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Red Raskall By CLARK McMEEKIN W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY THUS FAR: Lark Shannon, whose horse, Madoc, was sold to clear a debt when her father died, sails from England for America. David North, whom she loves, was to make the trip with her but sails the night before. Lark's ship goes down, but she reaches land and Galt Withe, a bound servant, finds her on an island and helps her but refuses to bring her to the mainland. The two manage to hobble Lancer, a fine horse who had escaped from the sinking ship and on which a price of 100 pounds has been offered. After some time Galt returns to the island with Cony, who plans to hold her for ransom to David North's firm. They reach the inn and Lark finds herself being carefully watched.

CHAPTER IX

Mag had gone indoors now and Cony returned to his oyster shucking. He was, for the moment, on the far side of the mound, raking the shells with his long wooden fork. Surely she could slip away for a few minutes, Lark thought. Surely she could!

Slowly she edged toward the corner of the inn and stood there in its shelter for a moment, watching, holding her breath. Nothing happened; nothing at all. With cautious deliberation she slid past the outhouses and, still slowly, sauntered toward the bridge. She gained the bridge and crossed it, was in the woods now and started to run after the four who were in sight just ahead, their bright garments glowing like exotic tropical flowers among the shadowed undergrowth.

Lark had time to call out and the satisfaction of seeing the gypsies turn and stand waiting expectantly before the sound came to her. The baying of Old Dog, the rush of his padding feet on the swinging bridge, the sniffing rustle of his paws in the dry grass behind her; it frightened her terribly. She screamed and drew back into the bushes.

It was less than a minute till he found her and fastened his teeth in the fabric of her skirt. She stood prisoner there till Cony came up on the lope. "I seed un," he panted, "I set Old Dog loose to learn un not to go sneakin' off. Never seed no Roms afore, did un? I seed that boy an' gal smile at un." He nodded sagely. "I wuz a-spyin' on un from 'hind the oyster-slope all the while." He threw back his huge yellow head and laughed uproariously. "I didn't tell Mag, sweetmeat, but she'll hear Old Dog bay an' know what-for."

Lark glanced in the direction of the gypsies and called out to them. They shrugged their shoulders with real or feigned indifference and, when Cony made threatening gestures toward them, continued on their way. Cony broke a switch off a nearby bush and pointed toward the inn. When Lark started back without comment, he ordered Old Dog to release her dress and followed along behind, flicking the switch vaguely in her direction.

Mag was waiting for them in the courtyard. "Go up-attic," she ordered. "No dinner for un this day, girl!" She came behind Lark up the steep and narrow steps and shut the heavy door quickly, turning the key in the lock on the outside and stamping down without any more words. It was then that she realized her luck in having Galt's spy-glass hidden under her straw pillow. It was still there. She was thankful Mag hadn't thought to rummage round. Lark focused the glass eastward toward Ghost Island. How she wished she could see Red Raskall hidden in the dip where the grass was so green and the rock-basin held the water like a cup. She could imagine him there so clearly, awaiting, like herself, his hour of freedom.

She turned the spy-glass then toward the castle. She could distinguish the glint of its red roof among the trees. She could see the gypsy camp below it, spread out on the plateau; the tents, bright patches among the trees, the figures of the men and women moving about in the open space where the cooking fires smoldered like dusky jewels.

David was there somewhere among them, Lark thought. It was a thing scarcely to be believed, that, almost, she could reach out her arms and touch him. It was nearly dark when Mag stumped up the stairs and unlocked Lark's door, telling her in a surly voice that she had need of her down below.

Following Mag down the steps, she saw now that the long trestle tables had already been set up, and that wine casks had been rolled in and lined the length of the room. Cony called to Lark, "Here, un, come give me a hand with these platters." He stood in the far corner of the big room beside the wide open-faced Dutch dresser whose high shelves were stacked with trenchers and platters and bowls of every description. Cony's eyes fell on her and lit up with astonishment and pleasure. "By God," he said softly, "but un's a beauty-bright if ever I seed one. Un looks like that Sheba-queen Parson Withe preached about onct in the brick church at the crossroads. Un's a pretty peach, for sure!"

His voice was soft, but not too soft for Mag to hear. "Sheba-queen, indeed; Jezzybel, more like!" She came at Lark with an upraised hand.

Lark drew back, her eyes blazing in fury. Mag's hand fell to her side. "Go back up-attic," she ordered, "an' see to it that un stays there. I'll soon up an' lock un in. Un's more hinder than help, cozening up to every male-crittur in sight."

Lark was afraid that if she made a scene it would be Galt and not she, herself, who would suffer from it, so, under Mag's sharp urging, she went up to her room again.

It was not long till Lark heard the crowd gathering in the room below. Snatches of song and rough loud talk came up to her. She strained her ears to hear David's voice among the others. Finally, she crept from her room and stood at the top of the darkened stairway, bending down, trying to peer into the big room.

She couldn't see the entire group from where she crouched and so, after a moment, edged lower, step by cautious step. Here, from the shadowed corner of the landing she had a good view.

The bright scarfs of the group of gypsy folk splashed color in the far corner of the dim-lit room. They stood a little apart from the sailors, Lark saw. The white haired woman was there, and Dosta and Chal and Ginko. The men's arms were woven around the women's waists and they were swaying and twisting to the tune which Ginko was playing on his fiddle. Their feet moved in an intricate, hypnotic cadence.

It was impossible to tell whether or not David was among the group. Several had their backs to Lark and a few were hidden by the dark shadow of the Dutch dresser.

It was at this moment that some quick dispute flared by the oak set-



The sailor crumpled in a heap on the dirt floor.

tle which banked the fireplace. Lark's eyes shifted to the sudden movement there and discovered Matson, still wrapped in his long black cape. Lark saw at once why Mag had spoken of him as the Spanish Cat. The nickname was an apt one, she realized, as he stepped from the darkened corner.

He stood now, electric with anger, staring haughtily at the black-bearded sailor who had knocked the tray from Galt's hands a few moments ago. Presumably the man had taken some liberty with him which he resented deeply. Almost more quickly than Lark's eye could follow the swift motion, a rapier was gleaming like a silver streak in the air; gleaming one moment and buried deep out of sight the next, as, with a groan, the sailor crumpled in a heap on the dirt floor.

Matson drew a silk handkerchief neatly down the rapier's blood-stained length as he stood, smiling a little, like a dancer, poised beautifully on the balls of his slim feet. "Pick him up," he said softly, "throw him out into the courtyard. The dog's ready for the dung-pile." His summoning gesture brought two gypsies from the group. With utter unconcern they tossed the dying man into the yard.

Galt was bending over the man, holding a cup of water to his lips. Lark whispered his name so softly that when he turned it was as if he had sensed her presence, rather than heard her. He followed her quickly to the shadows of the trees.

"Galt!" Lark's cold hands clung to his. "Oh, Galt, I'm going to the church. I'm going to try to get there, to the cross-roads. If you could go with me, Galt—" He shook his head, glancing back fearfully. "They'd miss me," he said, his voice less than sound. "Run, Lark! Once you get away from here you can find help. It's better for you, without me. Past the church you'll—"

He stopped, darted away from her, stood still as Cony opened the door, peering out. Lark slipped away among the trees and out-buildings, running now, making for the dunes

and the direction of the church, running faster than she had ever run in her life.

After a time the terrified beating of Lark's heart quieted a little. The very effort it took to walk through the loose sand calmed her. She was out of breath now and gratefully sucked the cool, damp night air down deep into her lungs. Presently a new strength seemed to enter into her.

Though she was still deeply perplexed and frightened, that last glimpse of Galt had been a comfort to her. She felt it had taken a certain courage which she had not known him to possess to be aiding the dying man. A craven would not have done that thing.

Galt would know her whereabouts at the parson's and would get word to her somehow. Their two fates were linked together. Lark knew that and it renewed her own courage. Lark pushed forward. It was good to thrust her feet deep into the sand and let it seep through the rough sandals. She could feel it under her toes, damp and firm, packing hard under the arches of her feet.

She was strong and young. The tug of the sand was, as yet, no impediment to her. Walking fast and free like this, she felt the night wind behind her, urging her on.

Not far ahead of her Lark could see the church, four-square and white-steepled. The parsonage must lie behind it, just out of her present vision. Lark wondered if the man of God would be angry, being awakened in the middle of the night. Maybe he was deaf, sleeping on his good ear as her father used to do to try and give himself a good night's rest. She tried the door of the church but found it locked. She crept through the little cemetery where the tombstones stood all awry until she came to the parsonage beyond.

Lark stood for a moment, looking. Then, as the moon came out from behind the clouds, a feeling of desolation and fear came over her. The paling fence was broken and falling away. The windows of the house were gaping wide, and the doorway was a hollow open shell.

Behind Lark there was a sound, a step, quick, pursuing. She swung round and called out, "Who's there? Galt, is it you?" The answer came, not in Galt's voice, but in David's.

"Lark, child, what in the world are you doing here?" In an instant she was in his arms, clinging to him, sobbing out all her fright and dismay. She knew only that David was holding her; David, whom she had loved ever since she was a little girl.

He was holding her close now, as if she were still that little girl, needing the comfort of his protecting care.

"Don't cry that way, Lark," he said gently, "it makes me feel real bad. There isn't anything to be scared of. I'm here with you."

"But, David, you wouldn't speak to me last night. I kept thinking all day you'd come to me and you didn't."

"I couldn't speak to you last night. You shouldn't have called out to me."

"I'm sorry, David. But I was so glad to see you." Lark tried to calm herself now, to take some assurance from David's reasonable tone. His arm was still about her, holding her shivering body against his own. He was so warm, so safe, so strong.

"David, you knew about the Tempora?" "Not till after I saw you yesterday, Lark. Then somebody told me of the shipwreck."

"It was horrible. I still wake up in the night dreaming about it."

"But you're safe now. You were one of the fortunate ones."

"When I was out there on that dreadful island I didn't feel fortunate. When Clink Swalters, the mate, died and left me, I almost wanted to go with him. I would have wanted to if it hadn't been for the thought of you, the hope I still held onto that we might be together again, be . . . be . . ."

"Be married, Lark? Was that it? We will be married some day, after a bit, when I've got this business with Matson straightened out. I'll be rich then, and safe. Now it's too risky a thing."

"What is it, David? Tell me about it. I don't understand the least little bit. I was so unhappy and confused when I got your note."

"I tried to send you a message by Mother Egypt this morning," he said, "but she had no chance to deliver it. Chal and Dosta said you attempted to follow them. That wasn't wise, Lark."

"But I had to know, David. I wanted to talk to you, and now you won't tell me anything!" "Darling, I'm ready to tell you everything. What was it specially?" "Why didn't you come with me, David? Why didn't you keep your promise?"

"Business," David said, "I told you that, honey. My company sent me over to catch Matson who has been black-birding slaves in for years, insuring them for a good round sum and then claiming he loses nearly half on every trip. He sneaks in those he makes the false claim on after his ship has been cleared and hides them away at his castle up the hill till he can dispose of them."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Hedda Hopper: Looking at HOLLYWOOD

SHE'S A SHE-DEVIL to some Hollywood people; to others she's an angel. Joan Fontaine is one of those persons who never could be accused of being wishy-washy. She's electric, giving off with dynamic impulses, sometimes a sparkling positive, sometimes a crackling negative.

Joan Fontaine is never neutral. When she's angry she's lightning in a summer storm, and just as deadly; when she's gay she's a veritable pinwheel on wheels.

Explosion into the ranks of the screen's first ladies back in 1939 with a haunting performance in "The Women," Joan has frequently been a storm center, and 'most always town's gossip conversation piece.

Joan, when she wants to be, can be a witch right out of "Macbeth." She once said: "I express my feelings by action. I have a frightful temper, and I can fly into rages about almost anything that gets on my nerves at any time of day or night."

Surprise, Surprise! The big news of the moment is that she went through one whole picture without once losing her temper.

That was "The Affairs of Susan," for Hal Wallis at Paramount. Producer Wallis, a wise man (he must be—anyway he won 27 Oscars during a 10-year period), provided Joan with everything an actress could set her heart upon. She had not one but four leading men—George Brent, Dennis O'Keefe, Don De Fore, and Walter Abel. In the picture each of these men falls in love with her and wants to marry her.

In "The Affairs of Susan" Joan played her first comedy role, and that scared her, she confided to me. Says I to her: "You've got one of the finest comedy directors in the business—Bill Seiter. He knows more than many of our supposed big shots, whom he's taught all they know, but can't remember because their hats are now too high for them to balance the hat and the brain underneath 'em. So with Bill just let yourself go. He'll carry the ball over the goal line, and you'll get the credit." She did, and now says: "I prefer comedy to those droopy roles I've been playing."

It's Contagious But it wasn't always sweetness and light with Joan. On her last picture, the \$4,000,000 "Frenchman's Creek," there was more than a little trouble between her and Arturo De Cordova, the technicolor pirate. Joan was very unhappy on that one, and when Joan's unhappy every one within shouting and shooting range is apt to be unhappy, too.

All due to a misunderstanding of the language. He apologized, she apologized, and they were friends again.

Many of the reports circulated about Joan are pure malice. Joan just never bothers to answer back. "But I don't let those things bother me any more," she told me. "After all, by this time they've said everything and written everything that could be said or written about me, so why explain anything?"

Don't You Believe It The Fontaine-De Havilland "feud" rumors, for instance, are a part of the legion of legends about her. Joan contends there isn't any feud, never has been one. "Why," says she, "I Livvy ever needed help I'd be the first one she came to, and vice-versa."

No, there is no feud, but the fact that she took the name Fontaine and not Livvy's made talk, as Joan knew it would. She wanted no one to write a story about Livvy's baby sister, said she. "If I can't win on my own, being tied to Livvy's apron strings won't help me. So what the heck! Just call me Joan Fontaine—or don't call me."

Regarding the reports that she has trouble with her directors she answers: "How's any one going to undermine a Hitchcock or a Cukor or a Bill Seiter? It's ridiculous!"

Joan is a determined person with a will of iron. If something comes up she disagrees with she just plants herself in the position she intends to maintain—and she maintains it. Ask David O. Selznick. He knows.

"I was sick of being the sad sack of the screen," said she. "I wanted to play comedy, and now that I've done it, I'm happier than I've ever been in Hollywood."

Unknown Becomes Known A new guy named Tommy Trout, six footer, 185 pounds, appeared at the studio, asking for a job. They thought he wanted to work as a laborer. Said he, "I want to act." As a joke, he was sent to Lillian Burns, Metro's coach. After five minutes with him she phoned the boss, and said, "If we don't sign him we ought to have our heads examined." They signed. He's finished his first, "Main Street After Dark." They swear from his performance he's been acting all his life.

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