

The Red Line Trail

By CRITTENDEN MARRIOTT

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CHAPTER XI—Continued

The veins in Bunker's forehead swelled. "You infernal scoundrel," he growled. "I'll—"

"Now, captain!" The ex-steward's voice was wheedling. Evidently he desired, for purposes of his own, to cajole the captain. But his tones rang false. "Don't get excited. You gave me an awful wallop in the eye, but I'm not excited. It's all over. Franks has been wounded and disarmed, and that shrimp Akin has been locked up in his stateroom. Everybody else on board is with us and against you. So, you see, there's no use in making trouble. Keep cool and let's talk things over."

Captain Bunker did not answer. But his eyes burned hot.

Price read them and nodded. "Easy, cap'n, easy," he counseled. "Easy! Of course you're angry. I'd be angry, too, if I was in your place. Let's take all that for granted and talk sensibly. The man's voice was all that could be desired. But his eyes betrayed his falseness.

"I'll see you hanged for this!" panted the captain.

"Maybe. But not yet a while. I repeat, captain, that you're practically alone on the ship. You notice we're in motion."

Undoubtedly the ship was under way. Bunker had recognized that fact from the first.

"You see," went on the steward, "we're in control. The chief engineer is locked up and the second engineer is with us. You haven't a friend on board."

"It's mutiny, is it?" Captain Bunker's voice had become cold and deadly. The rage that had gripped him seemed to be passing.

"Oh, no, captain. Nothing so crude as mutiny," answered Price reproachfully. "This is piracy—Twentieth-century piracy, polite, courteous and thoughtful. It was all planned out before we left New York, and so far it has worked out beautifully."

"Beautifully? What do you expect to gain?"

"A good many million dollars, captain. We're off to get them now. Your friends ashore precipitated our action a little by trying to signal you. But it was only a question of a few minutes longer, at most. We're bound for the landing place on this island—the right one, you understand. We'll be there in ten minutes, and before we get there I want you to surrender my map."

"Your map?"

"Yes! You've got it, of course. It isn't really important—in spite of himself the ex-steward's voice quavered—but I'd like to have it. My whole scheme has worked out so prettily that I hate to slip up even on a minor detail. I'm proud of the thing, you see. It's my first job at sea. I'm a landsman, you know. Banks are my specialty."

"Ah!" Captain Bunker glanced at his safe. "That explains how you got into it so easily."

Price seemed perplexed. "I don't know what you mean!" he said. "But it doesn't matter. What I want is my map!"

"What map?"

"My map of the island—that one you stole from me." Price's voice hardened. "Give it up and I'll land you with the other guys. I sent plenty of grub ashore with them this morning—enough to last a month; and you're sure to be taken off long before it's all gone. Refuse and—well, I'm apt to turn unpleasant." Price did not raise his voice, but he tapped the revolver in his belt.

Captain Bunker recognized the tone and realized what it meant. Nevertheless he shrugged his shoulders. "Price," he said, quietly enough, "you're an infernal scoundrel. No doubt you're a clever one, and know your way about on land. But you're up against a new game now. The sea will beat you. No amateur can buck it. If you go on, you'll be hanged, as sure as you're alive. Return to your duty and—"

"My map, please. Quick! We're stopping."

The propeller had ceased to revolve and the sullen plunge from forward told that the anchor had been dropped. Captain Bunker listened; then he shrugged his shoulders. "I haven't any map of yours," he said. "I haven't any map of the island at all except that on the ship's chart. I haven't seen any except the one that Mrs. Archman took ashore with her—"

"I don't want that one. I want my own; you understand, my own." Price's tones were vicious.

"I haven't got it, and I wouldn't give it to you if I had. You wouldn't keep faith with me. You couldn't keep faith. It would be suicide for you to keep faith. Your pals know this, if you don't. I'll hold no truck with you. And, by G—d! I'll see you hanged for this. There now, go ahead and show me if you like, and be done with it. But I'll advise you to load your gun first. If that's my pistol, and I guess it is, it's out or order—or you wouldn't be here."

Price grinned. "Oh, no; it's not out of order. It was the cartridges that were wrong. I took yours out yesterday and put in some others that didn't have any powder in them. But I've real ones in the thing now. Don't make me prove it."

The door opened and a man popped in. "There's a girl just come aboard,"

capt'n," he cried excitedly. "She says she's the owner's daughter and wants to see Captain Bunker."

Price's eyes widened. "The devil she does! How'd she come here?" he demanded.

"In a rowboat. By herself."

"Did you see where she left the land?" Price's tones were anxious.

"Sure! Just where you said we'd find—"

"Good!" Price slapped his knee jubilantly. "Don't it beat h—l?" he questioned. "The Lord sure does help those that help themselves. She'll be Miss Nellie, of course. Show her in, Jim! Show her in. She's a fine girl, captain."

Bunker tried to struggle to his feet. "You infernal hound!" he roared. "If you hurt a hair of that girl's head—"

"Who's going to hurt her? Keep your shirt on, captain. Keep your shirt on. Didn't I tell you we were nice, ladylike pirates? I'm not going to hurt the lady or let anybody else hurt her—unless she makes me. But I don't think she'll make me. We'll see, anyhow. Show her in, Jim! Show her in. You ought to be glad she turned up, captain. I'm pretty sure she saved your life—for the moment. However—"

He broke off as Nellie Archman opened the door and stood hesitating on the threshold.

CHAPTER XII

Cross and Double Cross

For a full minute Nellie stood in the doorway of the cabin, staring with round eyes at the scene before her—at Captain Bunker's bound form and bloodstreaked face and at the form of the ex-steward as he stood leaning by. Then she started forward. "Captain Bunker!" she gasped. "Oh! Oh! What has happened? What does it mean? The sailors acted so strangely and—now—"

Bunker's face grew grimmer than ever. "It means that this hound here"—he glared at Price—"has led a mutiny and that the scoundrels are in control of the ship. Come in! I'm sorry to see you here, but I think you're safer than you are on deck."

"But—but—you're hurt! You're bleeding!" Nellie ran forward. "Why! You're bound! Oh, how cruel, how wicked!" She swung around on Price. "Cut these ropes at once," she ordered. "At once—do you hear!"

Price shook his head. "I'm sorry, miss," he said; "but I can't. We had a devil of a time before we could tie the captain up and we don't want to have to do it over again. He ain't much hurt, you know."

Nellie stamped her foot. "Then I'll untie him myself," she flashed, and bent to the fastenings.

"Hold on!" A note of sternness crept into Price's voice. "Let those knots alone, lady," he ordered. "If you let the captain loose I'll shoot him. Understand? I was going to do it anyway when you came on board. Just you sit down." The man gestured toward one of the vacant chairs at the table. "I don't want to hurt you or any of your friends; but I'm going through with this thing now, no matter what it costs. Sit down and let's talk things over."

But Nellie shook her head. "No!" she said. "I won't sit down. I'm going to dress Captain Bunker's head. You can talk while I'm working."

"Oh! All right. Just as you like. I did what I could for him, but it wasn't much. I'll be only too glad to have you go ahead. Captain Bunker isn't much hurt, really. His head's too hard."

Price laughed smoothly and easily. His voice had again become obsequious. "I've been trying to persuade the captain here to see sense," he went on, "but he won't do it. Perhaps you will. Anyhow, I'll try. I always try persuasion before I try—er—stronger measures. I want to know all about things ashore here. First, I want to know how many men your father has."

Nellie raised her eyes from the captain's head. "I'll tell you nothing," she said flatly.

"Oh, yes, you will! You'll tell sooner or later, and you'd better tell sooner." For an instant cold ferocity spoke in the man's tone; then he slipped back into his old smooth manner. But a child could have told that it was mocking.

"Maybe you think this is just a sudden flash-in-the-pan mutiny," he said. "It ain't. As I've just been telling the captain, it ain't, rightly speaking, a mutiny at all. It's piracy, planned weeks ago. You remember the night that Morbach was killed?"

"Morbach?" Nellie sought in her memory. "No! Yes! You don't mean that—"

"Yes, I do. I'm the man who carried him into the Grant cottage. No! I didn't kill him. Quite the contrary. He ran me down and came near killing me. He was crazy to see your father and he talked about millions of dollars and all that, you know. Well! That interested me. I was just getting away from New York with my share of the loot of the Steenth National bank and I was ready for a fresh layout. So, to cut the story short, I went out to my buggy and put on another hat and coat and came back and said I was Mr. Akin. Gee! I insulted myself some when I did it. Before I'd be a shrimp like Akin!—However, I got the packet and cleared out. The doctor and the Grant girl were pretty excited, and I got away with the stunt. They'd seen me only a few minutes, and the dim light

helped. That was a mighty interesting packet. It held a map, a description of a route, and a good big package of I guess you know what, and a statement that there was about forty million dollars more where it came from. That interested me still more. See! I wanted that forty million dollars. The map was of an island, but it didn't say where the island was. But I guessed your mother knew. So I sent her a copy of the map, with—er—some changes, and watched. Sure nuff she piked straight down to the docks and interviewed our friend the captain here and took passage for the whole family and an extra lot of assorted freaks—"

"My mother? Is she here?" Nellie's eyes grew big.

"Well! Here or whereabouts. No! She ain't aboard, but she ain't far off. She and her friends all came down here with the ship. And I and my friends came along, too. This morning your mother's friends all went ashore, following the map I sent 'em. I sent a lot of grub along, so's they wouldn't suffer while they was waitin' for a ship. Then just as I thought I had everything lovely, I found out somebody'd swiped my map—my own map, y' understand. Course losing it don't do me any real harm, because I reckon I could draw it over again just from memory, but I hate to be stung that way. Besides, it's just possible that I might need it. So I starts to ask the cap'n what he knows about it, when all of a sudden somebody with your crowd begins to wigwag from the mountain top; and the mate starts to answer him; and so—not knowing what he's saying—I tells the boys to take possession and I comes in here and—er—takes possession, too. The captain says he don't know nothing about any map of mine—"

"I don't!" Captain Bunker cut in sharply.

"Well, who in thunder does, then? Those people that went ashore didn't have it, or they'd have gone to the right place instead of the wrong one. If you ain't got it, who has?" Very evidently Price was trying to make his auditors think that he set very little store by the map. But he was not succeeding.

Captain Bunker shrugged his shoulders. "If I'd had it you'd have been in Irons now, and my passengers would be safe on board. And while I'm talking, I'll just warn Miss Archman that you're a treacherous hound, and not to be believed on oath. I don't know what your game is, but you're not fooling me one ounce. You haven't told more than half the truth. You haven't told of robbing my safe and opening my sealed orders or of throwing bottles over the side with messages for your consort, or of burning that flare on the taffrail last night."

Price was listening curiously. "Not me," he said finally, entirely disregarding the captain's exclamation. "Not me. I didn't know your papers has been swiped, and I never heard about any bottles. As for the flare—well, 'twasn't me or mine that burned it. That's straight. But I'll give you a tip. If I was guessin', I'd charge all those things up to one or two of those passengers of yours. A steward gets lots of chances to hear things, and I've been hearing of 'em. Maybe me and my friends have double-crossed you, but unless I miss my guess, the alleged Britisher and that governess have been getting ready to triple-cross you. However, that's all over now. The map never was of much importance, and I don't give a whoop for it now, except to make a clean job. I've got Miss Archman instead, and she's better than a dozen maps."

"I!" Nellie had finished with the sponge and was binding up the captain's head.

"Sure! I've explained things so's you'd understand—that all I want is the money, that I don't want to hurt you, see? Nobody's going to hurt you, if you act proper, and I know you're a-going to."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Cause of Echo

An echo is the repetition of a sound due to its reflection from some distant surface, such as from a building, cliff, cloud or body of water. It must be remembered that sound is transmitted by means of waves through the air. Sound travels very slowly in comparison with light or radio waves. In ordinary air sound waves travel at the rate of about 1,000 feet a second. Now suppose a person is standing 1,000 feet from a reflecting surface such as a hill or cliff. It will take the sound waves set in motion by his voice one second to reach the cliff and it will require the same length of time for the reflecting sound waves to return to the human ear. Therefore two seconds will elapse between the time he shouts and the time he hears the echo of his voice. Repeated echoes are due either to independent reflections of sound from bodies at different distances or to successive reflections.

Billions of Buttons

There are 20,000,000,000 buttons manufactured in this country annually, and the industry has grown to such proportions that it equals, in dollars invested, and value of products, the cutlery industry or the manufacture of oleochemicals and linoleum. America has almost a monopoly on the manufacture of vegetable ivory buttons, which are made in enormous quantities from the togus nut. This nut grows plentifully in the northern part of South America and in Panama, and provides the greater part of the buttons used in men's clothing. If all the buttons made in a year in the United States were distributed equally among the population each man, woman and child would receive 182, with a few thousand left over for good measure.

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Says He Laid Down Law to His Bride

Floyd Dell, popular novelist, discussing marital problems in Hearst's International, claims he had the temerity to address the following remarks to his bride the day after the wedding:

"If you think this is one of those modern, advanced, civilized, artistic, sociological experiments, you are mistaken, young woman! This is a regular old-fashioned honest-to-God marriage. And if one of us finds the other falling in love with someone else, she had better not pretend to be refined and unselfish and polite about it—she had better trust to her instincts and raise h—l. Some things are worth quarrelling over and happiness is one of them. And because we want to be very, very happy, we shall probably have many, many quarrels."

Turkish Divorce

Custom in Turkey has made almost any trivial cause sufficient ground for a man to divorce his wife. It has made the Turk man the owner of the power to divorce. He may rid himself of his wife by merely saying before two witnesses, "I divorce you." Then, if he wishes, he may marry her again for a second time, divorce her by the same simple process, marry her a third time and divorce her. But before he marries her a fourth time she must have been married, if only for one day, to some other man and then divorced. If a husband chooses, he may indulge in a cubic divorce process by saying before two witnesses, "I divorce you with three divorces."—Beatrice Hill Ogilvie in Current History Magazine.

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Colored Onions Repel Germs

In the course of an investigation of some plant diseases that attack the common onion plant, Dr. J. C. Walker has discovered that the colored varieties of onions are highly resistant to the diseases, whereas the pure white onions succumb at once. The secret is that the skins of the colored onions contain a chemical which is poisonous to the germs causing the disease. If one of these germs tries to penetrate into the colored onion bulb the germ is killed. White onions lack this germ poison and disease finds them, therefore, an easy prey.

Many a man who has made a failure of everything else imagines he is a success as a husband.

Makes Strong Appeal

There is something in the very name of fortitude which speaks to the almost indelible love of heroism in men's hearts.—Bishop Francis Paget.

French Women Use Plows

Because of the many small farms in France, handplows that may be operated by women as well as men are sold there.

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