in to them!" he cried eagerly. "Tell them they are going ashore in the creek. That will stop the racket. If they listen to me I can still find a means of escape."

"A vast yelpin', you swabs!" bellowed Coke. "D'ye want to let every bally sojer on the island know where you are? We're makin' for the creek. Will that please you? Now, Mr. Norris, let her rip!"

The head of the launch swung toward the protecting shadows. Hozier seized the precious respite. He spoke loudly enough that all should hear, and he began with a rebuke.

"I am sorry that those of us who are left should have disgraced the fine record set up by the Andromeda's crew since the ship struck," he said. "Your messmates who fell fighting would hardly believe St. Peter himself if he told them that we were on the verge of open mutiny. I am ashamed of you. Let us have no more of that sort of thing. Sink or swim, we must pull together."

"Bully for you!" said the man who had suggested tree climbing as an expedient.

"Shut up!" was the wrathful answer. "You've made plenty of row already. I only hope you have not attracted attention on the island. You may not have been heard owing to the disturbance on the other side, but no thanks to any of you for that. Our skipper's first notion was to put to sea. Wasn't it natural? Do you want to be hunted over Fernando Noronha at daybreak? But he would have seen the uselessness of trying to slip the cruiser before the launch had gone a cable's length. Now, here is a scheme that strikes me as workable. At any rate, it offers a forlorn hope. There is a sharp bend in the creek just where the tidal water ends. I fancy the launch will float a little higher up, but we must risk it. We will take her in, unship the mast, tie a few boughs and vines on the funnel, and not twenty searchlights will find us."

A rumble of approving murmurs showed that he had scratched the dragon. He continued rapidly:

"No vessel of deep draft can come close in shore from the east. The cruiser will have the Grand-pere rock abeam within an hour, but to make sure two of you will climb the ridge and watch her movements. The rest will load up every available inch of space with wood and water and food. How can we win clear of Fernando Noronha without fuel? It is a hundred to one that the launch would not steam twenty miles on her present coal supply. Such as it is, we must keep it for an emergency, even if we are compelled to tear up the deck and dismantle the cabin."

"Talks like a book!" snorted Coke. Hozier was coolly reminding them of those vital things which frenzy had failed wholly to take into account.

Confidence was reborn in them.

Meanwhile here was the launch thrusting her nose into the mud and shingle of this malevolent island.

To his further annoyance, San Benavides, who depended on his compatriot for a summary of the latest scheme, asked Iris to accompany De Sylva and himself to the hut.

"They are stupid creatures, these peasants," he said. "When they see you they will not be frightened."

There was so much reason in the statement that Iris was a ready volunteer. Soon all hands were at work, and it was due to the girl's forethought that strips of linen were procured from Luisa Gomez and healing herbs applied to the cuts and bruises of the injured men. Sylva was for leaving the two soldiers on the island, but Coke's sailorlike acumen prevented the commission of that blunder.

"No; that will never do," he said with irritating offhandness. "These jokers will be found at daylight, and they'll be able to say exactly what time we quit. The wimmin can make out they were scared stiff and darsent out. It 'ud be different with the sojers. An' we ain't goin' to have such a 'eartbreakin' start, even if the cruiser clears away soon after 2 o'clock."

"Where do you propose to make for?"

"Where d'ye think, mister? Nor'east by nor', to be sure, until we sight some homeward bound ship."

"You mean to abandon everything, then?" said De Sylva. He seemed to be watching the onward sweep of the searchlight as the warship went to the north. But Coke was shrewd. He felt that there was something behind the words, and he suspected the ex-president's motives.

"I don't see any 'elp for it," he answered. "Gord's trewth, wot is there to abandon? I've lost me ship, an' me money, an' me papers, an' 'arf me men. Unless one was lookin' for trouble, this ain't no treasure island, mister."

"Yet it might be made one."

"As how?"

"Do you not realize how greatly the members of the present government fear my return to Brazil? Here I am their prisoner, practically friendless, almost alone. They dare not kill me by process of law, yet they are moving heaven and earth to prevent my escape or shoot me down in the act. Why? Because they know that the people are longing to hail me as president again. Suppose you and your men took me to Pernambuco."

"S'pose Halifax?" snapped Coke.

"Please listen. You can but refuse when you look at the facts fairly. If, as I say, I were put ashore at Pernambuco, or at any other of half a dozen ports I can name, I should be among my own followers. You, Captain Coke, and every officer and man of your ship and her owners and the relatives of those who have lost their lives would not only be paid all just claims by the new government, but adequately rewarded. In your own case the recompense would be princely; but, assuming that we board a vessel bound for Europe, what certainty have you that you will ever receive a penny?"

"Oh, reely, that's comin' it a bit thick, mister," growled Coke.

"You believe I am exaggerating the difficulties of your position? Pray consider. Your vessel is broken up. She was fired on while at anchor on the wrong side of the island, on the very day selected for my escape. You and your men manage to dodge the bullets, and, under my leadership, assisted by Captain San Benavides, you overrun the place by night, kill several soldiers, seize a launch, despoil peasants of their crops and stores and make off with a good deal of property belonging to the Brazilian government, not to mention the presence in your midst of such a significant personage as myself. Speaking candidly, Senhor Captain, what chance have you of convincing any international court of your innocence? Who will believe that you were not a true filibuster?"

"Wot exactly is your offer?"

"Ample compensation officially. Five thousand pounds to you in person."

"Five thousand!" Coke cleared a throat husky with doubt. "That 'ud make things pretty easy for the missus an' the girls," he muttered. "An' there's no new ship for me w'en Dickey Bulmer cocks 'is eye at Hozier. It's a moral there'll be a holy row between 'im an' David. D'ye mean it, mister?"

"Eren if I fall and my life is spared I will pay you the money out of my own private funds," was the vehement reply.

"Well, well, leave the job to me."

"I promise on my honor—" De Sylva began.

But the nearer surface of the sea flashed into a dazzling distinctness, and Coke dragged him down to the launch. The cruiser had rounded Rat Island and was devoting one sweeping glance eastward ere she sought her prey in creek or tortuous channel.

At last after a weary delay she vanished. Five minutes later Watts and Olsen brought the welcome news that she was returning to the roadstead.

It was then half past 2 o'clock, and the sun would rise soon after 5. Now or never the launch must make her effort. Ready hands tore away her disguise, she was tilted by crowding in the poop nearly every man on board, the engines throbbed, and she was afloat.

At daybreak the thousand foot peak of Fernando Noronha was a dark blur on the western horizon. No sail or smudge of smoke broke the remainder of the far flung circle. The fugitives could breathe freely once more. They were not pursued.

Iris fell asleep when assured that the dreaded warship was not in sight. Hozier, too, utterly exhausted by all that he had gone through, slept as if he were dead. Coke took the first watch which he chatted with the men.

surprised them by his candor on the question of compensation and announced his resolve to make for the 300 mile channel between Fernando Noronha and the mainland.

When Hozier awoke to find the launch heading west he was vastly astonished by Coke's program.

Watts let the cat out of the bag later. "Those of us 'oo don't leave Dom Wot's-his-name in the lurch are to get ten years' full pay, extry an' over an' above wot the court allows," he said. "Ten years' pay an' a ten years' drunk! It's enough to make a slunner of any man."

Hozier laughed. Two days ago he would have asked no better luck than the helping of Dom Corria to regain his presidency. Now there was Iris to protect. He would not be content to leave her in charge of the first grimy collier they encountered, nor was he by any means sure that she would agree to be thus disposed of. He was puzzled by the singular unanimity of purpose displayed by his shipmates. But that was their affair. His was to insure Iris' safety. The future he must leave to Providence.

And, indeed, Providence contrived things very differently.

By nightfall the launch was a hundred miles west of the island. Norrie got eight knots out of her, but it needed no special calculation to discover that she would barely make the coast of Brazil if she consumed every ounce of coal and wood on board. Were it not for Hozier's foresight she would have been drifting with the gulf stream four hours after leaving the is-



"FIVE THOUSAND! THAT 'UD MAKE THINGS PRETTY EASY."

land. As it was, unless they received a fresh supply of fuel from another ship, they must unquestionably take the straightest line to the mainland.

During the day they had sighted three vessels, but at such distances that signaling was useless. Moreover, they had to be cautious. The cruiser, trusting to her speed, might try a long cast north and south of the launch's supposed path. The hours of daylight were tortured by constant fear. Even Iris was glad when the darkness came and they were hidden.

At 4 o'clock in the morning, by general reckoning, they were midway between island and continent. They were all wide awake, too weary and miserable to sleep. Suddenly a fog-horn smote the oppressive gloom. It drew near. A huge blotch crossed their bows. They heard some order given in a foreign language, and De Sylva whispered:

"The Sao Geronimo! The cruiser!"

In a little while, perhaps twenty minutes, they heard another siren. It sounded a different note, a quaintly harsh blend of discords. Whatsoever ship this might be, it was not the Sao Geronimo.

Coke's gruff voice reached every ear: "This time we're nabbed for keeps unless you all do as I bid you," he said. "When the fog lifts the cruiser will see us. There's only one thing for it. Somewhere, close in, is a steamer. She's a tramp, by the wheeze of 'er horn. We've got to board 'er an' sink the launch. If she's British or American, O. K., as 'er people will stand by us. If she's dago, we've got to collar 'er, run every whelp into the forehold an' answer the cruiser's signals ourselves."

Hozier, who had contrived to draw near Iris while Coke was speaking, breathed softly, so that none other could hear:

"This is rank piracy. But what else can we do?"

"Is it wrong?" she asked.

"Well—no, provided we kill no one. We are justified in saving our own lives, and the average German or Italian shipmaster would fund us over to the Brazilians without scruple."

Iris was far from Bootle and its moralities.

"I don't care what happens so long as you are not hurt," she whispered.

"Mr. Hozier," said Coke thickly.

"Yes, sir."

"You've got good eyes an' quick ears. Lay out as far forward as you can an' peer the word for steerin'!"

Hozier obeyed. The discordant bleat of a foghorn came again, apparently right ahead. In a few seconds he caught the tapping of a propeller and silenced the launch's engines.

"We are close in now," he said to Coke after a brief and noiseless drift.

"Why not try a hail?"

"Ship ahoy!" shouted Coke, with all the force of brazen lungs.

The screw of the unseer reached them.

"Holla! Wer ruft?" was the gruff answer.

"Sink me if it ain't a German!" growled Coke sotto voce. "Norrie, you must stick here till I sing out to you, then open your exhaust an' unscrew

a seacock. Wot ship is that?" he vociferated aloud.

Some answer was forthcoming—what it mattered not. The launch bumped into the rusty ribs of a twelve hundred ton tramp. A rope ladder was lowered. A round faced Teuton mate, fat and placid, was vastly surprised to find a horde of nondescripts pouring up the ship's side in the wake of a short, thick, bovine looking person who neither understood nor tried to understand a word he was saying.

These extraordinary visitors from the deep brought with them a girl and three wounded men. By this time the captain was aroused. He spoke some English.

"Vas iss dis?" he asked, surveying the newcomers with amazement and their bizarre costumes with growing nervousness.

"Vere haf you comeed from?"

Coke pushed him playfully into the cook's gallery.

"This is too easy," he chorled.

"Set about 'em, you swabs. Don't hurt anybody unless they ax for it. Round every son of a gun into the fo'c'sle till I come. Mr. Watts, the bridge for you. Olsen, take the wheel. Mr. Hozier, see wot you can find in their flag locker. Now, Mr. Norris, sharp for it! You're wanted in the engine room."

And that is how ex-President Dom Corria Antonio de Sylva acquired the nucleus of his fleet.



"VAS ISS DIS?" HE ASKED.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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### NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior,  
U. S. Land Office at La Grande,  
Oregon, Oct. 26th, 1910.

Notice is hereby given that Lulu M. Bowly, 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 SE¼ SW¼, N¼ SW¼ SW¼, and SW¼ SW¼ SW¼ of Sec. 22, and the NE¼ NW¼, S¼ NW¼ NW¼, and NW¼ NW¼ NW¼, Section 27, Township 1 South, Range 46 East, Willamette Meridian, and the timber thereon, under the provisions of the act of June 8, 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 his purchase before entry, or initiate 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.

### SUMMONS.

In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Wallowa County,  
Edith Hooper, Plaintiff  
vs.  
Samuel W. Hooper, Defendant

To Samuel W. Hooper, above named defendant: In the name of the State of Oregon, you are hereby required to appear and answer the complaint filed against you by the plaintiff in the above entitled court and cause, within six weeks from and after the 8th day of December A. D. 1910, the same being the first publication of this summons, to-wit: if you fail so to appear and answer, you will be in default for want thereof, and plaintiff will thereupon apply to said court for the relief prayed for in her complaint, to-wit: for a decree of said court dissolving the marriage contract now and heretofore existing between plaintiff and defendant that said marriage contract be from henceforth held for naught, that the plaintiff be awarded the custody of the child of the marriage, Edith Nelly Hooper, and that plaintiff's maiden name Edith Harmon, be restored to her.

The defendant will take notice that this summons is published by order of Hon. J. B. Omssted, county judge of Wallowa County, Oregon, in the Wallowa Chieftain, a newspaper published weekly at Enterprise, in said county and state, and directing that the same be published in said newspaper for a period of six weeks and seven issues thereof, the date of the first publication thereof being the 8th day of Decem-

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