

NO DEFENSE

By GILBERT PARKER

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(CHAPTER XVI—Continued.)

CHAPTER XVII

The governor nodded. "Yes, I am given discretion, but this is an order." "An order!" she commented. "Then if it should not be fulfilled, break it and take the consequences. The principle should be—Do what is right and have no fear."

"I will think it over," answered the governor. "What you say has immense weight with me—more even than I have words to say. Yes, I will think it over—I promise you. You are a genius—you prevail."

Her face softened, a new something came into her manner. "You do truly mean it?" she asked with lips that almost trembled.

"Yes, I mean it," answered Lord Mallow. "I mean it exactly as I say it."

She smiled. "Well, that should be your recommendation for promotion," she said happily. "I am sure you will decide not to enforce the order, if you think about it. You shall be promoted, your honor, to a better place," she repeated, half satirically.

"Shall I then?" he asked with a warm smile and drawing close to her. "Shall I? Then it can only be by your recommendation. Ah, my dear, my beautiful dear one," he hastened to add, "my life is possible henceforward only through you. You have taught me by your life and person, by your beauty and truth, by your nobility of mind and character how life should be lived. I have not always deserved your good opinion nor that of others. I have fought duels and killed men; I have aspired to place; I have connived at appointment; I have been vain, overbearing and insistent on my rights or privileges; I have played the dictator here in Jamaica; I have not been satisfied save to get my own way; but you have altered all that. Your coming here has given me a new outlook. Sheila, you have changed me, and you can change me infinitely more. I who have been a master wish to become your slave. I want you—beloved, I want you for my wife."

He reached out as though to take her hand, but she drew back from him. "My lord," she said, "oh, you have stirred me! Yet I dare not reply to you as you wish. Life is hard as it is, and you have suddenly made it harder. What is more, I do not, I cannot, believe you. You have loved many. Your life has been a covert menace. Oh, I know what they said of you in Ireland. I know not of your life here. I suppose it is circumspect now; but in Ireland it was declared you were notorious with women."

"It is a lie," he answered. "I was not notorious. I was no better and no worse than many another man. I played, I danced attendance, I said soft nothings, but I was tied to no woman in all Ireland. I was frolicsome and adventurous, but no more. There is no woman who can say I used her ill or took from her what I did not."

"Atone for, Lord Mallow?" "Atone—no. What I did not give compensation for, was what I was going to say."

The situation was intense. She was in a place from which there was no escape except by flight or refusal. She did not really wish to refuse. Somehow, there had come upon her the desire to put all thought of Dyck Calhoun out of her mind by making it impossible for her to think of him; and marriage was the one sure and complete way—marriage with this man, was it possible? Her heart was for the moment soft to Lord Mallow, in spite of his hatred of Dyck Calhoun. The governor was a man of charm in conversation. He was born with rare faculties. Besides, he had a knowledge of humanity and of women. He knew how women could be touched. He had appealed to Sheila more by ability than by aught else. His concessions to her were discretion in a way. They opened the route to her affections, as his place and title could not do.

"No, no, no, believe me, Sheila, I was a man who had too many temptations—that was all. But I did not spoil my life by them, and I am here a trusted servant of the government. I am a better governor than your first words to me would make you seem to think."

Her eyes were shining, her face was troubled, her tongue was silent. She knew not what to say. She felt she could not say yes—yet she wanted to escape from him. Her good fortune did not desert her. Suddenly the door of the room opened and her mother entered. "There is a member of your suite here, your honor, asking for you. It is of most grave importance. It is urgent. What I shall say?" "Say nothing. I am coming," said the governor. "I am coming now."

Out of the Hands of the Philistines.

That night the Maroons broke loose upon Jamaica, and began murder and depredation against which the governor's activities were no check. Estates were invaded, and men, women and children killed, or carried into the mountains and held as hostages. In the middle and western part of the island the ruinous movements went on without being stayed; planters and people generally rallied at the governor, and said that through his neglect these dark things were happening. It was said he had failed to punish offenses by the Maroons, and this had given them confidence, filling them with contempt and disdain. They had one advantage not possessed by the government troops and militia—they were masters of every square rod of land in the middle and west of the island. Their plan was to raid, to ambush, to kill without mercy and to excite the slaves to rebel.

The first assault and repulse took place not far from Enniskillen, Dyck Calhoun's plantation, and Michael Clones captured a Maroon who was slightly wounded.

Michael challenged him thus: "Come now, my blitherin' friend, tell us what's your trouble—why are you risin'? What's your grievance? You don't do this without cause—what's the cause?"

The black man, naked except for a cloth about his loins, and with a small bag at his hip, slung from a cord over his shoulder, showed his teeth in a stark grimace.

"You're a newcomer here, massa, or you'd know we're treated bad," he answered. "We're robbed and trod on and there's no good word kept with us. We asked the governor for more land and he moved us off. So we rose, massa, and we'll make Jamaica sick before we've done. They can't conquer us, for we can hide and ambush here, and shoot those that come after us. We hide, one behind this rock and one behind that, never more than two or three together, and we're safe. You'll see; we'll capture captains and generals, and we'll cut their heads off and bury them in their own guts."

He made an ugly grimace, and a loathsome gesture, and Michael Clones felt the man ought to die. He half drew his sword, but, thinking better of it, he took the Maroon to the castle and locked him up in a slave's hut, having first bound him and put him in the charge of one he could trust. But as he put the man away, he said: "You talk of your people being able to hide and men not being able to find you; but did you never hear of bloodhounds that can smell you and hunt you down, and chew you up? Did you never hear of them?"

The man's face wrinkled like a rag, for there was one thing the native



"The Governor Has No Hounds."

fears more than all else and that is the tooth of the hound. But he gathered courage and said: "The governor has no hounds. There ain't none in Jamaica—we know dat—all of us know dat—all of us know dat, massa."

Michael Clones laughed, and it was not pleasant to hear. "It may be the governor has no bloodhounds, and would not consent to their being brought into the island, but my master is bringing in hounds himself—a lot with their drivers from Cuba, and your Maroons will have all they can do to hide."

"The hounds not here—in de island, massa!" declared the Maroon questioningly.

"Mebbe not, Sambo, but they'll be here within the next few hours, and then where will you and your pals

be? You'll be caught between sharp teeth—nice, red, sharp, bloody teeth; and you'll make good steak—better than your best olio, my Sambo."

The native gave a moan—it was the lament of one whose crime was come tete-a-tete with its own punishment.

"That's the game to play," said Michael to himself as he fastened the door tight on the man. "The hounds will settle this fool-rebellion quicker than ought else. Mr. Calhoun's a wise man, and he ought to be governor here. Criminal? As much as the angel Gabriel! He must put down this rebellion—no man else can. They're stronger, the Maroons, than ever they've been. They've planned this with skill, and they'll need a lot of handin'. We're safe enough here, but down there at Salem—well, they may be caught in the bloody net, for this thing is a dirty, black business. Bedad, that's sure."

A few moments afterward he met Dyck Calhoun.

"Michael," said Dyck, "things are safe enough here, but we've prepared! The overseers, bookkeepers and drivers are loyal enough. But there are others not so safe or well prepared. I'm going to Salem—riding as hard as I can, with six of our best men. Darius Boland is a good man, but he's only had Virginian experience, and this is different. A hundred Maroons are as good as a thousand white soldiers in the way the Maroons fight. There are a thousand of them, and they can lay waste this island, if they get going. So I propose to stop them. The hounds are only just outside the harbor, Michael. The ship Vincent, bringing them, was sighted by a sloop two days ago, making slowly for Kingston. She should be here before we've time to turn round. Michael, the game is in our hands, if we play it well. Do you go down to Kingston and—"

He detailed what Michael was to do on landing the hounds, and laid out plans for the immediate future.

"They're in danger at Salem, Michael, so we must help them one way or another. I think the hounds will settle this whole wretched business, though. The governor can't refuse their landing now. The people would kill him if he did. It was I proposed it all."

"Look, sir—who's that?" asked Michael, as they saw a figure riding under the palms not far away.

It was very early morning, and the light was dim yet, but there was sufficient to make even far sight easy. Dyck shaded his forehead with his hand.

"It's not one of our people, Michael. It's a stranger."

As the rider came on he was stopped by two of the drivers of the estate. Dyck and Michael saw him hold up a letter, and a moment later he was on his way to Dyck, galloping hard. Arrived, he dropped to the ground and saluted Dyck.

"A letter from Salem, sir," he said, and handed it over to Dyck.

Dyck nodded, broke the seal of the letter and read it quickly. Then he nodded again and bade the man eat a hearty breakfast and return with him on one of the Enniskillen horses, as his own would be exhausted.

"We're going down to help protect Salem, my man," said Dyck.

The man grinned. "That's good," he answered. "They knew naught of the rising when I left. But the governor was there yesterday, and he'd protect us."

"Nonsense, fellow, the governor would go straight to Spanish Town where he belongs, when there is trouble. That much he knows of his duty, I'll say."

When the man had gone, Dyck turned to his servant, "Michael," he said, "the news in the letter came from Darius Boland. He says the governor told him he had orders from England to confine me here at Enniskillen, and he meant to do it. Well, we'll see how he does it. If he sends his marshals to me, we'll make Gadarene swine of them."

There was a smile at his lips, but it was contemptuous, and the lines of his forehead told of resolve. "Michael," he added, "we'll hunt Lord Mallow with the hounds of our good fortune, for this war is our war. They can't win it without me, and they shan't. Without the hounds it may be a two years' war—with the hounds it can't go beyond a week or so."

"If the hounds get here, sir! But if they don't?"

Dyck laid his hand upon the sword at his side. "If they don't get here, Michael, still the war will be ours, for we understand fighting, and how to do it, and the governor does not. Confine me here, will he? Well, if he does, he'll be a better man than I have ever known him, Michael. No, he'll not confine me here. In a few hours I shall be at Salem, to do what he could not do, and would not if he could. His love is as deep as water on a roof; no deeper. He'll think first of himself, and afterward of the owner of Salem or any other."

Some hours later Dyck Calhoun, with his six horsemen, was within a mile or so of Salem. They had ridden hard in the heat and were tired, but there was high spirit in the men, for they were behind a trusted leader, as they knew full well—a man who ate little, but who did not disdain a bottle of Madeira or a glass of brandy, and who made good every step of the way he went—watchful, alert, careful, determined. They trusted him and they cared little what his past had been.

Somehow, in spite of the criminal record with which Dyck Calhoun's life was stained, they had a respect for him they did not have for Lord Mallow. Dyck's life in Jamaica was clean; and his progress as a planter had been free from black spots. He even kept no mistress, and none had ever known

him to have to do with women, black, brown or white. He had never given a-Maying, as the saying was, and his only weakness or fault—if it was a fault—was a fondness for the bottle of good wine, which was ever open on his table, and for tobacco in the smoking-leaf. Today he smoked incessantly and carefully. He threw no loose ends and carefully from cigar or pipe into the loose dry leaves and stiff-cut clouds that floated away from his head did not check his observation. That was proved beyond peradventure when they were within sight of the homestead of Salem on an upland well wooded. It was in apparently happy circumstances, for they could see no commotion about the homestead; they saw men with muskets, evidently keeping guard—yet too openly keeping guard, as they all thought, and so some said to each other.

Presently Dyck reined in his horse, and stretched out a hand to detain them. Each man listened attentively, and watched the wood ahead of them, for it was clear Dyck suspected danger there. For a moment there seemed doubt in Dyck's mind what to do, but when it was up he had decided. "Ride slow for Salem," he said. "It's Maroons there in the bush. They are waiting for night. They won't attack us now. They're in ambush—of that I'm sure. If they want to capture Salem, they'll not give alarm by firing on



Every Man's Heart Beat Faster.

us, so if we ride on they'll think we haven't sensed them. If they do attack us, we'll know they are in good numbers, for they'll be facing us as well as the garrison of Salem. But keep your muskets ready. Have a drink," he added, and handed round his horn of liquor. "If they see us drink, and they will, they'll think we're only stopped to refresh, and we'll be safe. In any case, if they attack, fire your muskets at them and ride like the devil. Don't dismount and don't try to find them in the rocks. It's a poor game fighting hidden men. You see, I want to get them into the open below, and that's where they'll be before we're many hours older."

With this he rode on slightly ahead, and presently put his horse at a gentle canter which he did not increase as they neared the place where the black men ambushed. Every man of the group behaved well. None showed nervousness, even when one of the horses, conscious of hidden Maroons in the wood, gave a snort and made a sharp movement out of the track in an attempt to get greater speed.

That was only for an instant, however. Yet every man's heart beat faster as they came to the place where evidently the ambush was. Indeed, Dyck saw a hush move, and had a swift glimpse of a black, hideous face, which quickly disappeared, however. After they had passed the spot of danger there was a cry almost from the lips of all save Dyck; but his imperturbable coolness kept them steady. They even gossiped of idle things loud enough for the hidden Maroons to hear. Though every heart beat harder, no face showed suspicion or alarm, as they passed, while all felt the presence of many men in the underbrush. Dyck talked to them presently without turning round, for to do that might have roused suspicion, and while they were out of danger now, there was the future and Dyck's plan, which he now unfolded.

"They'll come down into the open before it's dark," he said quietly, "and when they do that, we'll have 'em. They've no chance to ambush in the cane-fields now. We'll get them in the open and wipe them out. Don't look round. Keep steady, and we'll ride a little more quickly soon."

A little later they cantered gently to the front door of the Salem homestead. The first face they saw there was that of Darius Boland. It had a look of trouble. Dyck explained: "We thought you might not have heard of the rise of the Maroons. We have no ladies at Enniskillen. We prepared for the revolt, and we're safe enough so, as things are. Your ladies must go at once to Spanish Town, unless—"

"Unless they stay here! Well, they would not be unwise, for though the slaves under the old management might have joined the Maroons, they will not do so now. We have got them aren't here. They rode away into the hills this morning, and they've not come back. I was just about sending a search party for them."

"In what direction did they go?" asked Dyck with anxiety, though his tone was even. "In what direction did they go?" asked Dyck with anxiety, though his tone was even. "In what direction did they go?" asked Dyck with anxiety, though his tone was even.

Darius Boland pointed. "They went slightly northwest, and if they go as I think they meant to do, they would come back the way you came in."

"They were armed?" Dyck asked sharply, for thought of the ladies arriving by the route he came by made him fearful.

"Yes, they were armed," was the reply. "Miss Lynn had a small pistol. She learned to carry one in Virginia and she has done so ever since we came here."

"Listen, Boland," said Dyck, with some alarm. "Up there in the hills by which we came are Maroons hidden, and they will invade this place tonight. We were ready to fight them, of course, as we came, but it's a risky business, and we wanted to get them all if possible. It wouldn't have been possible if we had charged them there, for they were well armed. My idea was to let them get into the open between there and here, and catch them as they came. It would save our own men, and it would probably do for them. If Mrs. and Miss Lynn come back that way, they will be in much greater danger than we were, for the Maroons were coming here to capture the ladies and hold them as hostages; and they would not let them pass, as they did us. In any case, the risk is immense. The ladies must be got to Spanish Town, for the Maroons are desperate. They have placed their men in every part of the middle and western country, with orders what to do, and they came upon my place last evening and were defeated. Several were killed and one taken prisoner. The trouble is they can't be marched upon like an army. Their powers of ambush are too great. They must be run down by bloodhounds. It's the only way."

"Bloodhounds—there are no bloodhounds here!" said Darius Boland. "And if there were, wouldn't pious England make a fuss?"

Dyck Calhoun was about to speak sharply, but he caught a gleam of sarcasm in Darius Boland's face, and he said: "I have the bloodhounds. They're outside the harbor now, and as soon as they're landed I intend to use them."

"If the governor allows you!" remarked Darius Boland sarcastically. "He does not like you or your bloodhounds. He has his orders, so he says."

Dyck made an impatient gesture. "I will not submit to his order. I've earned my place in this island, and I will see he does not have his way. . . . But we must wait no longer. The ladies must be brought to Spanish Town, and placed where the governor's men can protect them."

Darius Boland bowed. "What you say goes always," he remarked, "but tell me, sir, who will take the ladies to Spanish Town?"

Dyck Calhoun frowned. He read the inner meaning of Darius Boland's words. They did not put him out of self-control, however. It was not a time to dwell on such things. It was his primary duty to save the ladies. "Come, Boland," he said sharply. "I shall start now. Wherever the ladies are, we must find them. What sort of a country is it through which they pass over there?" He pointed.

"Had enough in some ways. There's an old monastery of the days of the Spaniards up there"—he pointed—"or the ruins of one, and it is a pleasant place to rest. I doubt not they rested there, if—"

"If they reached it!" remarked Dyck with crisp inflection. "Yes, they would rest there—and it would be a good place for ambush for the Maroons, eh? It's a d—nable predicament—no, you must not come with me! You must keep command here."

He hastily described the course to be followed by those of his own men who remained to defend, and then said: "Our horses are fagged. If you can loan us four I'll see they are well taken care of, and are returned, in kind or cash. I'll take three of my men only, and loan you three of the best. We'll fill our knapsacks and get away, Boland."

A few moments later, Dyck Calhoun and his three companions, with guide added by Boland, had started away up the road which had been ridden by Mrs. Lynn and Sheila. One thing was clear, the Maroons on the hill did not know of the absence of Sheila and her mother, or they would not be waiting. He did not like the long absence of the ladies. It was ominous at such a time.

Dyck and his small escort got away by a road unseen from where the Maroons were, and when well away put their horses to a canter and got into the hills. Once in the woods, however, they rode alertly, and Dyck's eyes were everywhere. He was quick to see a hush move, to observe the flick of a branch, to catch the faintest sound of an animal origin. He was obsessed with anxiety, for he had a dark fear that some ill had happened to the two. His blood almost dried in his veins when he thought of the fate which had followed the capture of ladies in other islands like Haiti or Grenada. His soul revolted at it.

It did not seem possible that these beautiful and devoted women should have fallen into the outrageous hands of savages. He vexed his soul with torturing thoughts. He knew the girl was armed, and that before harm might come to her she would end her own life and her mother's also; but suppose she was caught from behind, and that the opportunity of suicide should not be hers—what then?

Yet he showed no agitation to his followers. His eyes were, however, intensely busy, and every nerve was keen to feel. He had the intense perception of a delicate plant, whose wonderful warning can only come to those who live close to nature, who study from feeling the thousand

moods and tenses of living vegetation and animal life. He was a born leader, and it was not easy to shake him when every nerve was on edge with premonition. He saw the danger of the hoods of Sheila's and her mother's horses in the road, knowing that by the freshness of the horse-droppings an hour, two hours passed, and then approached the monstrous mass of which Boland had spoken. She suddenly, Dyck dropped to the ground, for he saw unmistakable signs of danger or flurry in the hoof-marks.

He quickly made examination, and there were signs of women's feet and also a bare native foot, but no signs of struggle or disturbance. The prints, both native and white, were firmly placed, but the horse's hoofmarks became more conspicuous. Suddenly one of Dyck's men porters exclaimed he had picked up a small piece of ribbon, evidently dropped to guide those who were coming searching. Presently another token was found in a loose bit of buckle from a shoe. Then, sliding upon the middle of the road was a pool of blood and signs that a horse had lain in the dust.

"She shot a native here," said Dyck to his companions morosely, yet not without a certain satisfaction. "There are no signs of a struggle," remarked the most observant.

"Well, we must go carefully for they may have been imported to the ruin. You stay here, and I'll go forward," he added, with a hand on his sword. "I've got an idea that here. We have one chance, my boys, and let's keep our heads. If anything should happen to me, have a try yourselves, and see what you can do. The ladies must be freed, if they're not stand by to the last, but I want you oath upon it. By the heads of your mothers, lads, you'll see I'll through! Up with your hands!"

Their hands went up. "By your mothers' heads or graves," they were in low tones.

"Good!" he replied. "I'll go ahead. If you hear a call, or a shot fired, come forward swiftly." An instant later he plunged into the woods to the right of the road, by which he would come upon the ruins from the rear. He held a pistol as he stole carefully yet quickly forward. He was anxious there should be no delay, but he was equally anxious not to be rash. At last, without warning anyone, he came near to the ruins. They showed serene in the shade of the trees.

Then suddenly he saw come from the ruins a Maroon of fierce yet cruel appearance, who laid a hand to blind his ear, and looked steadily toward that part of the wood where Dyck was. It was clear he had seen something. Dyck did not know how many Maroons there might be in the ruins, or near it, and he did not track. It was essential that he had out the strength of his foe; and he remained quiet. Presently the native turned as though to go back into the ruins, but changed his mind, and began to make a tour of the surrounding ruined building. Dyck watched, and presently he saw more natives come from the ruins, and after a moment another three. These last were bringing an argument of some sort, and they pulled at each other's arms and legs and even caught at the long cloths of the head-dresses they were wearing.

"They've got the ladies then," thought Dyck, "but they've done them no harm yet." He waited some moments longer to see if more natives were coming out, then said to himself: "I'll make a try for it now. It will do to run the risk of going back to bring my fellows up. It's a fair risk, but it's worth taking."

With that he ran softly forward to the entrance of the ruins from which he had seen the men emerge. Looking in he saw only darkness. Then suddenly he gave a soft call, the old of an Irish bird-note which all people in Ireland—in the west and south of Ireland—know. If Sheila was alive and in the place she would answer it, and he was sure. He waited a moment, and there was no answer. Then he called again, and in an instant, although from a great distance, came the reply of the same note, clearer and more bell-like than his own.

"She's there!" he said, and he entered the place. It was dark and damp, but there was a break in the solid masonry of ruined wall, and he saw a clear space of light beyond. He stole ahead, peering over the stone obstructions, and came to a biggish room which once had been a refectory. Looking round he saw three doors—one evidently leading into the kitchen, one into a passage, and one into a hall. It was clear the women were alone, or some one was have come in answer to his call. He could tell when they would come. There was no time to be lost. With an instinct, which proved correct, he opened the door leading into the kitchen, and there, tied, and with faces, but in no other sense terrified, were Sheila and her mother. They put their fingers to their lips, then he cut them loose from the ropes of manacle, and helped them to their feet.

"Can you walk?" he whispered to Mrs. Lynn. She nodded assent, and braced herself. "Then here," he said, "is a pistol. Come quickly. We must have to fight our way out. Don't be afraid to fire, but take good aim. I have some men in the wood beyond where you shot the native." He led to Sheila. "They'll come at once if you call, or a shot is fired. Keep your heads, and we shall be all right. They're a dangerous crew, but we'll beat them this time, I think. Come quickly as you can."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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