Red Hair AND Blue Sea

By STANLEY P. OSBORN

CHAPTER I. Hand of the Genii

from the outer darkness in through n't we still a Jap or a Mexican aboard, a man, small, plump; dressed in a the port of her cabin aboard the yacnt or maybe a colored chef?" Rainbow, Miss Palmyra Tree had been lying for sometime, with her eyes closed.

And then, when she opened her black lace mitt upon it. The hand had come thrusting in from outside the yacht. The girl became aware only just in time to see it raised, seemingly in benediction. For an instant the hand remained mus. Then it receded, as if supporting a body, let go and

The girl sat back, seriously disturbed. Her first thought had been that a seaman was outside on some dangerous duty, that he was swept away. She would have given the alarm. But she had restrained herself on a positive perception that the hand was not torn from its grasp. It had deliberately let go. And there had

cumstance. The apparition had been silent as a ghost. Was it really a hand at all, or only a dream? It seemed very real, but she'd had only an in-

in musical mirth.

Yes, when one thought it over, the mischievious. whole vision had borne that exaggerated impressiveness common to dreams. As she opened her eyes the a very special and secret reason." hand appeared to be rising above her in a gesture, solemn, warning; a something of ineffable potent.

Then she dived back into her covers; guests. drew them up to her chin.

o'clock-the girl awoke to a serious the way she had polked and peered mood.

Why this voyage?

John Thurston. For she had seen a yacht without a microscape. Such great deal of those two while the fam- superficality. Deplorable. ily, from Boston, had been in Southern

up the coast in the Rainbow, the girl tact with a something warm and furry, had not suspected. But five days later but solid. And—the something moved! her parents were bundlin her aboard Had Van alone been asked as a fellow one of these trunks. Everyone." voyager she would have understood. But with John also here she was at a

all an endless triangle of courtship.

formed itself. What a splendid quality gracious figure. of brain and will and courage; to have forced oneself up, at thirty, from bred visage of his rival. Van, she de. back. fended, had done none of this because there was none to do. And her parents, in favoring him, had her happi- jam for one real uninterrupted . ness as their sole consideration.

Warned by the voices that it was time to dress, Palmyra jumped out, the sacred hour of midnight." And only now, did she think of the hand she had seen.

that when she had clothed herself she chatter held any purpose of return. climbed upon the berth for another

look through the port. Bending down to gaze out, she became aware of a something on the sound-intimidating, sinister. polished metal of the opening that caused her to start back in surprise;

the print of moist and dirty fingers. She sat astonished. The hand, then, open. had been no dream, but real flesh and

for the companionway to investigate. The girl was only a moment in veri- edly, a little afraid.

fying her impression of the evening

She shot a glance toward Captain Pedersen's hands. Big and square enough, heaven knew, but flery red and flaxen bristled. At the wheel stood one Johannsen, his huge paws gripped on the spokes. A scarlet ballet girl danced. disqualifyingly, on the back of one and of the other the index

finger was missing. Presently seven bells came, with breakfast for the whole crew, so that she was able to scruunize, not only

also those of the watch below.

"But Captain Pedersen," she asked boy. When the square sun-browned hand at last-the apparition of the cabin with the lace mitt upon it was thurst had seemed very dark skinned—bave- moved upward it revealed the body of

The sailing master shook his head. | racetrack, ringside. The checked suit, The girl hurried away to her cabin fancy vest, bright tan gloves, above all to make sure those prints had been the walking stick, were ludicrously unreal. The normality of everything on nautical. deck had quieted her alarm. She was sinewy sun-browned hand with the glad now that some instinct had kept the man said: "I ask you, lady, is it her from explaining. Of all on board, fair t'keep me hove to under yer light, through, and Ponape Burke, who had she alone knew.

Palmyra began to giggle in the most rig?" juvenile fashion. "Never before," thought she, "except in the theatre or between the covers of a book, have I grasped the lower edge of the opening come within hailing distance of adventure. But now, with the yacht scarcely out of sight of land, fascinatup the water, and he drank eagerly. ing mystery makes its presence

In the not remote past this girl had been a devoted reader of Treasure Island. And today, startled by her sudden realization of responsibility in this new and adult problem of Van and John, she was in a mood to flee away back to those frresponsible days.

So, as she jumped up on the berth again, she was demanding that pirates The girl laughed uncertainly in a lurk aboard. "Yes, undoubtedly," she growing appreciation of this last cir- affirmed, "they have mistaken the yacht for a treasure seeker."

> The girl sat staring at the finger prints. She was serious again.

Ought she to tell Captain Pedersen, Mrs. Crawford? She sat for a time. Again Palmyra laughed; this time disturbed. Then, all at once, a laugh. Here expression became ominously

> "I must," she announced, "see our pirate chief at once and alone., for

Palmyra was searching the Rainbow. She had penetrated as far. in Palmyra shivered once again in the 'tween-decks, as the space set chill air. She slammed shut the port, aside for the heavy baggage of the

Van and John and the Wampolds. With the chiming of five bells of who had followed her, stood clinging the morning watch-half past six one to another, laughingly puzzled at tive.

into dark corners. Van regarded her severely. "Real-She could not doubt it had, in some ly," he said, "really I marvel at anyone way, to do with Van Buren Rutger, trying to examine the fabric of a

The others laughed, but not the girl. As she had reached out for a big When Mrs. Crawford and the Wam- trunk a dip of the Rainbow drove her pold sisters and Dennis McCarthy and extended hand on and down over. Her Constance Crawford had come idling fingers came, rather awfully, into con-

-without any explanation that ex- lessly, "I felt like Aladdin. But now, plained-and the family was bound, at now it's Ali Baba. Ali Baba, and a least for Honolulu, perhaps Japan thief-I mean a pirate-behind every

> "A pirate?" Van was commenting. Then, let's go. I shouldn't want to walk the plank till I'd had my tea."

She was inclined to look upon this The tone was light. But he was, yachting as indelicate, brutal; penning for the second time in five minutes, her up, as on a stage, to play for them dusting with a handkerchief at his hands. Born to the American aristro-As if in protest there rose from the cracy, he had an almost hereditary main cabin the earnest voice of John distaste for the dinginess and grime Thurston, followed by the gay laugh of the under places. Give him ever of Van Buren Rutger. Before her the the prepared and proper stage of life. strong interesting face of Thurston There, indeed, he could be a sure and

Palmyra assented. "I go," she said, "but I shall return. I like these lower nothing at all to recognition in one's regions; so still, so dark, so mysterprofession. But shortly his features ious. I shall return-" she paused were replaced by the handsome high- significantly- "tonight. I shall come

> "She means," interpreted Van, "to sneak pickles and ham, chicken and

The girl laughed. "As you have said: with food and drink. I shall return at

She gave them a covert glance. But, unaware of the hand, of that hidden She had dismissed the appearance presence, neither Thurston nor the as a dream, but it seemed so real now others realized that her, to them, idle

> They moved to go. And once more there came from out the dark that stealthy wraith of

> Midnight. Palmyra swung the bulkhead door

Now that she was alone, how different it was down here; the darkness Palmyra had an unexpected sense of menacing, alive with groaning whispevil. She jumped down and hurried ers of sound, yet empty save for that unseen presence. She was, unexpect-

> But she had her definite purpose. Palmyra entered, placed sandwiches, a bottle of water, an electric torch on the deck. Then she shut the

heavy door. cheerily.

Silence She got up, waited, the torch cast ing a moon of light upon the food and

In the center of the spotlight were two feet. They were small, encased in button shoes. They dangled, juventhe men who had been on deck, but ilely, six inches from the deck. For a

Palmyra was amused, sceptical.

Y'kept still and those hours counted. covered. "And I hoped." she conclud-Now, she'll more likely hold her ed, "we could get up a little plot, timidating,

The girl smiled delightedly. Once again, Arabian Nights, ahoy!

There had been, it seemed a Chinese merchant of Bagdad-no, Honoluluwho was sending a cargo to California that would go under the hatches rice and tea, but come out coolies and opium. He wanted just the right sort | Know a lot o' native songs." of man along to smuggle them when I can't make out a line o' yer been idling about the town was

"But, lady," he explained earnestly, "don't mistake, I sure meant t'play of pride, "Something like that." next to that on which he sat. Then fair and square with Uncle Sam. I planned both t'make a piece o'side One of the gloved hands snatched citizen by tipping off the contraband.

ment of the intended coup; innocent startle. Wouldn't be a bit surprised, ingly, "would lay below at midnight, of any slightest perception of the shame of bad faith.

As he went on, however, his feat- laughed again. sea there came again that fettered ures turned ugly with disgust, Uncle clink and clank of iron away some. Sam had proved an unbelievable tightwad, and the Orientals had discovered is y'came in at?" he asked unexpectwhere in the dark. At the sound Palmyra stirred with a returning disquiet. Burke's attempt. They had set gun- edly. vague but insistent, that could scarce- men after him. And "for a reason"ly have been a response to anything which the man did not explain-he him; turned her gaze in the direction was conspicuous.

"I could of laid up ashore," he con-She shifted the light to his face. cluded, "but some ulavale devil He hesitated. "Because," he explain- Shanghales my bankroll and leaves ed presently, "I'd sooner be here than me just plain on the beach. So I in the cold, cold grave. Not," he added | stowes away here."

Palmyra thought it safe to believe with a shiver which set the plump cheeks a-tremble, "that I ain't cold he might really have been robbed. "So then," she inquired in a tone of regret, "you're not, after all, a pirate? I felt you might have heard the Rainbow "Bullet," explained the stowaway. The girl smiled invisibly. She did was seeking buried treasure."

Ponape Burke shot a look of interessary to shoot such a plump little est in her direction. Then, apparently annoyed that, for even a moment, he "As for who I am," he continued, could have taken her seriously, he 'I'm asking you, lady; do y'know the voiced a protest.

Presently: "Miss, | below here?"

She had lain below mischievously She shook her head, then realizing to consult a buccaneer. So, "I'm sorry you don't smack more of the Spanish Main," was what she said.

Then he asked: "But what did have in mind? Maybe we could do admirers-" a titter-"and also them better'n y'think.'

Palmyra shook her head invisibly.

fore, I follow the sea. Master o' my Ch, no," she said, "you're not at all she had found there was someone Burke, moving? aboard, she recalled a popular comedy: "I'm stowed away 'cause I had a burglar entrapped, all unknown to That's why I thank you tery, excitement, before he'd been dis-Something piratical, thrilly, "But," she added resignedly, "not a one would whirled toward the entry, switched on be scared at you.'

From the dark there came a pro-Burke at length, "if y'insist on pirates sprang into being a savage face. Wild, .But why not some stunt a little more genteel? A concert say?

In sample he gave her a phrase; a music; low-voiced words, mellifluous, on the blade of a ten-inch knife. polysyllabic.

"There," he concluded with a touch

But the girl scorned ministrelsy

He relapsed into the laugh-to money and do my plumb duty as a irritation, "Pirates it is," he assented "And even if yer bunch ain't scart o' His countenance beamed with enjoy- me, maybe we could frame 'em up a Not a bit." He was much amused.

She remained unconvinced and he

There was silence for an interval. Then, "D'y' know where the gangway

The girl looked puzzled, toward of the door, "Yes," she said wonderingly, "I know exactly where it is."

"Then," said Ponape Burke, "just give it one flash with yer torch.

The girl was, suddenly again a little the sort." But she explained. When afraid, Hark? Was that a sound of

Her thumb touched the torch. As a lightening flash, its ray shot forward, make my westing quiet! If this yacht the others, with a house party under landed full upon the plump vest, the puts back with me," he added, "I'm a guard in quarantine; no end of mys- chubby infantile face. Burke still sat on the trunk.

Again darkness; impenetrable, in-

Before Burke culd have moved, she the light.

The shaft leaped across, and then in longed chuckle. "Well," hesitated its circle, vivid against the door, there copper-hued, it held rigid as jungle lion caught by photo-flashlight. Under a great mat of hair, fierce staring eyes, grinning lips drawn back from two chanting fragment, rhythm without rows of square teeth that clamped up-

It was not the face of Burke. It was not the face of a white man. (TO BE CONTINUED)

BLIND FOR 30 YEARS. WOMAN REGAINS SIGHT

Carpentersville, Ind., Mar., 22-(Autocaster)-After 30 years of blindness. Mrs. Carrie Sillery, seventy years old, sees again. Awakening from a nap, Mrs. Sillery, who lives on a farm, suddenly began to depict various objects in the room. The cause has baffled physicians.

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moment she thought that here was a

But as the disk of illumination

way one might associate with the

The face now broke into a grin and

She took up the water and sand-

wiches and put these on the trunk

she backed away to a seat opposite.

"Not every lady," he went on admir-

As the Rainbow drove into another

'Why are you aboard?" she demanded.

"Grave?" inquired Palmyra.

not think anyone would feel it nec-

Line? The Line islands, I mean-the

he could not see, added a spoken nega-

"If y'was knowing t'the Line, lady,

you'd savvy Ponape Burke. Named

after the biggest o' the Carolines by

as is not so admiring. As I says be

Gilberts, Marshalls, Carolines?"

turned the torch upon them.

t'ferret out a storaway.'

in the man's tone.

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