



BY RICHARD HOFFMANN

W.N.U. SERVICE

SYNOPSIS

Following his father's bitter criticism of his idle life, and the notification that he need not expect any immediate financial assistance, Hal Ireland, only son of a wealthy banker, finds himself practically without funds but with the promise of a situation in San Francisco, which city he must reach from New York within a definite time limit. He takes passage with a cross-country auto party on a "share expense" basis.

CHAPTER II—Continued

"Nothin'," said Miller, grinning. "Well, where's everybody else?" "In the office, I reckon."

Miller chuckled again. "Guess we might've waltzed."

Hal leaned against a pillar of the garage—hands in side pockets, quick, sure eyes brooding, mouth moodily set between the lean lines of his cheeks—and watched them file in, his "companions" for an eight-day July ride through country which he vaguely conceived as the flat, dusty setting for midwestern novels.

First came Mr. and Mrs. Pulsipher—she almost scuttling, like a brood hen who knows that in another moment panic will be at her heels, and he following close with lanky bewilderment and the short steps of someone being pushed from behind. They hurried into the back seat.

Then came the nun, who had sat cool and unmoved all the time in a corner of the office, her tranquil face patient, faintly sad, and immaculate as its tight white framing.

But he wished Crack hadn't said that about broad shoulders and slim ankles.

"The ladies usually starts off in back," Miller said, and waited for Pulsipher to lunge forward abruptly and abandon his injured wife.

The nun got in and the girl. The dog wasn't so keen about the idea, and he growled ominously as Crack stooped to help him. And then Hal saw that another man had come—a bulky, ruddy, tough-cheeked man of perhaps fifty, in a pepper-and-salt suit, no waistcoat, gay bow tie, and Panama hat.

Miller surveyed him with a half-smile in his sleepiness and said, "You're biggest; you better get in front." And he added a drowsy "Hey" for Hal.

Crack got into the farther jump-seat, Pulsipher took the invention next him, and Hal cramped himself in last. There was a slamming of doors, and the oppression of the eight days ahead, crowded among these dull and mutually distasteful strangers, was shut into the close, dusty-mohair atmosphere.

Score for the first speech of the trip went to Mrs. Pulsipher; time: ten minutes. Passing the long, stone-faced docks with sunlit masts and flags and funnels visible over them, she suddenly announced, "That's where the boat goes to Europe."

The burly man in the front seat turned slowly and suspiciously round, a fresh but unheeded cigarette puffing and joggling at the side of his lips as he said, "Which boat, mam'?"

"All the boats—to Europe," said Mrs. Pulsipher, her manner implying she hadn't been speaking to him.

The man edged himself sidewise, with his arm along the back of the seat, and looked at her with a scholar's potential respect.

ney, but I judge we're mostly strangers. Let us have introductions."

His unsmiling look continued past Hal in the direction of Mrs. Pulsipher.

"Mrs. Ella Pulsipher," she said, less severely; "and that's John Pulsipher, my husband."

"You're from Iowa, mam," said Kerrigan.

"Yes," said Mrs. Pulsipher, interested beyond distrust now. "Burbank. How did you guess?"

"Los Angeles is the capital of Iowa, mam," said Kerrigan solemnly, "and I was told this crute—this car was going there."

There was a moment of silence and then a very soft, careful, faintly foreign voice behind Hal said, "I am Sister Anastasia."

Go ahead, look like that; somebody's going to speak to you now.

But he barely pursed lips parted in a slight smile when Mrs. Pulsipher said, "And your name, young lady?"

"Trafford," said the girl, in a tone nearer huskiness than you expected: "Barry Trafford."

"And did well to," said Kerrigan in grave courtliness, "if you'll allow me."

Hal saw her head turn, saw her blue eyes large and solemn but not hostile as she said, "Thank you."

"Henry Ireland," said Hal, trying to match the humorlessness of the brown, sedate eyes, even as he wondered if he really saw deep in them a flicker of something youthful and eager.

Mrs. Pulsipher tumbled quick words at him from behind: "Any relation to that Frederick Ireland, that banker, that Ireland who's president of that big bank here?"

Hal glanced into the mirror and a slight, wry satisfaction stirred his lips; the Trafford girl's eyes—not meeting his—were angry as when she had pulled her dog back from him, angrier, perhaps, for the knowledge that he was looking at her reflection and smiling to himself. He hoped so.

himself for getting into such a joyless state, would stay real; nor that his vivid sense of the girl's well-formed, hostile presence behind him would. Yet the journey and its days undoubtedly lay ahead; and it couldn't stay as it was now.

A continuance of that was patently too fantastic to credit, for eight days, for eight hours, even. The son of Frederick Ireland coasting on his father's name! Good old Frederick Ireland.

At least he had pretty well settled that they'd leave him alone now. Pulsipher had retired into humble perplexity, and there was no one on the running board to talk to Hal through the window.

Gradually Mrs. Pulsipher began to prattle about the household of her married daughter in Bridgeport, about places she and John had seen this trip and how they had liked them, about the reasons for sending certain postcards to certain friends back in L. A.

Hal had forgotten about the dog until it gave a quick whimper, and Barry an exclamation that made him look around. The dog's forelegs were in Sister Anastasia's lap, his head turned in reproach toward where Barry brushed a shower of embers from the coat upon which he had been lying.

"Oh, the lining," Mrs. Pulsipher half wailed in sorrow. "Oh, is it ruined?" Then with a grim pounce of her words at Hal: "His cigarette blew in the other window. Oh, what a shame, what a—"

"I am most awfully sorry," said Hal, sincerely contrite before the girl's disinterested look.

"The lining's ruined," said Mrs. Pulsipher with finality and triumph. "Ruined."

Barry's eyes—solemn, impersonal, confidently clear of resentment—looked down at the burn again.

"Who'd you mean by her?" said Hal inhospiably—adding to himself, if this guy goes on reading my mind, I'll give it to him as a present; I won't live with it.

Hal finished his ginger ale in a stinging, refreshing gulp and put a dime on the counter. Then he turned for a look of frank curiosity at the faintly rosy, unaged face beside him. Even if the fellow's standards were totally different from his own, what did it matter if Hal was rude to him? The lazy, mischievous curiosity of his eyes seemed to be partly ready for rebuffs.

He watched her take a couple of her sure, deliberate steps. Her smile took away the traces of toughness—accented a smooth delicacy in the slight in-drawing of her cheeks under the high cheek bones. The faint pink there wasn't make-up, either; and her frank lips were no lipstick. They were frank lips, generous, full without being sensual, under their two simple peaks. There was an air about her of reticent vitality, sure and artless as the angle which gave her plain blue hat its chic.

Hal pushed his back from the wall and spoke a quiet "Hello."

Her look at him was startled, almost alarmed, but he met her eyes aggressively, smiling. It was an instant before her smile began, the parting of her lips delayed; her look was relieved, but without demonstration. "Hello," she said, as if to a pleasant little boy, and looked off to see where the dog was.

"How're you?" he said, "Fine," she said, her smooth voice just off huskiness. She praised his smiling eyes thoughtfully another moment before she added, "Your clothes are English."

"They're my brother's," he said at once, wondering why the devil he'd said that when it was his own old suit and he had no brother anyway.

"You like England," she said, not as if he would deny it but as if he wouldn't volunteer it. "You like it better than this country."

"I'm not sure I'd say that," "You're not sure you wouldn't, either, are you? Are you flattered when people take you for an Englishman?"

"Miller cocked the toothpick at her. 'Yup,' he said. 'Couple stickin' valves. Might's well get 'em fixed up while you folks eat.'"

"Gad, sir, why didn't you get 'em fixed yesterday?" Kerrigan asked. "Sleepin' yestiddy," said Miller and sucked sharply. "Come in from Chicago in thirty hours."

"Look here, speedball," said Kerrigan gravely, "we've been delayed enough already. If you crowded the heap this far, you can get through till supper time. We can sleep where we eat tonight and you'll have a lot more time than here."

Mrs. Pulsipher, nodding decisive approval, said: "Yes."

Miller looked sheepish. "Awright—sure," he said; "but I gotta get gas noil." "There's a pump outside," said one fat sister. Miller looked round at the window with slow suspicion. "Awright," he said.

The others moved upon the tables at the back of the room with apparent intent to have a meal. Hal stayed at the counter, moodily regarding the fly-specked thermometer that stood at eighty-nine. He heard Mrs. Pulsipher saying confidentially, ". . . and lots of onions over it, crisp. I'll tell you about my dessert later."

Then Crack came to the counter from nowhere in particular, and in his unsurely pitched voice told the girl, "I'll have the same as him."

"She's the only one isn't eating enough for a hired hand," said Crack. "Her and that frog sister."

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"Used to be, when I was younger. Why?"

The Fascinating Stowaway By GEORGE M. HUNTER

DILLON, the second engineer, looked down into the defiant blue eyes of the stowaway, Isabella Johnson.

"How'd you pick the Iverson? How come? And who did do it?" Angry that her identity had been discovered, she told reluctantly how Parry of the Blue Funnel line had shot Biles at the Anchor inn owned by her mother.

She had followed Parry into the garden and raised her hand to stop him.

Being close together the gardener, the only witness, swore she fired the shot.

"I was trying to stop Parry instead of him trying to stop me." The trains and steamers were being watched so she had slunk aboard the first tramp steamer in the nearest dock and the day before been hauled on deck.

Eight bells interrupted Dillon's first talk with the stowaway.

Coming off watch he found the fourth engineer by her chair.

Angling his thumb over his shoulder, he snapped, "Gwan!" Her eyes protested.

"Fresh kid. Say, you're looking great." He said it with a proprietary air. "Anybody else been snooping around?"

Her face clouded as she told about the chief engineer asking how she was to get ashore in New York. "Aw, now don't worry."

He leaned across her chair. "Say, let me get you out of this mess. You're a swell girl."

She glanced shyly at him as the mess bell rang.

Dillon ate silently, scowled when the engineers bet three to one the stowaway would crash the gates of the United States.

Next day when he found her distressed the captain had hinted at deportation.

"Get that worry off your chest, Isabella."

"Here's the chief coming. So long."

the steward, handed him twenty dollars.

"See what Miss Johnson—eh—wants in clothes. If more money than that let me know."

"Yes, sir." "You know nothing about her." "Very good, sir."

The steward was edging past the longshoremen thronging the deck, when the second mate gripped him by the arm. "Say, Steward," jerking his thumb over his shoulder toward the stowaway's room. "How does a fellow buy women's clothes?"

"By de color, sur." "Color, nothin', bonehead! Size I mean. How tall is Miss Johnson?" "Vimmen's buy dress by ze chest, round ze chests—bust inches."

"An old man like you should quit lyin'. My compliments to Miss Johnson. Ask the correct size."

The steward returned, wiping his hands on his greasy apron. "Thirty-four, sir. A black dress she wants, an' says dank you."

"All right, I'll get her a black frock. Here's a dollar for yourself. Don't go boozin' now."

Half an hour later the third mate dodged inside the cabin and called the steward out of the pantry.

"Say, that stowaway girl—what does she need most?" "Stowaway—stowaway, sur. Oh, Miss Johnson?"

"Yes, Miss Johnson." "Oh, she needs shoes." "Waat size?"

"I don't know, sur." "Go ask her."

He returned breathless. "Four and de black color, sur."

At night the fourth mate hurried into the mess room, late for dinner. "Beel, buyin' something for the stowaway, Miss Johnson. Manicure set, some candy and flowers. Old Melchisedick, the steward, wouldn't let me see her. I—"

The fourth mate stood in the doorway with a paper in his hand, grinning. "Me and the other mates," he said. "Thought we might give that poor girl a lift. Tomorrow the skipper'll take her ashore and put her on the train for Chicago. He subscribed twenty dollars. The mates have made it up to fifty."

The engineer volunteered to make up the even hundred.

"Good sports," complimented the mate.

Next morning as the engineers ate breakfast, a cocky sailor's voice drifted through the window. "Did ye 'ear it. The female stowaway bolted last night! Her room smells like a blinkin' barber's shop."

ELIOT'S INDIAN BIBLE Sold from the library of John Baterson Stetson, Jr., of Philadelphia. Rev. John Eliot's Indian Bible brought \$2,400. Dated 1663, it was a translation into the Indian language and was used by Eliot in his missionary work among the Indians in New England. Approximately 1,000 copies were printed; only 50 are in existence.—Literary Digest.

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