

THE INN ON THE BEACH.

By P. Y. BLACK.

Author of "The Trailress," "The Dogrober," "The Sergeant of the Guard."

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Boom and roar and crash, and again and again throughout the day and through the night, boom and roar and crash! The surf charged upon the pebbled beach with the huge wash of a monstrous break. The screaming wind rushed in from the low caves beyond the sea, wailing and shrieking against its relentless hunters. It sought pity and shelter from the land, but the land shivered and shook, and heaved and tossed, and then the maddest wind setled the rain and tossed it in torrents on the roofs and streets. It swooped upon the waves and grasped the foam and scattered it far inland. It stretched up the sand and pebbles and pressed them together in the wind and window-pane. Boom and roar and crash! A fierce gale had seldom attacked the little lonely inn on the beach.

Out in the night, out on the sea, the fishing boat from strange lands tossed and tumbled and pitched, groaning and cracking, plunging and rolling, no better nor stouter in that storm than a shaving launched by a child. The three men in it clung helplessly to the spars and rails, shuddering with the wind and the less hope as the hours passed, seeking a light in the darkness, seeking aid in their extremity. No light shown, no lifeboat came. One lost strength and hope, and scarcely realising, was swept and hurled into a bowl of despair. Another began to pray with a foreign tongue to many saints, but the third held fiercely to the mast and laughed at his neighbor's prayers, and, looking on the storm, cursed it and defied it.

Mrs. Holloway could not rest in her snugery in the inn. She rose from her own special rocking chair and went to the window, drawing aside the warm curtains to peep out at the storm. She could not see two inches beyond the glass, yet she remained many minutes at the window and her fingers twitched and clasped each other in nervous dread. One might have thought so fixed was her gaze upon the impetuous night, that she really could see through the storm, could see across the roaring, racing waves, and advance her spirit further than man's ken to meet halfway that thing which was approaching.

From the parlor music came and the commingling of voices. A man's voice blended with a woman's so harmoniously as to assure the hearer of something more than frequent practice by the singers, of an entire union of soul in the singing. Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten, Das dich so traurig bin.

There was no note of undue sadness in the voice of the singer. For them the song was the fair expression of a dream—a song of sweet melancholy. In the sudden of the future they might repeat the words with more mortal import. Today they were too young to deeply think. To Mrs. Holloway the song meant far more than to them. As her daughter's eyes smote her ears and the lover's voice joined in the sudden of the window and sat down again in her rocker. She hid her face with her hands and wept.

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"Hallo, mother! What's the matter?" He too, bent over Mrs. Holloway, and with a son's regard, placed one arm lovingly around her shoulders. Yet the disengaged hand sought to soothe her and pressed it also in an embracing desire to comfort both.

"Crying, mother? Crying this week of all weeks in the long, long year? Oh, mother, mother! I thought we agreed that there were to be no tears at my wedding."

"Not so much of a gale, mother, and—Jack's not at sea at any rate." The mother laughed through her tears. "Of course, it does not matter how the wind may blow, but still, my dear, there are many boats at sea and many Jacks. I suppose I am nervous, but I seem to see the boats tonight rocking and tumbling, and the men on the shore peering and waving and looking ready for death. Oh, Katie dear, I shall be so glad when you're married, and then I shall give up this inn and get far, far away from the sound of the sea."

Kate Holloway looked at Jack Beaumont with a worried raising of the eyebrows, and Jack began to whistle softly the "Lorelei."

"It's very true," Mrs. Holloway said, and rose with a smile, drying her eyes. "I don't know what has happened to make me so sad, and you will both forgive me, won't you? I shan't do it again."

"Dear little mother!" cried Kate. "It's because all your summer boarders have flown, and you feel the house lonely and empty. But, really, you must remember your promise—no tears for the wedding next week, only love and laughter and kisses and the song all live together wherever you like so long as you are within reach when I come sailing home to meet my sweetheart and the best little mother in the world."

They grasped the gray-haired, tender-faced woman between the arms and the embracing her, and drew her into the parlor. "Dance," cried Kate Holloway. "Jack, make her dance. It is the one perfect cure for the dolours. Go on—I shall play."

"So, in spite of her protest, the landlady of the inn was gently guided about the room on the arm of her big young son-in-law to be."

Outside the storm howled again, and the spray and saad dashed against the sea, and the rain plunged on the roof. Nearer and nearer to the shore came the fishers, and nearer to the shore came to death, and one boat, nearer and nearer to death, and one man hung to a rope yapping, and one man grasped the mast cursing. The cozy lights of the inn, streaming bravely through the red window curtains shown out on the beach. A loud knock sounded on the outside door, but the damsel gazed about the room as the piano played merrily on to the accompaniment of Kate's laugh and Jack Beaumont's whistle. Mrs. Holloway, carried away by the cheerful sympathy of the young people, was laughing herself and forgetting the sad forebodings of the evening. The sole servant left after the departure of the summer boarders opened the door, and the wind and rain dashed at once so furiously into the hall that she was borne inside and flattened against the wall by the swing of the door.

"Mr. Guest, Mr. Guest!" she screamed. "Shut to the door. It's more nor I can manage. What a sight!" The burly, white-haired visitor turned, panting. "The wet upon his hair and the rough blue coat were all upon his shivering hat. He was too breathless to answer at once, but put his shoulder to the

He tore through the hall like a blizzard, followed by the young officer. In a second they were out in the open air. Jack Beaumont, who had already seen fishermen had gathered. A smack was being battered on the shore. Two men were washed from it and into the surf. They were cast almost at Ted Guest's feet, bruised and bloody and senseless. The skipper was at once on his knees beside them. For an instant he bent over one man, him who had cursed as he clung to the mast, and then the captain got up, white and shaking.

"Is he alive?" cried Jack. "Yes, old Ted Guest, 'God help her, He is alive.'"

The storm had passed. The wind had been driven again to its unseen haunts beyond the sea. A long, lazy, sun-dimmed swell had taken the place of the snow-capped waves. The sea beat heavily but wearily on the land, with a tired approach and a spiritless break. Here and there along the beach were still signs of the tempest's rage. An old tree near the inn was uprooted, the roof of an old sawmill had been carried away. Right in front of the inn, but a few yards below low water mark, the wreck of the sloop lay still, its ribs already half buried by the wash of the summer sea which to which the man had clung lay up on the beach, heaved here by the high tide. Nothing had come ashore from the bulk to show who the men were.

Mrs. Holloway had felt a little indignant. Here was an assured position in the town, ship where now she had kept the inn for four years. It seemed to her that the proper place to offer as shelter to the unfortunate mariners would have been that place at those doors Providence had cast them.

"Beside," she admonished Ted Guest, "there is no place where they could be really comfortable, no place along the beach for miles and miles."

"It is as," said Kate. "I don't know what the fisherfolk will think of us. Fancy being carried away from our very door. And they can't be comfortable at David Copeland's. Jack, you should have insisted on bringing them in here. I feel ashamed—it was worse than inhospitable. It was really and truly unchristianlike."

"I did think," said Jack Beaumont, apologetically, "but Captain Guest was in charge, you know."

"For Kate's sake, dear Ted."

The house of David Copeland, fisherman, and of Mrs. Copeland, teacher, was not by any means the comfortable and picturesque character which drew people to spend their summer in Mrs. Holloway's inn. A white, bare building, standing aloof from the little cottages of the other fisherfolk, it afforded no promise of cozy attentions, nor further pledges than that of ordinary barroom vulgar delights and the chilliest of bedroom accommodations. To an upper room, furnished with two cots, the fishers had carried the wrecked strangers. Their appearance and their manners, when the doctor had revived them somewhat, were not such as to conciliate either their hostess or the medical man. They were unresponsive to kindness, and, but that they had a little money with them to pay their way, David Copeland, when they were able to walk, would have bade them be on their road.

"Daddy," said Dolly, "at least one 'em is 'n other looks brother to the devil. No wonder Mrs. Holloway didn't take 'em at the inn—how they have saved something from the wreck, an' a poor man can't afford to turn away money."

Thus, the first interest in the castaways over their wrecked way, the fishermen of the lonely beach pursued their own laborious way. One of the strangers was more badly hurt by the surf than the other, and he remained fretfully in his room. The other was able to wander about a little, but he was unable to do so for long, and he remained in his room.

"What, almost drowned? Bruised? Near death?" "They'll be all right at Copeland's," said the captain with some irritation.

"Well, well," Mrs. Holloway said. "The captain acted for the best and to save us worry. But, do you know, that night of the storm I knew something was going to happen. I felt somebody was out there on the sea needing help. I could not keep away from the window. It seemed as if some one who had a claim on me was in danger. I really have not quite got over that nervous feeling yet."

Jack Beaumont showed him the room. It was dark save for a candle's light.

"I fear he's a bad man," the woman whispered. "If you're going to ask him about who he is, you'll get short answers, sir. He's a sulky fellow, an' I don't know how I'll ask him to be off."

The skipper closed the door, shutting himself in the room. The man from the wreck was alone, his face at the window. He turned swiftly around.

"So you've got back, Holloway, you scoundrel!" said Guest, "I'll be with you in a minute. The man bounded up at the name, and in an instant had drawn a revolver."

"Who are you? Who said Holloway? What do you want here? My name's not Holloway."

"But that was," said the sailor, sharply, "but lowering his usually jolly, roaring voice, 'Don't you know me? Don't you know your old skipper, Ted Guest?'"

The man gasped, and there was a minute pause. Then he laid the pistol on the bed and came forward with a laugh, holding out his hand.

"Ted," said she, looking at him with her quiet, deepening eyes, "you are worried about these men. It there any particular reason you did not bring them to the inn?"

"I don't know," said she earnestly. "I must know it," she said earnestly. "I must help him for Kate's sake. He is Kate's father. You're sure to know everything since ever you first metted with me. You interferred about my marriage."

You bent my wife's mist against me. You helped me to get away, that I might leave you free to marry her. I don't know how I feel myself deceived, and their happiness will be destroyed. O! Ted, don't you see? I am unhappy. I have acted a lie to Kate and Jack. I am never certain but that I will appear and ruin my child's happiness. If I am alive—and oh, surely it is no harm to hope him gone—my only safety is to keep him quiet somewhere. I have money. He can have a good allowance—any allowance, if only he will not disturb his daughter."

"I know," said old Guest, with a quiver. "Dolly, you were always good and wise, and know best. If it was your wish I would do it."

"The right of a man," cried old Ted. "The God-given right of a man to protect all women against such a man! Stand back, Holloway! I don't care that for your pistol! Touch a hair of my hair, and you're dead!"

The man was panting with rage, but the skipper looked so determined in his wrath that the other sank back in his chair.

"Goota night, oamaradose," said a voice at the door, and the other man entered, the same who had panted the smack, on the night of the storm. Ted Guest turned on him sharply. The ill-looking wretch who met his look smiled on him benignly.

"Never mind him," said Holloway. "He does not understand much English. He and I—you see, I repose special confidence in such an old friend" (the sneered, however, had to get away from Cuba best we could. I don't know whether the Spaniards or Americans wanted us worst—we played with both. That's why we're here. Now, as I was saying—

"If it were not for one thing? What thing?" "Why, that Dolly's dead. If she were not I should say she sent you. I heard of Dolly's death four years ago."

"You're enough. If we can only raise enough here we'll be on our way west by morning. It's a chance, but there's nothing else to do. Come on—this is a pantry window, I guess."

"I've waited long enough. Do you want to freeze to death? Come on." For an instant there was silence. Then a window glass fell in fragments on the snow. Holloway passed into the inn. The approaching feet sounded more loudly and nearly. One voice halted another.

"Come back be blowed!" a fierce voice started from within. "I tell you it's a drunk fisher—"

He interrupted his own words by giving a horrible yell, as, on the instant, a pistol cracked inside the house. The Cuban fled. A moment later old Ted Guest and David Copeland thundered at the door—Ted with cut and bleeding head and raging eyes. The door was opened, and the captain ran straight into Dolly Holloway, who carried a pistol.

"You're hurt! You're hurt!" "No, no," she answered, trembling, but firm. "I could not sleep, and heard a noise at the pantry window. I have to protect Kate and Maggie, you know, and sleep with a pistol. I think—I'm afraid I hurt the burglar."

Guest rushed on and found him prostrate, the man who had so strangely been thrated by fate at his wife's door, at the inn on the beach. Dolly followed, but Guest met her before she saw and led her back.

"Do you know who it is?" "Yes," said Guest softly. "Why do you look so? Oh, have I killed him? Is he dead?" "Dolly was sobbing now, and shaking."

"It was for Kate's sake," she cried, hysterically. "I had to protect her. Poor man! Oh, the poor man! But, Ted, it was my duty, say it was my duty!" "Yes, dear, yes," said the skipper, tenderly. "It was your duty."

The wedding, that was to have been as merry, between Jack Beaumont and Kate Holloway, had to be postponed, for the landlady of the inn was very sick after her adventures with her burglars. When she better she insisted upon the youngsters being married at once, when the skipper, who had been merely stunned and a little cut by the pistol blow, gave away his old sweetheart's daughter. When the lovers got back from their honeymoon they found an amusing tale had happened. Dolly Holloway's hair was almost white, and she was married to Ted Guest. What had passed between them neither said, but we may draw our own conclusions. No word has passed the lips of either to say how the skipper ever told Mrs. Holloway whom it was that she shot on that Christmas eve when burglars broke into the inn on the beach.

There has been a very brisk demand for the two famous pictures which are offered to Bee subscribers. We thought we should be able to supply an unlimited demand, but would suggest that it might be well to call soon if you want pictures.

Arresting the Highbinders. SAN FRANCISCO, March 21.—The police have made a raid on the Chinese High-binders, and several members of the 800th Sing Sing of the men in custody is accused of at least one murder and several instances of having assassinated two or more members of rival gangs. The supposed leader of the gang, Si Ho Ahn, who is charged with four murders, he reached for his arrest, but was quickly disarmed. Other arrests will follow and efforts will be made to convict the High-binders of some of the crimes charged against them, the police admit that evidence will be hard to secure.

Advances the Price of Coal. CLEVELAND, March 21.—As a result of the recent increase in wages granted the Massillon miners the Massillon District Coal Operators' association has decided to raise the price of coal 25 cents per ton. The increase in the wages of the miners, it is stated, amounted to 50 per cent. The advance in the price of coal is to take effect April 1.

Manhood! Womanhood! Manhood! Womanhood! The Kerm Medical Institute. The Kerm Medical Institute. The Kerm Medical Institute.



THE SKIPPER WAS AT ONCE ON HIS KNEES BESIDE THEM.



HE INTERRUPTED HIS OWN WORDS BY GIVING A HORRIBLE YELL.

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