

# The Strumpet Sea

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

## SYNOPSIS

George McAusland was 38 years old when he sailed from America to undertake his post as a missionary in the Fiji Islands. A crime he had committed in a fit of excitement had shattered all his confidence in himself. He felt forced to avoid pretty Mary Doncaster, who boarded the ship at Honolulu. She was en route to visit her parents, who were missionaries on Gilead Island. Mary was attracted by George's attempts to avoid her. One day George accidentally fell overboard. Mary unhesitatingly dove into the sea to rescue George. Now George had to talk to her. His fears were realized when he began to fall in love with her.

## CHAPTER II—Continued

"There aren't any houses anywhere in sight," George said.

"They're in among the trees, in the shade," Mary told him. "People keep out of the sun down here." A faint trouble showed in her eyes. "I don't know why no canoes come off. They must have seen us long ago." But a moment later she cried, relieved: "Oh, there they come!" Captain Keen and the others joined them in the bow, and Mary borrowed the Captain's glass to look for her father and mother.

"There's Jarambo," she said. She gave the glass to George. "Look," she said. "That old man in the first canoe. He worships my father, goes everywhere with him, like a dog."

Captain Keen spoke to the mate. She was close-hauled, the wind light. He said quietly:

"Square your fore and main yards, Mr. Chase. Smartly, now."

The mate shouted orders; men swarmed to their tasks; and presently the cable slid out through the hawse, men standing by. Mary moved back to the waist while the old man in the canoe drew alongside; and she was white now with formless fears. She called something to Jarambo in his own tongue; but instead of answering, he dropped his eyes. There was something terrifying in his silence.

A moment later, still without speech, he swung himself aboard. Jarambo produced a folded bit of paper and offered it to Mary.

She took it; she looked at Jarambo imploringly. Then her dry eyes raced along the lines, and the color drained out of her cheeks. Old John Gale came quick beside her, and she gave him the bit of paper, shaking her head wretchedly. He read it aloud, slowly.

"My dear Daughter,

"I thought I could wait for you, but since your mother died I am lonely and tired. I cannot wait any longer. I have nothing more to do except leave you my love and my blessing, and draw up my feet like good old Jacob and go home.

"Your father,  
"Ephraim Doncaster."

John Gale read the letter, and George McAusland said, not understanding: "Gone home? Didn't he know Mary was coming?"

John Gale said: "Yes, gone home. Ephraim is dead."

## CHAPTER III

After she had read her father's letter, Mary turned to Mrs. Gale and clung to the older woman and was suddenly like a child weeping at a hurt it cannot understand. Mrs. Gale led her below. George wished to follow them. An overpowering sympathy and tenderness filled him. Mary in her sudden bitter grief seemed small and defenseless and in need, and he felt himself strong and wished to strengthen her. But John Gale, watching him, said:

"Let her weep, George. She'll be better then." He suggested: "You and I might go ashore, see the Island."

George agreed.

George McAusland looked around him at the clustering crowd which welcomed them as loving children welcome a returning father, and he thought with a sort of reverence: This is what the first missionaries found. These are the heathen. Yet even in that first moment a doubtful reprobation filled him. Jarambo leading them, they moved away along a broad beaten path while men and women and children of every age trooped happily about them. McAusland said uneasily: "Mary's father hasn't taught them to wear many clothes."

"Ephraim was a trouble to the Board in some ways," John Gale admitted. "He refused to teach all the things they thought important; yet he accomplished more than most missionaries do. He worked less by precept than by example. I've heard his house is a model of what island houses should be; neat, secure, clean. I'm anxious to see it, perhaps to get some ideas to improve my own."

They moved on, many following; and a little way beyond a pool, they came to the house in which Mary's father and mother had lived.

McAusland saw the house with a quick pride in his race. It was built of stones, set on a sort of platform of basalt blocks five or six feet high, with a wide, thatch-shaded veranda all around. A fence of poles bound together with vines enclosed a neatly tended garden in front; and when they went indoors George saw everywhere evidences of proud and loving care. John Gale said understandingly: "These people have kept it like a temple, since Ephraim

died." Jarambo began to give an account of his stewardship, and since he and John Gale spoke in the Island tongue, which George did not understand, the young man turned aside. He saw a wide doorway opening at the rear of the main central room, and stepped out and found himself in what might have been a pulpit, with a lectern of stone, facing a rising slope of ground like a small amphitheater under the palms. Then John Gale beside him said quietly: "Ephraim preached to them here."

"Had he no church?"

"He thought it suitable to worship out of doors."

That night on the ship a grave question was discussed. Mrs. Gale and the old minister, George McAusland and Joseph Neargood and Captain Keen talked over the replacing of Ephraim in the cabin after supper. Mary sat with them; but she was very quiet, and she seemed small, as though grief had gone out of her and left her empty. John Gale stated the problem to Captain Keen.

"Someone ought to stay here," he said. "Jarambo tells me that a schooner lay in the lagoon across the Island for a while, and the natives aboard her dived for shell till bad weather drove the schooner away. But I judge they found pearls."

"I don't like that business of shell in the lagoon," Captain Keen reminded them. "If those men found pearls, they'll be back, and pearl-ers are a hard crew."

"I'm not afraid," Mary insisted. "No one could find me unless I chose. Remember, I was a child here. I know all the hidden trails."

"Joseph couldn't protect you," John Gale pointed out. "They wouldn't respect him." He looked at the Marquesan apologetically. "You understand, my son, I hold you high; but they would not."

The Marquesan nodded simply.

George McAusland felt his hands clench on his knees. There was burning in him now something reckless of all reason. To think that Mary was to be left here alone with a brown-skinned man for her protector filled him with a passion beyond controlling. His nails bit his palms; and he rose abruptly, stalked toward the companion, and went on deck. He went forward, stood by the rail, staring off across the water toward the shores so incredibly green that rose steeply to the tips of the mountains shimmering in the sun. There was a thumping in his throat that would not be still.

Corkran spoke at his shoulder. "A fine island, and fine people, Reverence," he said. "No one's spoiled 'em. The young lady's father, the missionary that was here, he must have been a sensible lot."

George spoke without thought. "She's going to stay here."

"Now if I was in the missionary line, myself, Reverence," the sailor remarked, "and if I was looking for some heathen to convert, I'd ask nothing better myself than to tackle this lot here, with the young lady to help." He glanced at the man beside him, saw the jaw muscles knotted, saw George swallow hard.

"Yes, Reverence," he declared. "I'd say to myself, 'Tis no work for a brown-skinned man, this; so I'll stay. The heathen need me, so they do.'"

"I want to, Corkran," he said miserably. "I want to. But I don't know whether I could do the work. Alone."

Corkran nodded. "If it was me, I'd be thinking a wife would make it easier," he agreed. "I'd be thinking of marrying. Someone." He added calmly: "The young lady, say."

"We certainly couldn't stay here alone together without being married," George reflected, half to himself.

George looked along the deck. Joseph Neargood and Mrs. Gale were together aft. Captain Keen and John Gale and the mate were in the waist, close by. George turned abruptly to ask John Gale:

"Where is Mary?"

"In the cabin!"

George went toward the companion and descended. Mary was sitting at the cabin table, with paper before her, a pen in her hand, writing. She looked up at him when he appeared. Her eyes stopped him for a moment. He stood unsteadily; and when the ship lifted beneath them, tilting into the trough, sliding down, he came forward carefully to sit facing her with the table between them.

Mary Doncaster waited. Her eyes were serene and calm; but on her cheek color played faintly, like heat lightning from a distant storm. He tried to find the word he wished to say, and his dry lips moved a little without sound.

It was she who spoke first. She asked: "What is it, George?"

He tried to explain, as much to himself as to her. "I know I ought to stay here and take your father's place. I want to, and yet I'm afraid to. I'm afraid of failing." He said more quickly: "I didn't understand what it would be like, till I went ashore yesterday. I thought being a missionary meant being brave and strong and firm and stern; but I can see now it's more than that. I want to do the work; but I can't do it without you, Mary. I want to stay here with you to help me."

She asked, carefully grave: "You want me to be sort of an assistant? Is that it?"

"Well, I'd have to have someone. I can't even speak their language." "Why don't you let yourself go, George?" she urged. "Tell me what you really want." He did not speak, and she saw that he could not. Her eyes deep and still, she asked at last: "You want to stay here and try to fill my father's place? Is that all, really?"

"Yes."

"Tell me, if you could do it alone, if you were sure you could, would you still want me? Or would you let me go on with the ship? Honestly?"

His face suddenly was convulsed. "No!" he cried. "I never want to let you go!"

"He had confessed something of which to be ashamed. He said awkwardly: "We couldn't stay alone here if we weren't married."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"A fine island, and fine people, Reverence."

and that means they'll come back, this year, or next, or the year afterward. Ephraim's people need someone."

Captain Keen nodded. "We'll let the Board know. I can't put back to Honolulu, but we'll speak the first sail we sight, send word."

Mrs. Gale suggested another problem. "What is Mary to do? Go on with us?"

No one answered. Then Joseph Neargood, without emphasis, began to tell them some things he had heard from Jarambo. He spoke of Mary's father and mother, and of their work here and of their deaths. The cabin grew quiet while they listened. When he was done, Mary said:

"Thank you, Joseph." She smiled in a faint fashion, almost apologetic. "I think I'm beginning to be all right again," she decided. "I was scared at first, like a child."

She spoke to the Marquesan. "But Joseph, you make me see that Father is more alive than ever now. He's alive in all their hearts on the island." She said steadily: "I shall never think of him—or of Mother—as dead again."

Captain Keen cleared his throat. Then Joseph Neargood said to old John Gale:

"I have thought, till someone better can come, I might stay here with these people."

They discussed this suggestion for a while; but George only listened.

McAusland was the first to leave the cabin. He went on deck, stood alone by the after rail with stars close above his head in the velvet blackness of the tropic night. Was he fit to take up the work old Ephraim Doncaster had laid down? Was he brave enough to undertake the task—which Joseph Neargood was brave enough to face so humbly?

This was a very lonely man, this George McAusland. He had been lonely all his life.

Tonight that loneliness was bitter on him. For the first time he understood that he was untested. It was one thing to be lonely; it was another to be able to stand alone.

He went below at last to lie in torment all that night, to rise with burning eyes, sick for the sleep that had refused to come.

At the cabin table for their midday meal, Mary Doncaster told them she had decided her personal problem. "I asked Jarambo," she said. "He says the Venturer hasn't touched here yet." She explained to Captain Keen: "She's a whaler; and any Uncle Tom Hanline is mate aboard her, and my cousin Tommy is cabin boy. When they sailed from New Bedford, Uncle Tom promised they'd put in here on the way home. So I'll wait here for them, go home with him." She added after a mo-



"A fine island, and fine people, Reverence."

# Winter Fashions Turn Spotlight On Handsome Jewelry Accents

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



WEAR dramatic jewelry in a dramatic way and your costume will soar to dizzy heights of chic and charm this winter. The technique for the costume ideal as prescribed by current fashion demands that "clothes" be styled with utmost simplicity of elegant choice fabric to serve as a perfect setting for jewelry that is superbly adornful. After you follow this formula of dress to a nicety you can complete the ensemble with a devastating chapeau.

In selecting your jewelry collection keep uppermost in mind that fashion emphasis this winter is on handsome important individualistic pieces, rather than flashy glittery baubles. The smartest of the smart are finding definite appeal in the idea of a gorgeous clip or brooch strategically placed below the shoulder, preferably to one side, to "show off" on the bodice. To this they match up intriguing earrings, which are vastly important this season, an eye-dazzling finger ring and imposing bracelets. To be sure, a necklace may be added, but "the latest" whim of fashion is to concentrate on the clip of artful design and exquisite workmanship.

The illustration herewith tells a fascinating story of current jewelry trends. To the left above in the picture dull finished gold and platinum leaves set with pale yellow sapphires make an unusual clip worn smartly on the lapel of a brown sealskin coat. A tailored bracelet of the same dull finished gold with jewel-set buckle serves as an appropriate companion piece. The casual daytime dress (favorite two-piece type) is of sheer wool with cartridge tuckings at the shoulder and pockets. This stunning frock in neutral color is one of those tailored classics well-dressed women adore.

A beau catcher if ever there was one! She is the cunningly bonneted young girl centered in the group. Bonnet toques of quaint prettiness such as these are the "newest out." The young set like them immensely.

ly and wear them most becomingly. This one is of black broadcloth and has velvet ties under the chin. The suit is of the same woolen fabric used for men's tuxedos. Needless to say it tailors beautifully, and with its braid trimming makes a stunning formal costume for town. It's quite the thing, as you no doubt know, to affect masculine fashions both as to materials bought in men's tailoring establishments and details such as blouses cut shirt fashion, and coats that look as if they might have been filched from brother's wardrobe. At any rate the young miss pictured yields to feminine urge when she wears an eye-impelling single jewelry piece of rubies set in gold.

Appropriate for a young girl to wear for afternoon or dinner dates is the winsome jewelry "set" shown above to the right. The ensemble consists of two flower pins, uniquely positioned one below the other on the bodice together with bracelet and ring of unusual workmanship which are well accented against the black of her simple dress.

Soft tweeds, as noted below to the left in the group, make a stunning background for jewels. Here a gold clip with sprays of rubies accents a heather and ruby tweed dress. The bracelet of flexible gold links and gold balls encircled by square rubies is matched by the earrings.

For bridge or informal dinners a black chiffon dress as shown below to the right achieves a sophisticated and perfect background for diamond and platinum jewelry. Earrings? Of course! For earrings are a fashion "must." They are tiny hoops of diamonds. A diamond clip brooch together with flexible platinum bracelet with diamond buckle add infinite style prestige. The only note of color is a resplendent cocktail ring of diamonds and rubies. (Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

## New Shape Handbag



Handbag designers continue to present new ideas. Here is the long handbag, low and wide at the base. It interprets a very new silhouette. Inside is a smart detail in the jewelry-like wire zipper which protects the safety pocket. A bag with the "new" look like this will impart infinite chic to your winter costume.

## Girdle Treatments

New frocks of the slenderizing type have wrapped hips done in egyptian girdle manner. Sometimes the girdle is draped with streamers to the front ending in a deep fringe finish.

## Braiding, Quilted Designs Popular

Winter fashions display extreme enrichment in decorative detail worked out in lavish braiding, colorful embroidery and very interesting quilted design.

Many dressmaker suits have jackets that are allover braided in soutache. Braided sleeves and pockets add charm to many of this season's sheer wool dresses.

Evening sweaters and the new long-torso jenkins are all aglitter with all over sequin embroidery. Very new and chic too are draped turbans of fabric that has been colorfully embroidered.

## Late Fall Scarfs Are Voluminous

Voluminous evening scarfs made of tulle or chiffon in vivid color are very charming. There is one the full width of the tissue-thin fabric and more than two yards long. Their effectiveness, thrown over bare shoulders when the dress is black or rich dark tone, and extremely décolleté is very lovely. It is a grand way to give your black velvet evening dress a dramatic touch and to add the dash of color that flatters.

## Tricolor Costume

Tricolor costumes for evening and daytime continue to have the approval of such famous designers as Mainbocher.

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