

# ADVENTURE

By  
**JACK LONDON**

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## CHAPTER XIII THE MARtha.

THEY were deep in a game of billiards the next morning, after the 11 o'clock breakfast, when Viaburi entered and announced:

"Big fella schooner close up." Even as he spoke, they heard the rumble of chain through hawse pipe, and from the veranda saw a big black painted schooner swinging to her just caught anchor.

"It's a Yankee," Joan cried. "See that bow! Look at that elliptical stern! Ah, I thought so— as the stars and stripes fluttered to the masthead."

"Martha, San Francisco," Sheldon read, looking through the telescope. "It's the first Yankee I ever heard of in the Solomons. They are coming ashore, whoever they are. And, by Jove, look at those men at the oars. It's an all white crew. Now, what reason brings them here?"

"They're not proper sailors," Joan commented. "I'd be ashamed of a crew of black boys that pulled in such a fashion. Look at that fellow in the bow—the one just jumping out; he'd be more at home on a cow pony."

The boat's crew scattered up and down the beach, ranging about with eager curiosity, while the two men who had sat in the stern sheets opened the gate and came up the path to the bungalow. One of them, a tall slender man, was clad in white ducks that fitted him like a semi-military uniform. The other man, in nondescript garments that were both of the sea and shore and that must have been uncomfortably hot, slouched and shambled like an overgrown ape. To complete the illusion, his face seemed to sprout in all directions with a dense bushy mass of red whiskers, while his eyes were small and sharp and restless.

Sheldon, who had gone to the head of the steps, introduced them to Joan. The bewiskered individual, who looked like a Scotchman, had the Teutonic name of Von Blix and spoke with an American accent. The tall man in the well fitting ducks, who gave the English name of Tudor—John Tudor—talked purely enunciated English such as any cultured American would talk, save for the fact that it was most delicately and subtly touched by a faint German accent.

Von Blix was rough and boorish, but Tudor was gracefully easy in everything he did, or looked, or said.

They were on a gold hunting expedition. He was the leader and Tudor was his lieutenant. All hands—and there were twenty-eight—were shareholders, in varying proportions, in the adventure. Several were sailors, but the large majority were miners, culled from all the camps from Mexico to the Arctic ocean. It was the old and ever untiring pursuit of gold and they came to the Solomons to get it. Part of them, under the leadership of Tudor, were to go up the Balesuna and penetrate the mountainous heart of Guadalcanar, while the Martha, under Von Blix, sailed away for Malaita to put through similar exploration.

"And so," said Von Blix, "for Mr. Tudor's expedition we must have some black boys. Can we get them from you?"

"In the first place we can't spare them," Sheldon answered. "We are short of them on the plantation as it is."

"We?" Tudor asked quickly. "Then you are a firm or a partnership? I understood at Guvutu that you were alone, that you had lost your partner."

Sheldon inclined his head toward Joan, and as he spoke she felt that he had become a trifle stiff.

"Miss Lackland has become interested in the plantation since then. But to return to the boys. We can't spare them, and, besides, they would be of little use. You couldn't get them to accompany you beyond Binu, which is a short day's work with the boats from here. They are Malaita men, and they are afraid of being eaten. They would desert you at the first opportunity. You could get the Binu men to accompany you another day's journey through the grass lands, but at the first roll of the foothills look for them to turn back. They likewise are disinclined to being eaten."

hung eagerly upon his words. "You can go two miles up the Balesuna and wash colors from the gravel. I've done it often. There is gold undoubtedly back in the mountains." Tudor and Von Blix looked triumphantly at each other.

"Old Wheatsheaf's yarn was true, then," Tudor said, and Von Blix nodded. "And if Malaita turns out as well!" Tudor broke off and looked at Joan. "It was the tale of this old beach-comber that brought us here," he explained. "Von Blix befriended him and was told the secret." He turned and addressed Sheldon. "I think we shall prove that white men have been through the heart of Guadalcanar long before the time of the Austrian expedition."

Sheldon shrugged his shoulders. "We have never heard of it down

here," he said simply. Then he addressed Von Blix. "As to the boys, you couldn't use them farther than Binu, and I'll lend you as many as you want as far as that. How many of your party are going and how soon will you start?"

"Ten," said Tudor; "nine men and myself."

"And you should be able to start day after tomorrow," Von Blix said to him. "The boats should practically be knocked together this afternoon. Tomorrow should see the outfit portioned and packed. As for the Martha, Mr. Sheldon, we'll rush the stuff ashore this afternoon and sail by sundown."

As the two men returned down the path to their boat Sheldon regarded Joan quizzically.

"There's romance for you," he said, "and adventure—gold hunting among the cannibals. Aren't you sorry you became a coconut planter?"

"What do you think of them?" she asked.

"Oh, old Von Blix is all right, a solid sort of chap in his fashion; but Tudor is a flyaway—too much on the surface, you know. If it came to being wrecked on a desert island I'd prefer Von Blix."

"I don't quite understand," Joan objected. "What have you against Tudor?"

"A man of Tudor's type gets on my nerves. One demands more repose from a man."

Joan felt that she did not quite agree with his judgment, and, somehow, Sheldon caught her feeling and was disturbed. He remembered noting how her eyes had brightened as she talked with the newcomer.

A second boat had been lowered, and the outfit of the shore party was landed rapidly. A dozen of the crew put the knocked down boats together on the beach. There were five of these craft—lean and narrow, with flaring sides and remarkably long. Each was equipped with three paddles and several iron shod poles.

"You chaps certainly seem to know river work," Sheldon told one of the carpenters.

"We use 'em in Alaska. They're modeled after the Yukon poling boats, and you can bet your life they're crackerjacks. This creek'll be a snap alongside some of them northern streams. Five hundred pounds in one of them boats and two men can snake it along in a way that'd surprise you."

At sunset the Martha broke out her anchor and got under way, dipping her flag and saluting with a bomb gun. The union jack ran up and down the staff, and Sheldon replied with his brass signal cannon. The miners pitched their tents in the compound and cooked on the beach, while Tudor dined with Joan and Sheldon.

Their guest seemed to have been everywhere and seen everything and met everybody, and, encouraged by Joan, his talk was largely upon his own adventures. Descended from old New England stock, his father a consul general, he had been born in Germany, in which country he had received his early education and his accent. Then, still a boy, he had rejoined his father in Turkey and accompanied him later to Persia, his father having been appointed minister to that country.

Tudor had gone through South American revolutions, been a rough rider in Cuba, a scout in South Africa and a war correspondent in the Russo-Japanese war. He had muscled dogs in the Klondike, washed gold from the sands of Nome and edited a newspaper in San Francisco. The president of the United States was his friend. He was equally at home in the clubs of London and the continent, the Grand hotel at Yokohama and the selectors' shanties in the Never Never country. He had shot big game in Siam, perished in the Paumotu, visited Tolstoy, seen the Passion play and crossed the Andes on muleback, while he was a living directory of the fever holes of west Africa.

Sheldon leaned back in his chair on the veranda, sipping his coffee and listening. In spite of himself he felt touched by the charm of a man who had led so varied a life. It seemed to him that the man addressed himself particularly to Joan. Sheldon watched her rapt attention, listened to her

you." "Utami." "And who the dickens is Utami? Where did I ever meet you, my man?" "You no forget the Huahine?" Utami chided. "Last time Huahine sail?" Tudor gripped the Tahitian's hand a second time and took it with genuine heartiness.

"There was only one Kanaka who came out of the Huahine that last voyage, and that Kanaka was Joe. The deuce take it, man, I'm glad to see you, though I never heard your new name before."

"Yes, everybody speak me Joe along the Huahine. Utami my name all the time, just the same."

"But what are you doing here?" Tudor asked, releasing the sailor's hand and leaning eagerly forward.

"Me sail along Missie Lackalanna her schooner Miele. We go Tahiti,

Ralatea, Tahaa, Bora-Bora, Manua, Tutuila, Tpia, Savali and Fiji islands—plenty Fiji islands. Me stop along Missie Lackalanna in Solomons. Very soon she catch another schooner."

"He and I were the two survivors of the wreck of the Huahine," Tudor explained to the others. "Fifty-seven all told on board when we sailed from Huapa, and Joe and I were the only two that ever set foot on land again. Hurricane, you know, in the Paumo-



AND WHO THE DICKENS IS UTAMI? tus. That was when I was after pearls."

"And you never told me, Utami, that you'd been wrecked in a hurricane," Joan said reproachfully.

The big Tahitian shifted his weight and flashed his teeth in a conciliating smile.

"Me no t'ink nothing 't all," he said. "All right, Utami," Tudor said. "I'll see you in the morning and have a yarn."

"He saved my life, the beggar," Tudor explained, as the Tahitian strode away and with heavy softness of foot went down the steps. "Swim! I never met a better swimmer."

And thereat, solicited by Joan, Tudor narrated the wreck of the Huahine, while Sheldon smoked and pondered and decided that whatever the man's shortcomings were, he was at least not a liar.

## CHAPTER XIV A MATTER OF TRAINING.

THE days passed, and Tudor seemed loath to leave the hospitality of Berande. Everything was ready for the start,

but he lingered on, spending much time in Joan's company and thereby increasing the dislike Sheldon had taken to him. He went swimming with her, in point of rashness exceeding her, and dynamited fish with her, diving among the hungry ground sharks and contesting with them for possession of the stunned prey, until he earned the approval of the whole Tahitian crew. Arabu challenged him to tear a fish from a shark's jaws, leaving half to the shark and bringing the other half himself to the surface, and Tudor performed the feat, a flip from the sandpaper hide of the astonished shark scraping several inches of skin from his shoulder. And Joan was delighted, while Sheldon, looking on, realized that here was the hero of her adventure dreams coming true. She did not care for love, but he felt that if ever she did love, it would be that sort of a man—a man who exhibited, was his way of putting it.

He felt himself handicapped in the presence of Tudor, who had the gift of making a show of all his qualities. Sheldon knew himself for a brave man, wherefore he made no advertisement of the fact. Life pulsed steadily and deep in him, and it was not his nature needlessly to agitate the surface so that the world could see the splash he was making. And the effect of the other's amazing exhibitions was to make him retreat more deeply within himself and wrap himself more thickly than ever in the nerveless, stoical calm of his race.

"You are so stupid the last few days," Joan complained to him. "You don't seem to have an idea in your head above black labor and coconuts. What is the matter?"

Sheldon smiled and beat a further retreat within himself, listening the while to Joan and Tudor propounding the theory of the strong arm by which the white man ordered life among the lesser breeds. As he listened Sheldon realized, as by revelation, that that

was precisely what he was doing. While they philosophized about it he was living it. But why talk about it? It was sufficient to do it and be done with it.

He said as much, dryly and quietly, and found himself involved in a discussion, with Joan and Tudor siding against him.

"The Yankees talk a lot about what they do and have done," Tudor said, "and are looked down upon by the English as braggarts. But the Yankee is only a child. He does not know effectually how to brag. He talks about it, you see. But the Englishman goes him one better by not talking about it. The Englishman's proverbial lack of bragging is a subtler form of brag, after all."

"I never thought of it before," Joan cried. "Of course. An Englishman performs some terrifically heroic exploit and is very modest and reserved, refuses to talk about it at all, and the effect is that by his silence he is as much as says: 'I do things like this every day. It is as easy as rolling off a log. You ought to see the really heroic things I could do if they ever came my way.' Confess, Mr. Sheldon, don't you feel proud down inside when you've done something daring or courageous?"

Sheldon nodded. "Then," she pressed home the point, "isn't disguising that pride under a mask of careless indifference equivalent to telling a lie?"

"Yes, it is," he admitted. "But we tell similar lies every day. It is a matter of training, and the English are better trained, that is all. Your countrymen will be trained as well in time. As Mr. Tudor said, the Yankees are young. Certainly we are proud inside of the things we do and have done—proud as Lucifer, yes, and prouder. But we have grown up and no longer talk about such things."

"I surrender," Joan cried. "You are not so stupid after all."

"Yes, you have us there," Tudor admitted. "But you wouldn't have had us if you hadn't broken your training rules."

"How do you mean?"

"By talking about it."

Joan clapped her hands in approval. Tudor lit a fresh cigarette, while Sheldon sat on, imperturbably silent.

Joan was looking intently across the compound and out to sea. They followed her gaze and saw a green light and the loom of a vessel's sails.

"I wonder if it's the Martha come back," Tudor hazarded.

"No, the sidlight is too low," Joan answered. "Besides, they've got the sweeps out. Don't you hear them? They wouldn't be sweeping a big vessel like the Martha."

"Besides, the Martha has a gasoline engine—twenty-five horsepower," Tudor added.

"Just the sort of a craft for us," Joan said wistfully to Sheldon. "I really must see if I can't get a schooner with an engine. I might get a second hand engine put in. If you were not so medieval I could be skipper and save more than the engineer's wages."

He did not reply to her thrust and she glanced at him. He was looking out over the water, and in the lantern light she noted the lines of his face—strong, stern, dogged, the mouth almost chaste, but firmer and thinner lipped than Tudor's. For the first time she realized the quality of his strength, the calm and quiet of it, its simple in-

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integrity and reposeful determination. She glanced quickly at Tudor on the other side of her. It was a handsomer face, one that was more immediately pleasing. But she did not like the mouth. It was made for kissing and she abhorred kisses. For the moment she knew a fleeting doubt of the man. Perhaps Sheldon was right in his judgment of the other. She did not know, and it concerned her little; for boats and the sea and the things and happenings of the sea were of far more vital interest to her than men, and the next moment she was staring through the warm tropic darkness at the loom of the sails and the steady green of the moving sidelight and listening eagerly to the click of the sweeps in the rowlocks.

Nor did she take interest in the two men beside her till both lights, red and green, came into view as the anchor checked the onward way. "It's the Minerva," Joan said decidedly.

"How do you know?" Sheldon asked, skeptical of her certitude.

"It's a ketch to begin with. And, besides, I could tell anywhere the rattle of her main peak blocks—they're too large for the balyard."

A dark figure crossed the compound diagonally from the bench gate, where whoever it was had been watching the vessel.

"Is that you, Utami?" Joan called.

"No, Missie; me Matapu," was the answer.

"What vessel is it?"

"Me t'ink Minerva."

Joan looked triumphantly at Sheldon, who bowed.

"If Matapu says so it must be so," he murmured.

"But when Joan Lackland says so you doubt," she cried, "just as you doubt her ability as a skipper. But never mind, you'll be sorry some day for all your unkindness. There's the boat lowering now, and in five minutes we'll be shaking hands with Christian Young."

Lalaperu brought out the glasses and cigarettes and the eternal whisky and soda, and before the five minutes were past the gate clicked and Christian Young, tawny and golden, gentle of voice and look and hand, came up the bungalow steps and joined them.

News, as usual, Young brought—news of drinking at Guvutu, where the men boasted that they drank between drinks; news that the Matambo had gone on a reef in the Shortlands and would be laid off one run for repairs.

"That means five weeks more you can sail for Sydney," Sheldon to Joan.

"And that we are losing time," she added ruefully.

"If you want to go to Guvutu, Upolu sails from Talagi tomorrow noon," Young said, "and you catch her as late as 5 tomorrow noon—at least so her first mate."

"But I've got to go to Guvutu," Joan looked at the men with a peculiar expression. "I've some things to do. I can't wear these curtains into Sydney. I must have a cloth at Guvutu and make a dress during the voyage. You start immediately—in an hour, per-Adam along me. Tell me, Ornafril make 'm' kail-kail whaleboat." She rose to her feet, looking at Sheldon. "And you have the boys carry down the boat—my boat, you know. It's in an hour."

"I'll go over with you," Sheldon announced.

"Let me run you over to the Minerva," said Young.

She shook her head laughing. "I'm going in the whaleboat. Mr. Sheldon, as my partner, I permit to desert Berande and work out of a mistake with a testy. And as for you, Christian, you know very well that you're bound for Marau and that you yourself that in two hours getting under way again."

"But may I not see you across?" Tudor asked, a gleam in his voice that rasped on her nerves.

"No, no, and again not," she said. "You've all got your work to do. So have I. I came to the boat work, not to be escorted by a doll. For that matter, I'm in court, and there are several men here."

Adams Adam stood leaning over her, as he looked at the three white men.

"We start in an hour in the boat for Guvutu, big boat," said to him. "Tell your partner of them, so that they can get us. We catch the Upolu for you. Leave the guns behind. You over to Mr. Sheldon. We wait for them."

"If you are really here, Young," Sheldon began.

"That's settled long ago," answered shortly. "The boat is here."

(To be Continued next page.)