

YU'AN HEE SEE LAUGHS

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WNU Service.

By SAX ROHMER

CHAPTER X—Continued

—15—

Burned up by impatience—not daring to speculate about Eileen—he walked slowly toward the northern extremity of his patrol. And a curious fact obtruded itself. All the eunuchs had disappeared!

And now, coming in sight of the wall which marked the boundary on the north, he heard again, dimly, that babel of many tongues . . . but outside, in the distant tree-bordered street which led down to the town. . . .

At one point an old lebbekh tree overhung the great wall. Haig ran to it, mounted to the lower-most branches, climbed higher, and could see over the wall. A straggling procession was winding down the street towards the port below! The eunuchs he could identify by their liveries, but there were many others who wore no distinguishing dress.

There had been an exodus from the great house. Could he take advantage of it? Along a path bordered by almond trees, he walked. Above everything—he must keep cool. Always Eileen came into the foreground—but he knew, and his conscience cried out, that even greater stakes were being played for.

A state of the wildest excitement prevailed aboard the Wallaroo. What had happened? Had war suddenly been declared? The underwater craft bore no distinguishing number and flew no flag. Then,



Len Chow, the Second in Command, Delivered Them.

a smartly dressed man wearing a turban had come off in her boat. Up in the captain's room, Aswami Pasha stood by the desk, smiling. He had boarded the Wallaroo alone, and apparently unarmed, leaving one man, a recognized pugilist, on duty at the ladder head. There was something terrifying in the Egyptian's smiling audacity. Captain Peterson's gray face was very grim.

"I carry three hundred passengers," said he, "a hundred and eighty of them women and children—or, by G—d! I'd take you at your word."

The Egyptian shrugged his shoulders. "We are both under orders of my commander in the submarine, and you, at the moment, under mine."

"It appears to me, sir," Rattray said, turning to Captain Peterson, "that this thing's an unholy great bluff."

Through a window of the cap-

tain's cabin Aswami Pasha pointed to where the wreckage of the mainmast lay, half over the starboard rails.

"You see, we do not hesitate," he murmured. "The dhow has reached position," the Egyptian went on, and—glancing at a jeweled wrist watch—"I must notify you that you now have exactly three minutes in which to make up your mind, Captain."

A boat, packed with negroes and manned by four Arab rowers, was coming from the dhow. The captain exchanged glances with Jack Rattray.

"No alternative, sir—none whatever," said the latter savagely. "Passengers come first. We daren't risk it."

The skipper nodded, and crossing, swung open the door of a safe. He handed keys to the purser.

And so, from the bullion room between decks, two millions of minted money was removed, taken down the ladder and transferred to the dhow. It was contained in wooden boxes, each holding five thousand pounds, and not too heavy for one man to carry. The work was done by a team of huge negroes. In a constant procession, coming and going like magnificent black ants, they worked until all the boxes were removed from the Wallaroo.

The transshipment, carried out with admirable dispatch under the orders of Aswami Pasha at the head of the ladder, was completed in less than a quarter of an hour.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE control room of the submarine Yu'an Hee See received constant messages from an unnamed source. Len Chow, the second in command, delivered them:

"P & O BENDIGO INWARD TWENTY MILES SOUTH-EAST"

"BIBBY LINER OXFORDSHIRE OUTWARD FIFTEEN MILES NORTHWEST"

"AMERICAN FREIGHTER JOHN CLAY ADEN TO SUEZ TEN MILES DUE SOUTH"

On receipt of this third message, Yu'an Hee See spoke into a tube. "There is too much delay," he said. "Signal to All to draw off in the dhow."

He studied the scene on the Wallaroo. Aswami, at the head of the ladder, raised his hand signifying that the order had already reached him. Three negroes, carrying chests, the last of the consignment, climbed into the boat. Aswami followed.

The boat pulled off to the dhow. Yu'an Hee See spoke again down the tube: "All is to take both boats in tow without transshipping the load." This order was transmitted to a man forward on the deck of the submarine and shouted to Aswami Pasha.

Captain Peterson, bare-headed, gray-faced, stood on the bridge of the Wallaroo. It all seemed unreal, utterly impossible. Even now it was difficult to believe that the pirates had been actually on board his ship—without a blow struck, had removed that precious cargo under his eyes. . . .

Yet, had there been any alternative? Even if the Wallaroo had carried a gun, the fate of all these women and children below must have rested upon the success of one shot.

He stood listening to the pulsing of the auxiliary engine on board the dhow—watching the negroes scramble onto her stern. Then the boats swung out on two lines, and the dhow headed in for the head of that rocky island near to which they lay. Her decks were black with negroes.

Suddenly all signs of life van-

ished from the submarine. Came the faint sound of a bell on the Wallaroo's bridge; the ship began to vibrate, but:

"Stand by all boat stations!" the captain roared. The order was transmitted, in dying echoes, from point to point of the ship: "Stand by all boat stations . . . stand by . . . boat stations . . . boat stations. . . ."

Peterson sprang to the telegraph and jammed "full speed ahead"—then leaped to the side of the bridge and looked again.

He was too late!

Yu'an Hee See sat in the control room of the submarine. Seen through the periscope, the towering hull of the Wallaroo seemed almost to overhang the vicious little warship. Yu'an Hee See spoke softly. "First tube," he said. And the first torpedo was launched against the helpless liner.

Frightened faces of stewards and other members of the crew, some of them with war experience, peered out of portholes. Men were running—there was tumult—desperation.

Yu'an Hee See began to laugh. That weird, piping laughter swept around the oily little compartment like a breeze from hell.

The torpedo buried its wicked

had seen the torpedo, was racing for the bridge. He had just reached the ladder when it crashed into the engine room. One of the boilers went, and he was heaved off his feet, lost his hold of the rail, and pitched into the scuppers.

Dazed, temporarily confused, he staggered up. Somewhere behind and below there was a shambles—shrieks which he was never to forget to his dying day. He tottered again for the ladder and was half-way up when the second torpedo found its billet in the secret cargo. . . .

The whole of the Wallaroo, forward of the bridge, burst upward like a volcano. The deck planking belled upward and shot him into the sea as if he had been propelled by a catapult. He came to the surface immediately beside a floating deck chair. Upon this he rested his hands, for the moment content to be alive.

The Wallaroo was sinking fast. Pushing the timely piece of wreckage before him, he ducked his head and kicked off wildly. Then, resting on the fragile raft, he watched

The forward part of the ship broke free of the hull. The bowels of the Wallaroo dropped out of her through the gaping hole below her bridge—and the big ship dived. . . .

Rattray, clutching his little raft, threw one arm across the folded wooden struts. Shaken though he was, he knew its presence alone spelled salvation. And pushing it before him, he began to swim slowly yet further out to sea, towards where, a hundred and forty-five miles due southwest, Port Sudan

THE STORY FROM THE OPENING CHAPTER

Matt Kearney, young American living in London, says good-by to his sister Eileen, on board the Wallaroo which is conveying £2,000,000 in gold to Australia. Inspector Dawson Haig, of Scotland Yard, very much in love with Eileen, is on the trail of opium he is convinced is concealed in Jo Lung's warehouse. He delegates Kearney, with Detective Norwich, to visit the place and find out what he can. While there Kearney picks up and carries away a notebook, which he turns over to Haig. Yu'an Hee See, leader of international thieves, is at Jo Lung's. He sends men after Norwich and Kearney, one of whom he realizes must have picked up the notebook. Haig is puzzled over cryptic notes in the book. Norwich is found murdered. While Haig is poring over the book, a monstrous creature enters, seizes it, and escapes. Haig boards the Wallaroo at Marseilles, disguised. From radio messages he decodes, he realizes members of Yu'an's gang are on board, and have recognized him. A Chinaman tries to throw Haig overboard but goes over himself. At Port Said Haig is lured into a "bath of feathers." Eileen disappears. Haig escapes from the trap and shoots Joseph, one of the plotters. Eileen, drugged, regains consciousness in Yu'an's headquarters. Yu'an intends to capture or sink the Wallaroo. Using Joseph's credentials, Haig makes his way to Keneb. He begins to perceive Yu'an's plot, to seize the gold on the Wallaroo, but all his thoughts are centered on the rescue of Eileen. Impersonating Joseph, he is assigned to guard duty outside Yu'an's mansion. The girl sees him from a window, and is heartened. Haig also has seen her. Yu'an lures the Wallaroo from her course with a wireless appeal for aid.

nose—Jo Lung was clever!—squarely into the engine room. There was a monstrous explosion which shook the submarine from stem to stern. Smoke and steam dropped a veil between the doomed liner and the watching eyes of Yu'an Hee See. Yet he trusted the Wasp, his chief torpedo operator. "Second tube," he directed.

If the first explosion had been an enormous one, the second was such as seemed to rend the very heavens. The second torpedo had registered in Number Two Hold, where twenty cases of potted Stilton for Colombo were stored. They had come aboard in Marseilles just before Doctor Oestler went ashore. They contained enough high explosive to destroy a small town. . . .

Yu'an Hee See rubbed his plump hands together and began to laugh again. Although they had drawn away from the Wallaroo, a veritable tidal wave swept them, but Yu'an laughed on. At last, recovering himself:

"Order All to cast the boats off and head the dhow back," came his high-pitched instructions.

He glanced up to find Len Chow at his elbow. He took the message which his second in command had brought, adjusted his spectacles, and, still chuckling, read:

"NEWS OF EXPLOSION RELAYED PORT SUDAN HMS PANTHER HEADED FOR YOU."

Yu'an Hee See nodded, read the message a second time, and began very softly to hiss.

Jack Rattray, chief officer, who

nestled on the African coast, and H. M. S. Panther, Captain Harwood, raced toward him.

. . . .

The mass of wreckage was spread over a great surface of the sea. The two machine guns in the submarine's conning towers crackled into activity, sweeping that area where survivors struggled in the flotsam of the wrecked liner. From the deck of the dhow, men armed with rifles picked out more distant swimmers.

And now—darting actively about amongst that marine shambles—now came the fins of the sharks. . . .

From the deck of the dhow black marksmen were making good practice. Kid Brown, his face very white, fired once or twice, but wildly, and never at a living target. In his capacity as Aswami Pasha's bodyguard, he knew that he served a soulless villain, but his own record was far from unblemished, and somehow he had made terms with his elastic conscience.

He knew that the German freighter had been sunk with all hands nearly two years before, but he had not been present at her actual sinking. He had been on the submarine when the American yacht was held up. Explosives had been smuggled into her hold in some way, and he had seen her go up like a Crystal Palace firework display.

Although no rescues were attempted, there had been none of this sniping. The sniping was too much for his stomach. He threw his rifle on to the deck of the dhow. "Gor' blimey!" he shouted, clen-

ing his fists. "I can't do it! It's bloody murder! That's what it is—bloody murder!"

"You are conscience-stricken again, Mr. Brown?"

The Kid turned. Aswami Pasha stood pointing a vicious-looking automatic straight at the Kid's stomach. "I have watched you with interest for some time," the Egyptian went on; "in Paris and in Egypt, as well as here. I regret it—but I can no longer trust you." Aswami Pasha pressed the trigger. But swiftly as he acted, he nevertheless acted too slowly to check that "Maxim silencer" left of the Kid.

As the boxer dropped, coughing, to hang over the side, pumping his life's blood into the Red sea, Aswami Pasha temporarily passed into forgetfulness, his once classic nose a mere memory. . . .

On the submarine, Yu'an Hee See gave the order to cease firing. "It will disturb the sharks," he explained. He rang on the engines to "Dead slow ahead."

And old Macles, raising his eyes to the indicator as it tinkled, grasped the levers automatically—and then sank his debauched face into his hands, sobbing as only a drunken man can sob, when, sober, he looks down upon what he has become.

. . . .

In the great gardens of the old palace an unusual quiet reigned. The negroes seemed to have disappeared, to a man. Even the great engine shed adjoining the garages, and its annex with the tall radio masts, were deserted. The big house was still.

Haig strode along the path close under the wall which marked the southern boundary of his patrol. His brain was racing again, and he knew that he must keep a grip on common sense.

Haig realized that practically he had the run of the place; a guardian who was himself a prisoner. Foolhardily he had thrust himself into the place, and he knew that it was not the call of duty, but a mad anxiety for Eileen which had driven him.

He had seen the room in which she was imprisoned, apparently under the guardianship of a woman. He wondered if any of the eunuchs remained on duty inside the harem enclosure.

Cautiously he mounted the steps of the first of the little watchtowers. There were several women in the garden, but Eileen was not among them.

Passing on, he cautiously mounted another flight of steps. . . . he saw something at which his heart seemed to miss a beat. One of the black eunuchs was coming down a side path, carrying a woman's body thrown sackwise over his right shoulder.

One glance was sufficient. He was carrying Eileen Kearney—alive or dead Haig could not tell! A tall and vicious looking Arab, white-robed, followed.

Automatic in hand, Haig craned over the parapet as the gigantic negro swung suddenly left, descending a flight of stone steps, and disappeared under an archway, followed by the Arab.

Where did that tunnel lead to? Haig heard the bang of a heavy door in the sunken archway.

As he stood plainly in view now to anyone in the garden, he heard a cry! It came from the balcony upon which he had seen Eileen! "Cherie! cherie! my baby, where are you?" This was the big woman he had seen the previous day. She had looked French.

Haig sprang right up on the parapet, waving his arms. Swiftly Celeste indicated that he should conceal himself and wait. Haig drew back, and presently she came running down the stone steps and along the garden.

"You up there! you can hear me?" she gasped.

"Yes, yes I am. . . ."

(TO BE CONTINUED)