

NO MAN'S LAND A ROMANCE

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

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SYNOPSIS.

Gerrett Coast, a young man of New York City, meets Douglas Blackstock, who invites him to a card party. He accepts, although he dislikes Blackstock, the reason being that both are in love with Katherine Thaxter. Coast fails to convince her that Blackstock is unworthy of her friendship. At the party Coast meets two named Dundas and Van Tuyl. There is a quarrel, and Blackstock shoots Van Tuyl dead. Coast struggles to wrest the weapon from him, thus the police discover these. Coast is arrested for murder. He is convicted, but as he begins his sentence, Dundas accuses Coast as his murderer and kills himself. Coast becomes free, but Blackstock has married Katherine Thaxter and she has chosen a yacht and while sailing sees a man thrown from a distant boat. They arrive at a lonely island, known as No Man's Land. Coast starts out to explore the place and comes upon some deserted buildings. He discovers a man named Blackstock, who has been hunting a house for some time. He is blind, a wireless operator and has a station there. Coast informs her that her husband murdered her, but she is rescued by Appleyard, who sets the Echo in safety, and there he reveals that he is a secret service man and has been watching the crowd on the island, suspecting they are criminals. Coast is anxious to follow the mysteries of No Man's Land, and is determined to save Katherine. Appleyard believes that Black and his gang make a splendid business. Coast penetrates to the fair of Blackstock's disguise. Katherine enters the room and passes him a note which tells Coast that neither his life nor her own are safe. Coast feels that Blackstock suspects him. Appleyard and the Echo disappear. Coast assures Katherine of his protection, and she determines that they are to abandon the island immediately. The blind man and his crew, secret service men, sail away. Coast escapes and is met by Katherine, willing to see. They discover a yacht but before they can reach it the engine dies. Black appears and Katherine flies from the spot, and goes to a remote part of the island and signals a boat which they see in the distance. Appleyard and the Echo appear. Blackstock comes rushing to the boat, claiming he is dying, and is taken on board.

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

Stooping low to escape the banging of the boom, Coast stepped over the Chinaman's body and went to Blackstock. He had some trouble overcoming his physical repugnance to the task, but resolutely forced himself to touch the man, seizing a shoulder with one hand, while with the other he lifted his head and exposed his face to the light. It shone a ghastly white, but the jaws were set and in their sockets the prominent eyes moved and lifted to Coast's face, with a dim, pale shimmer of recognition. But it was evident at a glance that only his tremendous vitality and force of will sustained the man; the blood soaked bosom of his flannel shirt told too plainly the tale of a terrible drain upon his strength.

"Appleyard—"

"No, this one's first—he's done for completely," interrupted the little man with prompt decision; "we've got to get him out of the way before we can move. Tether can wait."

"But he'll die—"

"I'm satisfied. Here, lend me a lift at this, won't you?"

Together with considerable difficulty, they managed to raise the body of Chung to a side seat and then over the rail. A sudden splash and a shower of spray, molten silver in the moonlight, were all his funeral rite.

"And now for the quick," said Appleyard, "and quick's the word."

But as they approached Blackstock the man, drawing upon some unsuspected reserve of nervous force, deliberately with torturing effort, pulled himself together, lifted a leg over the wheel and slipped off the box to the seat to leeward. A grim ghost of a smile showed upon his face, and for a fugitive instant there shone from his eyes a gleam of their one-time mocking lustre, a little proud and disdainful altogether unrepentant. Then with a long sigh, his chin dropped down on his breast again.

"Thanks," said Appleyard, coolly; "you've saved us a deal of trouble and exertion, I'm sure. Coast, take the wheel, will you, while I get Mr. Blackstock a drink and see what can be done to save his worthless hide for a more evil end."

Obviously Coast placed himself on the box. "Any idea where we are?" he asked.

Blackstock roused at the query and raised his head, staring round the horizon. "Vineyard sound," he croaked hoarsely, with a nod to leeward; where, against the pale blue splendor of the sky the twin red masthead bonnets of the light vessel watched them several miles ahead.

Coast consulted Appleyard's face. "Now Bedford?" he asked, tersely.

The little man nodded. "Best for all concerned," he added; "especially if this festive hydrophobic is to get proper attendance."

With a sort of disgust he moved to Coast's side, and trimmed the sheet as the latter swung the Echo off upon her course; then turned and went forward to the companion door, descending to the cabin.

Thereafter for a little Coast heard indistinctly the murmur of Appleyard's voice, civil and pleasant but firm, contending with Katherine's. He understood that she was arguing against her own wishes and natural instincts, insisting she must go to her husband's aid, while the little man was insistently refusing to permit anything of the sort. And confirmation of this deduction was furnished when the detective's small, blonde-thatched head appeared against the light.

"Don't worry, madam," he was saying in conclusion. "Leave him to me; I'm an old hand at first aid to the injured, and I can do for him infinitely more than you'd dare attempt. If there's the slightest need of you, I'll be the first to let you know."

He wagged his head obstinately and came on deck, grumbling privately some refreshingly personal opinion as to the general and perverse intractability of the feminine sex.

Balancing himself before Blackstock, who in the interim had sunk into a semblance of lethargy, he meas-



"Too Late," He Said. . . . That's All. "G'd-Night. . . ."

peculiar half-smile watched the little man at work.

"What's the use?" he asked abruptly in a voice more clear than heretofore.

"What's the use of what?" asked Appleyard sharply, looking up.

"Of troubling with me—trying to save my life?"

"Oh—" With a sudden cough the motor began to hum; Appleyard sat down on the edge of the hatch coaming, folded his hands before him and continued to eye the wounded man. "I don't know," he said with an air of open confession. "I don't know, I'm sure. Business, so far as I'm concerned; commonplace humanity with Coast, I presume; all that sort of nonsense. Why? Don't you want to be helped—saved?"

Soberly Blackstock shook his heavy head. "No," he said evenly. "What's the use? I'm at the end of my tether, as far as getting any of the savor out

Influence of Salt Water

It induces some to drink, others to be profane, and others to tell falsehoods.

When riding on the harbor steamboats use your ears. Then you will not need your eyes nor your brains. By paying heed to the intentionally audible remarks of your neighbor it will be possible to pick up more accurate information than in any other place in the city. The deck of a ferry or the rail of a steamer cast curiously on the human mind. If it does not know, it will guess, and the wilder the guess the more willingly risked.

It is well known that salt water acts in freakish ways on the conscience. To some it brings an overwhelming impulse to get drunk; to others it brings a disposition to the freest use of profanity; and still others, who would never think of fibbing from the windows of a railroad train (dear old Germany, and innocent young girls), the instant they put off from the wharf begin to tell the most shocking whoppers.—Boston Transcript.

Rothschild's Valedictory.

One day in September, nearly a hundred years ago, an old Jew lay dying in a gabled house that bore the device of a red shield in the ghetto of Frankfurt-on-the-Main. Grouped around his bed were five stalwart sons. In a firm voice this father in Israel admonished his children to be loyal to the faith of Moses; to remain united to the end;

Heart Hunter

By Izola Forrester

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Russell did not look up at the schoolhouse window when he drew near. He knew that she could see him from her desk, and the outer door was wide open. It was well after four, and all the children had vanished down the four roads leading from the schoolhouse corner. They were quite alone, if one excepted the red squirrel who was tenant for life in the elm that was king of the playground.

It was half a mile to the nearest farmhouse. All about lay June fields, rich in lush grass ready almost for mowing. The air was golden, warm, hazy, lazy, wooing one to forget duty and day's work. Russell was heavily burdened with both at present. As superintendent of schools in Laverne county, it devolved on his shoulders to let the teacher go at the little Flaxy Bend district, because of inattention to duty and general laxity of conduct.

That was exactly the wording of the charges in Mrs. Deacon Mabry's letter that reposed in his coat pocket. He didn't intend to show it to the girl.

So simple it seemed, so hard it was to do. He had fought against it for nearly a week, remembering her upturned, earnest face, so warm and tender in its brunette tinting, the big, brown eyes, and childish mouth that drooped wistfully at the corners, the dark hair bound smoothly around the small head, with a big, black velvet bow on one side. That bow had been an offense to the enemy even, at least on one side.

"She ain't stiddy enough to teach," old Mrs. Mabry had insisted. "I taught considerable after Myron and me were married, but I was stiddy. It's a known fact that she's settled four of the boys this winter."

"Settled them? You mean expelled them?"

"No, I don't, Mr. Russell. I mean just what I say. She's carried on girl-fashion with Nate Hoskins and

"I'm Afraid They Don't Like Me Very Well—Do They?"

Benny Everitt and Walter Bennings, and even with Lonnie Murray, and they've every one of them lost their heads over her and proposed, and she's refused them all."

"Well," Russell tried to speak mildly, remembering the various attractions of the aforesaid four boys, "maybe she didn't intend to have them take her seriously, Mrs. Mabry."

"And if she didn't, then she's light-minded, and a heart hunter, if I do say it myself, Mr. Russell. That's what we always used to call them, heart hunters, and their minds don't go any further than hunting them, and letting them go as soon as they're caught."

Russell remembered the whole conversation now as he stepped into the little shadowy schoolroom, low-ceiled, cool, with fern boxes at the windows and bunches of June roses on the desks. Rose was her name, too, he remembered—Rose Phillips. She turned her head now, a quick smile of welcome and surprise on her face.

"Did you come to wish me good-by?" she asked.

Russell could not help but smile back. He laid his cap on one of the first row desks and stood looking at her as she drew off his gloves. She could not have been over eighteen.



"I'm Afraid They Don't Like Me Very Well—Do They?"

Then suddenly it dawned on Nef Russell why he had driven ten miles that afternoon to make all fit and due explanations to the teacher in stead of writing. He knew just why he had thought of nothing but her tender lips and dark eyes and low contralto voice for weeks past. He knew why he had saved every scrap of writing she had ever sent him and why he carried in an inner pocket a little tan suede glove he had found beside her chair after a board meeting one day. Oh, yes, he knew now, and he imprisoned both her hands in his and raised them to his lips.

"Rose," he said. "Stop crying. I've brought you another heart, dear."

She stopped sobbing, but did not raise her head.

"I haven't any one in the world myself. I came up here from New York and got along well. There's enough saved in the bank to buy us a good home in the fall. I think I could make you happy, Rose, if I may have you, dear."

"What would you tell the deacon's wife and—and—all the rest?" she asked faintly.

"That I had to dismiss you because I couldn't let my wife work," he whispered. "Won't that do for a good excuse?"

Concerned About the Past

"Oh, hush!" repeated her companion.

"I should like the play if it were not for the incongruity I mentioned," the woman remarked a little later. "It grates upon me. I feel that I must account for it. Can it be possible that the author wishes the audience to understand that she did kill him? She may have used one of those soundless rifles, so the audience could not hear the report. There is smokeless powder, so of course there must be soundless rifles," she babbled, more contentedly.

Her companion vouchsafed her no reply, for a time she remained silent. But soon her voice again welled forth as she inquired earnestly:

"There are soundless rifles, Adolph, are there not?"

"Great heavens!" returned the long-suffering Adolph. "I don't know, I never heard one."—New York Press.

The worst that you can get is that it's none of your business.

In spite of what the school committee had reported, he knew that the little school had made actual progress under her care and tuition during the past term.

Since her coming the whole place had been changed. The children had given little entertainments and earned money for a new stove, for new globes and window boxes, and little fresh muslin curtains at the windows. At the school examinations they had led the other township schools, and before her days, Flaxy Bend district had been a problem in education.

"Yes," said Russell, with almost a sigh, "I came to say good-by."

"She waited a minute, chin raised, eyes questioning.

"Where did you tell me your home was, Miss Phillips?" he asked, leaning over the top of the tall desk, and fingering a pink rose that was nearest to him.

"Vermont. It's only a little bit of a place where the trains stop if they are flagged. We call it Phillips Crossing."

"I suppose you'll be glad to get home."

"Not so very." She spoke reluctantly, with a little uplift of her shoulders. "You see, I have a step-father, and I am the only child from the first marriage, and there are seven little ones now besides. They don't miss me a bit, unless it's a good miss."

"Why did you come way down here in the country?"

"Because I was in a hurry to go to work. The city schools won't take you unless you've been through Normal, you know. I like it out here. The work was hard, but the victory was so much greater, and I do think the children love me."

Russell caught the little wistful touch in her voice.

"The old folks are peculiar, aren't they? Hard to get along with."

"I'm afraid they don't like me very well—do they?"

"They say you're a good teacher, but—"

Rose waited and looked up at him quickly. Her brown hair was very near, with its soft satiny braids. Before he really meant to, he had tucked the pink rose among them.

"It looks much better there," he added, and wondered why his own pulses were racing suddenly, like brooks in April.

"But what? Please—please tell me!" she pleaded, drawing back, but not removing the rose. "What do they say?"

"They say you're a heart hunter."

She leaned back her head and sighed, her hands clasped back of the rose, her eyes looking past him out of the first open window.

"They mean the boys, I suppose, Nate and the rest. Could I help it? Now, truly, could I, Mr. Russell? You know just what boys are. They'd come here every day, and bring all sorts of things to me that I didn't want. Why, Lonnie even used to bring me fox pelts for a cloak, of all things. Boys are always boys, and they get over it so quickly. I was just as nice to them as I could be."

"I am not blaming you—nor them," said Russell a bit unsteadily. "Only I agree with the deacon's wife that you are a very dangerous and disturbing influence to have around these peaceful parts."

The tears glistened in her eyes. "Oh, you don't really mean that?" she said pleadingly. "Are you trying to tell me I cannot teach here again?"

Russell stared awkwardly down at her head, as she leaned it on folded arms, and her shoulders shook with sobs.

"I've tried so hard, and the children all love me," she said brokenly. "I didn't want to go back home at all. I was going to board here all summer, and rest."

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Satisfies

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ECONOMICAL SOUL WAS THIS

THE ONLY TIME.

Hebrew's Attempt to Save Fare Probably Went Astray, but the Idea Was a Brilliant One.

Arthur W. Marks of Washington tells this story to illustrate the talent of the Hebrew race for economy.

A little Hebrew got on a train in New York to go to Philadelphia, but had no ticket. In the car with him were the members of several theatrical companies and he noticed that, when the conductor asked them for their tickets they would reply:

"Company."

"What company?" the conductor would ask; and the actors would reply by announcing the title of the theatrical company under whose name all their transportation had been paid for.

"Give me your ticket," the conductor finally reached the Hebrew.

"Compy," said the little fellow, looking carelessly out of the window.

"What company?" asked the conductor.

Said the Hebrew: "The Pittsburgh Clothing company."—Popular Magazine.



Grace—Do you remember, Jack, the night you proposed to me I hung my head and said nothing? Jack—Do I remember it? Well, I should rather say I did. It was the last time I saw you act so.

Powerful Plea.

A man in North Carolina, who was saved from conviction for horse stealing by the powerful plea of his lawyer, after his acquittal by the jury, was asked by the lawyer:

"Honor bright, now, Bill you did steal that horse, didn't you?"

"Now, look a-here, judge," was the reply, "I allers did think I stole that hoss, but since I hear'n your speech to that 'ere jury, I'll be doggoned if I ain't got my doubts about it."—National Monthly.

Poor Girls.

Mrs. Willis—What do you think of that Highupp girl marrying Mr. Bullock?

Mrs. Willis—Isn't it awful the way some girls sell themselves for money?

Mrs. Willis—And did you hear about Miss Munney marrying that chauffeur?

Mrs. Willis—Yes. Isn't that about the worst case of infatuation you ever heard of?

Got a New Wife.

"Wombat is working like a horse. He used to be rather lazy. Why the change?"

"He's under a new management. His latest wife needs a lot of expensive things."

DIFFERENT NOW.

Since the Sugar, Coffee, Was Abandoned.

Coffee probably causes more biliousness and so-called malaria than any one other thing—even bad climate. (Tea is just as harmful as coffee because it contains caffeine, the drug in coffee).

A Ft. Worth man says: "I have always been of a bilious temperament, subject to malaria and up to one year ago a perfect slave to coffee. At times I would be covered with boils and full of malarial poison, was very nervous and had swimming in the head."

"I finally became convinced that my sickness was due to the use of coffee, and a little less than a year ago I stopped coffee and began drinking Postum."

"From that time I have not had a boil, nor had malaria at all, have gained 15 pounds good solid weight and know beyond all doubt this is due to the use of Postum in place of coffee, as I have taken no medicine at all."

"Postum has certainly made healthy, red blood for me in place of the blood that coffee drinking impoverished and made unhealthy." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Postum makes red blood.

"There's a reason, and it is explained in the little book, 'The Road to Wellville,' in pkgs.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

And Then All Symptoms of Kidney Trouble Vanished.

C. J. Hammonds, 1115 E. First St., Fort Scott, Kans., says: "I was operated on for stone in the kidney but hot cured and some time after, was feeling so bad, I knew there must be another stone that would have to be cut out. I decided to try Doan's Kidney Pills and the kidney action improved right away. Large quantities of sediment and stone particles passed from me and finally the stone itself, partly dissolved, but still as big as a pea. With it disappeared all symptoms of dizziness, rheumatism and headache. I have gained about 50 pounds since and feel well and hearty."

"When Your Back Is Lame, Remember the Name—DOAN'S." 50c. all stores. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

Goodness does not certainly make men happy than happiness makes them good.—Lander.

Water in bluing is adulteration. Glass and water makes liquid blue costly. Buy Red Cross Ball Blue, makes clothes whiter than snow.

Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others.—R. L. Stevenson.

Why Rent a Farm

and be compelled to pay to your landlord most of your hard-earned profits? Own your own farm. Secure a Free Homestead in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta, or purchase land in one of these districts and bank a \$12.00 an acre every year.

Those who purchased 3 years ago at \$10.00 an acre have recently changed hands at \$25.00 an acre. The crops grown on these lands warrant the advance. You can

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by cattle raising, dairy farming, mixed farming and grain growing in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Free homestead and pre-emption areas, as well as land held by railway and land companies, will provide homes for millions.

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